



**APRIL 9 - 12, 2026
DALLAS, TEXAS**

NAVIGATING PATHWAYS TO RESILIENT AGING:

Innovation in Community,
Academia, Health Care,
and Advocacy



SGS ANNUAL MEETING & CONFERENCE AGENDA THURSDAY, APRIL 9, 2026

12:00 PM – 5:00 PM

**REGISTRATION DESK OPEN & SILENT
AUCTION INTAKE**

2:00 PM – 3:30 PM

**PRESIDENT’S OPENING - BUILDING
RESILIENT AGING: INNOVATION,
PARTNERSHIP, AND PURPOSE**

REUNION E/F

Dr. Ethlyn Gibson, Old Dominion University

Resilient aging is cultivated through intentional collaboration, evidence-based innovation, and shared commitment across community, academia, health care, and advocacy. As our aging society grows in complexity and diversity, the need to strengthen protective factors that promote physical health, mental well-being, and cognitive vitality has never been more urgent.

This Presidential Opening will explore resilience as a multidimensional framework that supports better physical health outcomes, protects against mental health challenges, and sustains cognitive functioning across the lifespan. Grounded in current research and

real-world practice, the session will examine how innovative programs, interdisciplinary partnerships, and inclusive advocacy efforts create environments where older adults can adapt, recover, and thrive.

Aligned with the mission of the Southern Gerontological Society — to improve the quality of life for older adults through education, research, and practice — this address will highlight how bridging gerontological education, research, and applied practice leads to measurable impact. By strengthening collaboration among academic institutions, clinical systems, community organizations, and research networks, we move from isolated efforts to coordinated pathways of support.



3:30 PM – 4:45 PM**WE CAN DO BETTER: AGE-FRIENDLY HEALTH AND HEALTH CARE**

REUNION E/F

Dr. Eduardo Sanchez, American Heart Association

As the median age of the United States rises, the nation must build its health and health care capacity to be more age-friendly. In this session the topics of age-friendly public health, the relationship between frailty and cardiovascular health, and the importance of age-friendly primary care will be covered.



A = ADVOCACY FOR OR BY OLDER ADULTS

H = AGE-RELATED HEALTH AND WELLNESS

C = CAREGIVING, CARE SUPPORT, AND CARE PARTNERSHIPS

D = DIVERSITY TOPICS IN AGING COMMUNITIES

G = GERONTOLOGICAL EDUCATION AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

5:00 PM – 6:30 PM**POSTER SESSION A**

REUNION G/H

1. A Developmental Perspective of Older Adults' Interactions with Traditional, Complementary, and Alternative Medicine (Student Poster)

*Lauren Chrzanowski, University of Louisville***A H**

2. A Science of Learning Informed Intervention for Carers of People Living with Dementia (Student Poster)

*Ariana Elsdon, Texas Christian University***H C G**

3. Aging Begins at Birth: Teaching Gerontology Through a Life-Course and Care Lens

*Dr. Karel Kalaw, University of Central Oklahoma***A G**

4. Attitudes of Rural Seniors towards Ambient Assisted Living Systems (AALS)

*Dr. Cory Roberts, Stephen F. Austin State University***H C D**

5. Beyond 911: Preventing Falls Before the Next Call

*Dr. Sara Murphy, University of North Texas Health Science Center***H**

6. Beyond Survival: Integrating Palliative Care to Improve Quality of Life for Older Adults Living with Liver Cirrhosis (Student Poster)

Mercy Agbona, University of North Texas

H

7. College Students' Perceptions of Hospice and Palliative Care: Implications for Gerontological Education (Student Poster)

Arti Patel, University of North Carolina Charlotte

G

8. Comparison of Physical Disability Prevalence Between Older Veterans and Non-Veterans in the United States

Dr. Benjamin Ansa, Augusta University

H

9. Common Medications in Older Adults Have a Differing Effect on Inflammatory Responses to a Dual Exercise/Cognitive Task (Student Poster)

Saria Pinkston, University of North Carolina Wilmington

H

10. Daily Associations of Neighborhood Quality and Overall Perceived Stress (Student Poster)

Alexa C. Allan, The Pennsylvania State University

H D

11. Dementia Hospitalization Outcomes in Older Adults with Blindness and Vision Defects: Mediation by Pre-existing Health Conditions (Student Poster)

Amos Mareverwa, Dr. Garikayi Chemhaka, Juliana Abude-Aribo & Dr. Rongfang Zhan, University of North Texas

A H C

12. Diabetes Care at the Intersection of Age, Race, Ethnicity, and Geography within the Southeastern Region of Virginia

Dr. Moushumi Roy, Texas College

H C D

13. Does Leisure-Time Physical Activity Buffer the Negative Impact of Alcohol Use on Loneliness in Older Adults?

Dr. Jungjoo Lee, Texas A&M University

H

14. Evaluating the Integrated Memory Care in Community Program on Reducing Alzheimer's Symptoms and Caregiver Distress (Student Poster)

Iris Chung, Emory University

H C

15. Evaluating the Musical Biographies Program: A Multi-Sensory Approach to Enhancing Well-Being in Dementia Care

Dr. Ann Mayo, University of San Diego Caytre Ede, University of California San Diego

H C

16. Exercise And Multimodal Interventions for Fall Risk Reduction in Older Adults with Diabetes: A Systematic Review of Randomized Controlled Trials (Student Poster)

Vera Kusi, Georgia State University



17. Exploring the Role of Electroretinography (ERG) for Predicting Cognitive Change (Student Poster)

Isaiah Osei Duah Junior, North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University



18. Faith Through the Practice of Self-Reconciliation: Improving Physical and Mental Health Outcomes Among Women Aging-In-Prison

Alex Bishop, Oklahoma State University



19. Feasibility and Validation Pilot: Does Local EHR Data Reflect National Hospital Utilization Patterns Among Persons Living with Dementia (PLWD)

Dr. Stephanie Bennett, Emory University



20. Future Burden of Cardiovascular and Pulmonary Disease Healthcare Needs in Florida's Older Adults (Student Poster)

Aishwarya Joshi, University of Central Florida



21. Increasing Older Adult Vaccination Awareness and Uptake through a Community Engagement Initiative in Texas

Dr. Matthew Lee Smith, Texas A&M University



22. Influence of Acute Exercise Bouts on Biomarkers and Cognitive Functioning in Older Adults (Student Poster)

Madison Croucher, University of North Carolina Wilmington



23. Interaction Effect of Education and Neuropathology on Cognition: A Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis (Student Poster)

Yuan Yang, Stony Brook University



24. Intergenerational Caregiving and Role Strain Among Older Adults in Single-Parent Families (Student Poster)

Habiba Raffi, University of North Carolina Charlotte



25. Leisure Activities as Modifiable Correlates of Objective Sleep in Older Adults (Student Poster)

Lauren Saurbaugh, Clemson University



26. Life Balance Disruption and Health

Outcomes Among Family Caregivers of Older Adults: Evidence from NHATS/NSOC Round 13 (Student Poster)

Clinton Gyimah, University of Pittsburgh

**27. Mindfulness, Knowledge, and Family**

Conversations About Dementia: Insights from Intergenerational Rural Families (Student Poster)

Allison M. Walton, Clemson University

**28. Navigating Crisis Across Ages: Community Perspectives on Emergency Preparedness in Five Refugee Populations (Student Poster)**

Erreannau Zellous, Miami University

**29. Obesity, Mobility Limitations, and Cognitive Decline Among Older Adults in the United States: Investigating Interrelated Risk Pathways (Student Poster)**

Khunza Asma, University of South Florida

**30. The Development of the Arlington Healthy Brain Collaboratory: Advancing Research, Education, and Outreach Through Community Health Workers**

Dr. Noelle Fields, Dr. Denise Hernandez & Dr. Tracy Greer, The University of Texas at Arlington



BREAKFAST ON YOUR OWN**7:00 AM – 5:30 PM****REGISTRATION DESK OPEN & SILENT AUCTION INTAKE****7:15 AM – 8:15 AM****STUDENT NETWORKING BREAKFAST**

COTTON BOWL

Separate Registration Required. More Information Coming Soon.

8:30 AM – 9:30 AM**CONCURRENT SESSION A**

PRESIDENT'S SPOTLIGHT SESSION - Bridge Youth: A Culturally Responsive Workforce Pathway for Adolescent Dementia Caregivers of Color

REUNION E/F

Dr. Bashir Easter & Jarett Fields, Melanin Minded

Alzheimer's disease and related dementias (ADRD) disproportionately affect communities of color, resulting in greater reliance on informal family caregiving. Within these households, adolescents often assume substantial caregiving responsibilities, including assistance with activities of daily living and supervision of relatives with cognitive impairment. Despite their contributions, adolescent dementia caregivers remain largely invisible within aging services, education systems, and workforce development initiatives.

Bridge Youth is a community-based, culturally responsive program designed to support adolescent

dementia caregivers of color while translating informal caregiving experiences into recognized and transferable workforce skills. The program was implemented as an eight-week, in-person pilot serving youth ages 16–20 who were actively providing care to a family member with ADRD symptoms. The curriculum integrated dementia education, communication strategies, personal care assistance, infection control, residents' rights, and culturally affirming caregiving practices. Instruction was delivered through a combination of classroom learning, skills-based laboratory training, and supervised practicum experiences.

