0:01

Welcome to senior Moments on 93.1 CFIS FM.

Hi everybody, I'm your host Don Hemingway.

Exciting show for today.

For the first half hour of the show, we have Tara Hildebrand, Support and Education Coordinator and Provincial Coordinator for the Alzheimer's Society of BC.

0:19

She's going to be talking about 3 upcoming dementia workshops for caregivers that are taking place here in Prince George.

So really looking forward to that.

The workshops are next week, so September 23rd to 25th.

And then for the second-half of the show, we have Doctor Shannon Freeman from UNBC and Tracy Dunn from the Northern Health.

0:40

She's the strategic lead for the Elder Services Network and they're going to be sharing some news about an exciting new project around caregiver empowerment.

So focus on caregivers and dementia today.

0:55

So welcome Tara, really happy that you can join us and we're very excited to have these in person workshops taking place here in Prince George.

Thank you so much for having me.

I really appreciate it.

It's great to be here.

Tara, I wonder before we start talking about the workshops, if you might share just a little bit about yourself and and kind of the, the, the role that you're playing within the Alzheimer's Society.

1:22

Just a bit of background for our listeners.

Sure.

So I've been with the Alzheimer's Society as a support and education coordinator for GOSH, 15 years now.

Not sure where the time goes, but yeah.

So my role is working within community, providing support, education and information to families and people living with dementia.

1:44

We do that in a variety of ways, support groups, in person education.

We also have all of our virtual education and support groups as well.

We do minds, emotion programs.

There's a whole suite of programs that we offer families in a variety of ways.

2:02

And people can find out that information at the Alzheimer BC website.

And I will make sure that when we post the archived version of the show that the contact information is also on the website.

2:18

I should note that in addition to going to the website ALS ALZ bc.org/princegeorge workshops, you can also register at 1-800-936-6033.

2:34

And we'll say that again at the end of this segment and it will be on the website, as I said.

So we're really excited that these workshops are happening here in Prince George and just really would like to go through however you would like to.

But I'd like to see us talk about each of the workshops just to give people a sense of what they will be like and when they are, etcetera, so that folks can, if they haven't already, can perhaps sign up for them.

3:04

So.

Absolutely.

And thank you for that too, because the easiest way frankly, to register is just calling the First Link Dementia helpline.

You'll be connected with a staff person who can register you right then and there.

So it's really quick and easy to register.

3:20

The first workshop that I'll be teaching is on Tuesday, September 23rd.

It's a long one.

It's an all day workshop, although we will be breaking an hour for lunch and and different breaks in between.

But it's a really, really important workshop and this is the one where I usually encourage families to start with this information.

3:41

It's technically 5 components and when we're teaching out of town, like out of our own communities, we generally try to teach it in a one day workshop to get all of that information in.

We go through everything starting from understanding what is dementia, what does the terminology mean?

3:59

You know, we get asked a lot what's the difference between Alzheimer's and dementia.

While there isn't 1, if you have Alzheimer's disease, you have a type of dementia.

So we, we clarify all the terminology that families are going to hear from medical teams and whatnot because some of it can get a little bit confusing.

4:16

So we want people to leave with that knowledge.

So we talk about the progression and the stages, what to expect along those stages and some real life strategies on how to cope and manage better in the home.

We discussed, oh, I'm sorry, no, it's it's a little harder when we're, when we're on both on a phone situation, we can't see each other.

4:37

I just wanted to say that I think it's really important just even just talking about what is dementia, because if I mean, I, I've sort of been around this area for a long, long time.

I don't mean geographically, I mean in terms of older adults and dementia.

4:53

And, and there's so often the question about what is the difference between Alzheimer's disease and dementia and you know, what are the different types of dementia?

And then the biggest thing that I get mentioned, Tara, is does the Alzheimer's Society only work around the question of Alzheimer's dementia and clarifying, you know, that is really important.

5:18

So just wanted to get that in there.

Yes, and thank you so much, Don.

It's and you're, you're right.

I mean we're called the Alzheimer's Society of BC, but we speak to families and support families if their person is living with any type of dementia.

So it could be vascular dementia, it could be a type of frontal temporal dementia, Lewy body, there's many, many different kinds and or type story of dementia.

5:41

And we support families and all of those.

We even have support groups specific to other types of dementia.

So we've got a Louis body support group, we have a frontal temporal support group.

So we really try our best to make sure that whatever, whatever that person is diagnosed with, whatever type of dementia, they're going to get support through the Alzheimer's Society of BC.

6:03

Excellent.

No, I just, I know that was just the first point on the workshop, but I, I just wanted to make that point because I think it's really important for people to know that it, it doesn't have to be Alzheimer's dementia and that the Alzheimer's Society supports all dementias in so many ways.

6:19

So just wanted to to make sure listeners knew that, but I know there's there's some several other points that the workshop will cover.

Yeah.

So you know, once we talk about the changes in the brain and like I said, what to expect and and what not, we move into the changes that that person will experience with regards to communication.

6:38

So their ability to understand what is being said, their ability to find their words and express their own thoughts and feelings and and needs and wants.

And so we talk about the communication changes, how what's happening in the brain.

And once we discover all of that changes, that leads to the next conversation about behaviors.

6:59

So when there's a communication breakdown, there's a change in how a person responds, reacts and what not as well.

So talking about all those different kinds of behaviors that a person might see, behaviors are just behaviors.

We never want a person labeled for their behavior, but you know, frustration can come out in many ways.

