



THE OHIO MASONIC COMMUNITIES

**Connecting Realities** 

## Improving Memory Care Where Compliance Meets Culture

OALA Spring Conference  
April 14, 2026

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**Presented by**



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THE OHIO MASONIC COMMUNITIES


### Who We Are

- Home for worthy and distressed Master Masons and their wives, widows, and children was founded in 1888 in Springfield, Ohio
- The Ohio Masonic Communities Foundation was founded in 1995 and community resources (now The Ohio Masonic Communities Resource Center) was added in 2005
- In 1996, doors were open to the public at Springfield Masonic Community
- Browning Masonic Community (Waterville, Ohio) and Western Reserve Masonic Community (Medina, Ohio) were added in 1999 and 2001
- Roughly 760 units across 3 campuses, with 2 five-star CCRCs and 1 IL/AL/MC mix

### Mission

At The Ohio Masonic Communities, we live our Masonic Values by serving as a trusted partner to help our communities thrive.

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**Session Objectives:**

- 1. Be able to identify immersive, innovative trainings that can bridge the gap between minimum compliance and true clinical excellence.
- 2. Recognize the benefits and importance of resident engagement responsibilities lying with the interdisciplinary team and not just life enrichment.
- 3. Develop a training roadmap to guide implementation of a custom training program that improves staff satisfaction and retention as well as engagement, connection, and outcomes among residents.

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**Connecting Realities Overview**

- Research-based, resident-centered, purpose-designed
- Connect who residents were to who they are
- Meet residents in their reality
- Create environment for those with dementia to thrive

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**Connecting Realities Overview**

- Programming offered in Pathways Memory Support Neighborhoods
- 4 elements
  1. Staff training
  2. Resident-centered technologies
  3. Music therapy
  4. Purpose-designed spaces and elements

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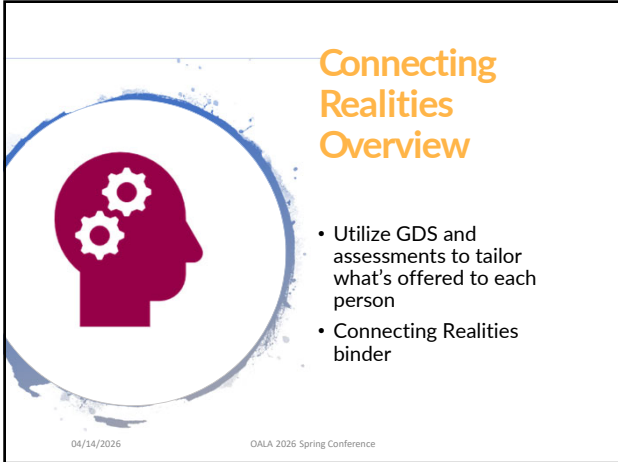
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**Connecting Realities Overview**

- Utilize GDS and assessments to tailor what's offered to each person
- Connecting Realities binder

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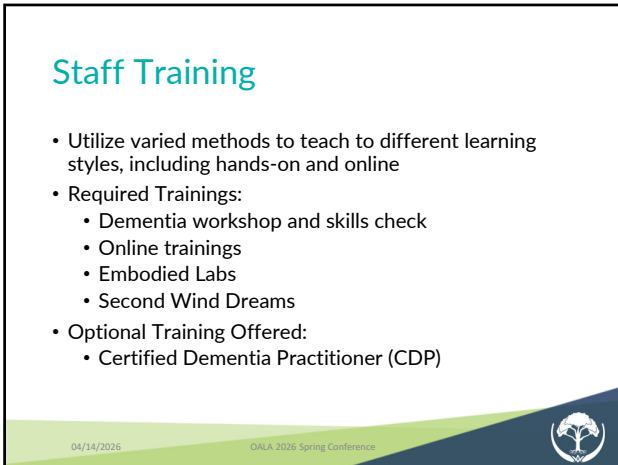
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**Staff Training**

- Utilize varied methods to teach to different learning styles, including hands-on and online
- Required Trainings:
  - Dementia workshop and skills check
  - Online trainings
  - Embodied Labs
  - Second Wind Dreams
- Optional Training Offered:
  - Certified Dementia Practitioner (CDP)

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**Embodied Labs**

THE OHIO MASONIC HOME

Putting Innovation into Action

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## Resident-Centered Technologies

**Lifeloop's iN2L**

- Computer-based and used 1:1 or in groups
- Activities designed for different cognitive levels
- Provide independence and sense of purpose