Preliminary findings indicate that participants demonstrated increased dementia knowledge, improved caregiving confidence, and reduced stigma associated with ADRD. Youth reported greater recognition of caregiving as a valued skill set and increased interest in future education or careers in healthcare, aging services, or social support fields. Families described improved communication and greater appreciation of adolescents' caregiving roles within the household.

Bridge Youth reframes adolescent caregiving as both a public health concern and a workforce opportunity. By centering equity, culture, and intergenerational caregiving, the program offers a scalable model for strengthening dementia-capable communities and expanding pathways into the gerontological workforce.

ENCORE COMMITTEE SPOTLIGHT SESSION - The Crime of the 21st Century: Elder Abuse & Exploitation

PEGASUS A

Julie Krawczyk, The Senior Source

Discover a national model for elder justice. The Elder Financial Safety Center is a first-of-its kind collaboration between The Senior Source, Dallas County Probate Courts, and the District Attorney's Office. By integrating prevention, protection, and prosecution, the Center has secured a \$210 million financial impact and served over 71,000 clients.

Learn to replicate this success in your own community through our proven frameworks for strategic alliances, coordinated service planning, and data-driven impact tracking.

Amplifying Voices in Aging: Building Advocacy for Older Adults through Brand & Marketing Strategies

REUNION A

Robert Yanks, Andy Suggs & Travis Sharp, Reckon Branding



Programs and organizations serving older adults often focus their advocacy efforts on policy change, funding, or awareness campaigns, yet overlook a powerful and underutilized tool: strategic branding and marketing. When applied intentionally, brand and marketing best practices do more than promote programs, they build trust, foster connection, and activate individuals and organizations as advocates for older adults and the communities in which they age.

This presentation introduces a practical, three-part framework: Clarity, Connection, and Activation, that demonstrates how organizations across community, academic, and healthcare settings can leverage brand and marketing strategies to strengthen advocacy efforts. Using real-world case studies from gerontology and aging-focused programs and partnerships including faith-based dementia initiatives (Dr. Fayron Epps's Alter Program), statewide care networks (Georgia Memory Net and Dr. Ted Johnson's Georgia Gear - Emory GWEP), academic research labs (Emory's Frost Lab), and innovative

clinical models (Integrated Memory Care), the session illustrates how clear messaging, value-driven storytelling, and consistent engagement transform participants, caregivers, clinicians, and partners into active champions for older adults.

Attendees will explore how brand clarity builds trust, emotional connection drives engagement, and sustained marketing activation turns engagement into advocacy. The session will include a brief interactive exercise enabling participants to apply the framework to their own programs and identify opportunities to amplify older adult voices, strengthen community buy-in, and advance resilient aging initiatives. By reframing marketing as an advocacy tool rather than a promotional tactic, this presentation equips attendees with strategies to mobilize communities and sustain impact in an increasingly complex aging landscape.

A Roadmap for Program Development in Aging Studies at the University of South Florida

REUNION B

Dr. Nasreen Sadeq, Dr. Debra Dobbs & Dr. Daniel Meng University of South Florida



This interactive workshop will present the ongoing evolution of undergraduate and graduate programs at the University of South Florida's School of Aging Studies, in response to shifting institutional priorities, workforce needs, and student interests. Three faculty members from the School of Aging Studies will discuss how the department has strategically adapted its academic offerings while maintaining a commitment to high-quality gerontological education and professional development.

First, we will discuss the challenges at the undergraduate level that resulted from rebranding the aging-focused Long-Term Care Administration major into a broader Health Care Administration major. While this transition successfully increased student enrollment, it ultimately led to the closure of the Aging

Sciences major, prompting faculty reflection on how to sustain gerontology coursework within an interdisciplinary curriculum.

Next, we will focus on similar challenges related to student enrollment and curriculum offerings at the master's level. We will explore some proposed revisions to the program that emphasize applied skill development, professional competencies, and career readiness to meet the needs of today's aging services workforce.

Finally, we will outline recent changes to the PhD program, including the introduction of part-time students and the impact of recent state-level policies regarding international student visas, which can simultaneously expand and limit PhD admissions.

Overall, this workshop will offer potential roadmaps for redesigning academic programs and will engage participants in discussion about the challenges of balancing university demands with sustaining gerontology education, along with strategies for preparing the next generation of gerontology professionals.

Sing for Life: How Choral Singing Supports Healthy Aging

REUNION C

Joshua Vickery, Encore Creativity for Older Adults



Encore Creativity for Older Adults is the nation's largest choral organization. This session will focus on how Encore has used a recent research study of their singers to inform current best practices of building a health aging community through choral singing.

Inspired by Dr. Gene Cohen's Creative Aging Study in 2001, Encore Creativity for Older Adults creates meaningful arts experiences supporting lifelong learning, wellness, and fun for all older adults. Encore conducted a survey of singers to explore self-reported evaluations of health and wellness. The survey

gathered demographic information to understand our singer base and asked questions about personal health (both physical and mental), loneliness, and their involvement in Encore activities.

Encore's core values include celebrating older adult voices, creating accessible and inclusive arts community, improving health and wellness, inspiring a passion for quality lifelong learning, and cultivating opportunities for social connection and friendship. The goal of this research project was to learn more about Encore's singers and whether we are fulfilling our mission and focusing on our values.

9:45 AM – 11:15 AM

CONCURRENT SESSION B

PRESIDENT'S SPOTLIGHT SESSION - Innovative Advocacy Approaches for and by Older Black Americans: Two Unique Examples

REUNION E/F

Dr. Ronit Elk, University of Alabama, Birmingham

C. Nathaniel Brown, Expose Dementia

Pastor J.R. Finney, Covenant Church

Pastor Geraldine Daniels, Southside CME Church

Linda Michelle Trainer



Two advocacy approaches created by and for older Black American; each will include: 35m panel discussion and 10m audience interaction.

Remember Me: Dementia in the African American Community: Mr. Brown, the documentary's producer, will discuss his motives for creating the film – witnessing the challenges facing African American adults with dementia and their families. He will

describe the impact of the film shown in communities, schools and churches in more than 30 cities nationwide, on African American audiences, and the call for more advocacy for older adults in the community. Mrs. Trainer, who provided care to her mother and husband for 14 years, will discuss the unexpected challenges they encountered, how she navigated these, and how it changed her into an advocate for people living with dementia and their care partners.

Black American Communities Speak: Development of a Training Program BY the Black American community FOR Healthcare Providers: Researchers partnered equitably with a Community Advisory Board (CAB) of Black Americans to create a training program to teach clinicians to respect the cultural values of Black American, recognize their previous negative experiences in healthcare, and how to communicate respectfully. Clinicians from 50 settings were trained, and reported understanding, respecting and honoring the community's cultural values, and implementing the CAB's recommendations. Dr. Elk will highlight the approach that guided this study, Community Based Participatory Research, a social justice advocacy approach. Pastor Finney and Pastor Daniels, members of the CAB, will share how the CAB guides the study and determines the program content.

Emotional Wellbeing & Brain Health Awareness Among Aging Farmers in North Carolina: Methods and Preliminary Results from the Aging Farmers Health Study

PEGASUS A

Dr. Cassandra Germain, Dr. Shuang Li & Rajan Owens, North Carolina A&T State University



Agriculture remains one of the most hazardous occupational sectors in the United States—placing older farmers at heightened risk for adverse physical, mental, and cognitive health outcomes. Compared to the non-farming population, farmers experience

higher rates of morbidity and mortality, yet surprisingly little research has focused on the health needs of aging farmers. As the U.S. agricultural workforce continues to age, understanding the unique health challenges faced by older farmers is essential to sustaining this vital sector. This session highlights emerging research from the Aging Farmers Health Study, a cross-sectional survey examining the mental, physical, and cognitive health of aging farmers in North Carolina. Presenters will share the study's design and methodology, along with preliminary findings on emotional wellbeing and cognitive outcomes, offering timely insights into an underrepresented and at-risk population.

Building the Geriatrics Workforce Across Settings: GWEP Innovations in Dementia Care and Long-Term Care Education

REUNION A

This joint session highlights two Geriatric Workforce Enhancement Program (GWEP)–supported initiatives that address critical workforce gaps in dementia care and long-term care (LTC) settings. Together, these projects demonstrate how experiential and targeted educational strategies can strengthen the geriatric workforce across community, clinical, and academic environments. Drawing from implementation and evaluation data, the session showcases scalable approaches to improving knowledge, attitudes, and preparedness among both current caregivers and future healthcare professionals serving older adults.

Experiential Learning to Strengthen Dementia Care Partnerships

Dr. Guillermina Solis & Andrew Vernon, The University of Texas at El Paso



This GWEP project focuses on enhancing dementia care capacity in an underserved, predominantly Hispanic/Latino community through experiential learning. Using Dementia Live® and complementary

caregiver training initiatives, the program improved dementia-related knowledge, empathy, and teamwork among over 150 caregivers across healthcare, social services, and community-based settings. Evaluation data demonstrate statistically significant gains in dementia knowledge, highlighting the value of experiential training to support both formal and informal caregivers in resource-limited communities.

Preparing BSN Students for Long-Term Care Practice

Dr. Kimberly Delgado, East Carolina University



Supported by the Carolina GWEP, this project addresses the shortage of BSN-prepared registered nurses in long-term care through an innovative elective course combining didactic content, clinical experience, and tuition support. The course improved students' perceptions of LTC nursing, increased appreciation for the RN role in residential care, and strengthened intentions to pursue LTC employment. Findings underscore the importance of GWEP-supported academic-practice partnerships to build a sustainable LTC workforce.

