



ENGAGE AT EVERY AGE: MAY 2018

## Information & Caregiver Resource Corner

### May is National Older Americans Month

By Laurie Deskavich, Information & Caregiver Resource Center Program Director, LifePath

Every May, the Administration on Aging, part of the Administration for Community Living, leads our nation's observance of Older Americans Month. The 2018 theme, **Engage at Every Age**, emphasizes that you are never too old (or young) to take part in activities that can enrich your physical, mental, and emotional well-being. It also recognizes the many ways older adults make a difference in our communities.

**Q: How can I make a difference?**

**A:** You can help by volunteering with programs that promote wellness, helping individuals to access public benefits, assisting someone with bill paying, or by visiting residents in a local nursing facility. These are just a few ways to engage at LifePath.

LifePath is proud to offer many different opportunities where you can offer your wisdom and life experience. Programs like Healthy Living, Benefits Counseling, Money Management and Long-Term Care Ombudsman are powered by volunteers wanting to give back. More than 250 people each year volunteer for LifePath, 71% of whom are 60 or older, reports Lynne Feldman, Director of Community Services at LifePath. This means that every day, there is a small army of elders helping other elders live as independently as possible in our community. "I admire how engaged, compassionate, and knowledgeable these older Americans are," says Lynne, "helping others while enriching their own lives, too."



Rides for Health Volunteer Steve McKnight, right, helps Martha Shibillo, left, get from her house and into his car before driving her to a medical appointment. You can read about Steve's experience and those of other LifePath volunteers at [lifepathma.org/news/stories/a-volunteers-story](http://lifepathma.org/news/stories/a-volunteers-story).

LifePath has many volunteer opportunities. To learn more about how you can volunteer, call us at 413-773-5555 or 978-544-2259 or visit [LifePathMA.org](http://LifePathMA.org).

Remember no matter your age, there is no better time than now to begin. Engage at Every Age!

## Sound Health, Part 3

### Music Therapy

Listening to and making music on your own can bring health benefits. But some people may also benefit from the help of a board-certified music therapist. Music therapists are trained in how to use music to meet the mental, social, and physical needs of people with different health conditions.

"Music therapy can take many forms that go beyond listening to music," explains Dr. Sheri Robb, a music therapist and behavioral intervention researcher at Indiana University.

Music therapists can use certain parts of music, like the rhythm or melody, to help people regain abilities they've lost from a brain injury or developmental disability. For example, a person who's had a stroke may be able to sing words, but not speak them.

Music therapists also rely on the social qualities of music. Shared musical experiences can help a family member connect with a loved one who has dementia. Music can also be used to help young people with behavior disorders learn ways to manage their emotions.

Robb's research focuses on developing and testing music therapy interventions for children and teens with cancer and their families. In one study, music therapists helped young people undergoing high-risk cancer treatments to write song lyrics and create music videos about what was most important to them.

"With the help of music therapists, these teenagers were able to identify their strengths and positive ways to cope, remain connected with family and friends, and improve communication during a challenging time," Robb explains.

**"Shared musical experiences can help a family member connect with a loved one who has dementia."**

Music can offer many health benefits, but it may not be helpful for everyone. Traumatic injuries and brain conditions can change the way a person perceives and responds to music. Some people may find some types of music overstimulating. Others may find that certain music brings up emotional or traumatic memories.

"It's important for healthcare providers to identify and understand when music isn't helpful and may be harmful," Robb says. "And this is an area where music therapists can be helpful."

As scientists continue to learn more about music and the brain, try striking a chord for your health. Whether you're looking to boost your mood, stay connected to others, or improve symptoms of a health condition, add a little music to your life.

"Think of music like physical fitness or what you eat," says Northwestern University neuroscientist Dr. Nina Kraus. "To see the most health benefits, try to include music as a regular, consistent part of your life. It's never too late to add music to your life."

Article adapted from the National Institutes of Health January 2018 *News in Health*, available online at [newsinhealth.nih.gov](http://newsinhealth.nih.gov).



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## Have you heard about imposter scams?

### Here's how they work:

You get a call or an email. It might say you've won a prize. It might seem to come from a government official. Maybe it seems to be from someone you know – your grandchild, a relative or a friend. Or maybe it's from someone you feel like you know, but you haven't met in person – say, a person you met online to whom you've been writing.

