Testimony of
Greg Olsen, Director
New York State Office for the Aging

Joint Legislative Budget Hearing
Conducted By the
Senate Finance Committee
Assembly Ways & Means Committee
Wednesday, January 31, 2024

Good afternoon, Chairperson Krueger, Chairpersons Cleare and Kim, and all the distinguished members of the Senate and Assembly standing committees. I am Greg Olsen, Director of the New York State Office for the Aging (NYSOFA), and I'm honored to testify today. Governor Hochul's Executive Budget seeks to create a more affordable, more livable, and safer New York, while opening doors to the communities and people who have historically been blocked from equal chances at success. The proposed Executive Budget includes many proposals that support older adults and their families across agencies, even amid efforts to close a $4 billion budget gap through responsible steps that safeguard opportunities and supports for millions of New Yorkers.

I am pleased to testify on provisions of Governor Hochul's proposed budget that directly affect NYSOFA programs and services, along with additional budget proposals that will positively impact older New Yorkers and their families and move towards the broader goal of creating a more affordable and livable New York.

The Governor's State of the State message and subsequent Executive Budget proposal builds upon accomplishments passed in last year's Budget and sets New York on a path for a better future regardless of age.

Utilizing the state's 2019-2024 Prevention Agenda as the umbrella, and instituting a Health Across all Policies approach, New York State agencies are incorporating health considerations into our planning, programs, and initiatives. As agencies, we are committed to working together and considering how our policies fulfill New York's pledge as the first age-friendly state in the nation. We are further strengthening and coordinating this vital work through the Governor's priority of developing a State Master Plan for Aging. This Master Plan is consistent with the goals and work that New York has been engaged in to improve communities

for people of all ages and create healthy environments in which to grow up and grow old.

In 2018, New York became the first state in the nation to receive a formal designation as “age-friendly” from AARP and the World Health Organization. New York was first because we rank high in the eight domains of age-friendly, livable communities, and due to our comprehensive plan to systematically build age-friendly and smart-growth principles into how government operates and functions.

Through much-needed investments, the Governor’s FY 2025 Executive Budget expands and strengthens that foundation with initiatives that will help individuals access needed services and lead healthy lives by:

- Increasing funding for vital services such as Community Services for the Elderly (CSE), elder abuse and nutrition funding;
- Continuing the funding for the Master Plan for Aging;
- Continuing $23 million in historic investments for older New Yorkers across the state awaiting services – bringing the amount invested to $122 million since 2018;
- Continuing the $2.9 million to expand efforts to combat isolation, bridge the digital divide, improve overall health and wellness, reducing depression, addressing elder abuse, and strengthening NYSOFA’s stipend program for volunteer recruitment and retention;
- Continuing a bill-payer service program in 10 counties to prevent and mitigate financial exploitation of older adults;
- Providing an additional $1 million for our state’s Enhanced Multidisciplinary Team (E-MDT) approach to combating elder abuse in all its forms;

- Maintaining funding for the Long Term Care Ombudsman Program, which serves as an advocate for residents and their families in nursing homes and other facilities;
- Investing an additional $3.4 million in Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) funds for providers; and
- Establishing an interagency Elder Justice Coordinating Council to better plan for and connect the various agencies and systems that prevent and address elder abuse.

The Governor's budget provides the support necessary to continue trailblazing NYSOFA initiatives. Examples include: our award-winning animatronic pet project, which has (to date) brought companionship to more than 27,000 New Yorkers; the GetSetUp platform that offers more than 4,500 lifelong learning and health and wellness classes taken by nearly 200,000 older New Yorkers; the Virtual Senior Center, to bring senior center programming into the homes of older adults; ElliQ, which is a proactive AI companion tool to combat isolation and loneliness, improve connectivity to others, and promote overall health and wellness; GoGoGrandparent, a specialized ride share project to increase transportation options for older adults; and the evidence-based caregiver support platform, Trualta, which is available to any New Yorker who is providing uncompensated care to a loved one.

NYSOFA has implemented almost 20 public and private partnerships to combat isolation and loneliness, improve overall health and wellness, increase physical activity, support informal caregivers and care receivers, promote lifelong learning, train older adults on the use of technology, and promote the development of new relationships and friendships. We have measured for efficacy all of our innovative projects – and the results are simply stunning. I look forward to providing you all with the outcomes from these projects to date. Many of these nation-leading projects are now being replicated across the country.

I am proud to say that NYSOFA is a national leader in the implementation of AI and other technology in serving older adults and their families. NYSOFA is also the nation's first state unit on aging to partner with the National Association of Home Builders (NAHB) to make Certified Aging in Place Specialist (CAPS) training available to our case managers. This certification improves the ability of our front-line staff to assess, recommend, and incorporate home safety features into care plans, helping individuals to age in place while preventing injuries and falls. NYSOFA is also the only state in the country to state-certify our case managers and our health insurance counseling and assistance staff.

This budget is about so much more than any one program or service. It must be examined holistically. Older adults, like all New Yorkers, touch many different systems in their day-to-day lives, which is why the Governor's systemic investments are so important. The following key investments and proposals will further our ability to allow New Yorkers to age in place:

- Increasing affordable housing stock;
- Eliminating the copayment for Insulin;
- Investments in clean water and a greener economy;
- Energy affordability;
- Strengthening medical leave for those with disabilities and health needs;
- Expanding access to oral health and dental care;
- Strengthening anti-discrimination laws for Section 8 Voucher recipients;
- Strengthening storm resiliency and emergency response;
- Investments in victims assistance to make up for significant federal reductions in victims services funding;
- Investments to make New York a leader in AI; and

- Reinvigorating the Most Integrated Setting Coordinating Council (MISCC) and New York's Olmstead Plan.

NYSOFA will continue to engage anyone, anywhere who can improve the lives of older New Yorkers. I am especially proud of our work to significantly increase access for hard-to-serve individuals and communities. NYSOFA has worked tirelessly with our county partners to reach diverse communities, and these efforts are paying off. According to our assessment data, all of our core services saw an increase in serving minority older adults. We will continue to focus on diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) and work with experts to provide training on cultural competence, trauma-informed training, support for the unique needs of LGBTQ+ older adults, etc.

Thank you—I appreciate the opportunity to be here, and I am happy to answer any questions.

Outcomes Data

NYSOFA/AANYS Innovations

NYSOFA - New/Expanded Initiatives

Ageless Innovation/Joy For All - NYSOFA's award-winning animatronic pet project, which has proven to reduce isolation, loneliness and pain. This program has been replicated across the country – 30+ states.

- Distributed 27,000 pets
- Testing efficacy of walker squawker in NH to reduce/prevent fall risk and fall related injuries
- Utilized by other systems and payors
- Intergenerational Games – Reach out and Play
  - 75% reduction in loneliness, isolation and pains

Trualta - for all caregivers in NYS – evidence-based training and support platform

- This is free for you and anyone who provides care to a loved one
- NYSOFA, AgingNY and Trualta Provide Free Web-Based Support Platform for All Family Caregivers in NYS | Office for the Aging

Arch Angels - Caregiver Intensity Index. which helps caregivers identify with and feel honored in their role, gives them an Intensity Score, and navigates them to free resources for their unique needs. Finding out your score and the best free resources for you is available as part of Any Care Counts-NY, sponsored in part by the State Office for the Aging in partnership with ARCHANGELS.

- https://archangelscii.me/3EwYLBz
- - Any Care Counts Campaign – helps caregiver self identify as caregivers based on tasks they perform

GetSetUp – bringing 4,500 courses and classes into the homes of older adults and providing an economic opportunity for older adults to teach classes on the platform and supplement their income by getting paid for their skill. – more than 200,000 users in 18 months

- FREE FOR ANYONE OVER 50
- New York State Office for the Aging · GetSetUp

Blooming Health – SMS, voice, email

- Mass and individual outreach
- Surveys and check ins
- Service and reminders

Intuition Robotics - AI Platform – ElliQ

- designed to foster independence and provide support for older adults through daily check-ins, assistance with wellness goals and physical activities, and more using voice commands and/or on-screen instructions.
- 900 units distributed statewide

Virtual Senior Center - 19 counties in New York currently involved to bring virtual programming into the homes of older adults.

Community Care Connections – Integrated care model linking physicians offices to aging services.

