



# ALBERTA ASSOCIATION ON GERONTOLOGY

*Improving the Lives of Older Albertans*

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*AAGmag*  
Spring 2023, 45(2)

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## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Happy Spring everyone! The AAG board and its many supporters and sponsors are continuing to work diligently to contribute to the transformation of services and improved quality of life for older Albertans. We have reached several important milestones in the last few months: Page | 2

- The Workforce Think Tank Final Report was completed, approved by the Stakeholder Collaborative Committee and submitted to Hon. Jason Copping, Minister of Health with copies to other Ministers with relevant portfolios. Next steps include development of proposals and structures for overseeing implementation and sharing achievements.
- The Futures Policy Forum series of 8 webinars has been successfully completed. We are grateful to our platinum, gold, and silver sponsors and more than 50 speakers who made this possible. A Summary Report will be posted very soon but you can access the YouTube videos and reports for each session now on our website.
- Networking events are back! The AAG Annual General Meeting will be held in person in Edmonton as well as virtually (see the registration form in this issue). Corinne Schalm, AAG member and ADM, Continuing Care, Alberta Health, will be our guest speaker. Hope to see many of you there. AAG members attending in person will have a discounted price for the dinner.

Please be sure to support AAG by renewing your membership and encouraging your organization and colleagues to join AAG. Visit our website at [albertaaging.ca](http://albertaaging.ca) for resources and membership payments.

Lynne Mansell.

President AAG

## EDITOR'S MESSAGE

Quick update, AAG is still addressing the need for an updated website – they are considering all options. Of course, support of an on-line newsletter is an important component of this process. Stay tuned for updates! We are hoping to get online soon.

With thanks

Sandi

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## FEATURE ARTICLE

Jon Parr Vijinski PhD

### **Caregivers' Experiences of the Effects of Music for Communication on People Living with Dementia**

Loss of ability to communicate for people living with dementia can lead to anxiety, depression, and have a direct impact on quality of life (Carbone et al., 2022). Music for dementia care has been linked to triggering memories, positive emotions, and as an alternative pathway for communication (Dassa et al., 2020; Parr-Vijinski et al., 2018). There has been a renewed interest in the subjective lived experiences of people with dementia (Baird & Thomson, 2019), of which this study of how caregivers experienced the effects of music on communication for people living with dementia, is a contribution.

#### **About the Study**

A constructivist grounded theory methodology (Charmaz, 2014) was selected due to the subjective nature of music and communication, and the exploratory nature of the phenomenon under study (Stebbins, 2001). Purposefully sampling was used to recruit thirteen participants from across Canada (nine formal caregivers: six music therapists, three health-care aides), and four informal caregivers (three spouses and one daughter).

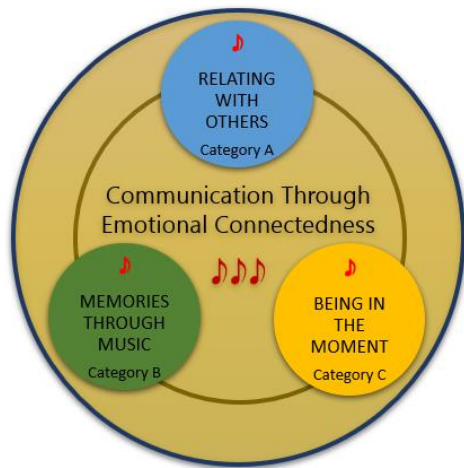
Sixteen interviews (13 via Zoom, three via telephone) were conducted, including three follow-up interviews. A Zoom focus group was held with three formal and two informal caregivers. Open-ended questions were used and analysis was drawn primarily from the interviews and focus group, but augmented with video analysis, field notes, and memos.

Ethical approval was obtained from the University of Calgary *Conjoint Health Research Ethics Board*.

## Results

Three main categories emerged: (a) *Relating with Others*, (b) *Memories through Music*, and (c) *Being in the Moment*. The three categories resulted in an *emergent theory* described as *Communication through Emotional Connectedness* (Figure 1).

