



**SOUTHERN
GERONTOLOGICAL
SOCIETY**
Bridging Aging Research & Practice

THE SOUTHERN GERONTOLOGIST

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ISSUE 1

Reaching New Faces

*A*s we approach the end of another year, we wanted to highlight some of the different places where SGS President, Dr. Ethlyn McQueen-Gibson has been promoting the work of SGS. We are currently planning out outreach efforts for the 2025-2026 SGS year. In June 2025, Amanda James is excited to attend the Aging in Texas Conference. We hope this trip will increase attendance from Texas at our 2026 Annual Meeting & Conference in Dallas. We hope you will be encouraged to share information about SGS at events that you are attending. If you would like to request some handouts to provide at an event, would like to invite a representative of SGS to attend an event, or want to share contact information for potential speakers/exhibitors that you meet at events, please reach out to Amanda James at admin@southerngerontologicalsociety.org.



***Alzheimer's Association Community Leader's
Summit in Atlanta, GA***



2025 ALTER Dementia Conference

(Left) Dr. Ethlyn McQueen-Gibson and SGS Member Dr. Fayron Epps (Right) Dr. Ethlyn McQueen-Gibson, Loretta Veney, and SGS Member Chanel Reid



Dr. Ethlyn McQueen-Gibson with AARP CEO, Dr. Minter-Jordan at the Virginia Governor's Conference on Aging. Dr. McQueen-Gibson served as a co-chair for the event.



American Geriatrics Society Annual Scientific Meeting

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ANNUAL MEETING & CONFERENCE RECAP

Birmingham, AL played host to our last Annual Meeting & Conference where attendees networked with their friends and colleagues, shared best practices and research, and enjoyed the local hospitality. We received 216 registrations and had at least 19 additional attendees who participated as presenters only, exhibitors only, companions, and guests. We hope to see you at our upcoming conferences!









2025 SGS AWARD WINNERS



GRITS AWARD

Ishan Williams



GORDAN STREIB ACADEMIC GERONTOLOGIST AWARD

Leslie Taylor



APPLIED GERONTOLOGIST AWARDS

(left) David Hage
(right) Glenna Brewster



RHODA L. JENNINGS OLDER ADVOCATE AWARD

Rose Marie Fagan



MEDIA AWARDS

(left) Orange County Dept. on Aging,
Aging Well Together Show
(right) Corinne Auman,
Keenagers: Telling A New Story About Aging



2025 SGS AWARD WINNERS



VICTOR MARSHALL FELLOWS

(First Row, Left to Right)

Karen Appert

Jennie de la Cruz

Elise Eifert



(Second Row, Left to Right)

Cassandra Germain

Jeffrey Lentz

Kellie Mayfield



BEST PRACTICES AWARDS

(left) Virginia Memory Project

(right) Creative Aging Network - NC

2025 SGS AWARD WINNERS



STUDENT PAPER AWARDS

1st Place - Lauren Catlett

2nd Place - Sarah Cho (not pictured)



STUDENT POSTER AWARDS

1st Place - Douglas Gyamfi

2nd Place - Jasmine Sampson

3rd Place - Natalia Babenko
(not pictured)



STUDENT SCHOLARSHIP TRAVEL AWARDS

(left to right) Jeremiah Assan, Jerena McNeil, Elizabeth Lutz, Yanjun Dong & Younghyun Kim

THANK YOU 2025 CONFERENCE SPONSORS!

