



THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA
COLLEGE OF MEDICINE TUCSON

Center on Aging

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aging.arizona.edu

It's a DRY HEAT

A spotlight on the
Arizona Geriatrics Workforce Enhancement Program (AZ-GWEP)

Improve patient care with Aging Empathic Program

By Rachel Peterson, MPH, MA

AZ-GWEP Health Educator

“How many of you think you’ll work with older adults?” I ask a classroom of pre-med undergraduates. Two hands go up. “All of you should raise your hand,” I tell them, and provide them with a few statistics on the growing older population. This is just the beginning of our unique training program designed to increase empathy for older adults.

The Aging Empathic Program funded through the AZ-GWEP is one of the most popular trainings provided by the Arizona Center on Aging (ACOA). Increasing demand in the past year has shifted our focus to include training more instructors for the Aging Empathic Program.

The one-hour interactive training uses simulations and discussion to highlight common physical and emotional changes that can occur with aging. Topics covered include hearing, vision, smell, taste, touch, and issues such as falls, elder abuse, loss and de-



University of Arizona students struggle to complete a standard medical history form when challenged with simulated vision loss and arthritis at an aging empathic

pression. A key part of the training includes specific tips to improve the patient experience, such communicating with an older adult with hearing loss.

The Aging Empathic Program can be adapted to meet the needs of the group — whether health professionals or community volunteers. Since July 1, AZ-GWEP staff have trained about 500 individuals, including health professions students (nursing, pharmacy and the entire second-year class at the UA College of Medicine—Tucson), clinical staff of a federally qualified community health center on the Arizona/Mexico border, hospice volunteers, Area Agency on Aging staff and volunteers, and care staff at an as-

sisted living facility.

Additionally, about twenty empathic trainers have been trained to extend the reach and sustainability of the program. At Banner—Peoria, which serves residents of planned retirement communities northwest of Phoenix, sixteen staff were trained as trainers, and the group was provided a starter kit of materials as a first step toward implementing the empathic training across Banner’s facilities.

“I do this every single day. Never did I have any idea what the vision, arthritis, and hearing loss, was like, and how it impacted everything right down to filling out patient paperwork,” said Dr. Sarah Payne, geriatrician and physician lead at Banner Peoria



Student clinic in assisted living provides education, meaning

By Hannah Stocker Cioltan, MPH
AZ-GWEP Program Coordinator

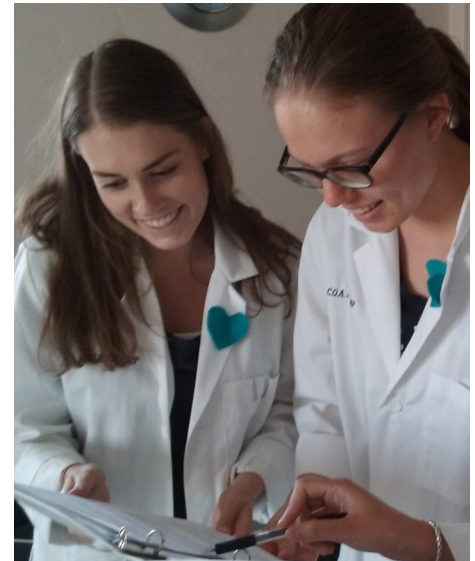
Waking early on Saturday may seem a tall order for busy health professions graduate students. But that hasn't deterred nearly 40 students each month from participating in the interprofessional education and practice (IPEP) geriatric training clinic at St. Luke's Home in Tucson.

Initiated in 2014, this popular clinic operates one Saturday a month from 7:30 a.m. to noon, and provides future clinicians a chance to work across disciplines to address screening and health care needs of between one and three geriatric patients. Each team consists of four or five students from the University of Arizona's Colleges of Medicine, Pharmacy, Public

Health and Nursing, and Arizona State University's School of Social Work, and is supervised by faculty members of these programs.