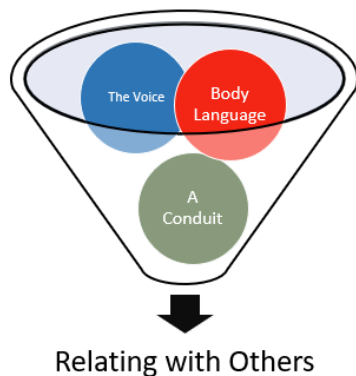
**Figure 1**



### Category A: Relating with Others

This category (Figure 2) is the interplay of *The Voice* (e.g., the use or response to the voice in connecting with the caregiver), *Body Language* (e.g., smiling, making eye contact, and various rhythmical actions), and *A Conduit* (e.g., verbal, non-verbal sharing of experiences).

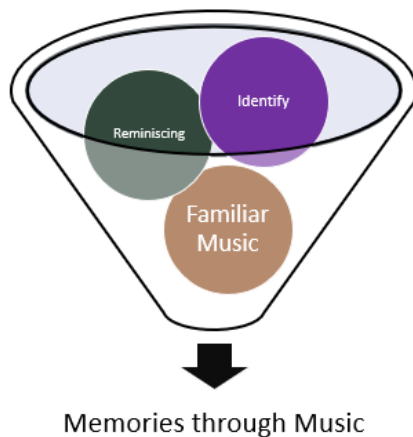
**Figure 2**



### Category B: Memories Through Music

This category (Figure 3) is the interplay of *Identity* (e.g., feelings of self-awareness, reattaching to self, leading to communicative interaction), *Reminiscing* (familiar music triggering memories expressed verbally (e.g. song), non-verbally (e.g. body language), and *Familiar Music* (e.g., music in long-term memory triggering verbal, non-verbal responses, and enhancing positive emotions).

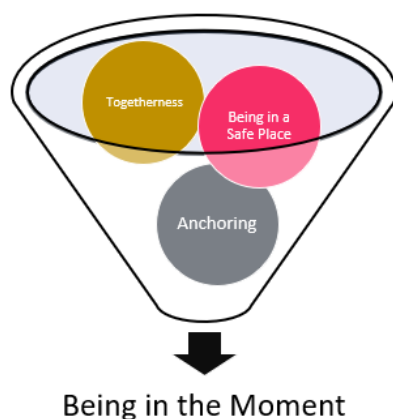
**Figure 3**



### Category C: Being in the Moment

This category (Figure 4) is the interplay of *Anchoring* (e.g., increased awareness, engagement in the moment), *Togetherness* (e.g., connecting, bonding emotionally in the context of the moment), and *Being in a Safe Place* (e.g., a sense of unconditional acceptance, autonomy, comfort, intimacy that can enhance communication and emotional bonding).

**Figure 4**



## Discussion of Findings

Communication emerged as an interplay of the main categories leading to *emotional connectedness*. Caregivers experienced music facilitating far deeper communicative interactions than just responding to prompts for activities of daily living, but rather as music facilitating emotion and connection. This was reflected in the interplay of *relating* (e.g. smiling), *remembering* (e.g., recalling a memory) and a state of *being* (comfort) leading to *Emotional Connectedness* that emerged as constantly dynamic and unique to each individual; an ebb and flow with the caregiver. Similar findings exist in the literature reflecting music as an emotional connector (McDermott et al., 2014; Osman et al., 2016).

*Relating with others* through music was connective and emotive, building relationships and facilitating emotions. This is consistent with findings in the literature (Allison et al., 2019; Dassa, 2018). *The voice* was noted as a strong conduit for emotional connecting, which has also been documented in the literature (Dassa & Amir, 2014; Ridder & Gummesen, 2015). *Memories through music* triggered reminiscing, reawakening identity, and building upon emotively related meaningful past events which could, in turn create bonding and increased communication. Similar findings exist in the literature (Baird & Thompson, 2019; Mandzuk et al, 2018). Additionally, familiar music was seen to enhance the category *Being in the moment* through triggering (e.g.,) comfort and safety and thereby facilitating a psychological sensibility such as anchoring within oneself or with the caregiver. *Being in the Moment* was seen to enhance relating and remembering, and communication emerged as an action that was free, autonomous, and never demanded. Similar findings have been found in the literature (Aldridge, 2005; Götell et al., 2009; Marmstål Hammar et al., 2011).