CONFERENCE BAG SPONSOR



GOLD SPONSORS



SILVER SPONSORS



BRONZE PLUS Living with Dementia Sponsor

The Riverside Martha W. Goodson Center

BRONZE SPONSORS

- CerebroFit
- East Carolina University School of Social Work
- The Doctoral Program in Gerontology, University of Maryland Baltimore and University of Maryland Baltimore County
- The Erickson School of Aging Studies at UMBC
- HBCU Aging Conference
- University of Alabama at Birmingham, Department of Sociology
- University of South Florida, School of Aging Studies

Clin-STAR Opportunities for Early Career Clinician Scientists in Aging Research



The NIA-funded **Clinician-Scientists Transdisciplinary Aging Research Coordinating Center (Clin-STAR)** is a platform for clinician investigators in aging research from across disciplines and specialties. We encourage Southern Gerontological Society members to explore the [Clin-STAR website](#) to learn about activities, initiatives and resources, to [sign-up for updates](#), and to create a researcher profile on the [Clin-STAR Database](#).

Clin-STAR initiatives aim to connect and support the development of clinician-scientists across disciplines and specialties to expand and synergize aging research that focuses on improving the health, independence and well-being of older adults.

Among the initiatives and funding opportunities are: Clin-STAR [Research Interest Groups](#) offer opportunities to network, learn from established investigators, share works in progress and collaborate on co-authored manuscripts and symposia. The ten interest groups include: Inflammation Research, Frailty Research, Delirium Research, Exercise and Lifestyle Medicine Research, Psychosocial and Behavioral Research, Perioperative Research, Social Determinants of Health Research, Biology of Aging Research, VA Research, and R01/R21 Grant Writing.

[Mini-Sabbatical Awards](#) which are funded short-term, immersive, learning experiences from aging researcher(s) for up to a week.

[**Early Career Lecture Funds**](#) cover travel expenses to present aging-related research at an annual scientific or medical specialty meeting where aging-related research is not the primary focus.

[**Visiting Professor Funds**](#) offer travel expenses and honoraria to bring a visiting professor to your institution to expose clinician-scientists to aging research (e.g., grand rounds, department workshops, small group or individual mentoring). Clin-STAR has identified over 50 [**researchers available to participate**](#), and other researchers are considered as well for the fund.

[**Distinguished Professorship**](#) offers travel and honoraria funding to bring an aging researcher to a specialty or subspecialty conference. Activities could include a symposia talk, meeting with a special interest group, 1-1 mentoring, and participating in other events.

[**Aging Research Development & Training Awards**](#) support planning and development of clinically relevant aging research projects by early career investigators.

Please reach out if you have any questions about the Clin-STAR Coordinating Center.



The National Association for Professional Gerontologists (NAPG): Reenergizing Gerontology

Submitted by Donna Schafer, PhD, CPG, President,
and the NAPG Board of Directors

It is a pleasure to connect with SGS members (some of whom are also NAPG members) to bring you up to date on NAPG's activities and directions. Our primary goal has always been to professionalize gerontology. We have done this by promoting and credentialing the education and expertise of professionals in aging. Since our founding in 2005, we have credentialed 389 members, and welcomed over 100 students, in 45 states and 8 countries. We want to distinguish and validate the expertise of our members and make our field more publicly visible. Information about why we credential, membership categories, and how to apply is available on our website: www.NAPGerontologists.org.

Recently, NAPG has revisited our mission and vision and sharpened our focus on reenergizing gerontology. We have become alarmed by two developments. The first is the lack of growth, or stagnation, in the number of gerontology degree programs. Between 2000 and 2022, the total number of gerontology degrees declined (from 110 to 101) as did certificates at all levels. Our failure to increase the number of academic programs is in sharp contrast to the growth of the population 65 and older from 2000 to 2020 (35 million to 56 million). We have not been keeping up with the need for trained gerontology professionals.

Over the last few months, we have witnessed an alarming assault on programs and services for older adults and their families, including reductions in the workforce and services provided by the Social Security Administration and the organizational elimination of the Administration for Community Living under the Department of Health and Human Services. NAPG, and other organizations such as GSA and ASA, issued statements and letters to decry these federal actions. We encourage you to reach out to your federal and state representatives to express your views. At the same time, we understand more is needed than strongly worded letters.