7:17

If I can't find my words, imagine how frustrating that would be.

So we talked to families about where some of these behaviors are coming from.

And again, the coping skills to be able to manage with that.

And then the rest of the day we'll be talking about some of the personal planning that needs to be completed as well.

7:33

So what documents do we need?

How do we technically get our ducks in a row, so to speak?

So that's, that's that first workshop on Tuesday.

The next workshop I'll be teaching on Wednesday is all about the caregiver because as caregivers will realize, they will get asked a lot.

7:51

Oh, how's your person doing?

You know, how's, how's Bill doing or how's Susie doing?

And, you know, the questions and concerns are always about the person living with dementia, but what about the caregivers?

And so that's that primary focus for for Wednesday is it's a dementia dialogue, which it's not quite as formal as a PowerPoint presentation workshop like the the Tuesday workshop is, but it's more conversational and delving a little bit deeper into what it feels like to be a caregiver.

8:22

And some of those feelings can be, you know, I'm a little upset about it.

I'm not happy to be a caregiver.

This isn't where we thought we would be in our life at this stage.

And you're really talking about some of those real raw feelings that are really helpful for people who are caregiving for someone with this disease, because it can feel awfully lonely at times.

8:42

And then on, sorry, on Thursday, we're going to be talking about long term care.

So all things long term care, the process of getting a spot in long term care, what to expect, advocacy, what life and long term care looks like, feels like visiting all of those kinds of things.

8:58

So I really encourage families that are attending to bring your questions.

I want to make sure that when you leave those workshops, you have your questions answered and you don't leave leave their hanging with something you're still wondering about.

Yeah, no, I really appreciate and and very, you know, anyway it covers a lot that people would be thinking about or potentially wondering about how to deal with or address.

9:21

I think, you know, the, the all day workshop on Tuesday, September 23rd seems like a really good foundational workshop for anyone that's just wanting to really, you know, just get a sense of the breadth of the the different topics and the different situations that they may be in and their loved one in terms of their loved 1.

9:45

So really think that that one covers so many things.

One of the things that I wonder if we could just get into just a little bit more when we're talking about the both the changes in communication and the changes in behavior and the impact not only on the person experiencing dementia, but on the caregiver.

10:08

And why it's so important to both understand those things that are happening to best as one can, but also to think about oneself as a caregiver, but also just to be conscious of the different things that can come up that are not that you need the, you need the skills that the ability, the understanding to be able to deal with.

10:34

So I don't know if there's a bit more that you might want to share on those without doing the workshop on.

Yeah, yeah, absolutely, Don.

I mean, when it comes to being a caregiver, I, I stay in my workshops.

This disease doesn't come with a playbook.

10:49

You know, we're not given a, a book at, at the beginning of our life and said, OK, well, you know, as we get older, this is what we're going to experience.

This is not natural aging.

And so we want to make sure that people understand, look, there's help and support out there.

You don't have to be navigating and figuring it out all of this out on your own.

11:07

You don't need to be stabbing away in the dark.

We have so much information and support to provide for families that can help, you know, the caregivers function better, help them understand that person living with dementia's perspective a little bit better.

You know, I say to families, we're not, they're not giving us a hard time.

11:25

They're having a hard time.

Let's understand and be more curious about where these behaviors are coming from.

And the more knowledge that we have, the better we function.

The, the, the goal is to help maintain quality of life while this person is living with his disease.

But that doesn't just mean quality of life for the person with the illness.

11:44

It is also quality of life for the caregiver.

If I've got real strategies I can pull out of my toolbox, that's going to help me, I don't necessarily come to the table with those strategies.

I don't know what I'm doing.

I don't know how to respond.

I, I tend to respond like I always have to this person.

12:00

And now that's not working.

So now what?

And so that's where we come in is to help families understand different ways of communication, different ways to approach different things that come up in in day-to-day life.

Yeah, I think those are all really important points.

12:16

It makes me reflect on, and this is many, many years ago before much of this work was fully developed probably, oh, I don't know, 35 years ago or something.

But when my I remember my grandmother and I, you know, I'm, I'm a young woman and I'm, I'm very practical and, you know, look at the what's the scientific side of things?

12:38

What's going on be factual?

And, and I remember her thinking that there was some something going on in, in outside her window in the trees, and that there were, there were people there and they were protecting her.

And of course, this is this was something, you know, that was beyond just just the question of the dementia.

12:58

I mean, there was some other things happening.

But, but I remember as a young woman, you know, saying, but Grandma, there's nobody in the tree, right.

And then I, I learned that that probably was not the best way to to respond, you know, to, to, you know, so.

13:14

Yeah, just being able to have those examples and to talk with, with someone like yourself who's and others who will be there about experience, just it made a huge difference for me when I, when I found out I was probably not, you know, that's probably not the best way to deal with the situation.

13:33

So yeah, I do appreciate the that.

Yeah, we've come a long way, haven't we, in figuring out, you know, more appropriate ways to respond.

And I mean, at that time we, you are trying to be logical and, and practical and, you know, offer proof and evidence.

13:50

And that's kind of where most of us come at with this, you know, some of the things that a person living with dementia might say or do.

And you're kind of thinking that it's a little odd, different than maybe how they responded before.

And we want to bring them back.

But there's a difference between my truth and their truth.

14:06

And So what we'll we'll delve into that pretty deep during that family caregiver series on on Tuesday.

And, and then, like I said on on the Wednesday, the transitions along the dementia journey, talking about what's changing for you as a caregiver and how are you feeling about that?