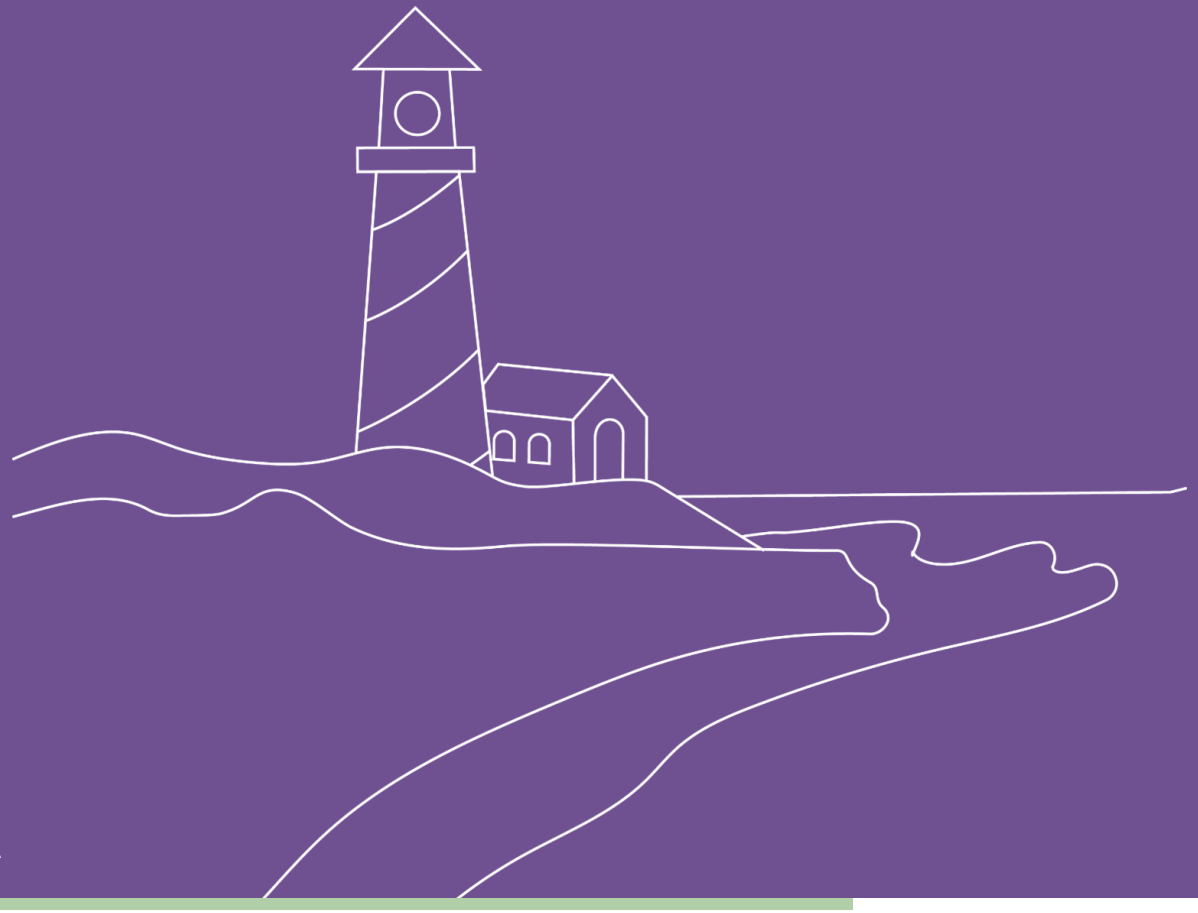
Memory Lane TV – programming for individuals with dementia and their caregivers via TV

Relish-Life – Products designed specifically for individuals with dementia – music, puzzles, arts and crafts, games, etc.

ACUU: Aging Concerns Unite Us

Trualta: New York Caregiver Portal

6/27/2023



Stephanie Shipley - Director, Client

NEW YORK STATE OF OPPORTUNITY. Office for the Aging

Association on AGING in New York

TRUALTA

Since launching last summer…

TRUALTA

1,659
caregivers registered
(37% are age 60+)

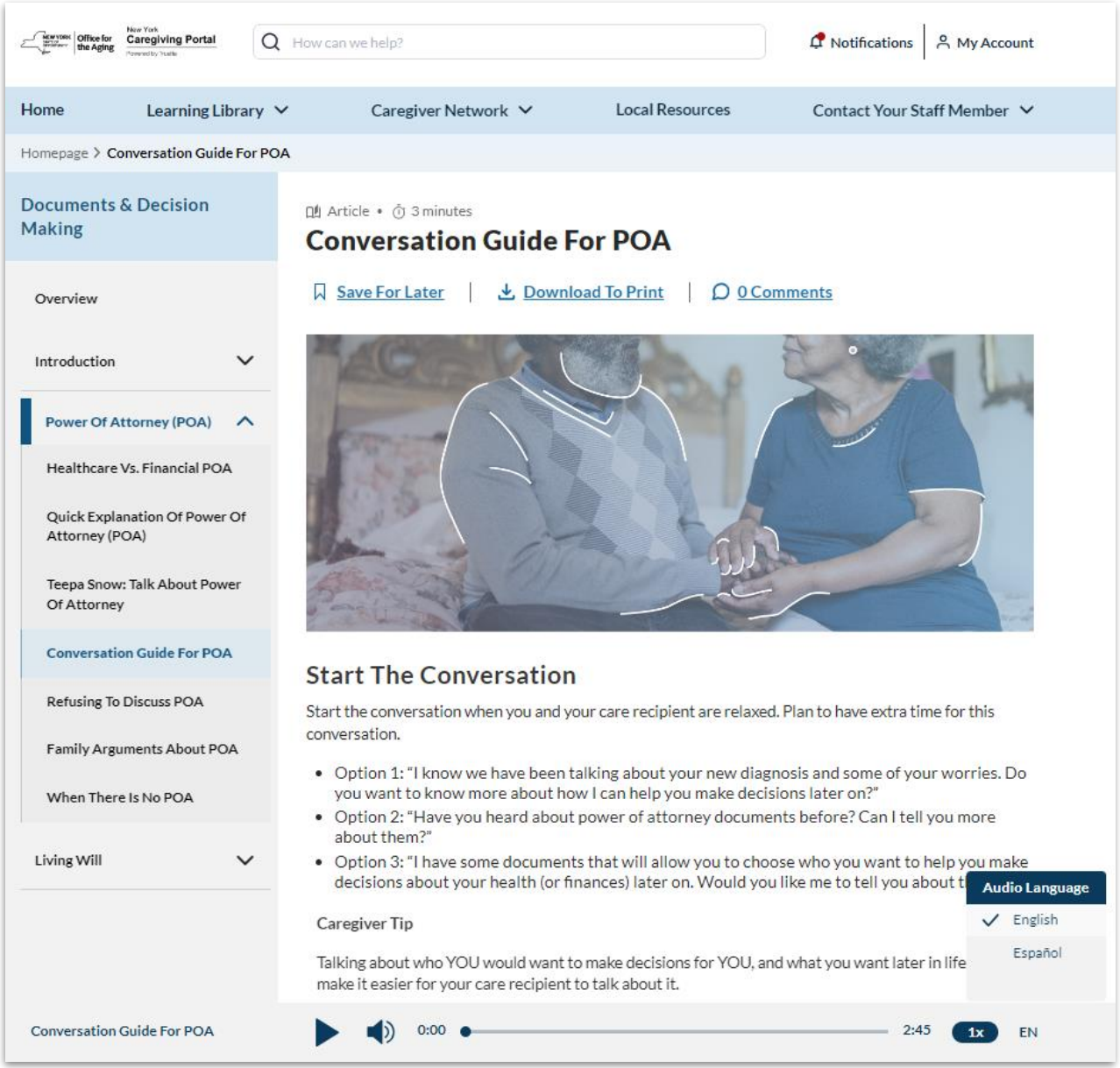
12,000+
activities viewed

Average of
~7.3 activities/
caregiver

60/62
counties represented

http://newyork-caregivers.com/

For Example: Documents & Decision-Making Toolkit



615 New York Caregivers took this toolkit

…in English or Spanish

… read online, or download and print

… or "read-it-to-me" audio podcast

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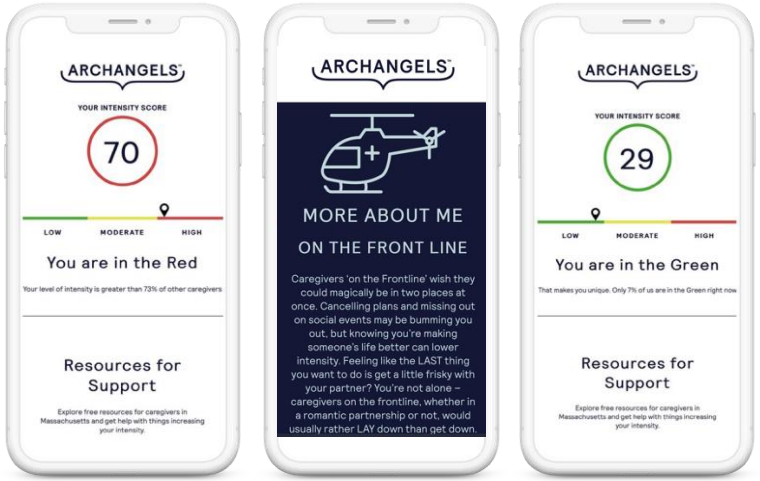
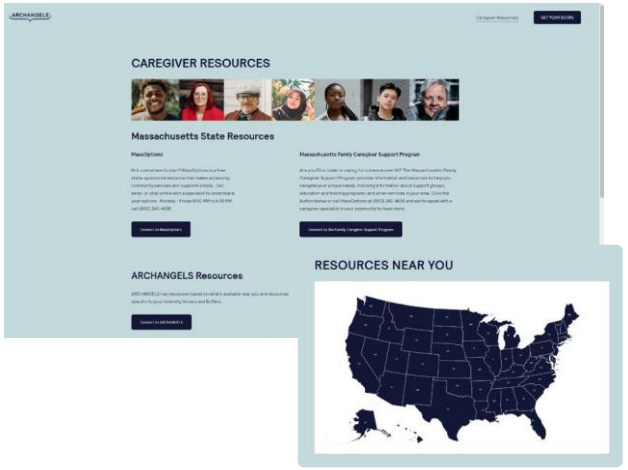
RESEARCH





ENGAGE

VALIDATE INTENSITY

SUPPORT

IMPACT

with data-informed action, policy and advocacy

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If you're the one others rely on, you're probably the go-to guy...find out your score.

archangels-cii.me
What's Your Score?
What's your Caregiver I…
Learn more

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If you're the guy others rely on, who do you go to when you need some help?

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Are you the 'go-to' guy?
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Are you the 1 in 2? Find out your score.

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Because quitting is not an option. Because the intensity is real. What's your score?

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Learn more

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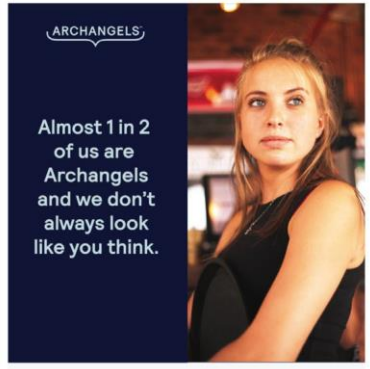
Are you the one in two? Find out your Score.