In our view we gerontologists have never been particularly effective in organizing ourselves and our associations to work together for the common good. Now, more than ever, we need to be strategic in forming partnerships to confront the challenges to the field and those we serve. Fragmentation and lack of coordinated effort have limited our impact as educators and advocates.

However, we are unlikely to be successful if we talk only among ourselves. Just as we have not formed the organizational partnerships we could use today, we have not systematically built the public support and buy-in from employers that could help our field grow and thrive. Many employers, let alone the public, have no idea who gerontologists are and what we can do. Without ample employment opportunities, and a public that understands and expects the highest quality in services, it is no wonder many gerontology degree programs struggle with maintaining enrollments. Providing prospective employers and the public with more information about gerontology is daunting but not impossible. Public education can and has worked (remembering the days when many people smoked, and no one wore seat belts or bicycle helmets).

The magnitude of the problems we face can be overwhelming, and we are all inclined to become absorbed in our daily responsibilities. But a continuing failure to focus on the bigger picture does a disservice to the health of our field. Complacency or, worse, defeatism is a choice we cannot make. In the past we have been able “to do big things.” We have had initiatives to reframe aging and to create age friendly communities and universities. How about embarking on an initiative to re-energize gerontology education and the public’s understanding of it?

We know it will take a coalition of gerontology educators, practitioners, organizations, employers, and public advocates engaged in strategic planning to promote our field. NAPG would like to begin this work and partner with organizations such as SGS. We would like you to join us, as individuals and as an organization, to reenergize gerontology.

Contact us at: donna_schafer@sbcglobal.net.

MEMBER ACHIEVEMENTS

We want to celebrate your achievements - professional or personal! Please: send any news you want to share to Amanda James at admin@southerngerontologicalsociety.org.



Dr. Jeffrey Lentz completes his first marathon!



Cynthia Gayle Wilkerson received her MSW with a Concentration in Mental Health & Trauma.



Dr. Joy Birabwa receives her Doctorate in Human Development & Family Studies. Pictured here with her SGS Mentor, Dr. Althea Taylor Jones

Calling all Students, Junior Faculty, Early Career Professionals, And More!

Are you looking for a mentor? If so, complete our [mentorship interest survey](#). This brief survey aims to assess the need for a mentoring program for members of the Southern Gerontological Society (SGS). The mentoring is specifically designed for, but not limited to, students, junior faculty, and practitioners. The goal is to pair SGS members who feel they'd benefit from mentoring with a senior SGS member who has significant experience in your desired mentoring area.

The information from this survey is confidential unless you choose to provide your name and contact information so a potential mentor can contact you.

There is no fee or other obligation on your part for mentoring service.