14:22

Because you're, you're allowed to be mad too.

You know, we don't talk about these things often enough.

I think in our society, we're all supposed to be positive all of the time.

And sometimes it's really hard to find those positive moments.

They're there.

But the more we understand where this person is coming from and understand the disease itself and how it's impacting this person's brain and functioning, the better we do and the easier time we're going to have as caregivers as well.

14:49

So I really also want to focus on the caregiver.

It's vitally important.

Yeah, I absolutely agree with that.

I think, you know, oftentimes people just feel like, well, I have to do the best for my loved one.

And, you know, I just have to, to, you know, deal with it myself.

15:06

Like I can't, I can't express what's happening to me.

I just need to make sure I'm doing everything that I can do for my loved one.

Even though, you know, one has to, you have to take care of yourself to be able to, to be there for your loved one and, and that it's not wrong to, to have feelings of frustration and, and just, God, I don't know what to do.

15:27

And, you know, those kinds of things.

So I, I, I really appreciate having that, that workshop for people so that, you know, there's an opportunity to, to express yourself and to hear, you know, that it's OK if you're feeling tired and you're just thinking, Oh my God, how do I do this?

15:45

And just really, you know, so truly appreciate that, that that's going to be an opportunity for people to, to come and talk about, you know, the other thing that we actually, I, I sit on the council of advisors to the seniors advocate and, and you, as you'll know, I'm sure one of the recent reports on long term care, we had him on, I think it was just last week talking about, about that report and, and a boat weightless and a boat, you know, having supports ahead of time.

16:17

And, and so having this session also talking about the transition to long term care to me is extremely important because there really are some challenges, not, not just with the actual physical challenges in terms of of of someone moving into long term care, but even just the time period when you're waiting and wondering what's you know.

16:43

Yeah.

So I'm really think that's important as well.

And it, you know, the thing about long term care too, is frankly, right now we know that there's, there's just not enough to go around that, you know, and so yes, the wait list can be long and extensive, but you know, we also will be talking about priority access system and what do we do in the meantime while we're waiting for a, for a long term care bed?

17:07

What is the support available for families?

How do we access it?

Why should we access it?

But then we talk also about like before I worked for the Alzheimer's Society, I actually worked in long term care myself.

And the concern that I have is long term care often gets a bad rap.

17:25

It's like, oh, I would never put my person into one of those places.

Frankly, I get a little offended sometimes because I'm like, well, I worked in long term care.

I saw amazing, compassionate, kind care happen daily.

And that's not the stuff that gets talked about.

17:41

So we need to unwrap that too and talk about what it's really going to look like.

And yes, it will be different than how you provided care at home.

Why will it be different?

And just because somebody's doing something a little bit different maybe than you did at home with your person doesn't mean it's wrong.

17:58

It's just different.

You know, staff in long term care facilities have legislation that they have to adhere to and, and so there's rules.

So it's about learning about the advocacy Part 2 and sticking up for our person and getting them, getting the staff to know them and all of those things that become vitally important.

18:17

And and then again, your role changes.

You know, you go from being perhaps a spouse to a caregiver to now an advocate.

There's grief with all of that.

So in and amongst all of these workshops, we're also going to be talking about the different kinds of grief that creep in as well and how that impacts our ability to care.

18:35

OK, that's great.

Maybe we can get into that a bit more.

We just have to take a quick break and then we'll have another little segment to talk about that.

Sure.

The music.

You.

Grew up with.

CFIS takes you back with the music that defines an era and shaped our lives.

18:59

Timeless hits the 60s and 70s.

Your memories.

Our.

Playlist plus local voices and local stories on your community connection.

Keep it tuned to CFIS 93.1 or stream online at CFIS fm.com.

19:16

Take advantage of the Dementia Friendly Day program by Quality Time Wellness Tuesdays and Thursdays at the Spruce Capital Senior Center.

It's a sweet escape from isolation and stress, providing an increased sense of purpose, self esteem and more, plus a welcome respite for caregivers.

19:31

Book for a day from 9:00 to 3:00 or 1/2 day for half the price, Quality Time Wellness Tuesdays and Thursdays at Spruce Capital Senior Center.

For more information about the program, visit qualitytimewellness.ca.

The coffee house is back at Omanika Arts Center.

19:47

Stop by every second Sunday to perform or just enjoy local talent on the open mic.

Open to all ages and all art forms with admission, snacks and refreshments by donation.

It's a family friendly event celebrating poetry, music, comedy, spoken word and more.

20:02

The next Coffee House open mic is this Sunday.

Coffee House open mic every second Sunday from three to seven at Omnica Arts Center, 369 Victoria St.

Forecast from Environment Canada for today's sunny A high of 17 tonight.

Claire fog patches developing overnight.

20:20

A low of three on Friday.

A mix of sun and cloud wind for the South of 20K in the afternoon with a high of 19.

This is senior Moments on 93.1 CFIS FM.

Welcome back everyone.

We're here with Tara Hildebrand talking about some of the caregiver workshops that are happening here sponsored by the Alzheimer's Society this coming week, September 23rd to, let's see, September 23rd right through to September 25th.

20:50

So we were just talking about the fact that you're going to be going through the different stages of grief.

And I wonder maybe if you wanted to say a little bit more about that, Tara?

Yeah, thank you, Don.

You know, the grief creeps in when we least expect it to.

21:08

You know, I've had caregivers say, you know, I've been fine and we've been managing really fine.