**Cara's Kennel**

- Robotic animals that mimic pets, including dogs, cats, and birds
- Reduce feelings of isolation, anxiety, and depression

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## Cara's Kennel



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## Resident-Centered Technology



**Lucynt Table**

- Interactive table using sensors, with a variety of games and activities
- Playlists tailored to each resident's individual abilities and interests

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## Resident-Centered Technologies



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## Music Therapy

- Encourages orientation to space and time
- Supports mental, emotional, and social wellbeing
- Treats the whole person
- Silver Songbirds choir



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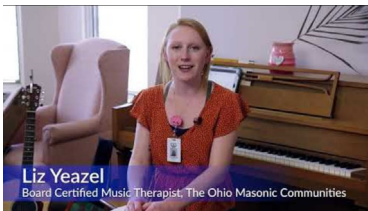
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## Music Therapy



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## Purpose-Designed Spaces and Elements

- Individual spaces with designated purposes
- Invoke instinctive sense of purpose based on ingrained memories
  - When you see a piano, you know it's for music
- Current spaces include:
  - Music
  - Art
  - Games and puzzles
  - Movies
  - Exercise



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## Purpose-Designed Spaces and Elements

### Life Stations

- Areas set up based on hobbies and interests of residents
- Independent engagement with no or minimal cueing
- Current stations include:
  - Woodshop/Garage/Mancave
  - Gardening
  - Laundry
  - Library
  - Nursery
  - Home Office



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## Purpose-Designed Spaces and Elements

- Intentional choices for wall colors, flooring style and patterns, and lighting
- Interactive wall art
- Dishes chosen for style and color that encourage eating for residents with dementia
- Shadow boxes



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### Benefits for Residents

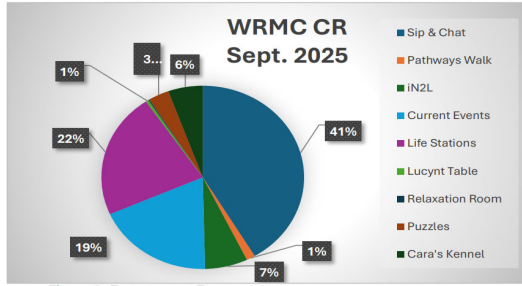


Figure 3: Engagement Types

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### Next Building with Benefits:

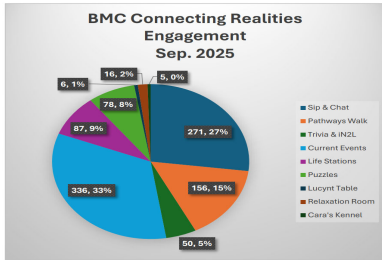


Fig. 2: Types of Connecting Realities Engagement, BMC, 9/2025

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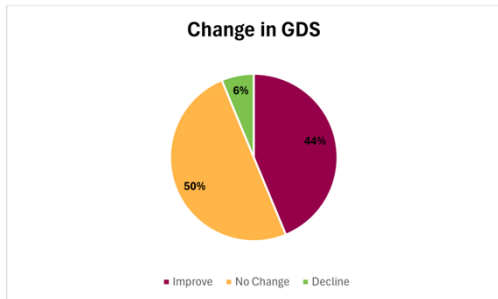
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### Benefits for Residents



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## Lesson Learned #1

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### Implement in phases

- Elements of programming added over time, not all at once
- Updating physical space was most recent
- Continue to evolve

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## Lesson Learned #2



Some elements are more expensive than others



Be creative about implementing and funding



Grants and donations

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## What's worked well

- Staff binder with summary sheet about each resident
- Workshop-style training with stations
- Engagement has decreased behaviors and falls

## What didn't work how we thought it would

- Staffing turnover
- Buy in on "approach to life" instead of "life enrichment programming"
- Integration with therapies

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## Develop Training Roadmap:

- A. Orientation (What does this look like?)
- B. Mentoring (Am I the right fit for Dementia Care?)
- C. Embodied Labs
- D. Second Wind Dreams
- E. On-boarding (Become CDP certified)
- F. Utilize Retain (Obtain Satisfaction #'s and Feedback)
- G. Outcomes for Residents
- F. Turnover/Retention Monitoring (QAPI)

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## Learn More



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Connecting  
Realities



Vist: [omcoh.org/ConnectingRealities](https://omcoh.org/ConnectingRealities)  
 Email: [cschuster@omcoh.org](mailto:cschuster@omcoh.org)  
[kweil@omcoh.org](mailto:kweil@omcoh.org)

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