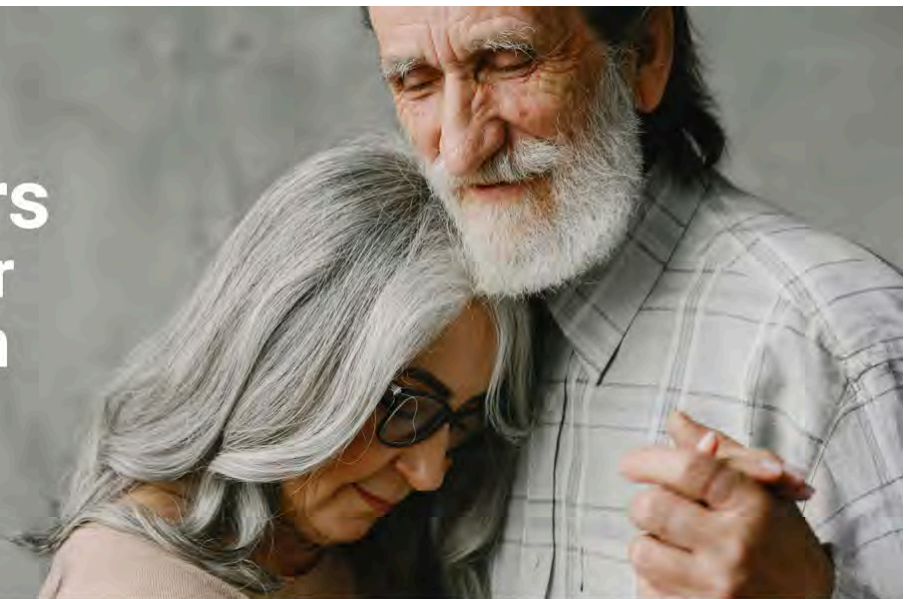
SGS Teaching Repository

The goal of the SGS Teaching Resource Repository is to promote and support the maintenance and expansion of options for aging focused education in a range of disciplines beyond gerontology.

Learn more and share your materials at:
**[https://southerngerontologicalsociety.org/
resources-teaching.html](https://southerngerontologicalsociety.org/resources-teaching.html)**



Volunteers needed for a research study



ARE YOU RESPONSIBLE FOR **LOOKING AFTER A FRIEND OR FAMILY MEMBER WITH DEMENTIA?**



WHO ARE WE

The Department of Psychology is conducting research aimed at identifying methods to help people learn about Alzheimer's Disease, dementia, and care. We hope to discover how to best support people who are helping a relative or friend who is living with Alzheimer's Disease or a Related Dementia.

REQUIREMENTS

- ✓ Be a caretaker for a family or friend with dementia
- ✓ Read and speak English
- ✓ Participate online or in-person in Winton Scott Hall at Texas Christian University.
- ✓ Be 18 years old or older.

WHAT WILL YOU DO?

You will learn about the symptoms and treatment of dementia in a session that lasts approximately 1.5 hours. In a follow-up session that will last approximately 1 hour, you will answer questions about dementia, and you will complete surveys about your experience.

COMPENSATION

You will be awarded a \$90 gift card to a business of your choice (e.g. Amazon, Target, Walmart, Kroger) for completing both sessions.

INTERESTED?

Please use the QR code below to complete a screening survey,



or you can contact the dementia knowledge research team at the Memory and Aging Laboratory at

memorylab@tcu.edu
or 817-257-4295 for details.

Texas Christian University

TCU does not discriminate based upon any protected status. Please see <http://www.tcu.edu/notice-of-nondiscrimination.asp>

WRITING A PAPER?



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 adults. Published monthly, it brings you comprehensive coverage of all areas of gerontological practice and policy, such as caregiving, exercise, death and dying, ethnicity and aging, technology and care, long-term services and support, mental health, and sexuality. [Submit your paper](#)

Sage Open Aging (GGM) is an interdisciplinary, peer-reviewed, open access journal focusing on the psychological, behavioral, social, and biological aspects of aging. The journal addresses a wide variety of topics in gerontology and geriatrics, including health economics, health services research, health outcomes, public health, medicine, biology, equity, social science, epidemiology, demography, and nursing. GGM reflects the global importance and interest in this subject area and its particular relevance to countries that are experiencing an exponential growth in older population. SGS members receive a discount on publishing fees. [Submit your paper](#)

The Sage [Journal Author Gateway](#) provides a variety of [How to Get Published](#) resources (including a how to get published webinar series) and [Promote your article](#) guidelines to support authors.

[SAGE Author Services](#), powered by Editage, offers high-quality professional language editing and manuscript formatting services for pre-peer review manuscripts.

INTERVIEWS WITH OLDER EXPERTS IN AGING: “OUR KNOWLEDGE HELPED US AND CAN HELP OTHERS”

Submitted by F. Michael Martin and Sue Hazelett

In Spring, 2024, several members of the SGS Encore Committee participated in in-depth interviews for a study conducted by F. Michael Martin focused on their personal experiences growing older. Mr. Martin had recently retired from a career heading the Lifelong Health Division of Riverside Health Systems in Virginia and became interested in exploring factors in optimal aging. In the spirit of combatting ageism by presenting realistic, non-deficit perspectives on aging, the Encore Committee is pleased to share this synopsis of the study's findings.

