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# What's the Real Bottom-Line? Cultivating Compassion: Leading from the Heart in Memory Care Facilities

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PROPOSAL FOR LESLEY UNIVERSITY COMMUNITY OF SCHOLARS  
IDENTITY AND LEADERSHIP IN THE CONTEXT OF SOCIAL CHANGE

*What's the Real Bottom-Line? Cultivating Compassion: Leading from the Heart in Memory Care Facilities*

**ABSTRACT:**

The aim of this panel is to present an emerging if not visionary approach to caring for patients with neurodegenerative disorders. We will present the thesis work of Laurie Smith "A New Approach to Dementia Care Including Visual Cues and Person-Centered Activities" and Paula Reardon-Webster "Cultivating Compassion as a Tool for Everyday Leadership". Using research and personal experience, the presenters will consider the possibilities of applying mindfulness-based leadership to provide compassionate care in memory care settings. This session will appeal to students of compassionate care, creative therapies, and applications of mindfulness practice.

- Laurie Smith's work says: "Providing quality care for this aging population means local communities must begin to create programs that focus on the individuals, capabilities, preferences and remaining strengths, rather than minimizing their limitations. In doing so, we foster the in the individual awareness for the independence to learn, allowing the resident to safely express their needs and to teach them to trust they still have the ability to make choices. Moreover, research indicates it can help to reduce behavioral symptoms such as agitation, depression, restlessness, aggression and isolation".
- Paula Webster's work adds: "Many argue this is not a cost-effective approach and is unsustainable; economies of scale must outweigh individual needs. Emerging research in the field of compassion outcomes and mindfulness studies would indicate otherwise. A mindfulness-centered, compassion-based approach throughout an organization, could be the answer to how we serve this population, and in the end ourselves."

**PARTICIPANTS:** We hope to engage participants in a lively, collaborative discussion!

**SHORT DESCRIPTION FOR WEBSITE:**

Mindfulness-based practices are commonly taught to residents at many memory-care and assisted living communities. Our work gives cause for consideration that a holistic, compassion-based approach of delivering care – a “heart-wired” approach-is good for the patient and the entire organization. The approach supports the health of the patient, their family, the staff, and the organization itself.

**PRESENTERS:**

Laurie Smith, 2016 M.A. in Interdisciplinary Studies, CDP Dementia Care Specialist with a Non-Pharmacological Approaches and Paula Webster 2016, M. A. in Mindfulness Studies

**FORMAT** This session will be a panel discussion combining key elements of cultivating compassion as a leadership tool with compassion-based, holistic approaches in memory care. Each presenter will give a brief overview of their thesis work, will move into a conversation about applications of mindfulness and compassion within memory care treatment as well as possibilities for a systemic shift to a compassion-based model.