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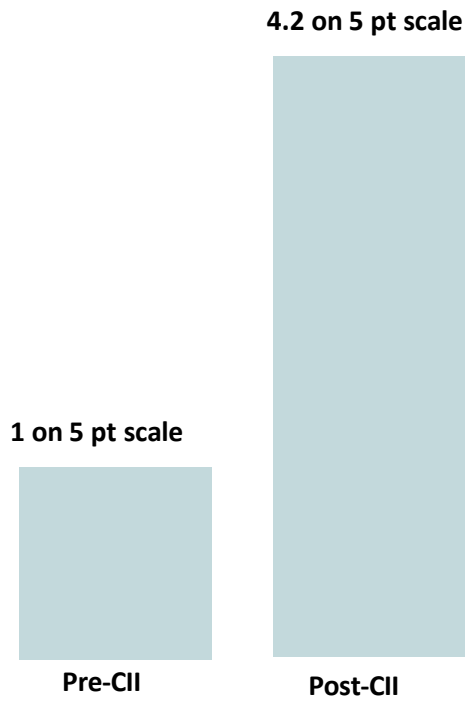
Do You Think of Yourself as a Caregiver?



CAREGIVER ACTIVATION THROUGH THE CII

Caregivers least likely to self-identify in the role had a 320% increase in self-identification (from 1 to 4.2 on average) after completing the Caregiver Intensity Index™.

79% of people who do not identify as a caregiver (before going through the CII) see themselves as a caregiver after completing the CII*

Self-identification activates effective use of support and resources

*Caregivers scoring 1 or 2 pre-CII who scored 4 or 5 post CII

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SOFT LAUNCH: ANY CARE COUNTS – NEW YORK PILOT:
Social only - Currently holding steady with 27% in the red

7500+ get their Intensity Score (30% men)	**Over 1.4 million** New Yorkers touched by awareness campaign	**100%** of counties represented
70% Cities and towns represented	**80%** Share an email for future outreach	**40%** Register
20% Caregivers navigated to explore resources		

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Association on AGING in New York

NEW YORK STATE OF OPPORTUNITY. Office for the Aging

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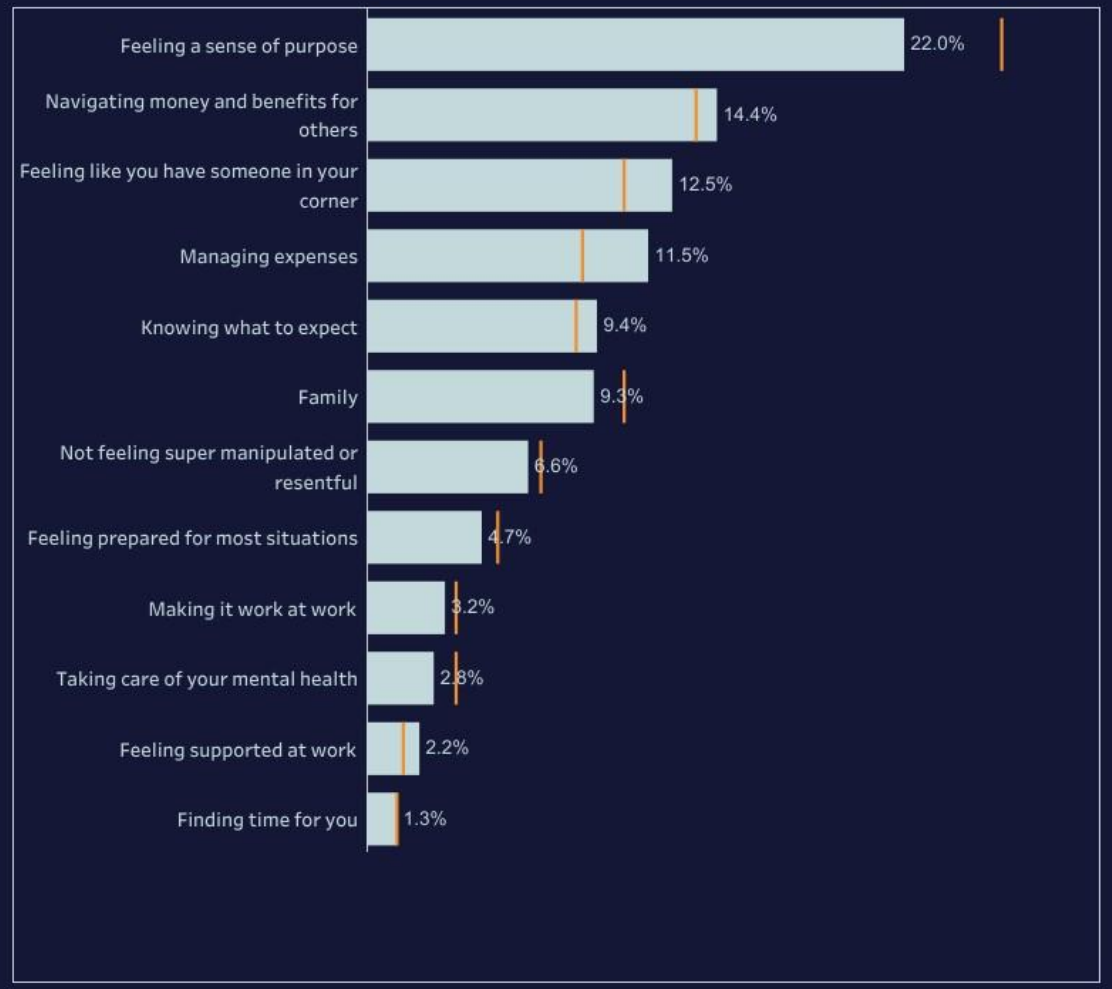
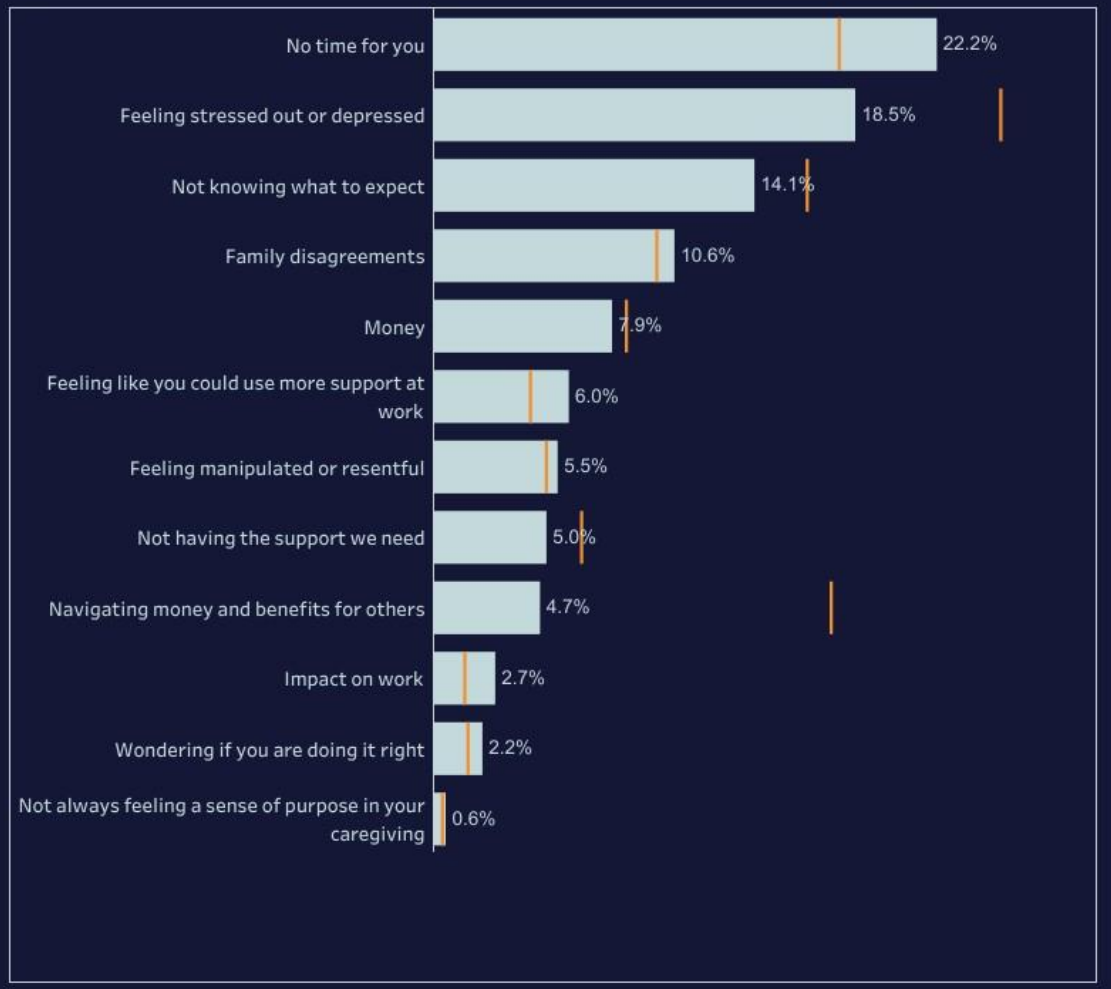
CAREGIVER INTENSITY BUFFERS AND DRIVERS