Aging Experts - Now Practicing What They Preached

When we receive advice from a professional on matters that might have profound, life changing effects on us, our first instinct is to ask that person what they would do if they were in our shoes. That is what I did this year to gain actual first-hand knowledge of how to age well. I asked super informed experts in aging in their older years – those who are now using their unique knowledge to get the most out of this stage of life.

Beginning in the 1970's, academic programs began to train gerontologists and geriatricians to prepare for the largest number of older adults in the history of the world. Now, for the first time in history, there are large numbers of these trained aging experts living in their older years. I launched a study to determine how well a sample of this group of experts were aging, and whether they used the same elements of optimal aging that they imparted to others in their careers.

This initial large cohort of aging expertise in our nation is to be revered for building the foundations of what we know today around aging related science, medicine, health, policy, and services. Their lived insights into what has given them the best aging experience possible may offer practical applications for others seeking advice on optimal aging.

Participants: 730 Years of Experience, Leadership, Expertise and Wisdom!

I recruited career experts in aging, largely from referrals of other trusted experts in aging. Some participants came from respected experts I knew in the field. Using an extensive questionnaire, I interviewed 19 highly respected and educated participants spanning in age from 65 to 90, representing a combined 730 years of experience in aging related matters. This group included not only experts but true leaders in their respective fields of aging.

Those affording optimal aging advice based on very personal experiences were geriatricians who started some of the first fellowship programs in the nation, gerontologists who led top academic programs, researchers offering foundational science of aging, and service providers improving the quality of life for thousands of older adults.

Invited to offer deep insight into their current conditions and experiences, and promised anonymity, extremely candid feedback was acquired from this group. All claimed to be aging successfully and/or optimally to a large degree, relying heavily on time-tested tools and methods for optimal aging. Their ranking of those tools was especially interesting, offering a unique insight into useful profiles of optimal aging. They also fully acknowledged areas where we they could have done better, and collectively, present a roadmap on critical areas affecting an optimal aging experience.

Results: Methods of Optimal Aging Are Not New But Must Be Practiced

Their collective feedback is a toolkit for how to age well. The implications are that optimal aging does have a profile that is evidence-based, and now has one more very powerful validation of effectiveness that offers potential benefit to others. The best and brightest in the field of aging offer profound insight from a lived experience and their decades of contributions to the field. As one participant offered, “All the pearls of wisdom around aging still apply.”

A Brief Overview of Optimal Aging Methods That Work

While there are potential limitations of a skewed sample of aging related experts, the results of their feedback offer an inside look at the implementation of optimal aging theory and practice and its effects. This group, themselves now confronting the entire spectrum of aging related issues, confirmed that most methods of optimal aging add to quality of life. They all believe that their career related efforts on optimizing aging years are relevant as revealed by their own positive aging experiences. The common themes of agreement were many. Please read the [full report](#) for highlights from the following themes:

- Confront the trajectory of aging: “I know too much.”
- Being intentional: “I follow the advice consciously.”
- Relationships: “Everyone learns that this is absolutely a key to optimal aging”
- Optimal Health: “Staving off inevitable decline is critical.”
- Emotional Health, Loss and Grief: “It’s more about navigating it vs mastering it”
- Importance of Planning: “Start a third life apart from work and family and do it early.”

Summary/Relevance: “We can live our lives to the fullest”

There were so many other “pearls of wisdom” from this group who believe “it’s ok to be old.” Great advice was collected on adapting to forced change, embracing new beginnings, overcoming ageism, benefits of spiritual health, improving public policy and more. But it was their strong belief that they are optimally aging due to time tested methods that when practiced with intent and discipline, lead to optimally fulfilling lives until we die. They face boldly all of what the aging experience will offer, thereby building the assets to be healthier longer and putting things into perspective to have joy in their lives when losses happen.

