

## **Background**

The UW Medicine Memory & Brain Wellness Center (MBWC) promotes the well-being of persons living with memory loss and their families by providing exceptional care, advancing scientific understanding and clinical best practices, and building dementia-friendly communities. As part of its mission, the MBWC provides a variety of programs and events for persons living with memory loss and their families, and the community at large.

In Fall 2020, two mother/daughter pairs suggested and helped launch Ask About Alzheimer's, an online peer support group for middle school students with a loved one with memory loss or dementia. The group provides an opportunity for youth to share their feelings and connect with others who have a similar experience. The goal of the group is that members would be able to process emotions, enhance their coping skills, increase their understanding and empathy for their loved one's experience, and find connection with others. The group meets on Zoom from 4 – 4:45 p.m. every other Wednesday during the school year. Each session includes an opening quote, ice breaker activity, and facilitated sharing. Periodically a guest speaker is brought in to discuss a requested topic. In the 2021-2022 school year, we intend to open the group to high school students as well, doing the ice breaker together and then separating by age group into two break-out rooms for sharing time. The program is led by a pair of volunteer co-facilitators who have personal or professional experience with youth and/or people with dementia.

**Volunteer Position Title:** Program Facilitator, Ask About Alzheimer's

**Supervisor:** Marigrace Becker, MSW, Program Manager for Community Education & Impact

**Volunteer Position Description:** The volunteer co-facilitators work together to ensure the success of the group. Responsibilities include the following:

- Meeting online to prep 15 minutes before each group, and staying online briefly afterward to debrief
- Setting and maintaining ground rules to create a safe, respectful and welcoming group atmosphere
- Helping incorporate any newcomers and orienting them to the group
- Coordinating group activities including opening quote and ice breaker
- Facilitating sharing among group members about feelings and experiences related to their loved one with memory loss or dementia
- Supporting leadership/ownership among youth members i.e. opportunities to lead activities
- Managing the Zoom platform
- Time-keeping
- Maintaining confidentiality of personal information of group members
- Communicating with Program Manager about any updates, concerns, or requests for guest speakers

## **Volunteer Requirements:**

- Age 21+
- Bachelor's degree in social or health sciences, or related field. Graduate students or current/retired professionals are encouraged to apply.

*Volunteer Position Description: Program Facilitator, Ask About Alzheimer's*

- Personal or professional background with youth, or persons with dementia
- Experience facilitating or instructing groups
- Interest in helping youth explore feelings and cope
- Access to internet, computer/tablet and webcam; ability to use the Zoom platform
- Reliable and dependable

**Time Commitment:**

- Co-facilitators commit to their role for minimum 6 months, ideally for 9 months, with opportunity to extend.
- Total time commitment for the group is 3:45 – 5 p.m. every other Wednesday, to include prep, group time, and debrief.
- Minimal administrative time may also be required, such as sending reminder emails, communicating with group members about their assigned roles, or communicating with Program Manager about the group.

**Training/Onboarding:**

- Volunteers will attend a 1.5 hour orientation/training covering information about dementia, adolescent psychology, and facilitation tips. They will have access to ongoing support from Program Manager for guidance.
- Volunteers will complete required Harborview/UW Medicine volunteer paperwork including background check.
- Volunteers will observe at least 2 sessions, then try out facilitation role with support of Program Manager, before initiating volunteer role.

**Volunteer Benefits:**

Volunteers can expect the following benefits:

- Contribute to the well-being of youth and families impacted by dementia
- Use your skills and personal experience on behalf of your community
- Learn more about resources for people with memory loss and dementia and the work of the MBWC
- Letters of reference available upon request

**More Information:**

For questions, concerns or more information, please contact Marigrace Becker, Program Manager for Community Education and Impact: [mbecker1@uw.edu](mailto:mbecker1@uw.edu), (206) 744-2190.

*Thank you for your interest in serving at the UW Memory & Brain Wellness Center!*  
*[www.depts.washington.edu/mbwc](http://www.depts.washington.edu/mbwc)*