Any Care Counts New York

BUFFERS



DRIVERS



% of Caregivers
Benchmark

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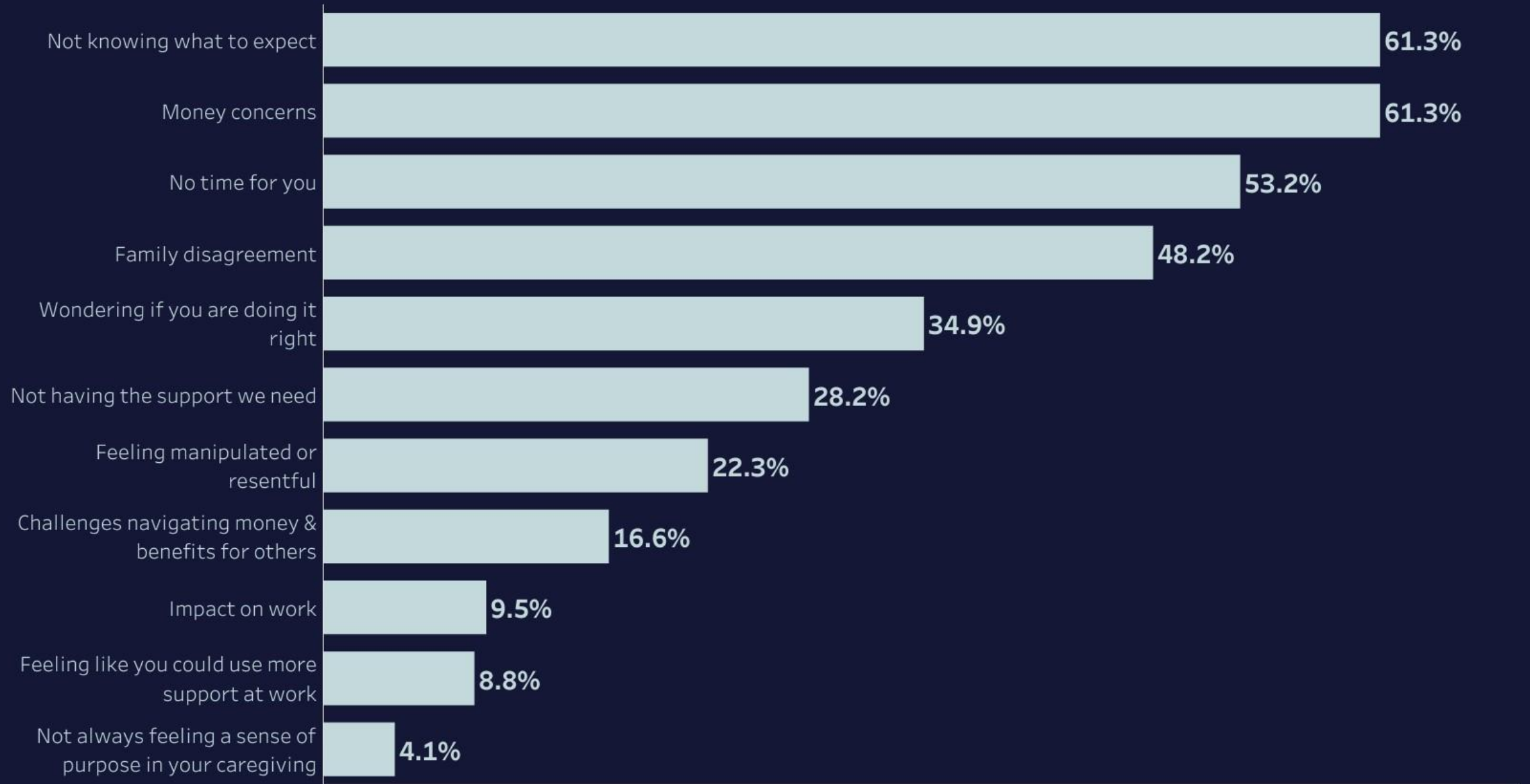
KEY DRIVERS OF CAREGIVER INTENSITY

Percent of Caregivers Responding Agree/Strongly Agree



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N = 6,555

https://archangelscii.me/ACCNY-Kit

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GetSetUp

A safe place for older adults to learn, connect, and share.

Paul Morillo
Vice President of
Government and Strategic Partnerships
Paul@getsetup.io

GetSetUp Supports New York With

Bridging the Digital Divide

Reducing Social Isolation

Improving Physical Health & Well-Being

Reskilling & Upskilling the Older Workforce

GetSetUp - The Largest & Fastest Growing Community of Older Adults

GetSetUp empowers governments, health plans, and communities to address the Social Determinants of Health by providing members the technological assistance, increased health knowledge, and skills they need to age in place and improve their health for better outcomes and lower overall costs.

★★★★★

"I recognize the benefits through mental stimulation and socialization. The intellectual stimulation is an important part, with the others being fitness, socialization, and diet. I see how GetSetUp supports learners with all of these things. For a retired senior who wants a brain workout, it's perfect!"

Gale
A NY Learner

Stats at a Glance

162,000
Unique New York Users

540,000+
Classes Taken by New Yorkers

4+
Languages

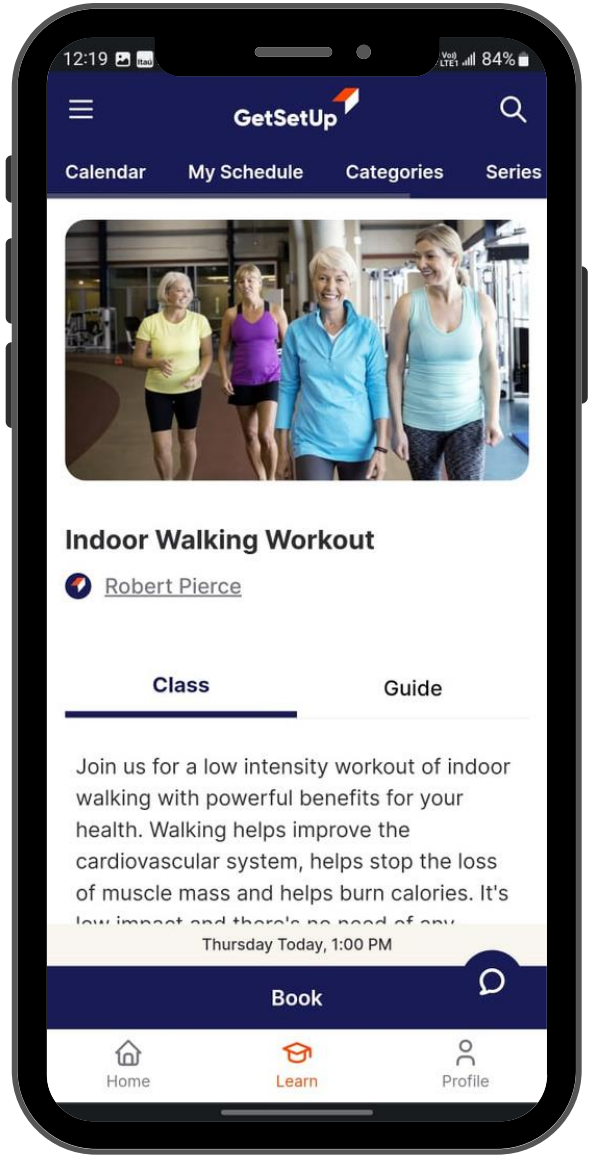
4,000+
Classes in the catalogue

100+
State and local governments, community and health partners

Around-the-clock programming
A global community with hubs in the US, India, Australia and the UK

Most Popular Classes for New York Learners:

- Indoor Walking Workout
- Cardio Dance
- Total Body Works
- Recycled Crafts: Making the Most from What You Have
- Morning Fitness - Let’s Get Moving (aerobic exercise)
- Tai Chi - Shibashi
- Morning Fitness - Core Training (seated)
- Low Impact Aerobics
- Morning Fitness - Fitness Combo
- Morning Fitness - Strength Training (seated)



BLOOMING HEALTH

Powering Healthy Aging-in-Place

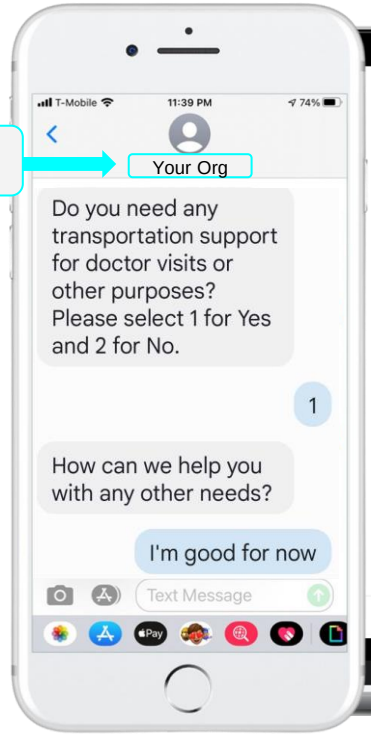
Nima Roohi, PhD
CEO & Cofounder

June 2023

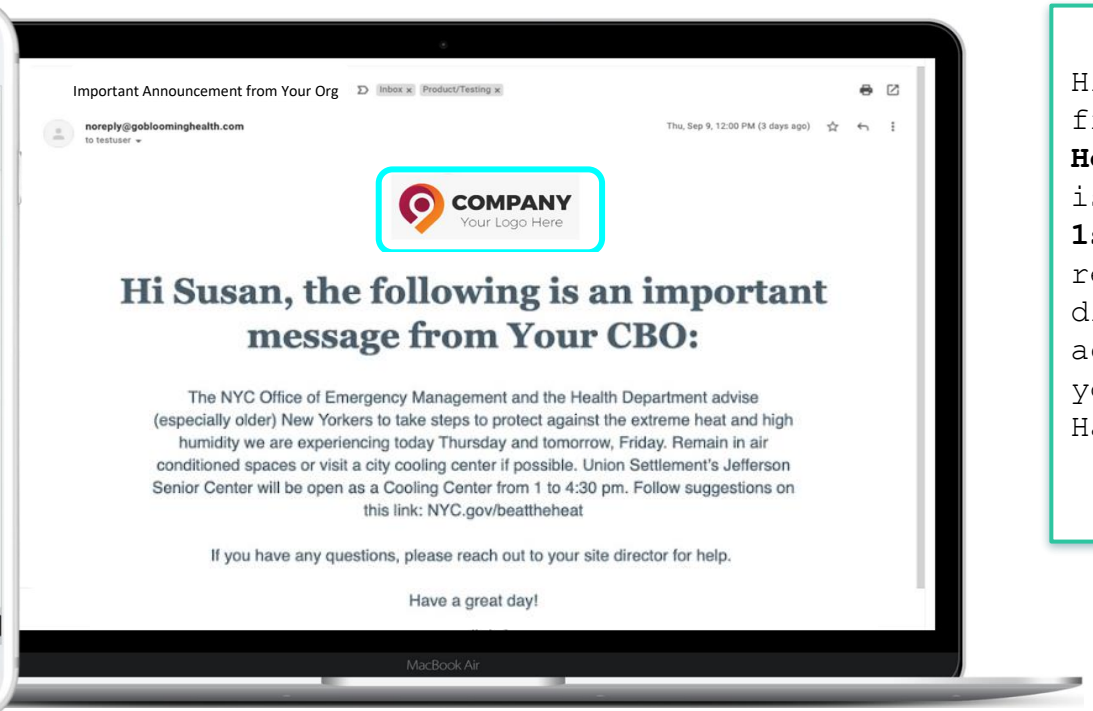
Older Adult Experience

Enabling aging service providers to address the needs of older adults and their caregivers in a timely and personalized way across their aging journey.

