

2026 MALA Conference and Dementia Summit Virtual Conference

CEU Information

If you attend the entire in-person conference, you will earn 8 AFC CEUs and have access to virtual sessions to complete your 16 AFC CEUs. If you are unable to attend in-person, you can complete your 16 AFC CEUs through virtual sessions. Virtual sessions are available at your convenience during the months of May and June.

*Please note that in 2026 we are unable to offer CEUs for nurses, social workers, and nursing home administrators. AFC CEUS will be made available.

Virtual Conference Sessions

Move Smarter, Care Safer: Body Mechanics for Everyday Caregiving

Join the Therapy Management, Inc. team for an engaging virtual session designed to make everyday caregiving safer and easier. Learn how simple adjustments in body mechanics can significantly reduce strain, prevent injury, and create a more comfortable experience for both care partners and residents. From safe transfers to supporting eating, walking, and lifting, this session offers practical, confidence-building techniques you can put into practice right away.

Presenters: Raman Mudgal, PT, Kate McGregor, OTRL, EverActive

Improving Employee Retention Using Safety Science

When something bad happens, our first question is ‘Whose fault is it?’ We blame people without even realizing we do it. Then, we think we solve our problem by firing employees, writing new policies, or retraining staff. While sometimes necessary, these approaches can have poor results when it comes to making systems safer. When employees feel they will be disciplined or fired for an accident or mistake in the course of normal work, they are less likely to share their concerns and the barriers they face to getting the job done. Without this information, we cannot learn and improve. Using a science called human factors and system safety, or safety science, we can shift from a blame culture to a culture of accountability and learning. This session will motivate participants to capitalize on safety science principles to see these research-based results: enhanced organizational learning and improvement, increased shift staffing levels, improved disciplinary outcomes, and improved employee retention. Participants will learn specific techniques that they can implement quickly and methods that can help set their systems up for success in the long run.

Objective 1: Participants will be able to recall how creating a safety culture can lead to better retention.

Objective 2: Participants will be able to describe how they can increase accountability while removing blame.

Objective 3: Participants will be able to employ techniques that engage staff in improving the system in which they work.

Presenter: Shannon Gadd, MSc, Senior Director, Collaborative Safety LLC

Therapeutic Interventions

This presentation explores the idea that every interaction, support, or Activity of Daily Living (ADL) can be intentionally structured as an “activity.” Rather than viewing care tasks or supports as routine or passive moments, the presentation emphasizes the importance of giving each interaction a clear beginning, middle, and end. This structure helps individuals understand what is happening, stay engaged during the process, and recognize when the interaction is complete. By framing everyday supports in this way, caregivers and professionals can promote predictability, reduce anxiety, and support smoother transitions between tasks. Participants will learn practical strategies for applying this approach across a variety of settings to improve communication, independence, and overall participation.

Presenters: Amy Sheridan, CTRS, Director, Christin Cardani, LPC, Family Support Program Manager, Seasons Adult Day Services

The Hidden Cost of Caring: Understanding Trauma and Stress in Direct Care, Part 1

To define the specific psychological hazards of direct care work (beyond general burnout) and to introduce the Healing Centered Restorative Engagement framework as a tool for workforce retention and safety.

Presenter: Dr. Tracy Hall, MPA, Healing Centered Restorative Engagement

From Burnout to Belonging: Strategies for Workforce Wellbeing, Part 2

To provide actionable strategies that build a "culture of health" and operationalize the concepts of Healing Centered Restorative Engagement (presented in The Hidden Cost of Caring: Understanding Trauma and Stress in Direct Care).