While there was agreement that much of our aging experience is within our control, they admit there are inescapable challenges. A common theme was that personalities and experiences can affect outcomes positively and negatively. Also, when losses occur, they still come as a shock no matter the knowledge or experience. And there are external events that can have devastating effects such as dementia where control of our perspective is lost.

However, the larger theme was that we can improve our chances of aging optimally if we use the approaches this group helped develop and then applied to their own lives. They don’t want to dwell on decline as the only aspect of aging but are intentional about delaying it and having some plans in place for its eventuality. And their focus on a meaningful social network, peace of mind through gratitude, an outward facing direction of purpose, and starting early in planning, collectively work to make our aging lives something to be treasured. They offered keen insight on the practicality of these critical aspects of optimal aging and how they can improve anyone’s aging experience.

Finally, I asked what would give us all the best chance at optimal aging, both while healthy and with diminishing function: While healthy: “Get away from being defined by chronological age without disowning your age...be generous and involve others...and while you’re healthy, work on extending it, appreciate it, know it’s not forever, and then take advantage of it. ”With diminishing function: “Plan for this time to give yourself the highest function possible and don’t pass this responsibility to others.” “Have a deep well of acceptance and gratitude and faith, have interests that are sustainable, stay connected, and develop a positive outlook for what the day brings.”

While there was not all encompassing quote on this matter, this offering from an esteemed geriatrician was close: “The research doesn’t ever change but clarifies the absolute methods to stay healthy, functionally optimal and age well. Essentially if we’re lucky enough, that even with functional disability and chronic disease, we can live our lives to the fullest and set a different standard than years past. People are hungry for this information.”

About the author: Michael Martin received his graduate degree from the Center for Studies in Aging at the University of North Texas in 1978 and had a lengthy career in aging related services. As a senior officer in a major health system, he spearheaded the largest network of aging focused services in Virginia including many first of their kind offerings in the State. He is now retired, contemplating how to optimally age, and attempting to utilize all the advice presented in this study. The intent is to have further articles and detail from this pilot study. The hope is that it becomes a catalyst for more conversation and interest on how to help others optimally age.

Acknowledgements: Special thanks go to the Encore Committee of the Southern Gerontological Society for their work in assisting with potential participant candidates, encouragement to pursue this work, and help in any wider distribution of the findings. Also, I am humbled by the extensive, candid, and enlightening feedback from all the esteemed participants of the study. This entire effort would have been impossible without their selflessness, openness, and willingness to share very private thoughts and experiences.

[Read the Full Article](#)



In this newsletter issue we are introducing a new feature —**CHECK IT OUT**. In each Newsletter we will feature a unique non-profit venture located in one of our member states. This is not designed as an advertising ploy for the featured entity but rather to bring attention to ideas, places or programs that are truly unique and innovative within our region.

The idea is that if you happen to be in the vicinity, you will be able to set up a visit to find out more about the facility or program. We hope that over time we will be able to build an inventory of such sites (and contact information) that will be available to SGS members so that they can visit when they happen to be nearby. The first place to be featured is Ashland Terrace in Lexington, Kentucky. If you have a suggestion for a future spotlight, please email Amanda James at

admin@southerngerontologicalsociety.org.

ASHLAND TERRACE



In an era of acute housing shortage, particularly for those of limited means, Ashland Terrace stands out as a unique non-profit 501(c)3 public charity and independent living community of vibrant older women (average age circa 85). Able to privately subsidize rent because of generous community donations, Ashland Terrace offers an affordable option for community living (featured at the 2024 SGS annual meeting). Over its lengthy history, the mission has remained the same: to provide a secure, friendly, affordable home to women sixty years of age and older. Ashland Terrace originated in 1849 as a community response to a Cholera epidemic in Lexington, Kentucky. Initially known as the “Home of the Friendless” the community served anyone left destitute by the sickness – largely women and children. As the cholera epidemic ended and time passed, Ashland Terrace became known as the “Old Ladies Home”. In December of 1923, Ashland Terrace incorporated as the “Old Ladies Home”.