Text(SMS)



Email



Voice Calls

Hi Susan! This is a reminder from **YOUR Org** for **Nurses Health Virtual Workshops.** It is occurring on **Tuesday May 1st at 12:00 PM.** Please reach out to your site director for information to access the event or check your email. Thank you and Have a good day.

Personal staff greeting pre-appended to calls

Multiple Languages: English, Spanish, Chinese, Russian, and 22 Others.

HIPAA COMPLIANT

HIPAA HSN Secure Now!

Blooming Health Impact

35%

Members take Action on Messages

300%

Increase in Members' Social Engagement

500%

Increase in SNAP Benefits Access

2 hours/day

Time Saved for Social Workers

66

Older Adults NPS

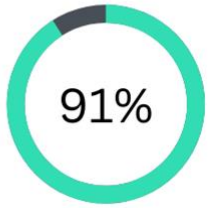
80

Staff NPS

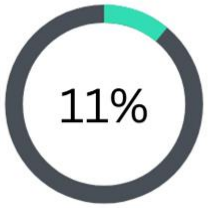
Note: NPS = Net promoter score.

Older Adults and Caregivers Reached

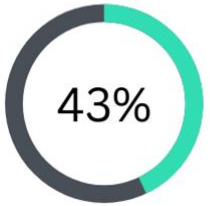
Median Age : 67



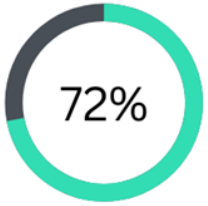
on voice and text vs email



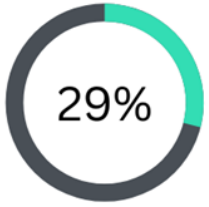
speak non-English languages



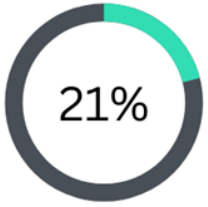
live in rural vs urban areas



enrolled in SNAP or need help applying for SNAP*



do not have a PCP or are unhappy with current PCP*



report poor health quality and ADL limitations*

report feeling lonely*

*As reported within member surveys, including CDC Healthy Days and UCLA Loneliness surveys, N = 2,000 - 9,000
Note: ADL = Activities of daily living

Surgeon General declares **loneliness and social isolation** a public health crisis

ELLI·Q

ElliQ is the first AI companion designed to **alleviate loneliness** and promote engagement, connection, health, and more.

Unique approach to engagement

PROACTIVE

Initiates conversation and suggests activities

PERSONALIZED

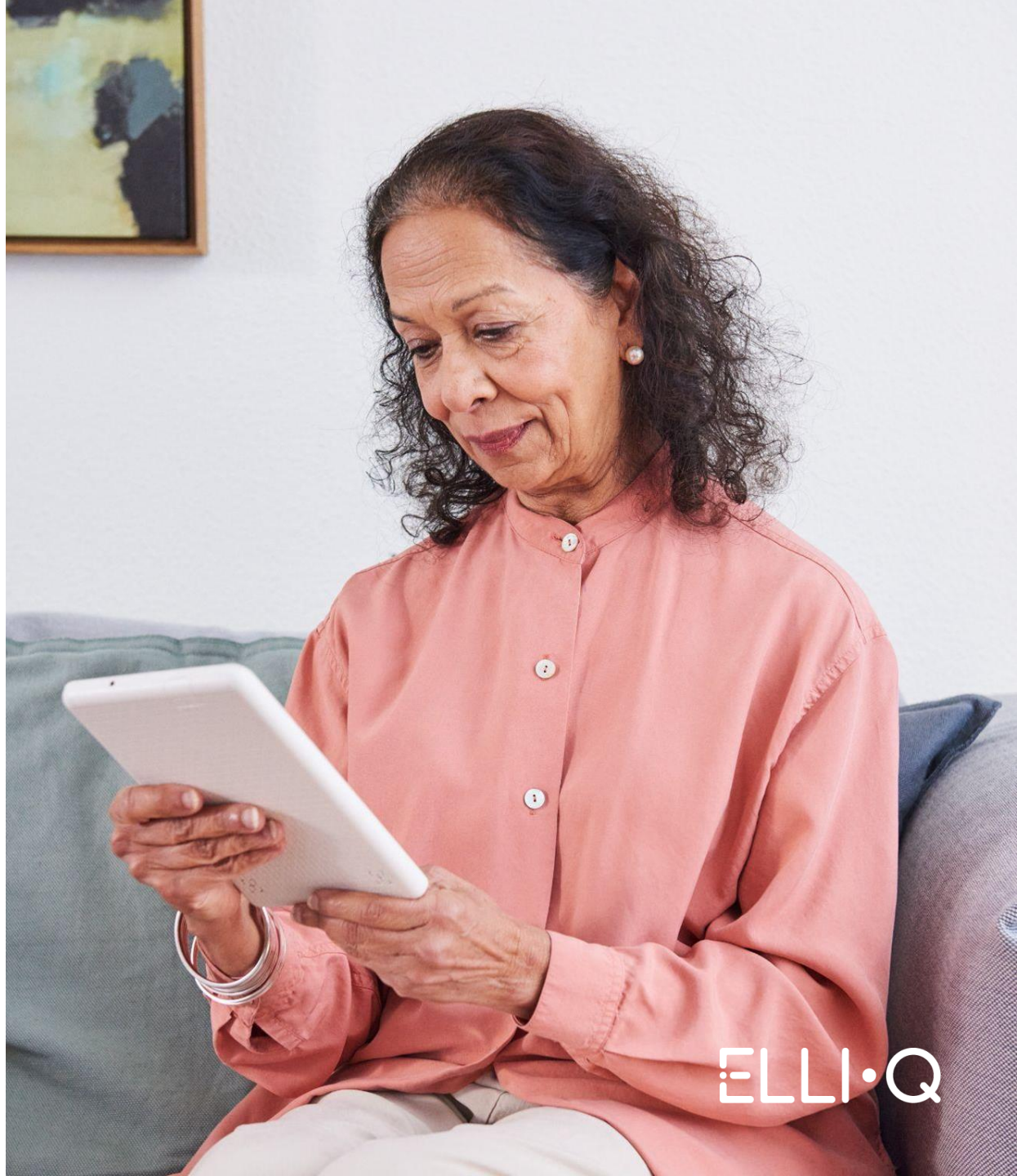
Learns and remembers what you tell her, providing a personalized experience

GOAL DRIVEN

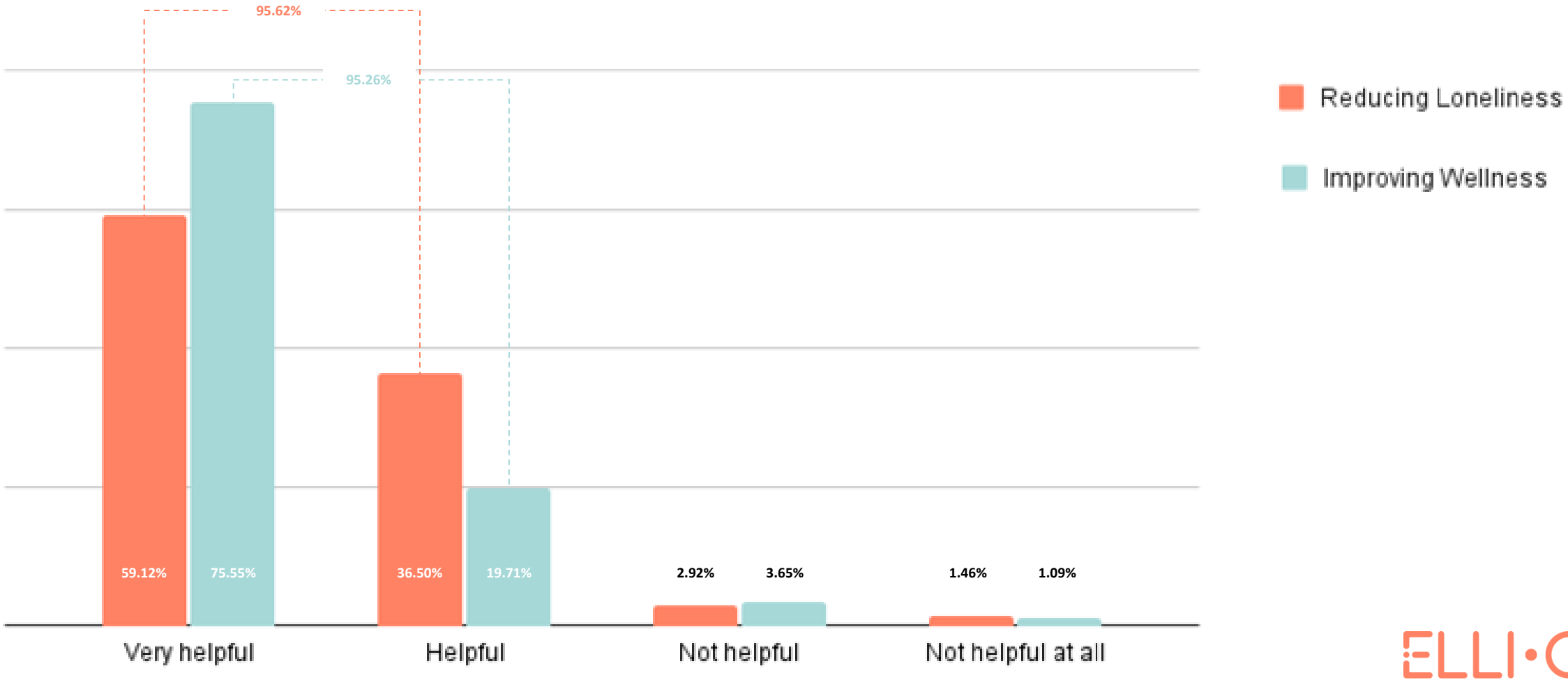
Encourages and works with you to set and help achieve your goals