## Conclusion

This exploratory study offers a new understanding of how music can aid communication for people living with dementia. Particularly, that successful communication can enhance emotions and build relationships. This study can be significant for families who desire to maintain the sharing of lifelong memories, as well as clinicians who are seeking interventions to meet the needs for communication and optimize quality of life and care. Finally, this study may provide a solid basis to build future research on the effects of music on communication.

More info: Read the full thesis here: <https://prism.ucalgary.ca/handle/1880/114356>

The author is a former recipient of an AAG scholarship.

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## NEWSFLASH




**AAG / AGM virtual and online!**

**June 20th, 2023**




**HOLD THE DATE!!**



ALBERTA ASSOCIATION  
ON GERONTOLOGY  
*Improving the Lives of Older Albertans*

**ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**  
**Tuesday, June 20, 2023**  
**NORQUEST COLLEGE**  
10215 108 ST NW, EDMONTON, AB  
**5:00 PM - 7:00 PM**

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Guest Speaker:  
**Corinne Schalm,**  
Assistant Deputy Minister,  
Continuing Care, Alberta Health  
**"If I Had a Billion Dollars..."**

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**REGISTER** IN-PERSON & VIRTUAL ATTENDANCE  
BY **FRIDAY, JUNE 2, 2023**

Membership allows you to vote and receive a discount on networking dinners, including this one. Apply now to make your vote count!

<b>Members: \$25  </b>	<b>Join Zoom Meeting</b>
<b>Non-Members: \$35</b>	Meeting ID: 884 3428 1408
payable via Paypal for	Passcode: Board
(In-Person Attendance only)	

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[WWW.ALBERTAAGING.CA](http://WWW.ALBERTAAGING.CA)

**Have you thought about AAG'S WEBSITE AS A RESOURCE FOR YOUR STRATEGIC PLANNING OR PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT?** (site [link](#))

Check out our Webinar Files: All 8 webinars are complete and you can find a summary report, speaker slides, and a video-taped recording of the event. Learn from experts from the UK and Denmark, Canada, and our province in 1.5 hour video recordings of the webinar!

### **Seniors' Week 2023**

Seniors' Week has been recognized since 1986 to celebrate and recognize the contributions seniors make to enhance the quality of life in Alberta. The province-wide Seniors' Week was inspired by the vision of the late Alice Modin. More than 3 decades ago, Modin began a

campaign to start a seniors' day in Strathcona County that helped pave the way for Seniors' Week. Each year, organizations hold events in communities throughout the province to show their support for seniors by declaring Seniors' Week locally. The week of festivities is kicked off with a provincial launch event hosted by the Alberta government with a community or organization.

### **The Conditions of Work are the Conditions of Care and Service**

[AAG Cultural Change Project Enhancing Seniors' Services Workforce Think Tank](#)



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## **UPCOMING CONFERENCES**

[16th Global Conference on Ageing - International Federation on Ageing](#)

Bangkok, Thailand

June 27-30, 2023

[Global Ageing Conference](#)

Glasgow, Scotland

September 6-8, 2023

[Canadian Association on Gerontology](#)

Toronto, Canada

October 26 - 28, 2023

[GSA 2023](#)

Building Bridges, Catalyzing Research, Empowering All Ages

Tampa, Florida

November 8 - 12, 2023

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## RESOURCES



### **RaDAR rural primary health care memory clinics**

Featuring: Debra G. Morgan, PhD, FCAHS, The recorded event is ready. [Watch Now!](#)

This webinar:

- Describes development of the rural PHC model for dementia;
- Describes how the model was operationalized as RaDAR memory clinics in partnership with rural PHC teams;
- Reports on factors that influence sustainability and scaling up of RaDAR memory clinics; and
- Reports on research underway to evaluate clinic outcomes.

### **Behavioural Supports Ontario (BSO) announces the release of My Personhood Summary®!**

My Personhood Summary® is a biographical summary tool that supports the provision of person-centered care for people living with dementia and other geriatric mental health conditions. It surfaces individuals' life experiences, important relationships, personal preferences, and other psychosocial and environmental factors that influence their daily lives. My Personhood Summary® is based on the PIECES of my PERSONHOOD tool developed by North East BSO in 2012. Its update was informed by the voices of those with lived experience, an environmental scan, a province-wide pilot, and various consultations with cross-sector healthcare providers.