The current location, at 475 S. Ashland Avenue, opened in the Spring of 1960 as the “Old Ladies Home”. In the 1970s, the residents requested a name change to “Ashland Terrace.” As independent living, Ashland Terrace requires prospective residents to be: age 60 or older, able to dress, take care of their room and get to the dining room on their own three times daily for meals, without dementia or Mild Cognitive Impairment, and cordial and appropriate for communal living. Pets are encouraged. Because of its intentionally limited size (35 residents), Ashland Terrace is able to maintain a strong family-oriented community culture. Its unique features include volunteer links with the nearby University of Kentucky and a public cutting garden that reinforce a strong link with the surrounding community. If you would like to visit, please contact Ashland Terrace in advance at www.ashlandterrace.org or (859) 266-2581.





✦ Chanel Reid, MA
Gerontologist

✦ Gently guided
workshop with a
reflective handout

Discover the power of storytelling,
reflection, and community.

AWARENESS THAT EMPOWERS

Vital Connections Support Services, LLC

✦ Limited Space
Available

7-9

PM ET

2ND & 4TH

THURSDAYS

25

Join us for Awareness That Empowers series—a bi-weekly virtual experience that blends film, heartfelt conversation, and a gently guided workshop with a reflective take-home worksheet to support emotional well-being.

✦ June 2025
Roadrunner: A Film
About Anthony
Bourdain

✦ July 2025
Somewhere in Time



✦ August 2025
SPARK: Robin
Williams and his
Battle with Lewy
Body Dementia

✦ September 2025
God Knows Where I
AM

📍 HOSTED ON ZOOM | LOW COST TO JOIN

📍 SCAN THE QR CODE TO RSVP



MASTER THE ART OF QUALITATIVE RESEARCH: 3-PART WORKSHOP SERIES



Are you looking to incorporate qualitative research into your work or organization? Each session is designed for professionals who want to build their understanding and application of qualitative methods.

SESSION 1: QUALITATIVE RESEARCH ELEMENTS

JUNE 10TH @ 11AM-1PM OR JUNE 11TH @ 6PM-8PM

This workshop is ideal for those exploring how and when to use qualitative methods. By the end, you'll have answers to:

- What is qualitative research and how do I know if it is a good fit?
- How do I decide which qualitative research design is best for my project?
- Why is reflection important to address researcher bias and how do I navigate ethical dilemmas?

SESSION 2: DATA COLLECTION & RESEARCH DESIGN

JUNE 17TH @ 11AM-1PM OR JUNE 18TH @ 6PM-8PM

In this session we'll focus on the *how* of qualitative methods. By the end, you'll have a stronger grasp of how to:

- Collect data that align with project goals.
- Implement strategies to analyze and interpret documents efficiently.
- Develop criteria to evaluate the quality and rigor of your qualitative research project.

SESSION 3: DATA ANALYSIS & EVALUATION TECHNIQUES

JUNE 24TH @ 11AM-1PM OR JUNE 25TH @ 6PM-8PM

This session will introduce you to data analysis. By the end, you'll have a deeper understanding of to how:

- Approach qualitative data analysis with clarity and confidence.
- Identify strategies to analyze and interpret data for your audience.
- Use AI and other digital tools to analyze information efficiently.

WHAT TO KNOW:

- Each workshop is 2 hours.
- To fully participate, reliable internet connection, access to video, and sound are recommended.
- Attendees will receive a resource toolkit and a recording of the session(s) after the workshop.
- Registration link: <https://www.followyourcardinal.com/store>

INCOMING SGS BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2025 - 2026

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VACANT