Community Strategies for Health Promotion and Resilient Aging Paper Session

REUNION B

This session examines community-based strategies that promote health, independence, and resilience in later life. Papers highlight initiatives support daily activity, health literacy, age-friendly care, and community engagement across diverse settings.

A Systematic Review of Caregiver-reported Barriers and Facilitators to Deprescribing in Older Adults with Dementia

Dr. Tara Klinedinst, University of Oklahoma Health Campus



A Community Based Approach to Providing Age Friendly Care in Rural Communities

Dr. Denise Hernandez, University of Texas at Arlington



Growing More Than Food: Community Gardens as Practice-Based Innovations for Resilient Aging

Dr. Kyle Bower, Cardinal Direction Qualitative Research Consulting

Dr. Cynthia Hancock & Lauren Hultquist, University of North Carolina at Charlotte



Health Literacy: The Foundation of Health (Student Paper)

Dr. Miriam Watts, Texas A&M University



Exploring Social Determinants of Health in the Black American United Memory and Aging Project (BA-UMAP)

REUNION C

Dr. Angela Sardina, Lauren Saurbaugh & Lena G. Simon, Clemson University

Alexa C. Allan, The Pennsylvania State University

Dr. Roland Thorpe, Jr., Johns Hopkins University



7.2 million Americans are diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease and related dementias (ADRD), with 13 million diagnoses projected by 2050. Older Black adults are disproportionately diagnosed with ADRD, which is linked to greater social determinants of health (SDoH; conditions people are born, live, work, and age; e.g., physical [neighborhood] and social environments [e.g., community resources availability/access]) exposure. Older Black adults are more likely to reside in under-resourced/deficient neighborhood environments (e.g., higher crime, low social cohesion), experience worse emotional health,

have lower access to essential cognitive screenings, and demonstrate negative health behavior engagement (e.g., lower leisure activity engagement [LAE]), which are linked to higher ADRD risk. Thus, enhancing access to cognitive measures within ADRD research; identifying compliance with time-intensive micro-longitudinal research designs; and elucidating interconnections across SDoH factors and psychosocial mechanisms driving ADRD risk in older Black adults. Therefore, this symposium will incorporate (1) an overview of the Black American United Memory Aging Project (BA-UMAP; Brown-Hughes), including key findings and lessons learned; (2) BA-UMAP participant compliance with completion of daily mobile phone surveys (4-times/day for 7-days; Sardina); and preliminary findings from studies exploring relationships between (3) neighborhood quality and mood/emotion (Allan), (4) LAE and mood/emotion (Saurbaugh), and (5) daily stress and anticipatory stress the next day (Simon). These presentations will provide important insights into feasibility, compliance, and satisfaction with remote cognitive measures administration; as well as inform relevant intervention strategies targeting SDoH (e.g., neighborhood quality) and poor emotional health (e.g., stress, mood) that may be driving ADRD disparities in older Black adults.

11:15 AM – 11:45 AM

EXHIBITOR BREAK

Please show your gratitude to our Sponsors for their support of the 47th Annual Meeting & Conference. Be sure to stop by their tables to learn more about their wonderful programs and services.

SILENT AUCTION

PEGASUS B

Bid High! Bid Often! Proceeds from our Silent Auction benefit our Student and Older Adult travel scholarships. Won't be here for closing bids? Some

items have a Buy Now price so you can snag your favorites today!

12:00 PM – 1:30 PM

KEYNOTE LUNCH - ANCHORS OF RESILIENCE: ADVOCATING FOR CREATIVITY AND COMMUNITY IN DEMENTIA CARE

REUNION D/E

Dr. Marc Rothman, Lizzy Care



Evidence shows that bringing art into your life even once a year lowers your risk of mortality by 14 percent. Wired to appreciate the arts, our brains crave the rich tapestry of detail in a theater, a painting, or a film, at all stages of life. Dementia Spring convenes artists, academics and innovators in fellowship, to advocate for the creation of accessible, inclusive spaces to enjoy and create art for those living with memory loss. Using examples from the work of current and former Dementia Spring Fellowship projects like *Mercedes*, the Day By Day Project, DanceStream, and Improv For Caregivers, this keynote will explore how to build resilience in aging anchored in social engagement, creativity, and community by looking to international models and local innovations.

1:30 PM – 3:00 PM

CONCURRENT SESSION C

Advancing Dementia Diagnosis and Care Pathways Paper Session

REUNION E/F

This session examines approaches to improving dementia diagnosis, care planning, and support across the care continuum. Papers highlight early identification, caregiver engagement, and evidence-based tools that enhance care quality and reduce avoidable harms.

Early Diagnosis, Lower Costs: The Impact of Georgia Memory Net

Emerald Anglin, Emory University

**From Assessment to Engagement: Supporting Care Partners Working with Individuals with Moderate to Severe Dementia (Student Paper)**

Stephanie Richings & Dr. Natalie Douglas, University of Louisiana at Lafayette

**Improving Palliative Dementia Care through Evidence-Based Caregiver Guides and a Caregiver Communication Toolkit**

Dr. Meredith Troutman-Jordan, University of North Carolina at Charlotte

**Before You Accept the Diagnosis: Identifying Medication-Induced Cognitive Decline in Older Adults**

Dr. Jered Yalung, Options Home Care

**Factors Shaping Health and Wellness in Later Life Paper Session**

PEGASUS A

This session examines clinical, environmental, and psychosocial factors that influence health and wellness in later life. Papers address chronic disease management, sensory and sleep health, care transitions, and health experiences across long-term and rehabilitative settings.

Ageing With Diabetes: Factors Associated with Self-Perceptions of Aging in Later Life (Student Paper)

Rejina Akter, Miami University

**Self-reported Hearing Loss, Insomnia Symptoms, and Sleep Medication Use Among Older Adults: National Estimate (Student Paper)**

Girish Hemrajani, University of South Florida

**Impact of Mirabegron on Urinary Incontinence Management in Adult Women with Cognitive Impairment at a Long-Term Care Facility (Student Paper)**

Alp Turgut, University of Alabama at Birmingham

**Transitions from Long-Term Care Facilities to Rehabilitation Hospitals: Diagnoses and Outcomes (Student Paper)**

Juliana Abude-Aribo & Dr. Rongfang Zhan, University of North Texas



Technology as a Tool and a Barrier Paper Session

REUNION A

This session explores the dual role of technology in aging, examining how digital tools can both enhance and hinder access to care and mental health support. Papers address digital interventions, ageism in online environments, and persistent inequities shaping technology use in later life.

The Digital Divide in Healthcare: The Older Adult Perspective (Student Paper)

Dr. Miriam Watts, Texas A&M University

H

Digital Ageism in Online Mental Health Directories: Misalignment Between “Geriatric and Seniors” Filters and Older Adults’ Mental Health Information Wants/Needs

Dr. Kristina Shiroma, Louisiana State University

A H D

Immersive Virtual Reality (VR) Experiences: A Beneficial Intervention for the Mental Health of Older Adults

Dr. Robyn Jordan, University of Louisiana Monroe

H

Designing a Custom GPT Model for Black Dementia Caregivers: Proof of Concept Testing

Dr. Stephanie Bennett, Emory University

C

From Classroom to Career: Preparing a Culturally Responsive Gerontology Workforce

REUNION B

G

This integrated session examines how gerontology education can intentionally build a strong, future-ready aging services workforce. By pairing cultural humility and the 5 Rs pedagogical framework with the NACE Career Readiness Competencies, the session demonstrates how educators can align inclusive teaching practices with essential workforce skills. Together, these approaches support the development of culturally responsive, reflective, and career-ready professionals equipped to meet the evolving needs of older adults and the aging services sector.

Integrating Cultural Humility and the 5 Rs into Gerontology Education and Age-Friendly Care

Jennie de la Cruz, Mercer University

This session introduces cultural humility and the 5 Rs (Respect, Resilience, Reflection, Regard, and Relevance) as a practical teaching framework for gerontology education. Through case examples and interactive strategies, participants learn how to create inclusive learning environments that center older adults’ lived experiences, promote critical reflection, and prepare students for person-centered, age-friendly practice.

Preparing the Next Generation of Aging Services Professionals through Career Readiness Competencies

Dr. Cynthia Hancock & Arti Patel, University of North Carolina at Charlotte

This session highlights how the NACE Career Readiness Competencies can be embedded into gerontological education to strengthen workforce preparation. Led by a seasoned gerontology educator and an advanced gerontology student, the session offers concrete tools and strategies to help educators, students, and employers align academic learning with the skills needed for successful careers in aging services.

Preparing and Sustaining the Aging Services Workforce Paper Session

REUNION C

This session examines how education, and training shape the aging services workforce. Papers highlight innovative educational models, and factors influencing resilience and burnout among those working with older adults.

The Use and Implementation of Microcredentials in Aging Studies Curriculum

Dr. Louise Murray, Erickson School of Aging Studies, University of Maryland Baltimore County



Fugitive Pedagogy for Aging Education

Dr. Jocelyn Brown, Ohio University



Risk and Resilience Factors for Burnout Among Long-Term Care Workers

Aishwarya Joshi, University of Central Florida



3:15 PM – 4:15 PM

CONCURRENT SESSION D

PRESIDENT'S SPOTLIGHT SESSION - Navigator: A Dementia-Capable Transportation Model to Support Aging in Place and Caregiver Well-Being

REUNION E/F

Dr. Bashir Easter & Jarett Fields, Melanin Minded



Transportation access is a critical yet often overlooked determinant of health, independence, and quality of life for older adults living with Alzheimer's disease and related dementias (ARD). Cognitive

impairment, safety concerns, and loss of driving privileges frequently result in social isolation, missed medical appointments, and increased caregiver burden. These challenges are especially pronounced in underserved and minority communities where transportation options may be limited or lack dementia-informed practices.