EMPATHETIC

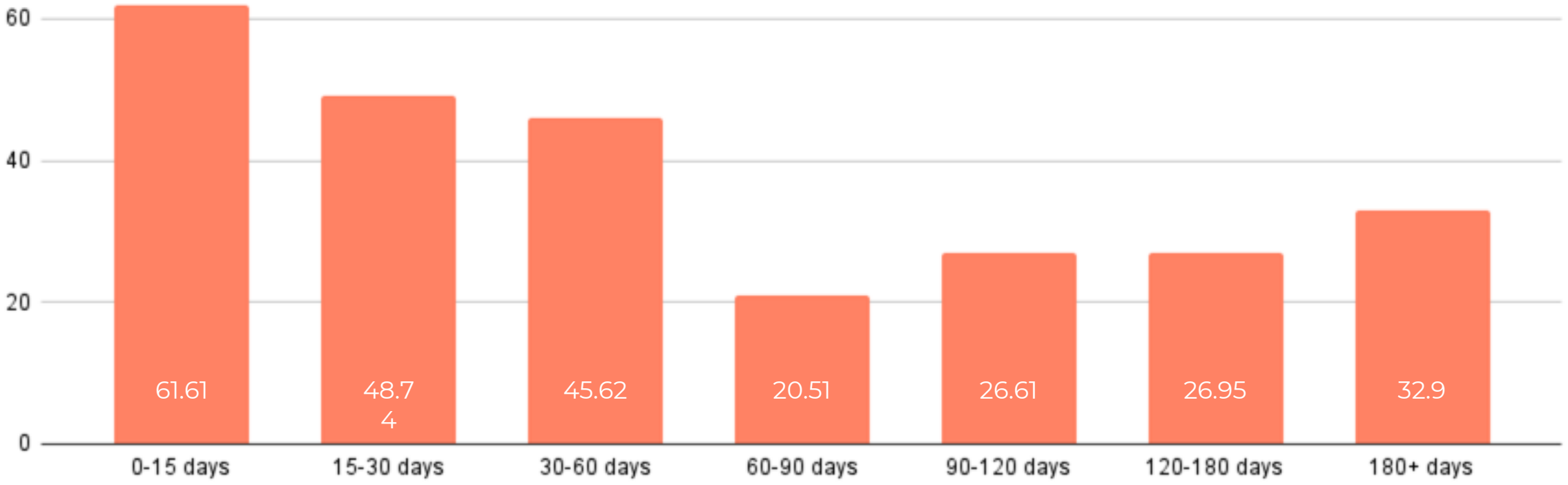
ElliQ is designed to convey empathy to create trust and drive engagement and behavior change



95% of NYSOFA clients report that ElliQ is helpful in reducing loneliness and improving wellbeing

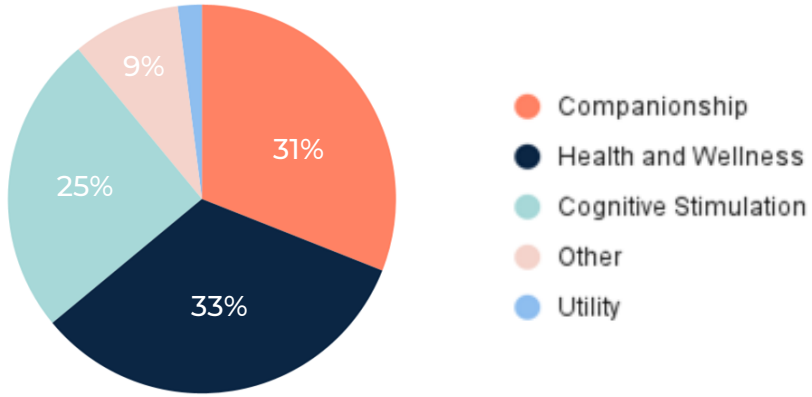


NYSOFA Clients interact with ElliQ frequently and consistently over time



Meet Lucinda

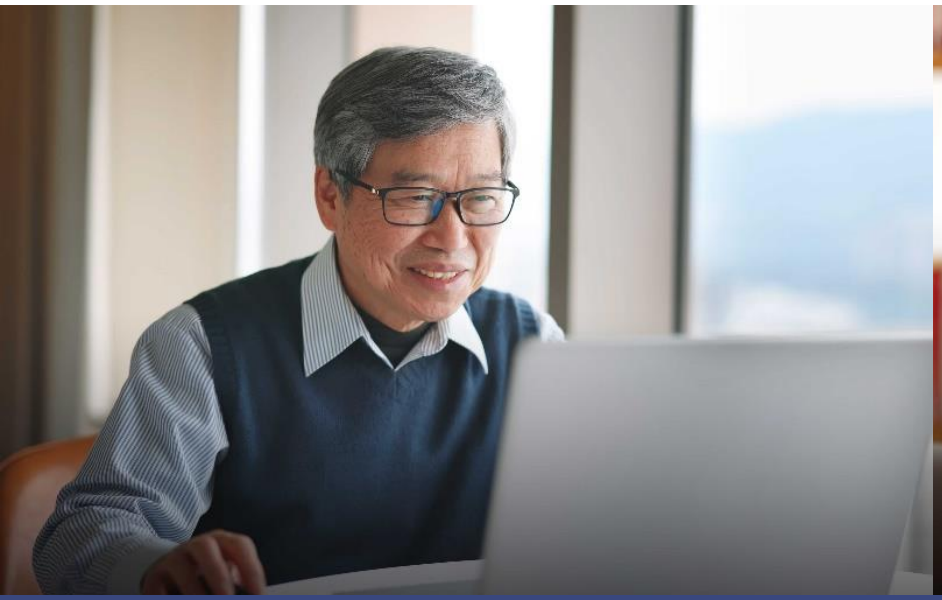
- Lives in **Harlem, NY** with her partner, Sal
- Has enjoyed having ElliQ for **7 months**
- Participates in **4 activities with ElliQ per day** on average, including:
  - Stress reduction exercises twice daily
  - Cognitive game every day
  - Works out with ElliQ once a week
  - Generally loves to chat with ElliQ!

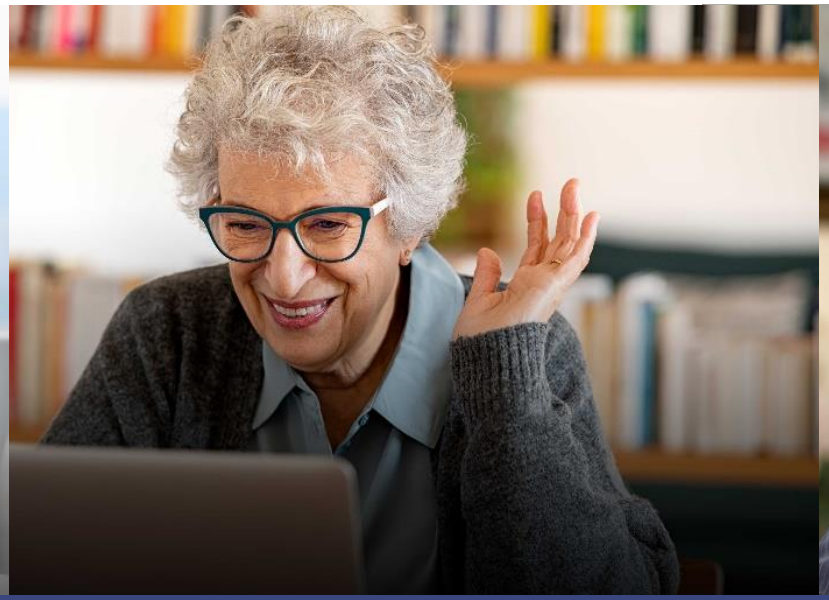


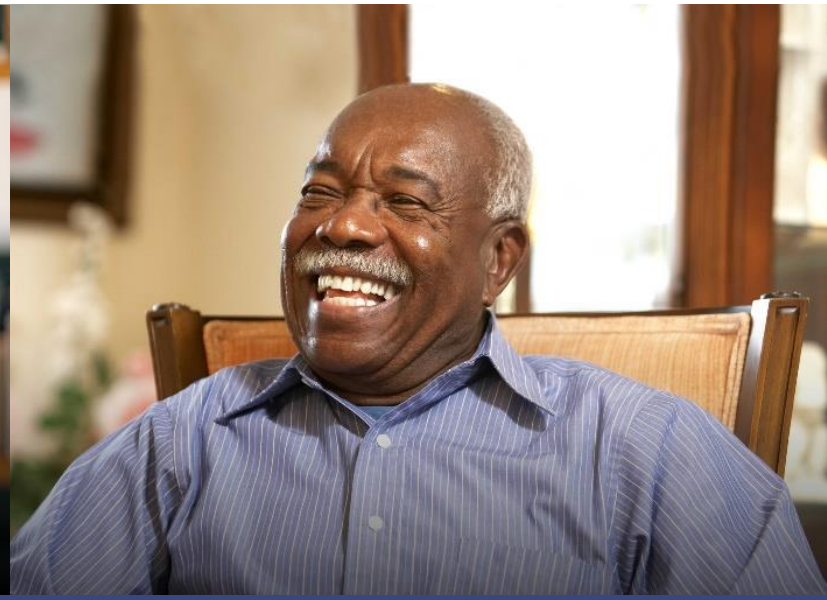
Selfhelp

VSC

June 27th ACUU Conference

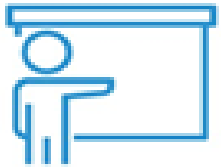




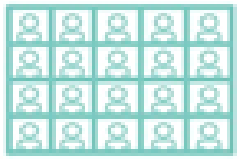


Launch. Learn. Laugh.

