

# Buddy Programs Across the ADCs 1997-2019

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# The Buddy Program History & Framework

- Launched 1997 – Northwestern physician diagnosed with Alzheimer’s disease. Unable to practice medicine, but could mentor a medical student.
- Rooted in value and belief that persons living with early dementia have continued capacity to make meaningful contributions to society and others.
- Medical students gain knowledge and experience outside clinical setting
- Based on relationship, dialogue and reciprocity

1997-2019 273 Matched Pairs



**PATIENTS TEACH STUDENTS**



# Buddy Program Goals



- Educate medical students regarding dementia
  - Increase dementia knowledge
  - Heighten awareness of the skills and strengths which remain in people with this disease
  - Provide opportunity to see firsthand how persons living with dementia responds to their own changing abilities.
- Familiarize students with issues related to the daily care and support of persons with dementia and their families
- Become familiar with most effective ways of communicating with persons with dementia.
- Introduce students to research and practice opportunities in related fields
- Provide persons with dementia an opportunity to serve as a mentor to a future doctor



# Buddy Program Structure

- Recruit 1<sup>st</sup> year medical students at the beginning of the academic year
- Pre-post testing of knowledge and attitudes
- 3 hour orientation on basics of dementia, communication and family caregiving
- Match Day
- 4 hours a month in activity of their choosing
- Monthly student process meetings
- End-of-Year Reflection Paper
- Mid-Year evaluation
- Year-End Focus Celebration
- Focus Groups for Mentors and Families



# Data Collection



- Student Pre-Post Tests
  - Jefferson Scale of Physician Empathy (Hojat et al., 2001)
  - Dementia Attitudes Scale (O'Connor & McFadden, 2010)
  - Family Stigma in Alzheimer's Disease Scale (Werner, Godstein & Heinik, 2010)
  - Dementia Knowledge
    - Northwestern (Morhardt & Kaptanoglu)
    - Boston University (Jefferson et al)
- Student Activity Journal Form
  - Activity type, date, time
  - Describe 'buddy' mood & behavior
  - Describe student reactions, thoughts, feelings
  - Interactions with caregiver
  - Concerns
  - Plan for next visit
- Student Reflection Paper
- Mentor & Care Partner
  - Mid – Year Feedback
  - End-Year Evaluation Focus Groups

# Results



- **Significant increase in knowledge of dementia:**
  - 6.5% increase in NU BP Dementia Knowledge test,  $p < 0.0001$
  - 8.1% increase in Boston PAIRS test,  $p < 0.0001$
- **Significant increase in empathy towards those with dementia:**
  - 12.2% increase in Jefferson Empathy Scale,  $p < 0.0001$
- **Significant increase in positive attitudes towards those with dementia:**
  - 13.5% increase in Dementia Attitudes Scale,  $p < 0.0001$
- **Significant decrease in stigma towards those with Alzheimer's Disease:**
  - 12.5% decrease in the Stigma in AD Scale,  $p = 0.023$

- **Qualitative thematic analysis**  
N= 27 students, 107 journal entries
  - Increasing comfort over time
  - Seeing person in a more holistic context - person is more than their diagnosis
  - Increasing awareness of the subjective response (emotional impact) of person with dementia
  - Expressing curiosity regarding symptoms
  - Understanding the family's experience



# Summary of Buddy Programs

Program	University	Student Makeup	Participant Numbers	Evaluation Methods	
Buddy Program (1997)	Northwestern	1 <sup>st</sup> Year Medical Students Pre/Post Doctoral Students	273 dyads	Pre/Post: Knowledge, Stigma, Empathy, Attitudes   Journals, Reflection Paper, Focus Groups	
PAIRS (2007)	Boston	1 <sup>st</sup> Year Medical Students	79 dyads	Pre/Post: Knowledge, Stigma, Empathy, Attitudes   Journals, Reflection Paper, Focus Groups	
DUO (2012)	Washington	1 <sup>st</sup> Year Medical Students	64 dyads	Pre/Post: Knowledge, Attitudes, Empathy	
A Friend for Rachel (2012)	Columbia	Pre-Medical Students: Undergraduate and Post-Bac	120 dyads	Pre/Post: ADKS, Attitudes   Participant Interviews	
PAIRS (2013)	Kansas	1 <sup>st</sup> Medical Students	102 dyads	Pre/Post: Dementia Attitudes, Dementia Knowledge. Journal entries, letter to teacher	
Patient as Teacher (2014)	UCSF	1 <sup>st</sup> Year Medical Students, Dentistry, Nursing, Pharmacy, Physical Therapy	30 dyads	Pre/Post Survey   Evaluation Survey	
New Friends (2014)	UW-Madison	Physical and Occupational Therapy, Nursing, Medical Students	45 dyads	Pre/Post: Knowledge	
Buddy Program (2016)	NYU	1 <sup>st</sup> Year Medical Students, Nursing, Undergraduates	118 dyads	Qualitative	

# You want to start a program...

**Northwestern Medicine**  
Feinberg School of Medicine

Mesulam Cognitive Neurology  
and Alzheimer's Disease Center



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*As you go into a (mentoring relationship) you must remember that you are not the giver and the other a receiver, but that this is about RECIPROCITY, where if you cannot grow and learn from each other, this relationship will not prosper!*

– Dr. Johnetta Cole, President, Spelman College





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