And yesterday I looked over at my husband and.

A wave of.

Something hit me and I just started to cry.

And it's like, yeah, well, that's grief.

When we realized that a person's not exactly who they used to be.

21:25

But this disease also changes us as caregivers as well.

We're not the same.

You know, we're we're living this alongside of them.

And no, maybe we're not the ones with the diagnosis, but it's directly impacting the caregiver and their ability to cope as well.

And sometimes that grief clouds the judgment.

21:44

Sometimes we're making decisions based on the emotions.

And I'm not ready for that to happen or I'm not ready for this.

And that's a big part of what we we talk about too in these workshops is, you know, our coping skills and what we bring to the table.

22:00

It's different for everybody.

And everybody's at a different spot in their grief process.

And that includes families, you know, I people struggle with, well, you know, my siblings aren't being helpful when I'm looking after mom or dad or whatever it might be.

And it's like everybody has a different relationship with that person, but they're also managing their grief differently because we're all different.

22:20

So helping families understand that too, that the grief is going to poke in there and, and reek some chaos every once in a while.

And how, how do we cope with our grief along all of this?

Yeah, no really important points.

And I I think, you know, just using some of my own examples and I, I think of another time when there was a fellow, I was volunteering in a care facility.

22:43

I have a long history there too with volunteering and working in kitchen and dietary in long term care.

So totally different experiences in terms of connecting with people.

But but I remember this one fellow who was who was not verbal anymore.

22:59

And I used to always read him what I called coffee table books and show them all the pictures because he used to be a trapper.

And one day out of the blue, showing him a picture of a mountain goat on a precipice.

23:16

And I talked to him as if he could fully understand me.

I'd say, God, what?

How does that mountain goat stay there?

Like it just seems impossible to me.

And we'd I'd just be talking away and all of a sudden he jumped in and said center of gravity and.

23:32

Even when I.

Say it now, I could start crying because totally, you know, so we do not, there's still so much we don't know about dementia and what's happening with that person.

You know, that, that he could just jump in like, and I was told that the care facility, he's not, he's not verbal anymore and whatever.

23:50

But I, I knew he was a trapper.

And so I brought these books in and here we have him saying that don't know where it came from, don't know how he was feeling about all the conversation, but it wasn't.

It's certainly reinforced, you know, my, my wish to be able to come back and, and talk to him again and show him the pictures that may have been part of his life when he was still a trapper.

24:11

So, so many things that you just don't know.

And those are some of those magical moments that we talk about, Don, where you just, you don't know what's going on for them, anyone given moment.

And so, you know, we get those little glimmers every once in a while.

24:27

I working in long term care.

I, I worked in the recreation department.

So I got to do all the fun stuff.

I, I loved it.

And you just never know what program and, and what moment is going to speak to what person.

And some of the stuff that you hear can be so funny and you you get that real sense for that persons personality and sometimes just some little sarcastic thing they've said or whatever and the least thing you were expecting out of them.

24:54

And those are those little glimmers that we just that we look forward to.

Absolutely no.

I think of another time when I it was a different care facility and I was again volunteering and and I started doing a sort of a, what do you call it like a current events thing.

25:10

So we pick one article from the newspaper to talk about and people were, you know, people were still doing pretty good.

And just the very interesting conversations that would come up on different topics and, and how people engaged in different ways that, you know, as a young woman, I didn't really fully understand at that time, but but it gave me a, I don't know, a spark of, you know, there.

25:34

There's something here like people's lives have changed, but there's still stuff and really good stuff that's happening.

And yeah, you just didn't know.

Well, you know, there's so much we could talk about, Tara.

I don't, I, I really, I want us to just maybe take the next minute or two for you to walk us through one more time, just the workshops and the time and how people can register.

26:00

Absolutely.

So they the all day family caregiver series, which is probably the best place to start for for newcomers.

And and you know what, some people take that workshop over and over because you're at a different spot.

So is the person you're caring for and you hear materials differently.

26:15

So I encourage people, even if you've taken it before or parts of it come again, the questions will be different in the conversations.

That is Tuesday, September 23rd from 9 till 5.

All of the workshops are at the Can 4 Leisure Pool.

Wednesday, September 24th is Transitions along the Dementia journey where we talk about the caregiver, all things caregiver, your thoughts, your feelings, the good, the bad and the ugly.

26:41

We'll talk about all of it.

And that's from 1:00 till four.

And then on the last day, Thursday, September 25th, again, one till 4 is the transition to long term care and adjusting to that new environment.

You can register with our first link Dementia Helpline AT1809366 033.

27:00

That's going to be the fastest and easiest way to register.

OK, perfect.

And just to emphasize again, these are workshops for caregivers and that's that's.

Caregivers only, please.

Yes.

So that's important for people to know and to again, emphasize that this is a, a workshop.

27:20

These are workshops about dementia and dementia is not only Alzheimer's disease.

Alzheimer's disease is a type of dementia.

So if if you're a caregiver for someone and you've been told that you know they have Lewy body dementia, you would be welcome as well and correct.

27:37

Yes, absolutely we will.

We will be talking about in that family caregiver series on Tuesday.

We'll be talking about all the different types of dementia, clarifying some of the differences and, and challenges with both.

And then, you know, there's going to be a lot of similarities that you will find throughout.

27:54

And so we will be talking about all of that and I'm happy to answer any questions about any of the other illnesses and stuff that other types of dementia that people might be living with.

Thank you so much for coming on, Tara, Really appreciate it.

