OUR VOICES

Wisconsin Alzheimer's Disease Research Center
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN
SCHOOL OF MEDICINE AND PUBLIC HEALTH

Brain Health Wisdom for Indigenous People

Apr. 2024/No. 6

Shekoli! (Hello)

Welcome to our newsletter, *Our Voices*. This quarterly publication is designed to inform you of future events, provide brain health resources, and share celebrations and other helpful news.

I want to maintain connections with all tribal communities. Please feel free to contact me with any comments or suggestions.

Sacheen Lawrence
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"Our Voices" Purpose

- Provide Support
- Help with Motivation
- Highlight Accomplishments
- Announcements & Updates

Native Americans are 15% more likely to develop Alzheimer's, a challenge to tribal communities in Wisconsin that view it as part of the normal aging process.

This article originally appeared in the Green Bay Press-Gazette on December 5, 2022, and is reprinted here with permission of its author, Frank Vaisvilas.

GREEN BAY - As Alzheimer's cases are expected to increase in Indigenous populations, health care professionals, such as Debbie Miller, a dementia care specialist for the Oneida Nation, are having to navigate through unique obstacles in tribal communities.

"There are some cultural sensitivities I navigate," she said. "Some of our tribal members follow Western medicine, but others follow more traditional culture, and I am respectful of their beliefs."

Tribal cultural values also can be an advantage when addressing Alzheimer's with Indigenous families because of the deep respect and care for elders.

"I have tribal members in my family and we have a strong passion to care for our elders," Miller said.

Native Americans are 15% more likely to develop Alzheimer's than whites and up to 70% more likely than Asians, according to the Alzheimer's Association.

One in three Native American elders will develop Alzheimer's or dementia and the number of Indigenous people living with dementia is expected to increase four-fold by 2060.
That's partly because advances in medicine are enabling people to live longer.

"There are a lot more older (tribal) members and age is the greatest risk factor (for Alzheimer's)," said Kate Kahles, a program manager who works with tribal communities in Wisconsin for the Alzheimer's Association. (continues on next page)

(article from cover page continues here)
A healthy diet can help reduce the risk for Alzheimer's, but food options have historically been limited on rural reservations.

The U.S. government had forced Indigenous people onto reservations that were typically in areas with poor farming, which led to poor diets for generations.

That poor diet has led to a health crisis on reservations with some of the top killers for Indigenous people being heart disease, cancer and diabetes.

Heart disease and cancer both caused 20% of Indigenous deaths in Wisconsin, according to the Wisconsin Department of Health Services.

Indigenous people in Wisconsin are also more than three times more likely to die from diabetes than the white population, according to the state agency.

Indigenous populations on rural reservations in Wisconsin also tend to skew older in age because of a lack of housing and jobs as younger families move to cities.

Kahles said there is typically also a lack of specialized health care, such as neurologists, in rural areas, including reservations.

About two-thirds of Native Americans say they know somebody with Alzheimer's, but only 25% of Native Americans say they are worried about developing Alzheimer's, according to the Alzheimer's Association.

Kahles said Alzheimer's is typically not much of a concern within tribal communities because it's seen as part of the normal aging process and part of a person's journey to the spirit world.

She said many tribal communities also revere long-term memories of historical events in elders and, since Alzheimer's generally affects short-term memory, its symptoms can be easily missed.

But Kahles said tribal communities are also tight-knit and people are very caring for their families and neighbors, which is a positive for health care professionals looking to address Alzheimer's.

"No one wants to talk about dementia," Miller said. "It's a scary thing. But even though it's not a good situation, you have to think about it in order to better care for your loved ones. ... Many families still don't know I'm here, but the education programs are helping to make inroads with families."

Miller started Memory Cafés in Oneida, which are social gatherings that allow people experiencing memory loss to connect with their loved one and build new support networks.

"Socialization is so important to the tribal community," she said. "Those who attended love to talk about history and tracing family trees. ... I tried to create activities tied to tribal history. We focused one café on the apple orchard on the reservation and discussed how it started."