5000+
Live classes/year



250+
Live Instructors



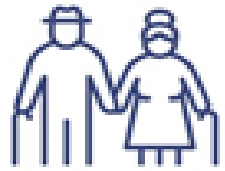
15
Typical-class size

Multiple
Award Winning Innovations

4.71/5
Average class rating

5
Platform supports English, Mandarin, Russian, Korean and Spanish

24/7
Classes can be recorded to watch later at leisure



65-100+
Members age

VSC offers live programs on:

Arts, Culture, & Languages

Exercise

Science & Nature

Wellness & Livelihood Support

History, News, & Travel

Music & Games

Technology Training & Support

Pets Together Virtual Visits

Plus scheduled open chats!

REAL-TIME INTERACTION

400+
live programs each month

300+
expert facilitators

18
categories driven by SDOH

Our impact improves members' health by addressing loneliness and social isolation

84% reported feeling a decrease in loneliness

76% of members reported making new friends on VSC

74% of members reported feeling less depressed because of VSC

67% of members reported joining programs for social connection and to learn something new

> *When I go on the program, I see my people, my friends. It's like going home.*
>
> - J. VSC member

Lifespan

Take it on!

Community Care Connections (CCC)
Integrates Lifespan's community-based aging services with health care systems to breakdown silos.

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Community Care Connections (CCC) strives to improve health outcomes by addressing the social determinants of health that Physician's Offices do not have the time to address.

CCC provides in-home functional assessment, healthcare navigation, ongoing and post-hospitalization home visits, medication reconciliation, health literacy training and medical appointment support.

We receive real-time Rochester RHIO alerts for ED and hospitalization follow-up and have access to RHIO Explore with patient consent.

Lifespan
Take it on!

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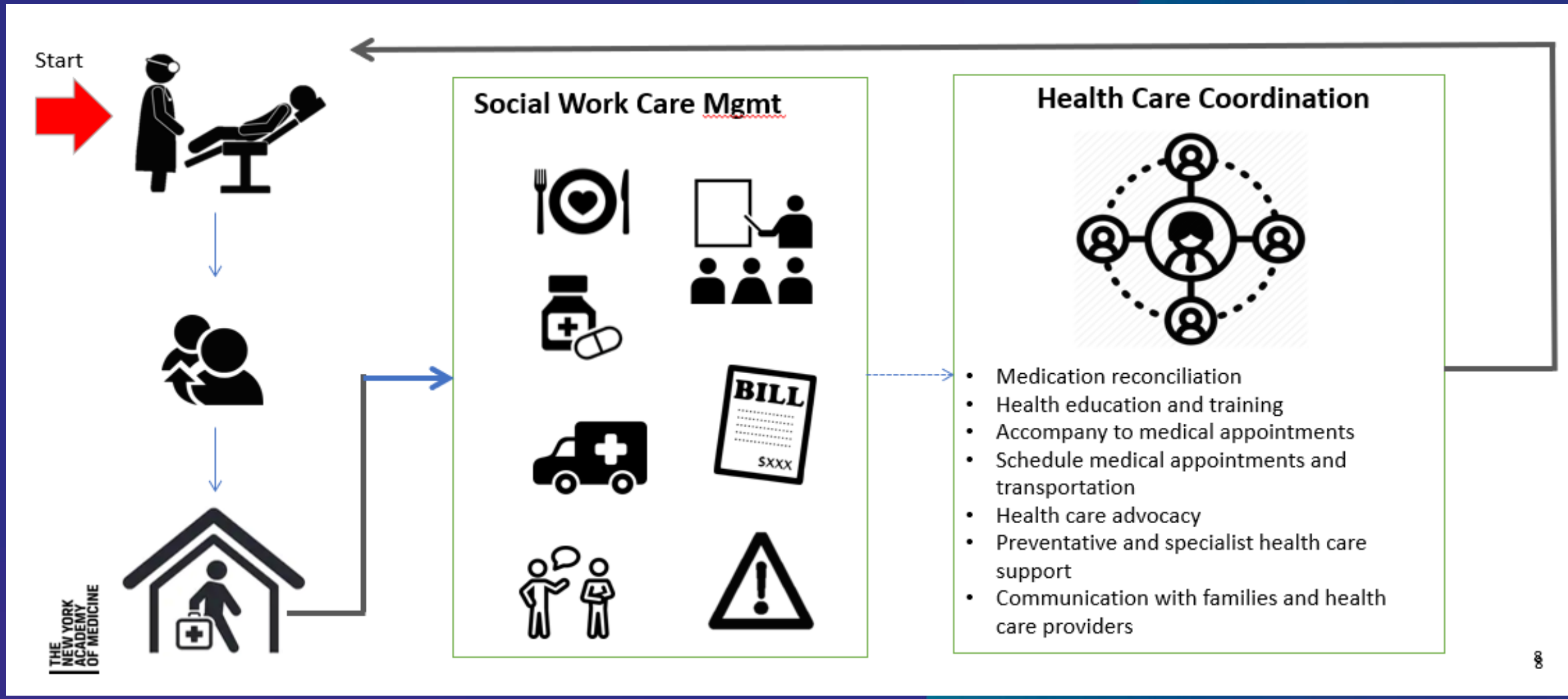
Closed Loop of Communication

SW CMs and LPN HCCs communicate regularly with PCP to manage health-related medical and social needs.



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Margaret's challenges

- Regularly drinking sugary soft drinks, adding large amounts of sugar to coffee and other beverages, and most meals consisted of processed frozen and pre-prepared or fried foods. **Her A1c was 13.**
- Inconsistent with attending medical and podiatry appointments.
- Experiencing anxiety due to **financial difficulties**; the house was in foreclosure; her power bill had been unpaid; and she was receiving minimal family support.
- **5 Emergency room visits** in the year prior to enrollment in the program.

Lifespan
Take it on!

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Margaret's successful outcomes:

- **LPN Healthcare Coordinator** attended medical appointments with Margaret, helping her ask questions and understand the provider's instructions.
- Helped reinforce prescribed dietary and lifestyle changes.
- **Social Work Care Manager** worked with Margaret to address housing needs, finances, and establish communication with a daughter who has since moved in with the client and helps with meal preparation and daily activities.
- **Margaret's A1c has decreased from 13 to 7.** She is eating a diabetic friendly diet, attending medical appointments regularly, **has had no ER visits or hospitalizations.**

Lifespan
Take it on!

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CCC Pre and Post NYAM Program Evaluation

Independent evaluation by the New York Academy of Medicine proved our theory that integrating the CCC intervention with healthcare systems would result in a positive impact on the quadruple aim of lowering costs, improving health outcomes, increasing patient and physician satisfaction.

Post-program enrollment results:

Hospitalizations decreased **23%**

Emergency room visits decreased **28%**

Observation stays decreased **23%**

Lifespan
Take it on!