This has been Tara Hildebrand, a support and education coordinator with the Alzheimer's Society of BC.

28:13

And just a reminder, you can go to the First Link Dementia Helpline in order to register for these workshops.

And hopefully we'll have you on again.

Tara, thank you so much.

Thank you so much for having me, Don.

I really appreciate it.

We're going to take a quick break and then we'll be back with our next guest.

28:32

Your Prince George council is Seniors Better at Home program needs volunteers if you can assist seniors in our community needing help with light housekeeping and grocery shopping.

Contact the Prince George Council of Seniors Better at Home coordinator at 250-5645 Triple 8 for assistance with the process.

28:50

It's all designed to help seniors remain independent, better at home from the United Way and your Prince George Council of Seniors.

Call or stop by the Seniors Resource Center to get involved.

Volunteering gives me a deep sense of fulfillment, knowing I'm helping kids build resilience and navigate the challenges they face.

29:08

Each moment I spend helping the Scouts fills me with a sense of purpose.

Take our online quiz and find your perfect volunteer role.

Adventure awaits.

Join us at scouts.ca/volunteer.

Follow Amanica Arts on social media to stay in the loop on their special events, inspiring exhibitions and hands on workshops.

29:28

You can also share your ideas for art related programs, workshops, or anything you'd love to see at the gallery.

Almanika Arts is open to all art expressions.

Let's create, connect, and make Amanika an artistic haven together.

Spread the word, invite your friends, and let the creativity flow.

29:46

Almanika Arts stay up to date on Twitter, Facebook and Instagram.

This month, the Alzheimer's Society BC is presenting the Anything for Alzheimer's fundraising program.

This Do It Yourself initiative invites you to turn your hobbies and passions into fundraisers to support people on the dementia journey.

30:05

From bake sales and hikes to music trivia and bridge tournaments, your fundraiser can come in any shape or size.

Discover current fundraising stories and how you can develop your own fundraiser through alzbc.org.

30:22

You're listening to senior moments on 93.1 CFIS FM Welcome.

Back, everybody.

We're here for the last segment of the show with Doctor Shannon Freeman, who is UNBC professor, academic director of the Center for Technology Adoption for Aging in the North.

30:40

And a lot of people know about the work that that center has been doing, as well as the UNBC Research Data Center.

And also on on the phone with us is Tracy Dunn, who is the strategic lead for the Elder Services Network at Northern Health.

30:56

And they're both here to share some news about an exciting new project, caregiver partner empowerment, enhancing lives in dementia care.

So welcome to you both.

Thanks, Don.

We're happy to be here.

Now it's good to have you both.

I'm wondering before we get into the substance of this exciting project and I should say I'm on the advisory of it.

31:19

So I'm particularly excited.

I'm wondering if if each of you may be starting with Tracy could just share a little bit about your background and kind of how how did you end up being who sort of Co leads on this project?

Yeah, yeah, for sure.

31:35

Thanks so much, Don, and thanks for having me today.

So as you said, I'm the strategic lead for the Elder Services Network for Northern Health.

So I have a nursing background and most of my nursing career with Northern Health has been in seniors care and in particular in small, rural and remote communities outside of Prince George.

32:01

And as part of my role, I've been able to work with our long term care homes and really work with families and caregivers around providing dementia care.

And so one of the gaps that I saw was is that we have lots of training for our staff in our long term care homes, but not so much for our caregivers.

32:24

So families were coming in and visiting their loved ones or caring for a loved one in community with dementia and there isn't a lot of support for them to to do that.

So that's what got me interested in this in this project that I'm working on with Doctor Shannon Freeman.

32:43

And so, Shannon, maybe you could talk a little bit about what inspired you for this project?

Yeah, thanks very much Tracy.

And, and again, Don, it's, it's always a pleasure to come and talk to you and talk to your listeners and share, share out what we're doing and, and how we're partnering to really make an informed change to improve the health and well-being of people here living in the North.

33:09

And Tracy is right.

I, in all the work we do, we see such a gap.

You know, I'm a lifelong learner at heart and, you know, an educator and there's just so much opportunity for people, if they have the right knowledge and skills and tools to be empowered to, to take positive action and make informed decisions with their loved ones.

33:32

And so this is just one of the greatest opportunities that we have with the university and the Northern Health Authority to partner together to help bring that education to our caregivers here in the North and then spread it further.

And I think our work nicely builds on your your previous callers focus as well.

33:53

Yeah, it does for sure.

And I, I have to say, Tracy, when you're talking about long term care that I, I do, I have to add, aside from what I said in the earlier segment about being involved in long term care in multiple ways, including, you know, housekeeping, dietary volunteering and various other ways.

34:14

But thinking about the caregivers whose loved 1 is already in long term care, I think it's so important.

We did do a project many years ago, 10-12 years ago, talking with, with caregivers who had, and mostly women who had partners who were in long term care.

34:31

And, you know, they really felt that it was a challenge for them.

And, you know, we used one of the, the, what one of the, the caregivers said to, to describe our article about the project together, but apart.

34:49

And just feeling that they wanted people to know that just because their loved one was in long term Care now didn't mean that they weren't still a caregiver and that they, you know, needed to be and wanted to be part of, of their lives.

35:05

And so I, I just really appreciate that this initiative is about caregiving the whole, the whole sort of range of caregiving, which includes when your loved 1 is already in long term care.

35:20

And I think COVID made that just brought that issue to the forefront with all of the policies where family and friends weren't not able to enter long term care.