TIPS TO REDUCE YOUR RISK OF DEMENTIA

- Get at least 8 hours of sleep every night
- Avoid or limit alcohol intake
- Maintain a healthy weight with healthy food intake
- Control high blood pressure
- Manage your blood sugar levels

To learn more, visit https://www.adrc.wisc.edu/prevention

Spring 2024 Indigenized Physical Education Workshop Series

Mii o'ow ezhi-odaminoyang Anishinaabeg
Tókhed ikčé oyáte iyéčhed uŋškátapi Tsi
Tsi' Niyukwatolyá•tha' Ukwehokúha
How We Play as the People

<u>No cost to actively participate in one or more sessions per day</u>

Indigenized Physical Education Workshop, 9:00 am-1:00 pm

<u>One Hour Sessions:</u>
Indigenized physical activity breaks in the classroom
Indigenized physical education strategies
The games of life curriculum model
Indigenous foods kitchen
Indigenized physical fitness testing
Sharing through storytelling

Read our bios:
Google keywords, Dan & Susan Ninham

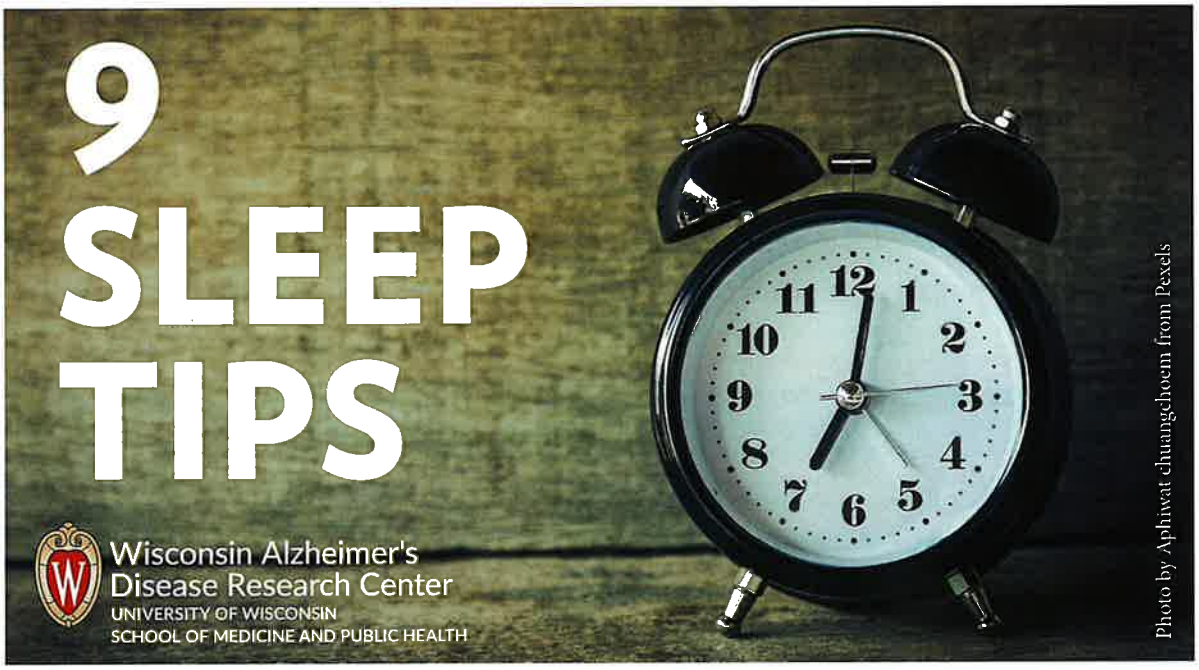
Get active, Indigenously!

Tues., Apr. 9: Northern Michigan University, Marquette, MI, Dr. Dan Ninham
Sat., Apr. 27: Proctor HS, Proctor, MN, Dr. Dan & Susan Ninham
Sat., May 18: Rochester Community Technical College, Rochester, MN, Dr. Dan & Susan Ninham
Sat., June 1: Milwaukee Indian Community School, Milwaukee, WI, Dr. Dan and Susan Ninham

Generous financial support & proceeds benefit Empowered Youth Development Initiatives

Location-specific Flyer Requests:
coach.danninham@gmail.com or
text 218.368.6430

9 SLEEP TIPS



Sleeping is one of the most important things you do in your day, yet studies show 1 in 3 Americans don't get enough sleep. Getting high-quality sleep with few interruptions and enough of it each night is critical to your health.