The two-page My Personhood Summary® tool is available for download in both English and French (Mon sommaire personnel) through completion of the download form at:

[www.brainxchange.ca/BSOpersonhood](http://www.brainxchange.ca/BSOpersonhood). This same webpage houses the tool's guidelines for use, some completed examples, and one-page poster templates.

The **Centre for Biomedical Ethics and Law** of the KU Leuven is organizing the 9th ed. of the *Summer Course on Ethics in Dementia Care* (Leuven, Belgium, 4-7 July 2023).

The objective of the course is to foster exchanges on foundational, clinical-ethical, and organizational-ethical approaches to dementia care practices. During the course, national and international experts will give presentations on various ethical topics in the domain of dementia care. There will be time for intensive discussions. The language of instruction will be English.

Detailed information on program, funding opportunities, registration, and payment can be found at [https://www.kuleuven.be/english/summer-schools/ethics-in-dementia-care-9th-edition-2023/ethics\\_in\\_dementia\\_care](https://www.kuleuven.be/english/summer-schools/ethics-in-dementia-care-9th-edition-2023/ethics_in_dementia_care) or at [www.cbmer.be](http://www.cbmer.be) under *Summer Course*. The deadline for early registration is May 15.

### [Alzheimer Disease International](#)



On 11 January, ADI launched its report on the #WhatsYourPlan campaign, documenting the progress made towards achieving the targets of the Global Action Plan on the public health response to dementia in each of the 52 campaign countries. The first year of the campaign has been a monumental success, with 204 official communications with Ministries of Health and 29 meetings, resulting in the commitment to implement 20 new National Dementia Plans, over half of those already in existence.

### [WHO Global Action Plan on the Public Health Response to Dementia](#)

The Global action plan on the public health response to dementia 2017-2025 aims to improve the lives of people with dementia, their carers and families, while decreasing the impact of dementia on communities and countries. It provides a set of actions to realize the vision of a world in which dementia is prevented and people with dementia and their carers receive the care and support they need to live a life with meaning and dignity.

Areas for action include: increasing prioritization and awareness of dementia; reducing the risk of dementia; diagnosis, treatment and care; support for dementia carers; strengthening information systems for dementia; and research and innovation.

### **HSO New National Long Term Care Services Standard**

HSO's recently released new national Long-Term Care Services standard (CAN/HSO 21001:2023 *Long-Term Care Services*). The standard can be accessed at no fee here: <https://healthstandards.org/standard/long-term-care-services-can-hso21001-2023-e>.

Group's complementary standard CSA Z8004:22 *Long-term care home operations and infection prevention and control* can be accessed here: <https://www.csagroup.org/store/product/CSA%20Z8004:22/>.

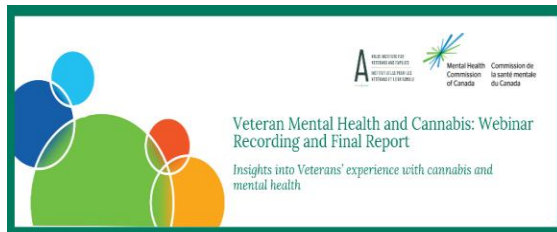
*What Was Heard Report #3: Findings from HSO's Public Engagement in the Development of a New National Long-Term Care Services Standard*, which summarizes the feedback received from over 18,800 Canadians throughout the development of the standard. The report can be accessed here: <https://longtermcarestandards.ca/engage>.

### **Meet the Global Pass It On Network**

A grassroots alliance of older people growing the potential for positive aging. Try living the Longevity Revolution in real time! In 2013, the Pass It On Network founders, Moira Allan and Jan Hively ([read their story](#)) created this grassroots network so that older people everywhere could show others how they were finding ways to expand their interests and thrive while coping with the challenges of longer lives. Since then, their global community has attracted age activists in nearly 70 countries, all of them engaged in discovering solutions to critical issues for older people worldwide.

## Mental Health Commission of Canada

As the use of cannabis to treat ailments grows among Veterans, [published research](#) in Canada on the relationship between cannabis use and mental health is limited, with even less that is specific to the Veteran context. Page | 14



To begin addressing these challenges, a series of virtual dialogues were conducted with the [Atlas Institute](#), asking Veterans, Veteran family members, service providers, and researchers about their perspectives on cannabis use and mental health. The Virtual Dialogue Series sought to hear about Veteran and Veteran family members' unique needs to identify and address key knowledge gaps and research priorities in this area. To access the full [report](#), which includes a range of insights and experiences that shed light on the complexities of this topic, visit the Atlas Institute [Knowledge Hub](#). Learn what Veterans, Veteran family members, service providers, and researchers say about knowledge and research priorities on cannabis use and mental health. Watch the [webinar](#).