And and it was, it was there was a big report by the seniors advocate.

35:36

Don, I know you sit on that.

And this work is about really responding to that and doing better moving forward and supporting family and friend caregivers.

Yeah, no, really important.

I guess I'm, I'm wondering maybe we were talking, but it would be important for our listeners to just get an overview of the project.

35:57

I don't know, Tracy, did you want to start with that and maybe Shannon can add in?

We've got yeah, about a minute or two before we go to our first little break.

Yeah, yeah.

So the project is really around to trying to address the gap in education and support for family and friend caregivers, a person's living with dementia, and really for our small rural communities.

36:22

And So what we hope to do is create some learning modules and provide some training for family and caregivers that they can put these dementia ability practices into place and use whether they're caring for their loved one at home or whether they're coming in to visit their loved loved one in in a long term care home.

36:48

So it's a four year project.

And then Shannon, do you, is there anything you want to add?

I've kind of given a pretty high level overview of the project, but maybe there's a couple of pieces that I missed.

Yeah.

So across the the North, Northern Health has embraced dementia ability training for many of their many of their staff.

37:09

And so this is a way to expand that to our informal family and friend caregivers.

And I'll talk a bit about dementia ability after the break dawn because I, I, I see you kind of looking at me for that break is coming.

But you know, really achieving improvement, empowering people.

37:29

The first step is, is, is, is knowledge, awareness and education.

And so that's where we're starting and we're focused on the north and our rural communities and building this, these programs that are sustainable offered in the, in the community by local trainers in that community.

37:48

So building that knowledge base and continuing it.

Perfect.

And we'll talk a little bit more about dementia ability when we come back from this break.

September is suicide prevention month.

On September 25th, join the Souls Remembering Souls Memorial Walk to honor loved ones lost to suicide and to support survivors of suicide loss.

38:07

If you have a loved one lost to suicideregisterthroughtheeventspage@crisis-center.ca to have them memorialized at the walk.

The evening will include music, refreshments, a silent auction and more.

Souls Remembering Souls Thursday, September 25th from 6 to 8 in Claytley to Memorial Park.

38:28

The Seniors Emergency Pilot Program from the Prince George Community Foundation can make a meaningful difference in the lives of local low income seniors.

The Seniors Emergency Pilot Program offers low barrier financial assistance to seniors facing urgent, unexpected expenses, providing short term support to help navigate those challenges.

38:47

For more information on the Seniors Emergency Pilot Program, call the Council of Seniors at 2505645888.

Donations and applications can be made to the Print George Community Foundation.

Measles is circulating in BC Measles spreads easily when an infected person breathes, coughs or sneezes.

39:04

Getting the MMR vaccine is the best way to prevent getting and spreading the illness.

Vaccines are safe, effective and available for free at your local health unit or Health Center.

Some pharmacies may also carry the MMR vaccine.

If you have a fever or a rash, seek medical attention immediately.

39:20

Notify any healthcare provider or facility before you visit.

Stay informed.

Stay protected.

Visit Northern Health dot CA.

Forecast from Environment Canada for today's sunny A high of 17 tonight.

Claire Font patch is developing overnight.

A low of three on Friday.

39:36

A mix of sun and cloud wind for the South of 20K in the afternoon with a high of 19.

You're listening to senior moments on 93.1 CFIS FM.

Welcome back, everybody.

And Doctor Friedman was just going to get into the question of what is dementia ability that we're talking about?

39:56

Yeah.

So Dementia Ability really aims to focus on empowering caregivers, empowering people to support persons living with dementia to live as well as they can.

And really to change that and normalize it.

40:12

So instead of looking, thinking about, oh, didn't my loved one used to be able to do that?

Or looking in the past about all the didn't they always do such and such focusing on how to what are the, how TOS of dementia.

So thinking about supporting care partners to better understand the connections between the brain, the person's life story and their environment and the behaviour.

40:36

And so emphasizing better understanding on how to enhance the individual's abilities.

So liking your story, not just assuming they're not responding.

So they're not listening, thinking about, you know, how to engage.

40:51

So even though they're not responding, you still understood.

I'm going to read the story, I'm going to show the pictures.

So really how to foster those environments to set individuals up for success.

And that success is measured in supporting to the person to be the best they can be at the time where they are in the place where they are.

41:12

So looking at supporting them in the now, in the present, not focusing on the losses and the negatives in the past.

And so dementia ability is really evidence, evidence informed.

There's a lot of research that that's gone in, gone into it on what are the the most innovative evidence based person centered education strategies that caregivers can understand.

41:36

So we're looking at equipping them with education that includes those resources, those tips, those tools, those approaches to dementia care.

And a lot of times, you know, you get a diagnosis, your loved one has dementia or you're starting to see changes and you're left to do all that research and finding out those things on their own.

41:56

And this is a way to package it up, make it easily accessible at the right time in the community for these for these caregivers.

And so, you know, people need this education because there's so many changes.

We think about how to adapt to change.

42:13

And you know, that can be hard for for, for all contexts of life adapting to that.

And so especially trying to understand those behavioral changes related to dementia, they can be very confusing, unpredictable, different kinds of things that individuals start to do.

42:32

So days can be long and difficult and you have those uncertainties as as a caregiver because many people have never navigated this situation with their loved one.

And even if you've cared for a parent with dementia, it can be very different caring for your spouse or your neighbor.

42:50

So each person with dementia has their own individual characteristics, their experiences, their journey.