Presenter: Dr. Tracy Hall, MPA, Healing Centered Restorative Engagement

Toward Dementia Friendly Communities

A Dementia Friendly Community is a town, a city, a county where persons living with dementia and their caregivers feel comfortable and confident in shopping, dining, doing business, going to the theatre, worshipping, with no worries about being embarrassed or disrespected. In a dementia friendly community, people walk towards persons with dementia, not away from them. For several years, the City of Saline was Michigan's only nationally recognized Dementia Friendly Community, because of the efforts of a small, independent non-profit now called Dementia Friendly Services. There are several more now and the list will grow. With increasing success, DFS works with cities and towns across Michigan to foster dementia friendliness. Using free lectures, workshops, even live "Dementia Awareness" theatre, DFS educates the public, governments, businesses and organizations about dementia and dementia friendly practices. In addition, this highly active non-profit runs a suite of engagement and support programs for persons with dementia and their caregivers. These include their pioneering Dementia Friendly Movies program, their innovative Memory Cafes, their Dementia Friendly Live Theatre, a Dementia Friendly Community Chorus, Dementia Friendly Shopping events, Dementia Friendly Art Fairs, a lending library of Memories Kits, and more. This session, presented by founder and long-time caregiver Jim Mangi, will describe the multi-faceted work of Dementia Friendly Services and how assisted living providers and others can join in the growing effort to make Michigan Dementia Friendly.

Presenter: Dr. Jim Mangi, Dementia Friendly Communities

Polypharmacy in the Elderly

As adults age, managing multiple medications from multiple providers becomes increasingly complex. This virtual webinar explores what polypharmacy is, why it is especially common in adults over 60, and the risks it can pose to health, safety, and quality of life. Participants will learn how to recognize warning signs of polypharmacy, understand common medication-related risks for older adults, and identify practical strategies for coordinating care across providers. The session emphasizes safe medication management, communication, and advocacy to help reduce adverse outcomes and support better overall care for older residents.

Presenter: Sarah Westbrink, RN, Nurse Account Manager, Guardian Pharmacy

How Virtual Reality is Revolutionizing Senior Care

As the elderly population grows, so does demand for innovative solutions to tackle age-related chronic diseases and disabilities. Virtual reality enables older adults to interact with the outside world in genuinely innovative ways that promote engagement, wellness, access, and positive outcomes. As an adjunct to traditional interventions, VR has the potential to have a positive impact on helping patients reach their goals. In this session, participants hear how VR is being used with residents with dementia (and other diagnoses) to impact ADL, IADL, exercise, balance, motivation, enjoyment, successful discharge, quality of care, and more.

Providers must be aware of these innovations so to monitor their use, develop policies regarding use, market their use and ensure that resident and QOL satisfaction remains high. As an adjunct to traditional interventions

for dementia, VR has potential for positive impact. Is VR coming to your community? The answer is probably yes.

As a result of this presentation the participant will be able to:

- Define the scope, type and incidence of virtual reality in senior living including functional benefits and outcomes related to use.
- List barriers to implementation along with strategies to overcoming barriers.

Presenter: Dr. Kathleen Weissberg, OTD, OTR/L, CMDCP, CADDCT, CDP, CFPS, CGCP, TIE, National Director of Education, Select Rehabilitation

Fostering Purpose and Meaning for Persons with Dementia

With limited resources, how can providers deliver person-directed care that supports meaningful engagement, promotes function, and improves quality of life for persons with dementia?

This session explores meaningful and purposeful engagement through dementia programming. Participants will learn principles of soliciting preferences, tailoring activities, reducing unwanted behaviors, addressing common challenges, and initiating tasks using novel approaches.

The Montessori approach and Tailored Activity Programs (TAP) are presented as practical methods to foster engagement and functional outcomes. Both emphasize person-centered care by focusing on abilities, needs, interests, and strengths. Participants will learn how to structure activities with everyday materials and create meaningful roles, routines, and experiences within a supportive environment.

Using these approaches, providers can develop programs for any stage of dementia that promote function, reduce unwanted behaviors, and enhance quality of life—regardless of residence size or setting.