Navigator is a community-based, dementia-capable transportation model designed to support older adults with cognitive impairment and their care partners through safe, reliable, and culturally responsive mobility services. The program integrates specialized driver training, dementia-informed communication strategies, and coordination with caregivers and community organizations. Navigator was developed using a community-engaged approach informed by caregiver experiences, best practices in dementia care, and aging-in-place principles.

Preliminary implementation insights indicate that dementia-capable transportation can reduce caregiver stress by providing trusted mobility alternatives and improving appointment adherence. Care partners reported increased peace of mind and reduced logistical strain, while riders demonstrated improved access to healthcare services and community engagement. Driver training contributed to greater understanding of dementia-related behaviors and increased confidence in serving cognitively impaired passengers.

Navigator reframes transportation as an essential component of dementia-capable communities rather than a peripheral service. By embedding cognitive awareness and person-centered practices into transportation systems, this model offers a scalable approach to promoting autonomy, equity, and resilience among older adults and their caregivers.

Does Stakeholder Input Matter? Alignment Between SGS Regional Priorities and Southern State Plans on Aging

PEGASUS A

Dr. Kyle Bower, Cardinal Direction Qualitative Consulting

Dr. David Hage, Florida Gulf Coast University

Karen Appert, NC Caregiving Collaborative



This presentation examines how stakeholder-identified priorities captured through the Southern Gerontological Society's longitudinal survey align with—and diverge from—formal state plans on aging across 15 Southern states. Drawing on policy documents spanning 2015–2028, the session highlights where regional concerns overlap with state planning and where gaps signal emerging needs, conceptual differences, or planning-cycle lags. Attendees will gain practical insight into how stakeholder input translates into policy, and how these findings can inform future survey design, strategic planning, and alignment between research, practice, and aging policy.

Memory Stations in Motion: Scaling Intergenerational Programming through Library and College Partnerships

REUNION B

Rick Voight, Vivid-Pix

Dr. Cory Roberts, Panola College



This session explores an initiative spawned from an encounter at a Southern Gerontological Society conference, where SGS and Vivid-Pix identified a shared mission to bridge the gap between research and practice. As the digital divide continues to isolate many older adults, this collaboration demonstrates how intergenerational partnerships can dismantle

these barriers. We examine how Photo Reminiscence Therapy serves as a primary intervention, transforming technology into a bridge that connects digital-native students with narrative-expert seniors.

The foundation of this work is the Vivid-Pix Memory Station and its accompanying digitization technology, which facilitates the preservation of family history. This infrastructure supports the Panola College Gerontology Initiatives pilot, where students serve as technology mentors. In this reciprocal exchange, students provide the digital literacy necessary to restore and archive photos with an accompanying Archoral subscription, while seniors share the narrative expertise of their lived experiences. This process reduces social isolation and preserves diverse community legacies in a searchable, lasting format.

This session welcomes academics, practitioners, students, and community partners to explore how these technology-based interventions enhance cognitive wellness. Attendees will see how this pilot transitions students into the workforce as skilled practitioners while providing community hubs with high-impact programming. We offer a practical look at how digital archiving and intergenerational mentorship create inclusive environments that celebrate history and strengthen the future aging workforce.

End of Life, Not End of the Conversation: Life, Legacy and Letting Go

REUNION C

Ernesto Finales & Jean Yves Benard, Hunter College



End-of-life conversations are often delayed until moments of crisis, limiting opportunities for older adults, caregivers, practitioners, and students to explore meaning, values, and legacy in thoughtful and

supportive ways. This interactive, skills-based workshop reframes end-of-life dialogue as an ongoing, life-affirming process that supports dignity, connection, and reflection across the aging continuum. Designed for a diverse, multidisciplinary audience, the session emphasizes practical tools that are accessible and applicable across academic, clinical, and community settings.

Grounded in an interprofessional framework that draws from thanatology, social work, counseling, palliative care and hospice practice, and death doula models, the workshop integrates reflective practice with applied strategies. Participants will develop individual-level skills such as values clarification, narrative and legacy-based approaches, and strengths-oriented communication techniques that help older adults articulate what matters most beyond medical decision-making alone. The session centers culturally responsive and trauma-informed practices that honor diverse identities, beliefs, and lived experiences.

At the systems level, participants will explore how organizations can embed meaningful end-of-life conversations into care planning, interdisciplinary collaboration, and program design. Through guided discussion, small-group activities, and real-world examples, the workshop also highlights peer support approaches that reduce isolation, normalize grief, and strengthen community resilience. By positioning end-of-life conversations as an act of care rather than closure, this session equips participants with actionable tools to support life, legacy, and letting go across gerontological settings.

4:30 PM – 5:30 PM

CONCURRENT SESSION E

The Power of Occupation: Why Meaningful Engagement Is Critical for People Living with Dementia and How to Implement Strategies for Participation

REUNION E/F

Dr. Laura Novak, Texas Christian University



Participation in meaningful daily activities, or occupations, serves a critical role in maintaining physical and cognitive abilities and psychosocial well-being. Additionally, occupational engagement serves to decrease the risk for loneliness and social isolation. For people living with dementia, participation in daily activities often declines as physical and cognitive abilities change. Care partners often struggle to find ways to promote engagement in meaningful activities, especially when behavioral and psychological symptoms of dementia (BPSD) become a factor. Occupational therapy practitioners focus on maintaining engagement in meaningful activities in order to promote sense of purpose and sense of self. By examining the root cause of BPSD and assessing barriers to engagement, we can find appropriate ways to modify activities to an optimal level. In this course, participants will learn about the neurological impact of occupational engagement. Additionally, participants will learn how to begin to investigate the root cause of BPSD and how to subsequently modify activities to meet the needs of their care partners. Finally, participants will learn about an evidence-based program created with multiple community collaborators to successfully provide opportunities for artistic and reminiscence-based engagement for persons with dementia living in the community.

Neither Wife nor Widow: Acknowledging Caregiver Emotions and Creating Opportunities for Support

PEGASUS A

Dale Sherburne



Family caregivers of individuals living with dementia experience profound emotional, physical, and psychological strain that directly affects their health and well-being. Yet within healthcare settings, caregivers' emotional experiences are often unseen, overlooked, or insufficiently addressed, limiting providers' ability to offer timely and appropriate support. This presentation examines caregiver emotions through the lens of *Neither Wife nor Widow*, a collection of 180 reflections written during a twenty-year journey caring for a spouse with dementia.

The reflections illustrate a wide range of emotions commonly experienced by caregivers—including guilt, resentment, invisibility, grief, and inadequacy—that frequently go unrecognized in clinical and social encounters. These emotional burdens contribute to caregiver stress, social isolation, burnout, and declining health outcomes that undermine caregiver resilience and independence over time. The presentation will use selected examples from the book to highlight gaps between caregiver experiences and current healthcare practices and social support services.

Attendees will gain insight into the often-unspoken emotional realities of caregiving and their devastating, long-lasting effects. The session advocates for the need for health, social, and community service providers to develop greater awareness of caregiver emotions; to proactively assess caregiver needs as part of routine care; and to increase caregiver services in underserved and low-income communities. Additionally, the presentation will emphasize the importance of professional development opportunities that equip healthcare providers with the skills, language, and frameworks necessary to

engage caregivers effectively. Strengthening provider awareness and training is essential to improving caregiver health, enhancing care partnerships, and promoting resilient aging for both caregivers and care recipients.

WHY, WHEN and HOW should a Researcher Partner Equitably with Older Black Adults? An introduction to a Social Justice Partnership Approach

REUNION A

Dr. Ronit Elk & Dr. Raymond Jones, University of Alabama, Birmingham



WHY, WHEN and HOW should a researcher partner equitably with Older Black Adults? This interactive session is geared towards anyone interested in research AND anyone who cares about the health of the Black American community.

Come to learn about, and to share your perspectives, on the different ways to partner with Older Black adults when conducting a study designed to improve the health of Older Black Adults

Power to the People: Grassroots Mobilization to Influence Aging Policy at Local & State Levels

REUNION B

Ernesto Finales & Bryan Ellicott-Cook, SAGE USA



Grassroots mobilization is a powerful strategy for shaping aging policy at local and state levels, especially when led by older adults with lived experience of intersecting marginalizations. Older adults who are Black, Indigenous, People of Color, low-income, disabled, or immigrants often experience disproportionate impacts from aging-related legislation, funding decisions, and regulatory

frameworks, yet they are frequently excluded from policy-making processes that directly affect their independence, access to services, and quality of life. This session highlights an intersectional, community-driven advocacy model that positions older adults as central agents in promoting or opposing policies, grants, contracts, and regulations that influence their lives. Participants will learn how targeted community outreach can proactively engage socially isolated seniors, connect them to vital resources, and build pathways to civic participation. The session also emphasizes strategies for voter engagement, advocacy campaign turnout, public hearings, legislative education, and lobbying training, equipping older adults to articulate policy priorities effectively and influence decision-makers. Grounded in social work principles of empowerment, human rights, and social justice, as well as public health frameworks addressing structural determinants of health, this approach demonstrates how older adults' leadership enhances resilience, preserves autonomy, and strengthens community power. Attendees will leave with practical insights for supporting older adult participation in advocacy and strategies for creating inclusive, equitable policy initiatives that benefit aging populations across diverse communities.