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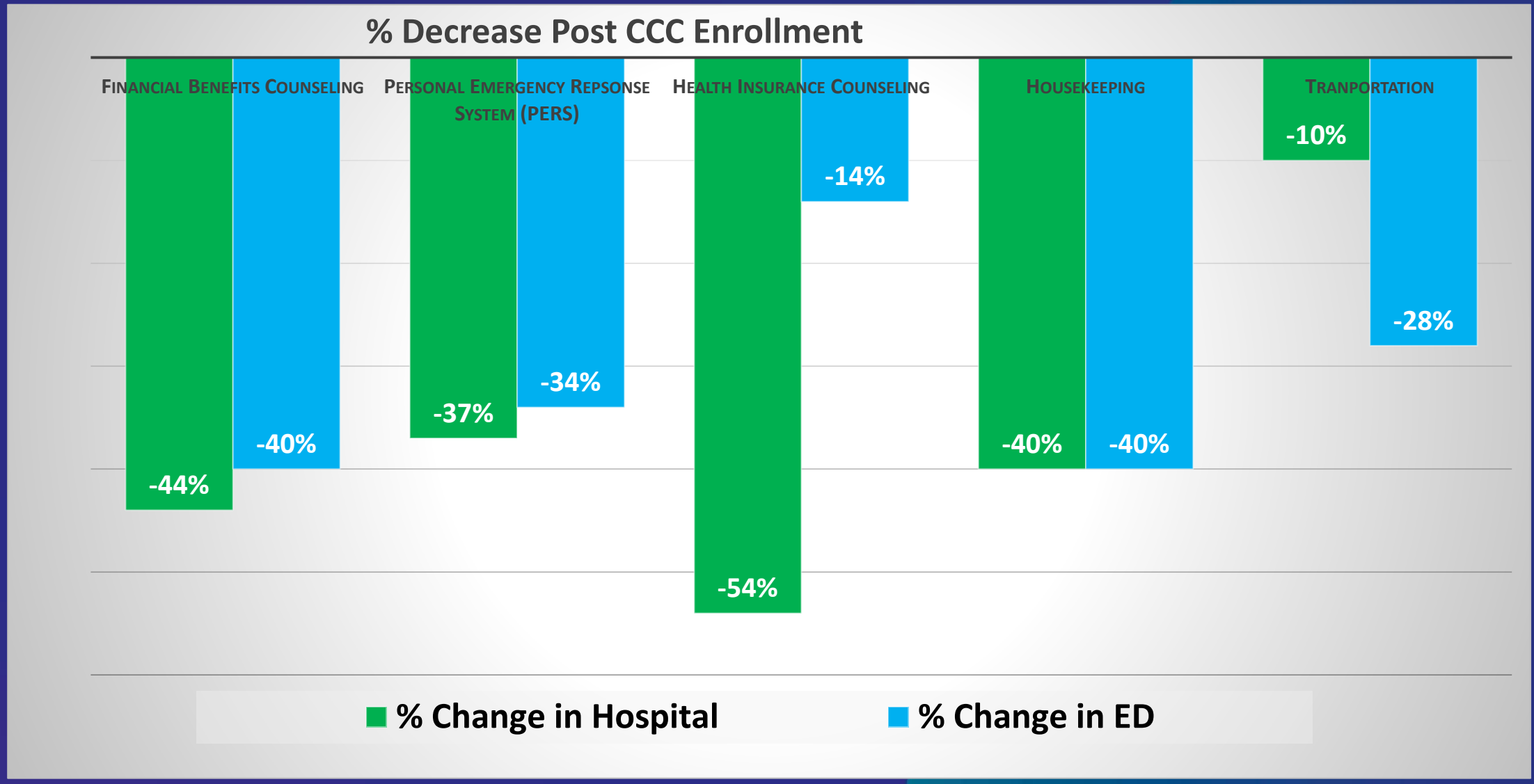
Top 5 Results By Service Connection



THE NEW YORK ACADEMY OF MEDICINE

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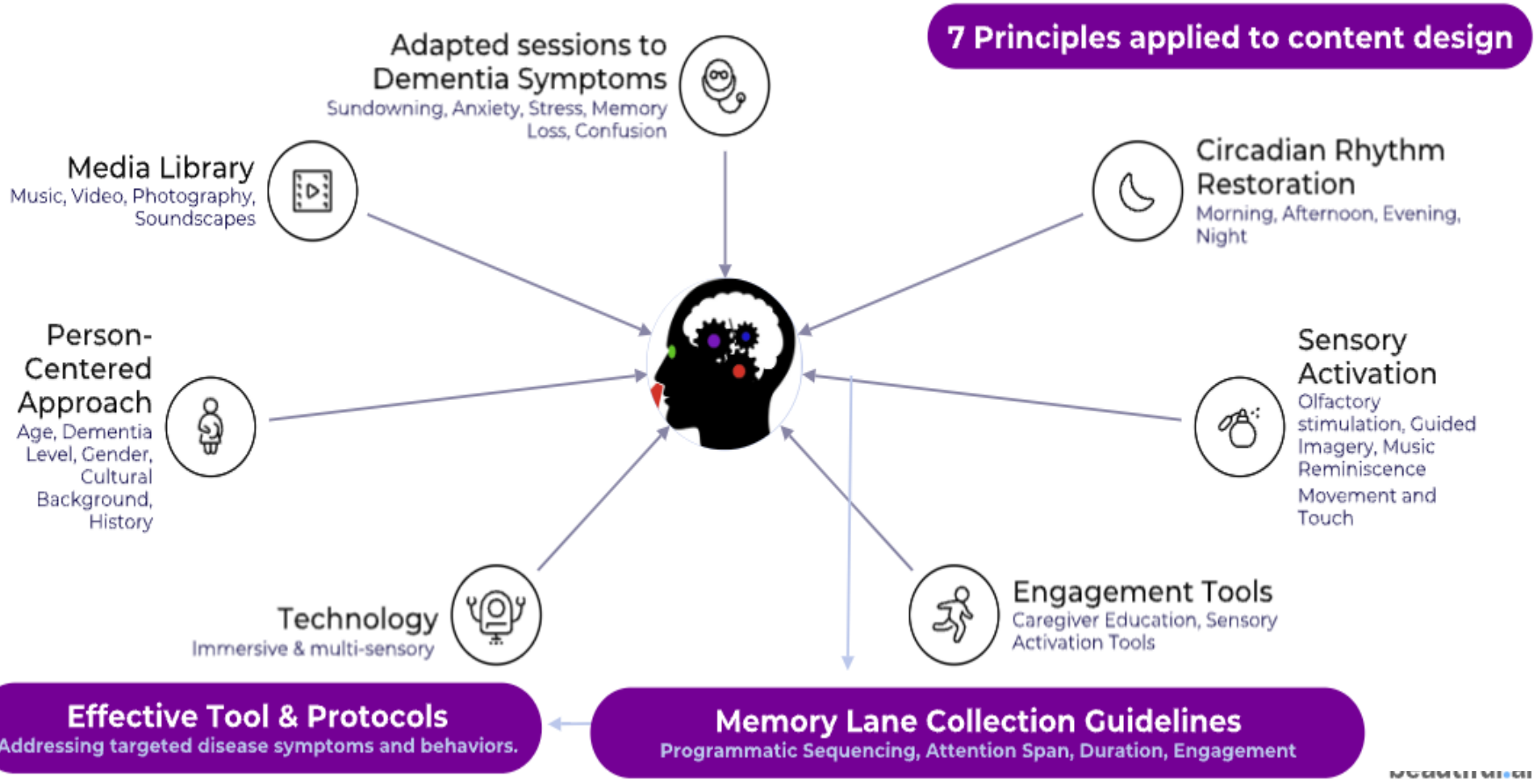
Memory Lane TV

Produced Using Scientifically Derived Protocols

1100 sessions = 1500 hours + a 24/7 channel



"Fantastic programs for us to reconnect with Mom! And one of the best safe solutions to help us cope with her condition while engaging her."

Joan K., Care Partner for her mother (2022)

MEMORY LANE TV

Meeting the Shifting Challenges of Dementia Care

Signs & Symptoms

Memory loss

Depression

Anxiety, aggressivity, anger

Constant confusion

Circadian rhythm disruption

Appetite loss

Sundowner's syndrome

Care partner burn-out

MLTV Benefits

24/7 positive & feel-good engagement media

Reduces hostility via attention redirection

Audio-visual symptom management tool

Re-grounding and human-centered activities

Guided imagery following day and night

Appetite restoration via imagery and smell

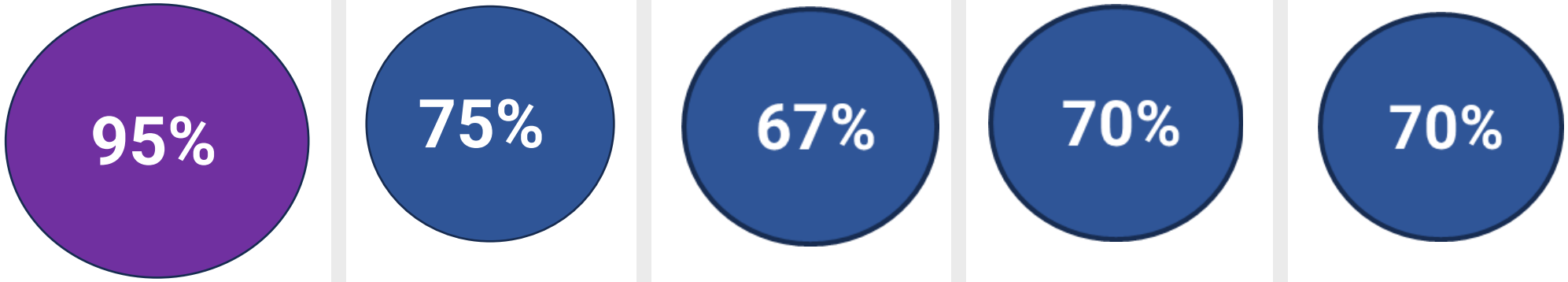
Gives professionals and family caregivers time and productivity

From at home to facility

MEMORY LANE TV

Survey Highlights: 2015-2020

1,000 residents participating in development, with 500 participants responding to feedback studies from 5 reporting facilities in Maine



Reported Overall Positive Impact

Reported Improvement to Residents & Staff Mood & Anxiety Levels

Reported Improvement in Resident Engagement

Reported Improvement in Interactions

Reported Improvement in Resident Stress

MEMORY LANE TV

Relish Life

What are we measuring and why?

In our 2019 report, we conducted an SROI (Social Return on Investment) analysis with the Association of Dementia Studies on the impact of Relish products on the wellbeing of those with dementia in a care setting.

For that study we utilised the Scripps Modified Greater Cincinnati Chapter Well-Being Observation Tool[1] to measure the changes of wellbeing and illbeing for people with dementia.

The Wellbeing Observation Tool look at the following factors:

Pleasure	Social Interest	Confusion	Negative Effect
Engagement	Disengagement	Sadness	

We combined this with research by NICE[2] and the Centre for Mental Health[3], which put a value on combatting the social costs of mental health problems.

1 - Adapted from: Kinney, J. M. & Rentz, C. A. (2005). Observed wellbeing among individuals with dementia: Memories in the Making, an art programme, versus other structured activity.

2 - https://www.nice.org.uk/glossary?letter=q

3 -Centre for mental health (2003), The economic and social costs of mental illness

After using Relish products, 84% of respondents saw an improvement across at least one pillar of wellbeing.

53% saw improvement in independence

76% became more engaged

77% saw greater happiness

70% became calmer

69% saw improved connection