As a result of this presentation the participant will be able to:

- Describe how meaningful activity addresses the needs of persons with dementia
- Use case examples to support person-centered care and improve QOL
- Identify novel approaches to facilitate engagement

Presenter: Dr. Kathleen Weissberg, OTD, OTR/L, CMDCP, CADDCT, CDP, CFPS, CGCP, TIE, National Director of Education, Select Rehabilitation

MIOSHA Applicability for Assisted Living Facilities

This course is designed first line supervision, safety and health committee members, and management personnel. Participants will learn about the MIOSHA regulations with applicability to assisted living facilities and receive an overview of hazard recognition, prevention, and best practices. This course will assist attempts to improve employee safety and health practices and direct facilities to resources and tools critical to understanding MIOSHA regulations.

Presenter: Ben Block, M.S., Senior Industrial Hygienist, MIOSHA, CET Division

Preventing Workplace Violence

Since 2020, there has been an uptick of reported complaints and injuries in inpatient long term care settings that have been investigated by MIOSHA. This presentation delves into one of the more sensitive and difficult safety and health concerns addressed by MIOSHA in care communities— injury to staff during moments of resident distress. Attendees will walk away with an understanding of MIOSHA requirements and best practices related to employee safety and health as it relates to these challenging incidents.

Presenter: Benjamin Block, MS, Senior Industrial Hygiene Consultant, MIOSHA CET

Building Recovery-Friendly Workplaces: Understanding Substance Use Disorder and Supporting Michigan's Workforce

This informational webinar introduces the Michigan Recovery Friendly Workplace (RFW) Initiative and explores how substance use disorder (SUD) impacts the workforce—and how employers can be part of the

solution. Participants will gain a clear, stigma-reducing understanding of SUD and recovery, learn why recovery-friendly practices benefit both employees and employers, and hear examples of how organizations across Michigan are building supportive, healthy workplace cultures. The session also outlines the goals of the Michigan RFW Initiative, available trainings and resources, and practical next steps for employers interested in becoming a Recovery Friendly Workplace.

Presenter: Nicki Gabel, BS, Program Manager, Keoshia Banks, BS, MPH, Project Manager, Recovery Friendly Workplaces, Michigan Public Health Institute

Bridging the Gap—Restoring Resilience for Staff and Residents

When staff morale is at its lowest, sessions should shift from standard "management-led" presentations to supportive, human-centric interactions that prioritize listening and immediate validation. This session is designed for leadership and frontline teams in residential care to address deep-seated burnout and disconnection. Instead of "toxic positivity," the session focuses on transparent communication, psychological safety, and small, actionable wins that reconnect staff to their "calling" and their residents.

Presenter: Bryan Rife, MA, Director of Quality Assurance, National Council for Activity Professionals (NCCAP)

AI in Human Hands: Tools for More Impactful Services Track: Service Innovation & Flexibility

Artificial intelligence (AI) isn't coming—it's already here. This session brings subject matter experts to show how AI can reduce documentation burdens, improve quality, and strengthen trust without losing the human touch. Attendees will see real-world examples of AI tools being used in human services today—from summarizing documentation and detecting health risks to streamlining attendance—and hear honest lessons about what works, what doesn't, and what's next. Whether you're AI-curious or already exploring how to integrate it into your agency, you'll leave with clear ideas, concrete strategies, and a fresh perspective on how to lead in the age of AI.

Presenters: Karen Neidermeier, Associate Director of Business Development, Jason Laws, Director of Quality and Data Initiatives, Therap Services

Collaborating for Change: Michigan Dementia Coalition and the CDC Building Our Largest Dementia (BOLD) Infrastructure for Alzheimer's Act.

This session will explore the Building Our Largest Dementia Infrastructure for Alzheimer's Act (BOLD), Michigan's progress under this landmark initiative, and the state's plans for the future. Learn how the Michigan Dementia Coalition is driving collaboration and supporting efforts to improve dementia care and quality of life across communities.