Empowering Dementia Initiatives through Data and Community Partnerships

REUNION C

Dr. Qian Huang & Dr. Kayla Alvis, East Tennessee State University

Rochelle Roberts, Tennessee Department of Health



The Tennessee Department of Health's Building Our Largest Dementia (BOLD) Public Health Program represents a statewide effort to strengthen the public health response to Alzheimer's disease and related dementias (ARD). A strategic collaboration between the Department of Health, East Tennessee State University's Center for Rural Health and Research, and statewide partners delivered the Tennessee Multi-

Sector Plan for Aging Data Dashboard V2, a user-friendly data visualization platform designed to guide dementia-informed planning, healthy aging, and resource allocation.

The dashboard integrates county-level demographic and health indicators with qualitative findings from focus groups and community case studies, reflecting the lived experiences of older adults, caregivers, and health service providers. By combining quantitative and qualitative insights, the tool enables agencies to identify disparities, design responsive programs, and evaluate impact over time.

On this workshop, presenters will demonstrate key dashboard features, share stories of older adults and lessons learned from implementing the BOLD initiative. Participants will engage in small-group discussions and guided exercises to explore how similar data-driven, multi-sector partnerships can be adapted for their own Area Agencies on Aging and Title VI programs to enhance dementia readiness and community engagement.

5:45 PM – 7:15 PM

POSTER SESSION B

REUNION G/H

1. Bored or Lonely: Preliminary Analysis of the Minet Boredom Scale

Joseph Kim, Oklahoma State University



2. Building Age- and Dementia-Friendly Communities Across Texas Through Workforce Training and Education

Dr. Sara Murphy, University of North Texas Health Science Center



3. Intentions to Create and Plan for Future Care Needs

Dr. A. Katherine (Katie) Harrington, Virginia Wesleyan University

C

4. Mask Use as Modifiers of Occupational Exposure and Neurodegenerative Plasma Biomarkers after the World Trade Center Disaster: A Cross-Sectional Study (Student Poster)

Yuan Yang, Stony Brook University

H

5. The Role of the Memory Alteration Test in Identifying Early Executive Function Changes in Aging Adults

Dr. Sachin Saju & Dr. Sara Murphy, University of North Texas Health Science Center

H

6. Holding the Story: Caregiving, Memory, and the Quiet Work of Aging Well

Dr. Karel Kalaw, University of Central Oklahoma

H C D G

7. Opportunities to Enhance Assisted Living Facility Care Quality Through Interprofessional Education

Dr. David Hage & Dr. Rekha Pudur, Florida Gulf Coast University

C G

8. Oral Health Expenditures in Aging Adults: Implications for Resilient Aging and Long-Term Health Outcomes (Student Poster)

Keerthiga Devi Ramesh Babu, University of North Texas

A H D

9. Portraits of Aging: Using Creativity to Enhance Gerontological Learning (Student Poster)

Ashley Tabachnick, University of South Florida

G

10. Prepared but Forgotten: A Narrative Policy Review of Disaster Preparedness and Implications for Older Adults' Mental Health in Underserved U.S. Communities (Student Poster)

Uche Nwatu, University of Alabama

H

11. Program Innovation as Scholarship: Leveraging AI for Systematic Gerontology Program Assessment

Dr. Maureen Templeman, Missouri State University

G

12. Promoting Brain Health in Community Settings: Findings from a Faith-Based Brain Wellness Program (Student Poster)

Adam Mohammed, University of Virginia

H D

- 13. Promoting Resilient Aging in Resource-Limited African Settings (Student Poster)**
Amos Elikplim Awuku, University of Debrecen
- H C D
- 14. Roots, Wisdom, And Wellness: Black/African American Women's Perspectives and Attitudes on Perimenopause, Health Literacy, and Help-Seeking in Midlife (Student Poster)**
Tonya Henighan, Liberty University
- D
- 15. Safe Enough to Thrive: Applying a Dignity of Risk Framework in Late-Life Mental Health Care**
Dr. William McKenna, Piedmont Geriatric Hospital
- A H G
- 16. Sleep Disruption as a Modifiable Contributor to Cognitive and Behavioral Symptoms in Dementia: A Literature Synthesis (Student Poster)**
Mary Jones, Georgia State University
- H
- 17. Supporting Nutrition and Health Among Older Adults Through Food Assistance Programs in Times of Crisis (Student Poster)**
Mercy Ayoola Agbona, Ganette Apeadu-Baah & Ranjani Priya Ravinuthala, University of North Texas
- H
- 18. Telehealth Adoption Is Associated with Online Access to Patient Medical Records: A National Study of US Older Adults (Student Poster)**
Ebenezer Kyeremeh, Drexel University
- A H D
- 19. The Associations between Perceived Stress, Protective Factors, and Cognition (Student Poster)**
Lena Simon, Clemson University
- H D
- 20. The Emotional Fatigue of Zoom: Age and Surface Acting in Online Meetings (Student Poster)**
Lauren Hultquist, University of North Carolina Charlotte
- H
- 21. The Moderating Role of Demographic Characteristics in Computerized Useful Field of View Cognitive Intervention Effectiveness: The Everyday Function Intervention Trial (EFIT) (Student Poster)**
Allison Walton, Clemson University
- H D
- 22. The Politics of Conspiracies: Age, Political Identity, and Distrust of the Government (Student Poster)**
Taylor Pope, Purdue University
- A H

23. The Role of Informal Caregivers in Supporting Assisted Living Residents with Advanced Dementia: Implications for Caregivers' Overall Well-Being

Dr. Jeffrey Lentz, Emory University



24. The Relationship between Organizational Culture and Implementation of Person-Centered Dementia Care in Long-term Care Facilities (Student Poster)

Maharshini Bommagouni, University of North Texas



25. The Weight A Woman Carries: Legacies of Inequity and Dementia in Black Older Women (Student Poster)

Jayla Washington, Howard University



26. Understanding Aging Through Immersion: Nursing Home Experience for Third-Year Medical Students

Dr. Chidinma Aniemekwe, UT Health San Antonio



27. Understanding Self-Care among Grandparents Raising Grandchildren

Dr. Bert Hayslip, University of North Texas



28. Exploring Food Security for Older Adults: Stakeholder Perspectives on Food Availability, Affordability, Accessibility, and Acceptability in North Texas (Student Poster)

Benjamin Sesay, University of Texas at Arlington



29. Repair as Stability Infrastructure: Grant-Funded Ecosystems and Later-Life Housing Stability in Memphis (Student Poster)

Emmanuel Bosompem Boadi, University of Memphis



30. Staying Put Under Disinvestment: Housing Adequacy, Cost Burden, and Later-Life Residential Stability in Memphis (Student Poster)

Emmanuel Bosompem Boadi, University of Memphis



EVENING – TIMES VARY

DINE-AROUND NETWORKING EVENTS

Visit the Registration Desk throughout the day to sign up for a Dine Around. Our Dine Around hosts have selected a local restaurant and reserved seats for a select number of people. You will purchase your own meal. This is a wonderful opportunity to meet new conference attendees and enjoy the local food scene. Be sure to sign up early for your favorite choice before the spots fill up! Be sure to read the sign-up sheet for the time and where to meet.

7:00 AM – 5:30 PM**REGISTRATION DESK OPEN****7:00 AM – 9:00 AM****SGS ANNUAL BUSINESS MEETING
BREAKFAST**

REUNION E/F

Regardless of your SGS membership status, all attendees are welcome to attend this annual meeting of the society. Our committees will report on their activities and successes over this past year and share exciting news about upcoming activities. Come and learn more about SGS and ways to get involved!

9:15 AM – 10:45 AM**CONCURRENT SESSION F****Affirming Care and Empowered Decision-Making in LGBTQIA+ Aging**

REUNION E/F

This session examines how LGBTQIA+ older adults and caregivers navigate healthcare and caregiving systems shaped by stigma, exclusion, and structural inequities. Bringing together community-engaged research and social work-informed practice, the session highlights innovative, affirming approaches that center self-determination, chosen family, and intersectionality. Presentations explore tools and strategies that empower transgender older adults in healthcare decision-making and address the often-invisible labor of LGBTQIA+ caregivers—particularly those who are BIPOC and/or low-income. Collectively, the session underscores the importance of culturally responsive, trauma-informed, and equity-oriented interventions to improve health, caregiving, and aging outcomes across the LGBTQIA+ spectrum.

Transforming Choices: Navigating Healthcare Decisions with Transgender Older Adults

Dr. Lauren Catlett, University of Virginia

A H D

This presentation introduces *Transforming Choices*, a community-engaged digital resource co-designed by and for transgender older adults to support empowered healthcare decision-making in later life. Through an interactive demonstration, the session explores key topics such as transitioning in later life, advance care planning, long-term care, and end-of-life decision-making, highlighting the value of collaborative, action-oriented research for improving care for transgender elders.

Chosen Family, Chosen Care: Caregiving Among the LGBTQIA+ Spectrum

Ernesto Finales, SAGE USA/ CUNY School of Public Health

Dana Barker LMSW, SAGE USA/ Hunter College-Silberman School of Social Work

C D

Focusing on LGBTQIA+ caregivers, this presentation examines how intersecting oppressions related to gender identity, sexual orientation, race, and socioeconomic status shape caregiving experiences—particularly for BIPOC and low-income caregivers. Drawing from a social work perspective, it highlights affirming, trauma-informed interventions and policy strategies that recognize chosen family, address economic injustice, and promote equitable access to caregiving supports.