St. Luke's, a 60-unit assisted living home for low-income elders, uses the Eden Alternative® Model to promote quality of life and self-determinism. The clinics are structured in alignment with this philosophy to ensure they are mutually beneficial for both residents and students.

After participating in the interprofessional clinic, the residents of St. Luke's state they have an enhanced sense of self-worth from contributing to students' educational experiences. Participating students report that the clinics provide a deeper understanding of person-centered care for older



University of Arizona health profes-

s, improved their communication skills, increased their knowledge of aging-related health issues, and increased their awareness of how to use the skills of other health professionals.

"St. Luke's is an incredibly valuable program for all health

Resources for providers, caregivers expanded under AZ-GWEP

Get "just in time" information on geriatric syndromes, conditions and issues from single-page, high impact and FREE *Elder Care* and *Care Partner* sheets.

Elder Care provider sheets are written for health professionals and students, such as physicians, pharmacists, nurses and social workers.

Care Partner pages are written for community health workers, certified nursing assistants, home health aides, and patients. They are available in English and Spanish.

Elder Care and Care Partner are available on our website: www.aging.arizona.edu. They are also available through regular email dissemination. To sign up go to: <https://is.gd/arizonaGWEP>.

We are grateful for funding from the Donald W. Reynolds Foundation, our HRSA Arizona



ELDER CARE
A Resource for Interprofessional Providers

Substance Abuse in Older Adults

Substance abuse is a major public health problem that is... of alcohol or other substances is sometimes less important... is often difficult to detect in older adults. Concomitant effects of... is often to stop using the substance. Many others, with less... of control can be affected when social deterioration or... substance-induced health problems have failed to lead to... substance abuse (Table 1).

Substance	Signs and Symptoms
Alcohol	Decreased ability to perform, decreased alertness, decreased... decreased ability to perform, decreased alertness, decreased... decreased ability to perform, decreased alertness, decreased...
Drugs	Decreased ability to perform, decreased alertness, decreased... decreased ability to perform, decreased alertness, decreased... decreased ability to perform, decreased alertness, decreased...

Table 1. Non-Specific Warning Signs and Symptoms of a Substance Abuse Disorder

Table 2. Alcohol Abuse Screening: Tools for Older Adults

Table 3. Alcohol Abuse Screening: Tools for Older Adults

Care Partner Information
Tips for Providing Older Adult Care

Taking Medications Safely

Almost half of all older adults take more than five different medications every day. Each medication has rules to follow in order to stay safe and healthy. Following the different rules for each is very important, but sometimes it can be hard to do.

Types of Medications

Medications can include those prescribed (given or ordered) by your doctor or nurse, "over-the-counter" medications, and herbal.

Three Types of Medications (Pills or other Treatments)	
Prescription	Medications such as pills, creams, ointments or injections, ordered by a doctor or nurse and filled by a pharmacist.
Over-the-counter (OTC)	Medications without a prescription. These include aspirin, pain relievers, laxatives, and cold medicines. Be careful when mixing over-the-counter and prescription medications because it can cause bad side effects.
Herbal	Herbal medications and products sold without needing a prescription. These include vitamins, dietary supplements and teas. "Natural" does not always mean safe. Many herbal medications can make prescription medications weaker, or cause bad side effects.

Medications come in many forms. These include pills or capsules that can be swallowed, chewed or dissolved, liquids, patches, creams, ointments, solutions that are injected, suppositories, ointments, and eye drops or ear drops.

Keep all medications in one location except those that must be kept cold in the refrigerator. Keep medications away from sunlight, heat, steam and moisture. Keep medications away from children and others with poor judgment, such as those with dementia. Avoid mixing medications into one bottle or reusing empty bottles for other medications.

This Care Partner Information page is part of a series on older adult caregiving tips. See written to help family and community caregivers, direct care workers and community health representatives care for older adults. Available in English and Spanish at www.aging.arizona.edu.

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