And so dementia ability really helps give those tips and tools to the care partners aimed at answering those questions, aimed at addressing those uncertainties by offering practical solutions.

43:10

What can you do, right?

How can we, you know, live with this and, you know, how can we reduce, you know, behaviors that that may not be liked?

How can we increase happiness and joy?

43:26

How can we engage in meaningful engagement?

Maybe the activities are different.

So instead of reading the book, you're showing the pictures and having the conversation.

That can still be an extremely meaningful opportunity.

And so Dementia Ability looks at that from an empowerment perspective.

43:45

And that's really what unites Tracy and I together in all of our work is how can we empower our informal caregivers to continue to care longer, to continue to care, care well and also care for themselves.

Your previous speaker also mentioned that we need to focus on not just the person living with dementia, but those around them, their circle of care, their family and friend caregivers.

44:09

So.

Important.

Tracy, did you have anything you'd like to add to that?

I know there's two aspects that have been brought up that I would like to get into around long term care itself and just respecting the good work that happens there.

I know we have many critiques and also the question of small and rural and remote communities, which I know that you're very familiar with.

44:32

And I, I should say that we do have folks from some of the, the smaller communities around northern British Columbia who listen to the show because you can listen to it on your computer.

And so you don't have to be able to pick up the signal in terms of being on, you know, the radio.

44:51

Who who's on the radio anymore?

I don't know anyway, but but seriously though, any other comments about the question of rural and remote communities and the importance of this work and how it's being done in terms of accessibility to people in rural and remote communities, I think our listeners would appreciate.

45:12

Yeah, yeah, for sure, definitely.

And so I think about, you know, in our small rural and remote, like we have way less services available to us in our smaller communities than what we say have in Prince George.

So, you know, where there's all kinds of different groups and, you know, libraries and all kinds of different resources.

45:33

But a lot of our smaller rural and rural and remote communities don't have taxis, don't have, you know, the adult day programs and things like that, that support our caregivers.

So it just means means the role for the caregiver is even bigger because they are doing it all.

45:52

And so the nice thing with this project is we're going to train some trainers that can easily go out to some of our smaller world remote communities.

And I think about Fort Nelson is one of those communities that I had the opportunity to visit a couple of years ago.

46:08

And then just because it's such easy techniques.

So it's like what Shannon talked about around really, you know, just sitting with your loved one and, you know, thinking about what are some of the things they enjoyed doing in the past, they might not be able to do it the same way now.

46:29

So, for example, say they used to really enjoy scrapbooking.

They may not be able to put together a beautiful scrapbook, but if you put out some things for them to work on, some pictures that they can look at that you can look at together, that now becomes a meaning, wonderful activity for them to do and something that you can engage in.

46:50

Look at pictures from, you know, your, your children, things like that.

So it's something that's not going to cost a whole lot of money where you need a lot of big, expensive equipment.

It's simple, easy techniques that we can do together to help enhance the person's quality of life, both for the caregiver and for the person with dementia.

47:14

So that's the part I'm excited about.

Yeah, really good examples.

And I'm also excited about being able to reach out and also knowing that there's ways of doing this as you pointed out yourself that it's not like a big expense.

It's, it's just having the tools and this hopefully is going to provide that opportunity for people to have those tools.

47:36

I think we're going to take a short break again and then we'll have about another 10 minutes to just talk about some of the other points that we haven't been able to get to yet.

Really appreciate you both being here.

Dominika Art Center is calling on you to support local artists.

47:53

You can do this in two ways, either donate through their GoFundMe page or when you return your bottles to Nanchaco Bottle Depot, use number 683 and the refund will go directly to Amanika Arts.

Reduce, reuse and reinvest in art while skipping the lineup.

48:09

Arts and culture are so important to every community, so support Dominika Art Center.

Visit dominikaartcenter.com For more information.

Melanoma is the deadliest form of skin cancer.

Cases in Canada have jumped 16% in just one year.

Over 1300 lives were lost in 2024, but most cases are preventable. 90% of skin cancers are caused by exposure to UV rays.

48:34

Protect yourself, stay in the shade, wear protective clothing and always use a broad spectrum sunscreen.

Visit saviourskin.ca For more information on prevention and patient support.

Together we can make a difference.

The Celebrate Life Gala is back October 2nd.

48:50

Be on hand for this year's key speaker, Matt Hammond.

Matt Hammond is a singer-songwriter, author and speaker.

He is the former lead singer of the Grammy nominated and double award-winning band Sancta Surreal, as well as the author of the book Lead Me Finding Courage to Fight for Your Marriage, Children and Faith.

49:10

That's Advocate Life's Celebrate Life Gala Thursday, October 2nd at the Civic Center.

Tickets available through Celebrate Life gala.ca.

Create drawing so gourd you'll want to decorate your Thanksgiving table with them during the next Creative Space Sunday.

49:27

Take inspiration from Japanese artist Yayoi Kuzama to make your own perfectly polka dotted pictures of your favorite Thanksgiving food.

It's an artful afternoon for you to let your creativity soar.

Just $9 per adult, $5 per child, or $18.00 per family.

49:43

Free for members.

Thanksgiving Pumpkins.

This week's Creative Space Sunday from 1:00 to four, Sunday afternoon at Two Rivers Gallery.

You're listening to senior moments on 93.1 CFIS FM.

OK, we're just going to hear a bit more about the project care partner empowerment, enhancing lives in dementia care and sort of the, the nitty gritty of of, you know, kind of what kinds of things people can learn, how they're going to learn them and how can people getting involved.