Innovations in Cognitive Assessment, Intervention, and Biological Markers of Memory Impairment

PEGASUS A

This session brings together clinical, technological, and biological perspectives on the assessment and management of cognitive impairment across conditions such as mild traumatic brain injury, concussion, and Alzheimer's disease. Presentations examine advances in digitally assisted cognitive assessment, AI-guided therapeutic interventions, and modifiable biological factors associated with memory decline. Collectively, the session highlights how evidence-based technologies and clinically actionable biomarkers can improve early detection, personalize treatment, and support equitable brain health care across diverse populations. Emphasis is placed on translating research into real-world clinical practice to strengthen diagnostic accuracy, therapeutic effectiveness, and prevention strategies in cognitive aging.

Effectiveness of AI-Guided Technology-Assisted Cognitive Therapy in Improving Memory in Mild to Moderate Dementia and Traumatic Brain Injury

Dr. Suresh Kumar, Young Scientist of America 501(c)(3)



This presentation examines the clinical effectiveness of *Regain Memory360*, an AI-guided cognitive assessment and therapy platform developed for individuals with memory impairment due to mild TBI, concussion, and early-stage dementia. Drawing on retrospective longitudinal data, the study highlights how digitally assisted cognitive testing and personalized therapy can be successfully implemented in real-world neurological practice across diverse populations.

Diagnostic Accuracy of a Digitally Assisted Mobile Cognitive Assessment for Memory Impairment

Dr. Jenil Patel & Dr. Suresh Kumar, Young Scientist of America 501(c)(3)



This session presents findings from a cross-sectional study evaluating the diagnostic accuracy of a mobile, digitally assisted cognitive assessment tool. Results demonstrate the tool's capacity to objectively measure multiple cognitive domains with automated scoring, supporting early detection of memory impairment and scalable cognitive screening in both clinical and community settings.

Association of Vitamin D and Homocysteine with Cognitive Impairment and Beta-Amyloid Regulation in Late-Onset Alzheimer's Disease

Anbu Subramanian & Dr. Suresh Kumar, Young Scientist of America 501(c)(3)



Using retrospective clinical data, this study explores the relationship between homocysteine, vitamin D, and cognitive performance in individuals undergoing memory assessment. Findings reveal that elevated homocysteine is associated with poorer cognition, while higher vitamin D and B12 levels show a protective relationship, underscoring the clinical value of screening for modifiable nutritional factors in cognitive decline.

Aging Across Cultural Contexts and the Life Course Paper Session

REUNION A

This session examines how cultural context, displacement, and structural inequality shape experiences across the life course and into later life. Papers address aging in global and U.S. contexts, culturally responsive mental health, retirement

planning, and reproductive loss as life-course experiences with lasting implications for aging.

Retirement Readiness, Health Challenges, and Plans for Old Age Among Aging African Immigrants in the United States: An Intersectional Approach

Ami Moore, University of North Texas

A D

Pregnancy Loss Across the Black Woman's Life Course

Dr. Jocelyn Brown, Ohio University

H D

Aging Beyond Borders: Life-Course and Cultural Perspectives from Nepal for Global and U.S. Gerontology

Dr. Saruna Ghimire, Miami University

D

Aging in New Homelands: Designing Culturally Responsive Mental Health Support Across the Life Course for Refugee Populations

Dr. Saruna Ghimire, Miami University

D

Care Partners and Care System Paper Session

REUNION B

This session examines how both formal and informal care partners support older adults and individuals living with dementia by providing direct care and helping navigate complex healthcare, community, and legal systems. Papers address role-specific responsibilities, communication strategies, and system navigation that shape care experiences and outcomes.

Caregiver Conversations about Dementia Primary Care: A Novel Educational Strategy for Improvement

Dr. Annie Rhodes & Kimberly Ivey, Virginia Commonwealth University

G

Frontotemporal Dementia Care Partners' Navigation of the Criminal Legal System

Dr. Victoria Helmly, Georgia State University

C

Beyond the Classroom and into Community: Preparing Healthcare Workers to Care for Patients with Dementia While Supporting Caregivers

Dr. Caitlin Torrence, Western Carolina University

G

The Roles of Home Care Aides in Older Adult Medical Care

Dr. Jordan Skowronski, East Carolina University

C

Inequality, Representation, and Voice in Aging Paper Session

REUNION C

This session examines how inequality, representation, and voice shape aging-related experiences and outcomes. Presentations address the biological consequences of discrimination, public narratives of aging, and efforts to center the perspectives of older adults and care partners in education and care settings.

Racial Discrimination Accelerates Age-Related Increases in Serum Neurofilament Light Chain among African American Women: Examination of Change from Midlife to Older Adulthood

Dr. Man Kit Lei, University of Georgia



Media Framing of Older Adults During COVID-19 Around the World: An Integrative Review (Student Paper)

Jhazzmyn Joiner, Georgia State University



Nothing About Us Without Us: Co-Teaching Dementia Care with People Living with Dementia

Dr. Michelle Kimzey, Texas Christian University



Centering Voices: Comparing Participant and Care Partner Perspectives on Adult Day Program Goals (Student Paper)

Erreannau Zellous, Miami University



11:00 AM – 12:00 PM

CONCURRENT SESSION G

Cross-Sectoral Impact: Advancing a Rural Age-Friendly Ecosystem

REUNION E/F

Dr. Kina White, KIW Consulting, LLC



Population aging in rural communities presents unique challenges and opportunities for advancing age-friendly environments. Addressing these challenges requires cross-sectoral collaboration that

extends beyond traditional aging services to include health care, housing, transportation, social services, and community development. This presentation examines the cross-sectoral impact of efforts to advance a rural age-friendly ecosystem, with a focus on how coordinated, place-based strategies support the health, well-being, and social inclusion of older adults in rural settings. Drawing on practice-based evidence and emerging frameworks, this presentation will demonstrate how partnerships across sectors mitigate structural barriers common in rural areas, including geographic isolation, limited service availability, and workforce constraints. Key facilitators of successful cross-sector collaboration—such as shared goals, local leadership, and community engagement—are identified, alongside challenges related to sustainability, funding alignment, and governance. The presentation will highlight the importance of integrating aging considerations into broader rural development initiatives and demonstrate how cross-sector approaches can strengthen age-friendly outcomes at the community level. Implications for gerontologists, practitioners, and policymakers are discussed, emphasizing strategies to foster collaboration, enhance system-level coordination, and promote equitable aging in place for rural older adults.

Sigma Phi Omega 2.0: Renewed, Refreshed, Re-Energized

PEGASUS A

*Dr. Amanda E. Soka MEZCOPH, University of Arizona
Dr. Aaron Hagedorn & Monica Gonzalez, USC Leonard Davis School of Gerontology*

Lauren Price, University of Maryland, Baltimore County



Sigma Phi Omega is 45 years old. In this session, we acknowledge and celebrate its history and provide participants and attendees with a blueprint for SPO's

vision and mission, retooled and enhanced to reflect and respond to the changing landscape for students, alumni, faculty, and professionals in gerontology and the aging industry. We discuss leadership opportunities, revamped membership benefits, expanded support for student members, chapters, and faculty advisors, and strategies to emphasize and expand the professional membership category. Discussants will also focus on how to create robust chapters - virtual and in-person - that build synergies across student and professional membership categories and respond to the opportunities and challenges in an era of technological and generational change. Please join us to discover what Sigma Phi Omega 2.0 has to offer!

Stories Drive Change: Using Film to Navigate a Personal Journey

REUNION A

Dr. Anne Dickerson, East Carolina University



Today, learning is increasingly visual. What people remember are the heartfelt stories. That's why film is such a powerful teaching tool. This workshop frames and showcases two short films that follow Sharon and son Steve as they face the difficult question: *How to know when driving is no longer safe – and then what? Driving is independence, freedom and the means of being with others to avoid isolation.*

In the first film, Steve notices change and concerned, seeks help from a primary care provider which leads to a driving evaluation. The second film takes viewers inside the complexity of this evaluation. It illustrates the overall process, clinical assessments, and how the on-road assessment identifies key driving errors using dramatic drone footage and graphics. The developing third film deals with transportation planning to promote successful aging-in-place.

In this workshop, participants will experience the emotional reality of an independent woman resisting

loss of her freedom to drive and the turmoil her family faces. The story's dialogue is gleaned from the presenter's experience as a driving rehabilitation specialist and expert research in aging. Facts will be presented to show it is not age per se, but the medically-at-risk drivers that need early identification. Then, intervention using supportive planning offers a transition over time from being a driver to a passenger, under the individual's control. Interactive dialogue will support attendees in using these films and other new tools to educate older adults and families in methods to promote proactive transportation planning.

A Home Unraveling: The Hidden Cognitive, Physical, and Social Causes of Dangerous Living Conditions in Aging Adults

REUNION B

Jennifer Snyder, Neat as a Pin Organizing Experts



Older adults often experience a quiet shift in the routines and abilities that once kept their homes safe, functional, and comfortable. Cognitive changes, physical limitations, and social isolation can gradually reshape living environments in ways that threaten health, safety, and independence. This session offers a compassionate and practical look at the hidden causes of home decline in aging populations, including early cognitive impairment, chronic pain, mobility challenges, and emotional and social factors such as grief and shame. Participants will learn how these vulnerabilities interact to create unsafe conditions like hoarding, squalor, and environmental breakdown, often long before anyone notices. Through real case examples and research-informed insights, this workshop highlights early warning signs, effective engagement strategies, and methods that uphold dignity while promoting safety.