### [Canadian Network for the Prevention of Elder Abuse](#)

CNPEA's mission is to connect people and organizations, foster the exchange of reliable information, and advance program and policy development on issues related to preventing the abuse of older adults. They do this work at the local, regional, provincial/territorial, and national levels. Watch [FutureUs](#) - a blueprint for addressing elder abuse in Canada.

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## RESEARCH READING

[Jamal, S. \(2021\). \*Needs, preferences and decision-making regarding long-term residential care: South Asian older adults' and family caregivers' perspectives\* \(Doctoral dissertation\).](#)



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**Objective:** The aging Canadian population is becoming increasingly ethno-culturally diverse primarily due to immigration. This, together with research indicating increased likelihood of long-term residential care (LTRC) use at older ages and challenges in providing services, prompt important questions about whether LTRC services are prepared to provide culturally responsive and competent care to immigrant and ethno-cultural minority older adults.

**Method:** This ethnography, informed by critical perspectives, explored these questions from South Asian (SA) older adults' and family caregivers' perspectives. Interviews with 18 SA older adults in LTRC, assisted living, and at home, their family caregivers, and seven key informants (N=43) alongside 220 hours of observation in LTRC provided information regarding the needs, experiences, and situation of SA older adults in LTRC. Review of LTRC-relevant documents revealed taken-for-granted assumptions about care and service provision and sociopolitical context of LTRC.

**Results:** Findings expose the differential impact of macro-policies and resource-constrained LTRC environments on SA older adults and their families and the ability of LTRC to provide person-centred care, reflecting unequal and inequitable care for ethno-cultural minority older adults.

**Conclusions:** The findings from this study along with demographic shifts in the aging Canadian population call for LTRC service providers and policy makers to actively prepare for increasing ethno-culturally diverse resident populations and point to the need for equity informed approaches to the care of older adults.

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## COMMITTEE REPORTS

### Goal 1: Governance

A report has been submitted to be included in the Annual Report of the AAG to the membership this coming June. I am pleased to state that the Committee successfully addressed its objectives with AAG's strategic plan.

Respectfully submitted,



Sandi Hirst, Chair

### Goal 2: Policy: Future Policy Forum

YOUR CALENDAR NEEDS A PLACE HOLDER FOR THE PROVINCIAL SUMMIT, Oct 10-12, 2023!

Theme: "Reimagining Aging; Leading the Way for An Integrated Approach"

Location: Grey Eagles Resort & Casino, Calgary

Sponsored jointly by AAG & Healthy Aging Alberta

Day 1: Reimagining Aging includes:

- Seeing & Seizing a Future of Longevity & Opportunity
- Developing an Age Positive Culture
- Moving Forward in Alberta: Health & Wellness Navigation and Living Well with Dementia

Day 2 & 3: Leading the Way for an Integrated Community Services System

:

*WATCH FOR FULL PROGRAM INFORMATION WITH OUR AMAZING KEYNOTE SPEAKERS AND REGISTRATION INFORMATION!*

Marlene Raasok, Chair





## ADVOCACY THINKING AND ACTION

### **A Challenge or an Opportunity? You decide.**

Many non-profits organizations identify organizational capacity as a barrier to their advocacy work. For example, financial resources are a key requirement for AAG advocacy work. Advocacy in the human services field can also be a “learn-as-you-go” process. Even if human services employees have a strong desire to advocate on behalf of clients, their limited education in advocacy coupled with restricted funding might undermine their efforts.

Those at the helm of senior focused organizations who want to integrate advocacy into their work should be prepared for a passionate fight. Various stakeholders, including a board of directors, will require sound arguments as to why precious resources should go into advocacy. Even with the best-laid advocacy plans, ongoing pressure to address competing priorities is likely.

Advocacy work requires a commitment by AAG’s Executive and Board. They must navigate difficult decisions about how best to pursue these efforts in order to yield the highest impact.