50:14

So we are have quite a large steering committee that directs all of these project activities.

Although you're speaking to Tracy and I today, we represent quite a large number of people involved in this program.

And I just want to mention to your listeners that all the work we're doing in this has more than 50% representation of persons with lived experience.

50:36

So that's persons with lived experience of living with dementia or persons with lived experience of caring, being care partners either current or past.

And so we are really engaging people with the actual experience as caregivers or living with dementia to drive this project forward.

50:54

And we are just, we are just starting things off.

And so we welcome any community feedback from caregivers or people with dementia who want to share with us their experiences or want to get involved.

And as we move forward, we will be looking for trainers.

51:11

So trainers will be people who live in, in our communities here in the North to start, who have had their own experiences with dementia.

So ideally we're looking for, you know, people who've been, who've been through the journey and in many different ways, whether it's a parent, a family, a friend, a loved 1.

51:32

So they've got some personal experience with dementia and we can train them in in all of these methods and then support them and equip them with the tools and materials to train others.

So when we were talking at the break, Shannon, you mentioned an example of what what that material is, what that training is.

51:53

I think we were talking about wandering, and I'm just wondering if you could go just give people a concrete sense of what that could mean.

Right, So thinking about applying these tools and strategies from dementiability can think about how can you support someone to wander safely.

52:11

A lot of times there's a lot of fear that Oh my loved ones going to get lost.

So individuals will try to restrict movement, keep their loved one in the house, and it actually can just create more frustration and upset of their loved one living with dementia because they want to go outside.

52:28

So there's lots of different strategies we have to support people to wander safely.

You can think about different kinds of tracker technologies.

You can think about different kinds of connection to community, different ways to do that.

Clear fencing is a big one because a lot of times if people see a door or a fence, they want to go through it.

52:50

They want to see what's on the other side.

But if you're, you know, redoing your fencing at home, put in that clear Plexiglas fencing and you'll find that again, that escaping behavior, that trying to get over the fence, those behaviors are often often reduced.

53:06

So there's lots of things we can do in the built environment.

There's things and technologies that we can use to enhance how people can navigate their environment.

And then on the simpler side of like meaningful engagement activities, folding laundry is a huge one.

53:23

Just having a basket, a laundry basket full of tea towels and letting someone you know sit there.

Oh, I need your help to fold the tea towels.

That's a meaningful activity.

Sorting socks also a wonderful one.

Sorting socks is great for memory and for matching.

53:41

It's good for fine motor skills and still using dexterity in your hands.

Lots of great stuff.

So there can be lots from that, the more high tech to the very simple low tech ones.

Folding baby clothes is often wonderful for reminiscence as well.

53:58

They love to talk about either their own childhood playing with dolls or their their times raising their their children.

There's lots of great positive things, and if you have some different tools in your toolbox as caregivers, you can try different things to make that time meaningful.

54:15

It's interesting that you mentioned that because I remember even those many, many years ago having residents in long term care come with to the laundry area and full towels, you know, something that's been going on for a long time.

And and I actually remember some of the conversations that developed out of that.

54:33

You know, so very important both at home and looking at what happens in long term care.

That's right.

Yeah.

So Tracy, as we get near the end of the show, I'm just wondering if one of the things I noticed that was, as mentioned by Shannon, was looking at doing this across the North but also going beyond the North.

54:57

And I wondered if you might want to say a few words about that before we wrap up.

Yeah, for sure.

So, so our, our, we're focused on starting in Prince George because that's, that's easy to start there.

And then over the course of the next couple of years, really working on getting these, you know, trainings out to our smaller rural remote communities outside of Prince George, some of our small Indigenous communities as well.

55:26

And then what happens is that generally folks across BC and the other health authorities hear about some of this really exciting work that we're doing and they're keen to hear about it.

So our focus after by the end of the, the term of this project, we're hoping to be able to offer this to other and not LED necessarily by the health authorities, but to other areas of BC that are interested in this work.

55:53

Because I really do feel that this is something that caregivers, you know, across not just Northern BC, but all of BC and possibly Canada would really be interested in having, having these resources available to help them navigate as navigate their loved one as they are going through a dementia diagnosis.

56:16

Excellent.

No, I think really important and and thinking about going across BC, but maybe beyond BC see how this all goes.

I mean, I think a contribution could go beyond our province as well, ultimately.

So excellent news and very good to have you both on the show.

56:35

I just want to make sure that people know that they can get in touch if you'd like more information about what's happening or you think maybe I you'd like to get involved.

And I know we'll, we'll probably have you both back on to talk about the the trainer's part of this as you get as the project develops further.

56:53

But for now, if folks just want more information, you can e-mail Doctor Shannon Freeman.

So it's just Shannon dot freeman@unbc.ca or if more straightforward, you can just leave a message on her phone at the university, 250-960-5154 and they'd be thrilled to hear from you and, and just to get your your input.

57:21

And I think also just a final reminder that this whole project is being overseen with a whole team of people who have lived experience.

At least half of the team has lived experience in one way or another.

57:38

So really the quality of what's being done is really rooted in meeting the needs of everybody and hearing all those voices, so.

And especially making sure that we are hearing the voices of people across our northern communities that we are we that we are creating this program by and with people in the north, for people in the north so that it's meets their needs.

58:03

Thanks so much to both of you and look forward to having both Doctor Freeman and Tracy Dunn back on to talk about this project as it progresses.

Thanks so much, Don.

Thanks, Don.