Presenter: Shona Mackenzie, MPH, CHES, Dementia and Healthy Brain Unit-Injury and Violence Prevention, Michigan Department of Health and Human Services

Your Staff. Your Residents. Your Operations.

Assisted living and behavioral health facilities serve Michigan's most vulnerable residents. Cybercriminals are increasingly targeting these providers, but their focus isn't clinical data. Instead, they pursue more accessible and lucrative targets: employee records, financial systems, and operational infrastructure. Business email compromise schemes extracted \$2.8 billion from American companies in 2024, with health care and human services enterprises ranking among the most affected sectors. When cybercriminals breach payroll platforms, human resources systems, or email networks, facilities face immediate disruption. Paychecks stop processing, accounts freeze, fraudulent transfers drain funds, and staff members lose confidence in their employer's ability to protect sensitive information. This webinar examines the specific cyber risks confronting assisted living facilities, adult foster care homes, homes for the aged, and behavioral health agencies. Participants will learn concrete strategies to protect their workforce data, safeguard financial assets, and maintain operational continuity against evolving digital threats.

Presenter: Rich Miller, Founder and CEO, Stack Cybersecurity

Supporting Patients / Clients / Residents with Chronic Pain and Co-Occurring Conditions

Chronic pain is highly prevalent among older adults, as well as younger populations that necessitate care in assisted living and adult foster care settings. This webinar equips direct care providers and professionals with a comprehensive, person-centered framework for understanding, recognizing, and supporting chronic pain needs. A focus of this webinar is on providing practical strategies for improving comfort, communication, and overall quality of life for residents experiencing persistent pain. Learning Objectives:

- List multiple understandings of pain and the derivation of pain.
- Describe chronic pain and the impact on clients.
- Explain supportive mechanisms and strategies to support individuals living with chronic pain.

Introduction to Dementia in People Living with DD (for professionals)

Presenter: Dr. Christina Marsack-Topolewski, LMSW

More sessions will be added—Be sure to check back!

Back By Popular Demand

Compassion Fatigue: Helping Helping Professionals

Helping professionals often share many of the emotions experienced by the vulnerable populations they serve. Intended or not, individuals who serve in the helping professions are affected by the work they do. Compassion fatigue can be one of the outcomes of the work of helping professionals. This presentation will introduce the concepts of compassion fatigue and compassion satisfaction. Participants will understand these concepts and will learn methods for addressing risk and promoting resilience in the work they do with vulnerable populations. This topic is one that revolves around self-care in helping professions. Participants will understand the concepts of compassion fatigue and compassion satisfaction as well as learn methods to address reducing the risk for compassion fatigue.

Presenter: Dr. Catherine Macomber, LMSW, Assistant Dean of the College of Health & Human Services, BSW Program Director, and Professor in the Social Work & Youth Services Department of Saginaw Valley State University

Holistic Hospice and Dementia Care

In this session, you will come to understand the impact of caring for the whole person at the end of life. You will be able to recognize the benefits and value of holistic, non-pharmaceutical interventions in hospice care. You will also explore challenges and interventions in caring for hospice patients with dementia while simultaneously integrating the concepts and interventions of holistic care.

Presenter: Kaitlyn Dawson, LMSW, APHSW-C, Emmanuel Hospice

Supervisors' Role in Safety

This course is designed for first line supervision, safety and health committee members, and management personnel. Topics covered include employee safety and health training, accident investigation, hazard recognition, and self-inspection techniques. This course gives tips to supervision on methods to integrate health and safety into their daily duties and responsibilities.

Presenter: Lynn Totsky, MA, Senior Industrial Hygienist, MIOSHA, CET Division

Understanding and Improving Your Safety Culture

This course will provide knowledge and tools for participants to gain an understanding of the factors that affect culture and how it impacts safety performance. The topics covered include techniques to improve safety culture, and examine what good, positive safety culture looks like.

Presenter: Lynn Totsky, MA, Senior Industrial Hygienist, MIOSHA, CET Division