Building Bridges to Longevity: Integrating Physician-Led Education and Community Wellness within a Metropolitan Health System

REUNION C

Dr. Laura Motta-Mena, Methodist Health System



This session explores how large-scale healthcare systems can move beyond traditional clinical walls to foster a culture of proactive health and community vitality for older adults through a zero-cost membership model. By examining the Methodist Health System's Generations program, attendees will discover a successful framework for integrating physician-led expertise with accessible wellness and fitness initiatives that are entirely free to the community. The presentation details a multi-disciplinary approach that leverages both in-person engagement and digital innovation, including an on-demand video library and hybrid seminar formats, to remove barriers to care and education. Participants will learn how the program utilizes data-driven strategies to increase membership among younger seniors and foster lasting provider-patient connections through community education. Beyond mere metrics, the session highlights the importance of bridging the gap between hospital administration and community advocacy to create scalable, inclusive pathways for healthy aging. Practitioners, researchers, and community partners will leave with actionable insights into how clinical resources can be transformed into a robust, free-to-join community asset that supports long-term independence and social connectivity.

12:00 PM – 2:30 PM

SGS/SPO AWARDS CEREMONY



Join us in a celebration of those who have been recognized for one of SGS's many prestigious awards. You are invited to wear your favorite fun or festive hat! We are also thrilled to be including the Sigma Phi Omega (SPO) awards ceremony in our celebration.

2:30 PM – 3:00 PM

EXHIBITOR BREAK

Please show your gratitude to our Sponsors for their support of the 47th Annual Meeting & Conference. Be sure to stop by their tables to learn more about their wonderful programs and services.

SILENT AUCTION

PEGASUS B

Bid High! Bid Often! Proceeds from our Silent Auction benefit our Student and Older Adult travel scholarships. Won't be here for closing bids? Some items have a Buy Now price so you can snag your favorites today!

3:00 PM – 4:30 PM

CONCURRENT SESSION H**Delivering on High Quality Care in Long-Term Care During Uncertain Times: What Matters?**

REUNION E/F

*Dr. Christopher Kelly, University of Nebraska at Omaha**Dr. Sandi Lane, University of North Carolina at Charlotte**Dr. Jennifer Craft Morgan & Dr. Candace Kemp, Georgia State University*

This panel session brings together four papers, using various methods (e.g. survey data, semi-structured interviews, case studies) that consider implications of training programs, work environments and engagement programming relation to both care outcomes and staff outcomes in long-term care. Attendees will leave with a more nuanced understanding of the complex relationships between worker competencies and care outcomes and will be able to identify promising practices to bring back to their communities and/or research agenda.

How to Publish: A Discussion with the Editor-in-Chief of Journal of Applied Gerontology

PEGASUS A

Dr. Debra Dobbs, University of South Florida

Journal of Applied Gerontology (JAG) provides an international forum for information that has clear and immediate applicability to the health, care, and quality of life of older persons. Join Dr. Debra Dobbs, Editor-in-Chief of *JAG* as she discusses the process for getting published in this well-respected journal. Get your questions answered and get helpful tips to help you with your next submission.

Building the Case for Gerontology Education in Workforce Development

REUNION A

*Dr. Judith Sugar & Dr. Donna Schafer, National Association for Professional Gerontologists**Dr. Robert Maiden, Alfred University**Maria Henke, University of Southern California*

We invite gerontology educators and practitioners to join us in considering the need to strengthen gerontology education for workforce development. The shrinking number of gerontology degree and certificate programs, with its negative implications for training skilled gerontology professionals, is alarming. Declining enrollments and discontinued programs are frequently reported. Our diminishing capacity to educate an aging services workforce threatens quality of life for older adults and their loved ones.

We begin our symposium by discussing how gerontology education contributes to resilient aging. Presentations in our symposium describe the current state of gerontology programs in higher education (Judith Sugar) and suggest ways that enrollments can be enhanced by improving the visibility and credibility of our discipline. Widespread adoption of the gerontology competencies (AGHE, 2014), revised in 2025, that define gerontological knowledge, skills and abilities, and thus our identity as gerontologists, is essential for credibility (Robert Maiden). Promoting professionalism in gerontology by credentialing individual gerontology professionals through the National Association for Professional Gerontologists (NAPG) will contribute to our legitimacy and visibility (Donna Schafer). Accrediting gerontology degree programs through the Accreditation for Gerontology Education Council (AGEC) provides opportunities for partnerships with employers for workforce development (Maria Henke). Making gerontology more visible and credible for prospective students, who will be more confident about employment prospects if they choose a gerontology major, will

enhance enrollment in gerontology programs. We conclude the symposium by engaging the audience in a robust discussion of strategies to build the case for gerontology education.

Social Relationships, Intimacy, and Emotional Well-Being Paper Session

REUNION B

This session explores social connection, intimacy, identity, and cognitive–emotional processes shaping quality of life in later life. Papers examine social isolation and connectedness across the life course, cognitive resilience, and embodied experiences of intimacy and aging.

Educational Attainment and Social Isolation Trajectories from Midlife to Later Life in Four High- and Middle-Income Countries

Dr. Zhiyong Lin, University of Texas at San Antonio

H

Calling Out My Own Name: Masturbation and Aging (Student Paper)

Jhazzmyn Joiner, Georgia State University

H

Theory of Mind and Cognitive Resilience Among Older Adults: A Scoping Review (Student Paper)

Evelyn Egyir Lee & Sonya Williams, Georgia State University

H

Social Connectedness and Cognitive Functioning in Community-Dwelling Older Adults: The Mediating Role of Information and Communication Technology and the Moderating Effects of Age Cohort and Gender (Student Paper)

Rongfang Zhan, University of North Texas

H D

Navigating Loss, Health, and Decisions in Later Life Paper Session

REUNION C

This session examines how older adults and those around them navigate complex later-life situations involving health, autonomy, and loss. Presentations address advance care planning, advocacy, grief, and the physical and mental health consequences of these experiences.

Navigating Advocacy at the Intersection of Dementia, Autonomy, and End-of-Life Decision-Making: A Practice-Based Case Study

Dr. Kathy Siepker & Soeun Jang, The University of Texas at Arlington; Venieca Kusek

A

Modifiable Mechanisms for Improving Advance Care Planning in Older Adults: A Systematic Review of U.S. Interventional Trials

Saroj Adhikari, University of North Texas

A H C D G

Fulfilling End-of-Life Dreams: A Scoping Review of Bucket Lists in Palliative and Hospice Care (Student Paper)

Swasati Handique, University of Texas at Arlington

A H D

Grief and Its Impact on Physical and Mental Health Among Older Adults: Findings from the National Social Life, Health, and Aging Project (Student Paper)

Swasati Handique, University of Texas at Arlington

H D

4:45 PM – 5:45 PM

CONCURRENT SESSION I**The Longevity Manifesto: Engineering Legislative ROI and Transformative Governance in the Southern Landscape**

REUNION E/F

*Dr. TimMarie (Chloe') Williams, University of the Incarnate Word School of Osteopathic Medicine***A**

Stop managing the "Silver Tsunami" as a crisis of scarcity and start engineering it as a Longevity Dividend. While traditional sessions focus on clinical observation and theory, this session introduces a new mandate for the 21st-century leader: the "Scholar-Statesman." This model represents a high-stakes hybrid of academic rigor and legislative acumen, designed to move aging programs from "discretionary line-items" to permanent fiscal mandates.

This blueprint deconstructs the mechanics of Transformative Governance through three high-impact pillars:

- **The Architecture of Power:** Master the "Nelson Lens" to translate clinical data into Legislative ROI, the strategic art of proving that clinical outcomes are economic assets.
- **The Alchemy of Agility:** Utilizing the Governor's Teaching Fellowship and GCAM frameworks, learn how "Accreditation Resilience" protects programs and ensures systemic stability during institutional mergers.
- **The Soul of the System:** Shift from "outreach" to "Trust Equity," operationalizing a "Clinical Proxy Workforce" to slash preventable ER utilization and optimize regional expenditure.

This is a masterclass in professional ascent. Attendees will leave with a forensic toolkit to secure their program's future and bridge the gap between clinical

excellence and systemic power. Don't just watch the tide come in; learn how to govern it.

The Effects of Racism on the Brain and Healthy Aging

PEGASUS A

*Sonja Gunter***D**

Racism has measurable and lasting effects on brain health, functioning as a chronic stressor that becomes biologically embedded over time. Repeated exposure to racial discrimination activates the body's stress response system, leading to prolonged cortisol release and dysregulation of brain regions responsible for memory, emotional regulation, and executive function. This sustained stress contributes to neuroinflammation, which is linked to mood disorders, cognitive decline, and increased risk of neurodegenerative disease. Racism also undermines social belonging, activating neural pathways associated with physical pain and increasing vulnerability to isolation and emotional distress. Emerging research suggests that racialized stress may influence gene expression, potentially transmitting health risks across generations. Despite these harms, protective factors such as strong community support, cultural identity, and collective resilience can buffer against neurological and psychological damage. Recognizing racism as a public health and brain health issue highlights the need for systemic change, trauma-informed practices, and community-centered interventions to promote equity and well-being.

