

THE UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO'S
Institute for Life Course and Aging is pleased to present

TEACHING COMPASSION THROUGH RELATIONAL EDUCATION: A LONG-TERM CARE EXPERIENCE

Shoshana Helfenbaum

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Ontario Centres for Learning, Research and Innovation Baycrest*

Tuesday, January 24th, 2023

12:00 pm – 1:00 pm

[ZOOM LINK](#)

Distress is part of healthcare and eldercare. The question is: How will people respond to that distress? With connection, warmth, compassion and heightened coping skills? Or with disconnection, isolation and poor coping skills? Though education can help shape that response, people involved in eldercare rarely receive education on how to cope positively with distress that stems from grief, illness, transitioning into long-term care, or death and dying. Such education, which uses transformational learning to explore the relationship-based context of eldercare interactions, is needed. A key example being the importance of involving families in care, especially for people who are limited in their ability to express their needs (i.e. individuals living with advanced cognitive limitations) so teams can meet their needs as unique individuals, beyond their health conditions.

Shoshana's research on a relational education framework identified positive influences of team-based relational education on care practice. These included willingness to explore new possibilities, to be more receptive to one another, to make connections with one another, to reflect deeply, to include one another, and to experience an increased sense of well-being. Shoshana will be inviting conversation and sharing insights, drawing from her doctoral research, about how a relational focus in education can positively influence engagement and interactions in care planning and delivery for older adults, family members and care teams. The discussion extends to generating ideas for bringing out the best in dementia and eldercare, including creating experiences of well-being, meaning and engagement for older adults, family members and care partners.

Shoshana Helfenbaum, BA (hons), MSW, RSW, D.Ger, D.RRP, is an educator, clinician, leader, advocate and social innovator concerned with advancing the wellness of populations at risk with a special focus on mental health and geriatric care. She currently works as an Interprofessional Educator, Special Projects, at the Ontario Centres for Learning, Research and Innovation at Baycrest, creating and delivering province-wide innovative education. Shoshana is also a consultant and subject matter expert in the area of Workplace Mental Health for teams and leaders (Telus Health, Bell Canada, Queen's University). Recently, she was awarded an International Diploma in Relational Research and Practice for her doctoral thesis articulating the influence of relational education, practice and evaluation methodology on quality improvement and team practice in geriatric healthcare.