Whatever the story, the request is the same: wire money to pay taxes or fees, or to help someone you care about.

But is the person who you think it is? Is there an emergency or a prize? Judging by the complaints to the Federal Trade Commission (FTC), the answer is no. The person calling you is pretending to be someone else.

### Here's what you can do:

1. **Stop. Check it out** – before you wire money to anyone. Call the person, the government agency, or someone else you trust. Get the real story. Then decide what to do. No government agency will ever ask you to wire money.
2. **Pass this information on to a friend.** You may not have gotten one of these calls or emails, but the chances are you know someone who has.

Another type of imposter scam specifically targets elders who receive home care services. For example, someone unknown to you knocks on your door, claiming

to be sent from an agency to do housework, and you welcome this person inside. After some light cleaning, this person abruptly leaves. Soon enough, you find that some of your valuables or personal information materials have been taken. This stranger has turned out not to be who they claimed to be and has stolen from you.

If this happens to you, reach out and make a report to:

- the police
- the vendor agency that is supposed to provide the services
- your case manager at LifePath or another agency

To help prevent this scam from happening to you, always ask to see the identification badges of anyone coming to your home claiming to be from a home care agency.

### Please report scams! If you spot a scam, please report it to the FTC.

- Call the FTC at **1-877-FTC-HELP (1-877-382-4357)** or **TTY 1-866-653-4261**
- Go online: [ftc.gov/complaint](http://ftc.gov/complaint)

Your complaint can help protect other people. By filing a complaint, you can help the FTC's investigators identify the imposters and stop them before they can get someone's hard-earned money. It really makes a difference.

Want to know more? Sign up for scam alerts at [ftc.gov/subscribe](http://ftc.gov/subscribe).

Information in this article was adapted from [consumer.ftc.gov](http://consumer.ftc.gov).

## The Western Mass Elder Care Conference 2018

### An annual meeting for professionals in elder care services

The 2018 Western Mass Elder Care Conference "Wrinkles = Experience" will take place on June 7, 2018, from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m., at Holyoke Community College in the Kittredge Center.

The conference offers an opportunity for professionals in Western Massachusetts to network, share knowledge and experiences with one another and educate themselves on topics related to their work in the field of elder care. The event is open to anyone who provides professional services for elders in any capacity.

#### THE TWO KEYNOTE SPEAKERS ARE:

- Julia Fox Garrison, author of *Don't Leave Me This Way* and acclaimed national speaker, who will jump start your day with humor and a patient's perspective of medical care.
- Robert Roose, MD, vice president of Mercy Behavioral Health Care. In this role, Dr. Roose oversees Providence Behavioral Health Hospital (PBHH) and leads the behavioral health service lines, which include psychiatric, addiction, and recovery services. Dr. Roose will speak about opioid use related to geriatric medicine.

Fourteen different educational workshops will be offered over the course of the conference.

#### MORNING WORKSHOPS ARE:

- Social Security and Retirement Planning
- Talk Saves Lives – Suicide Prevention and Our Seniors
- Benefits of Chair Yoga

- Working with Grandparents Raising Grandchildren
- Demystifying Elder Law
- Holistic Instruction
- MOLST

#### AFTERNOON WORKSHOPS ARE:

- Where to Go From Here? Navigating Long-Term Care Options and Choosing a Long-Term Care Facility

- A Day in the Life of Protective Services
- The Medical Marijuana Alternative
- Tai Chi, Falls, and Our Seniors
- Benefits of a Dementia Friendly Community
- A Guide for Caregivers: Reducing Harm from Gambling in the Senior Community
- Recognizing and Responding to the Stress of Clients, Clinicians, and Caregivers from a Clinical and Experiential Perspective

*"The conference offers an opportunity for professionals in Western Massachusetts to network, share knowledge and experiences with one another and educate themselves on topics related to their work in the field of elder care."*

Six Continuing education hours (CEs) will be available.

Due to space considerations, registration will be capped, so sign up soon to reserve a spot! To see additional details and to register, visit <https://fs30.forms.site.com/GSSSI/form14/index.html>.

To book your vendor table today, contact Heather Jolicoeur at [heather.jolicoeur@gsssi.org](mailto:heather.jolicoeur@gsssi.org).

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—Beverly Petravage,  
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