More Than a Move: Closing Practice Gaps and Cultivating Resilience in Later-Life Relocation

REUNION A

*Tach Branch-Dogans, University of North Texas***H G**

Relocation is often framed as a practical task, yet for many older adults it represents one of the most disruptive later-life transitions they will face. As aging pathways grow more complex, systems focused primarily on disease management frequently overlook how moves, losses, and environmental change undermine resilience, autonomy, and overall well-being. Relocation Stress Syndrome (RSS), a recognized nursing diagnosis, captures this reality. RSS reflects the psychological and physiological strain triggered by later-life moves, often presenting as anxiety, depression, fatigue, cognitive disruption, and gastrointestinal symptoms. Despite its relevance, RSS remains under-addressed in organizational training, policy, and practice.

Aligned with the conference theme, this interactive workshop invites participants to reexamine relocation as a pivotal moment where resilience can either fracture or be strengthened. Drawing from current literature and real-world practice, the session explores how healthcare systems, senior living communities, educators, and community organizations can realistically respond to RSS during later-life transitions. Grounded in Continuity Theory of Aging, Transition Theory, and Stress and Coping Theory, the session demonstrates how theoretical frameworks can be translated into practical, scalable interventions that support autonomy, preserve routines, and strengthen coping capacity among older adults.

By bridging gerontological education with applied practice, this presentation offers educators, students, and professionals actionable strategies to enhance organizational readiness and intentionally build resilience among older adults navigating later-life transitions. Ultimately, integrating theory-driven education into real-world settings is essential to reducing relocation stress and advancing holistic health and wellness outcomes in an aging society.

New Advances in Alzheimer's Treatments

REUNION C

Jenni Knutson, OliveBranch Seniors



This presentation provides an overview of current FDA-approved treatments for Alzheimer's disease, with a focus on how anti-amyloid therapies work in the brain, their potential benefits, and possible side effects. Participants will also learn about the steps required to access treatment and explore supportive services and educational resources available through the Alzheimer's Association.

6:00 PM

SILENT AUCTION FINAL BIDS

PEGASUS B

Don't miss your last chance to claim your favorite items. Payment will be collected once bidding closes. Cash, checks, and credit cards accepted.

7:30 AM – 11:30 AM**REGISTRATION DESK OPEN****8:30 AM – 11:30 AM****CLOSING BREAKFAST SESSION - WHAT STILL REMAINS: USING MUSIC TO ACTIVATE RESILIENCE, CONNECTION, AND PURPOSE IN AGING**

REUNION E/F

Kaylie Glenn, The Day By Day Project

What if the key to resilient aging isn't what's lost—but what still remains? In this dynamic, interactive session, Kaylie Glenn introduces Memory Disco™, an innovative, evidence-informed program that uses music to activate preserved brain functions such as rhythm, emotional memory, movement, and social connection. Blending neuroscience, powerful storytelling, and measurable outcomes with a live silent-disco-style experience (headphones provided), participants won't just learn about resilience—they'll feel it. Designed to align with *Navigating Pathways to Resilient Aging*, this energizing session offers practical, replicable strategies to spark joy, connection, and purpose in dementia and aging care settings. Come ready to listen, move, reflect—and leave inspired.

SGS ANNUAL MEETING & CONFERENCE AGENDA

VIRTUAL PRESENTATIONS

These presentations will be pre-recorded and available to conference attendees following the conference.

Comparing Memory Exercises and Cholinesterase Inhibitors in Women Aged 65+ With Alzheimer's Disease: A Systematic Review dressing Physical Inactivity in Older Adults: Socioecological Barriers and Solutions Across Rural Communities (Student Paper)

Madeleine Banks, Tyson Keyser, Nhu Pham & Dr. TimMarie (Chloe') Williams, University of the Incarnate Word School of Osteopathic Medicine



As Alzheimer's disease (AD) disproportionately affects women over 65, finding sustainable, low-risk treatment pathways is essential for promoting resilient aging. This session presents a systematic review comparing the efficacy of Memory Exercise (ME) therapy against the clinical standard, Cholinesterase Inhibitors (CI), over a six-month period.

The presentation synthesizes evidence from 11 randomized controlled trials to determine if non-pharmacological interventions can match the cognitive benefits of drug therapy. While both methods demonstrate modest improvements in short-term memory, the findings highlight ME as a promising, effective alternative that avoids the adverse effects often associated with CI. Join us to discuss the implications of these findings for geriatric care, the current limitations in longitudinal data, and how "prescribing" cognitive exercise can empower older women in their AD journey.

Efficacy of Spinal Fusion Versus Radiofrequency Ablation for Degenerative Lumbar Spondylolisthesis in the Geriatric Population: A Systematic Review

Carlos Chavez Hernandez, Summer Nerkowski, Opemipo Sanyaolu & Dr. TimMarie (Chloe') Williams, University of the Incarnate Word School of Osteopathic Medicine



Degenerative lumbar spondylolisthesis (DLS) is a leading cause of chronic pain in the elderly, yet the choice between invasive fusion and newer, less invasive interventions remains a subject of intense debate. This session presents a systematic review of clinical outcomes for patients aged 65+, challenging the traditional reliance on spinal fusion.

We will analyze data from 21 studies to determine if motion-preserving stabilization can truly match the efficacy of the "gold standard" and investigate the surprising lack of direct evidence for Radiofrequency Ablation (RFA). Join us to bridge the gap between surgical tradition and modern, patient-centered alternatives in geriatric spine care.

Improving Health and Well-being by Preventing Sexual Violence Against Older Adults Through a Web-Based Ending Violence Across the Lifespan (EVAL) Bystander Training

Dr. Michelle Hand, George Mason University



Pressing needs persist for practitioner trainings on sexual violence (SV) in later life, which bystander

programs have been recommended to address. Yet before this research, no known bystander training on SV in later life existed. Funded by SGS, this study aimed to explore training needs for practitioners who serve older adults or survivors and their recommendations for refining a bystander training to prevent SV in later life, then to pilot the training and evaluate its effectiveness. An interview and focus groups were conducted with 16 practitioners who serve older adults or survivors, and with people ages 50+, whose recommendations were thematically analyzed and used to refine the training. Six themes were identified, surrounding tailored training needs, stereotypes and myths, silent signs of SV in later life, norms that shape stigma, overlapping risk factors, and preference for a virtual training. After integrating the practitioners' recommendations, the training was then piloted with 51 practitioners who serve older adults and survivors. Pre- and post-training, participants were asked the extent to which they believed SV in later life is a problem, their intentions to prevent and address it, and a scenario involving SV in later life was presented, after which participants were asked the extent to which they felt obligated to prevent SV in later life, knowledge on where to report, and if their help was required. Paired samples t-test results demonstrated significant positive changes in awareness of SV in later life, intention and obligation to prevent and address it. Implications will be discussed.

The Efficacy of Structured High-Intensity Exercise vs. Usual Care on Bone Mineral Density in Postmenopausal Women: A Systematic Review

Anjali Aggarwal, Sharise Gant, Abriana Ortega, Mateo Reyes & Dr. TimMarie (Chloe') Williams, University of the Incarnate Word School of Osteopathic Medicine



As postmenopausal bone loss remains a primary driver of fracture risk, clinical guidelines must evolve to include the most effective physical interventions. This session presents a systematic review evaluating the efficacy of structured, high-intensity exercise versus "usual care" or low-intensity protocols for

improving Bone Mineral Density (BMD) in postmenopausal women.

Drawing from the latest randomized controlled trials (including data through late 2025), the review highlights the impact of supervised High-Intensity Resistance and Impact Training (HiRIT). Key findings indicate that twice-weekly supervised sessions can increase lumbar spine BMD by approximately 3% over eight months—significantly outperforming standard low-intensity care. The synthesis also explores:

- **Regional Variations:** Why spinal improvements are often more pronounced than changes in hip BMD.
- **Synergistic Effects:** The role of calcium and vitamin D supplementation in maximizing exercise-induced gains.
- **Safety and Longevity:** Evidence confirming the safety of high-intensity protocols and the necessity of long-term consistency (24+ months) for sustained bone health.

Attendees will gain insights into how supervised, high-intensity protocols can be safely integrated into clinical recommendations to combat osteoporosis and improve patient outcomes.

Supporting Those Who Care: Resources and Services for Family Caregivers of Older Adults

Tommy Patrick, Careforth



Family caregivers play a critical role in supporting older adults, yet many experience physical, emotional, and financial strain due to limited access to coordinated resources. This workshop will highlight caregiver resources and services provided by Careforth, an organization dedicated to supporting family caregivers of older adults and individuals with complex care needs. Participants will gain an overview of evidence-informed caregiver support models that focus on education, coaching, care

coordination, and connection to community-based resources.

The session will explore how Careforth's services address common caregiver challenges, including caregiver burnout, navigation of health and social service systems, and balancing caregiving responsibilities with work and family demands. Emphasis will be placed on practical tools that empower caregivers to improve care recipient outcomes while also prioritizing their own well-being. Case examples will illustrate how structured caregiver support can reduce stress, enhance caregiver confidence, and promote aging in place.

This workshop is designed for gerontologists, social workers, healthcare professionals, and community-based service providers seeking to better understand caregiver-centered approaches and referral pathways. Attendees will leave with actionable strategies for identifying caregiver needs, integrating caregiver resources into practice, and fostering partnerships that strengthen the caregiving network. By highlighting scalable caregiver support services, this presentation contributes to ongoing efforts to improve quality of life for older adults and the family members who care for them.