Dr. Barbara Bendlin, University of Wisconsin-Madison, published a study in 2017 that found people who reported more sleepiness during the day and not feeling rested after a night of sleep showed more brain changes related to Alzheimer's disease. Scientists are still trying to figure out if poor sleep causes Alzheimer's disease-related brain changes, or if the brain changes cause sleep disturbance. But it is clear there is a connection.

Your behaviors during the day, and especially before bedtime, can have an impact on your sleep. They can promote healthy sleep or contribute to sleeplessness. Below are 9 sleep tips and strategies to help you improve your sleep.

1. Aim for 7–9 hours of sleep each night.
2. Prioritize sleep and invest in a quality mattress.
3. Start a relaxing evening routine that includes dim lights (but not smartphones, TVs, or other screens) and peaceful thoughts.
4. Limit daytime naps to 30–60 minutes.
5. No electronics or bright screens before bed.
6. Limit caffeine in afternoons and evenings.
7. Avoid eating right before bed.
8. Exercise during the day, but not right before bed.
9. Limit your alcohol intake, especially right before bed.

Learn more

Visit the National Institute on Aging webpage "A Good Night's Sleep" at nia.nih.gov/health/good-nights-sleep. Find resources from the Wisconsin Alzheimer's Disease Research Center at adrc.wisc.edu/learn-more.

Healthy Living with Mild Cognitive Impairment (MCI) Education Series

Helping people across Wisconsin live and cope with an MCI diagnosis

March 15 | June 14 | September 13 | and December 13, 2024

9:30–11:30 a.m.

Register to attend each program in person throughout the year at one of six locations across Wisconsin in Brown, Dane, Dodge, Jefferson, La Crosse, or Rock counties. Or, participate from anywhere, live online via Zoom. **Programs are free and open to the public.**

March 15

Precision Medicine: Alzheimer's Disease Biomarkers and New Therapies

Guests: Sterling Johnson, PhD, and Robert Przybelski, MD

June 14

You Are More Than Your Diagnosis: Adapting to Life with Mild Cognitive Impairment

Guest: Adrienne Johnson, PhD

Sept 13

Heart Health is Brain Health: Reducing Vascular Risk Factors for a Healthier Mind

Guest: Cynthia Carlsson, MD, MS

Dec 13

Amplify Your Life, Sharpen Your Mind: How Managing Hearing Loss Can Help Your Memory

Guest: Pamela Souza, PhD

How to register: Call the Brown County Aging and Disability Resource Center to attend in-person or register to attend programs online at adrc.wisc.edu/mci

Brown County

Event location: Aging and Disability Resource Center of Brown County at 300 S. Adams Street, Green Bay

To register, contact the Brown County ADRC at 920-448-4300. Interested attendees can also register over the phone for a free brain check-up following the event.

About the Series:

Healthy Living with Mild Cognitive Impairment (MCI) is a support and educational series for people with MCI and their care partners. Classes offer attendees guidance and science-backed strategies for living and coping with a diagnosis of MCI.

Join **Nathaniel Chin, MD**, and **Jennifer McAlister, BA**, from the Wisconsin Alzheimer's Disease Research Center, and guest speakers, to learn more about Mild Cognitive Impairment (MCI). Each program will end with a Q&A session.

Questions?

Contact Jennifer McAlister at 608-262-9640 or jmcalister@medicine.wisc.edu

Wisconsin Alzheimer's Disease Research Center
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN SCHOOL OF MEDICINE AND PUBLIC HEALTH

ADRC Aging & Disability Resource Center

Relevant. Inclusive. Enlightened
MSC 55+ MADISON SENIOR CENTER

ADRC of Brown, Dodge, Jefferson, La Crosse, and Rock counties are committed to unbiased service and cannot endorse nor recommend any organization, product, or service.

KEEPING OUR BRAINS HEALTHY

V Q O E Q Z V H J B K Z J J J P Q E V W L K T K E
S O K H Q N B M Q Y C L I N I C A L T R I A L S D
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B R A I N H E A L T H E D W G Z O Q W S N H I S I

Alzheimers
Brain Health
Brain Reserve
Cleveland Clinic
Clinical Trials
Dashboard
Exercise
Learn
Lifestyle
Medical
Mediterranean
Memory
Mood
Nutrition
Pillars
Prevention
Quit Smoking
Sleep
Social
Stay Positive
Volunteer