

## **de Tornyay Center for Healthy Aging: University of Washington School of Nursing**

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In gerontology, there is an increasing emphasis on the positive aspects of aging. The de Tornyay Center for Healthy Aging is dedicated to advancing and sharing knowledge about healthy aging and ways professionals and systems can promote optimal experiences for older adults through research, education, and community relationships. Research: At the Center, we promote the development of researchers—from undergraduate students through senior faculty—by creating opportunities to exchange ideas about healthy aging, funding projects on health issues for older adults, and sharing research findings in seminars and presentations. Education: We have been involved in a number of important geriatric initiatives to enrich the curricula in the UW School of Nursing and serve as a resource for faculty involved in teaching gerontology, for students interested in working with older adults, and for practicing professionals seeking continuing education. Since 1999, the Center has awarded Healthy Aging Scholarships to undergraduate and graduate students in the School of Nursing. Faculty mentors offer individual guidance and serve as a valuable resource for these beginning researchers, who carry out projects that address issues related to aging and health care for older adults. To date, over 70 undergraduate and graduate student projects have been funded. Community Relationships: The Center promotes high quality, evidence-based services and optimal outcomes for older adults and their families and friends. We support collaborative models of health care and serve as a resource for the university, professionals in the community, and the general public. We also facilitate regular networking of nursing and other health care professionals in the community who provide services for older adults. The School of Nursing has a long-standing partnership with ERA Care Communities, a provider of innovative retirement housing in the Puget Sound region, to promote healthy aging by supporting the design and management of healthcare programs and facilitating opportunities for gerontological practice, research and education.

Within the School of Nursing, gerontology content is largely integrated throughout the undergraduate curriculum. A masters degree focusing on primary care in adult/older adult health is offered in our graduate program. Specific undergraduate and graduate courses on aging include life span growth and development, the biology of aging, mental health and older adults, and a new course in gerontological nursing. Many faculty conduct research in areas relevant to older adults, including Alzheimer's disease and dementia (Northwest Research Group on Aging: Linda Teri, Rebecca Logsdon, Susan McCurry), death and dying (Barbara Burns McGrath, Sarah Shannon), education in gerontology (Ruth Craven), elder mistreatment (Maggie Baker), menopausal and postmenopausal women's health (Nancy Fugate Woods, Ellen Mitchell, Cathryn Booth-LaForce, Barbara Cochrane), physical activity and fatigue (Basia Belza), and sleep (Carol Landis, Martha Lentz).