



Quarterly Newsletter | August 2025

Land Acknowledgement

We acknowledge that the home of Nav-CARE, the University of British Columbia - Okanagan Campus and the University of Alberta, are situated on the traditional, ancestral, and unceded territories of the Syilx Okanagan Nation and the Cree, Blackfoot, Métis, Nakota Sioux, Iroquois, Dene, and Ojibway/ Saulteaux/ Anishinaabe Nations respectively. We also recognize that Nav-CARE has a nationwide presence and respectfully acknowledge the traditional territories of the many other First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples, within which Nav-CARE is present. We encourage readers to reflect upon the beautiful lands on which they reside.

WELCOME!

We hope that you have all taken, or are planning to take, some well-deserved time for yourself over the summer to relax, spend time with those important to you, and to enjoy the warm sunshine. While the summer often brings a welcome chance to recuperate and recharge, and things may feel a little slower and quieter, everyone continues to work hard and the dedication to supporting our communities is unwavering. In this edition of the newsletter, we'll share the outcomes of some of that hard work including developments in our Compassionate Communities projects, an update from EU Navigate, lessons learned from some of our dedicated volunteers about how the Nav-CARE education (which, by the way, is now also available in French!) prepares them for supporting persons living with dementia, as well as providing you with an overview of some Compassionate Communities research and highlighting some useful resources.

As always, thank you for being part of the Nav-CARE Community!

With warm sunny wishes,
The Nav-CARE Team

Compassion in Motion: An Update on our Compassionate Communities Projects

The Compassionate, Dementia-Inclusive Communities (CDIC) project is well underway! We are collaborating with six organizations from across Canada to implement compassionate dementia inclusive initiatives that aim to: 1) raise awareness around – and reduce stigma about – living with dementia; and 2) improve the quality of life of persons living with dementia and their care partners along the dementia journey. The organizations involved in this project are: Prince George Hospice Palliative Care Society (BC), the Greater Trail Hospice Society (BC), Brella Community Services Society (BC), Age Friendly Cold Lake (AB), Bruce Peninsula Hospice Society (ON), and Newfoundland Health Services.

At the heart of this initiative is the power of social connection. Partner organizations have established leadership teams to collaborate with local advisory boards composed of key community members – including individuals living with dementia and their care partners. These groups will design and implement community-driven interventions tailored to the unique needs of the people they serve. To name a few, these interventions include: community awareness raising events, peer support groups, caregiver companioning programs, bereavement support groups, and intergenerational programs.

Over the next year, these activities will generate valuable insights into how compassionate, dementia-inclusive communities can enhance quality of life for people living with dementia. By prioritizing social engagement, meaningful connections, and active participation, this work is helping to create a more supportive and inclusive society—where everyone can thrive at every stage of life.



The progress of the Compassionate Community Volunteer Navigation (CCVN) project is following closely behind the CDIC project. The CCVN brings together two important social health movements to create a new model of volunteerism that could increase the capacity to care, and improve quality of life, for older persons living with declining health in rural communities.

For this project there are two 18-month rounds of implementation, the first round having started on April 1st 2025 in two rural areas with Quadra Circle Community Connections Society and The Hospice Society of the Columbia Valley. The second round will begin in October 2026 enabling two more sites to draw on the learnings from Quadra and Columbia Valley.

The CCVN has a larger research element than the CDIC, so as well as establishing advisory boards, Quadra and Columbia Valley have been working to create network maps depicting the current partnerships of the organizations represented on the advisory board including healthcare, social care, local government, and organizations that support work to serve persons living with declining health or their caregivers. In addition, the UBCO research team have been conducting interviews with the advisory board to better understand their motivation for engagement, desired impact, and the community context in which they work.

As the work progresses, we look forward to seeing how the vision of these two communities takes shape over the coming months as they promote the idea of a compassionate community and raise awareness of the importance and impact of volunteer navigation in their communities.



HOSPICE SOCIETY
OF THE COLUMBIA VALLEY



Quadra Circle
Community Connections Society

Major Milestone for EU Navigate: Recruitment Phase comes to an End

With the aim of developing, implementing, and evaluating the effectiveness of an adapted version of Nav-CARE to support older persons with cancer and their caregivers in Europe, the EU Navigate project reaches a major milestone this month with the completion of the recruitment phase. The next 12-18 months will see participants move through the program and the main evaluation taking place.

Members of the project team have also been working hard to map existing navigation services across Europe to understand what exactly is available for cancer patients, the accessibility of these services, who delivers the services, and the training provided for those delivering the service. This information will enable them to identify potential gaps and coupled with the results from the EU Navigate program, inform policy and practice. The final report and associated research papers will be available towards the end of the year. We'll be sure to share those with you!

To learn more about the EU Navigate Project, click [here](#).



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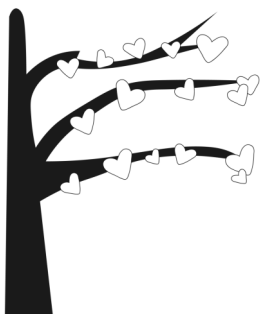
Funding Success for South West District Palliative Care!

We are delighted to share news that South West District Palliative Care (SWDPC)(MB) successfully secured a CIHR Institute of Aging Knowledge and Mobilization Support Grant. The grant recognizes and supports exceptional groups working in non-profit and voluntary sector health to enhance knowledge dissemination for the benefit of older persons. SWDPC will be using the funding to build up on and enhance the community-based palliative support it provides through Nav-CARE. Well done SWDPC!

To learn more about the SWDPC project and to see other recipients of the award, click [here](#).



Volunteer Impact



Volunteers play a vital role in creating a more compassionate and supportive environment for people living with dementia and their care partners. By offering their time and attention volunteers provide thoughtful companionship and meaningful activity. They also provide respite for care partners, allowing them moments to rest, attend to personal tasks, or simply recharge. In doing so, volunteers become trusted allies who strengthen the overall support network around those living with dementia.

The Nav-CARE curriculum now includes a module that addresses supporting persons living with dementia and their care partners. Our partner organizations have been actively training volunteers in this expanded role and we spoke to four volunteers from the Bruce Peninsula Hospice to talk about their experiences supporting this population.

The volunteers talked about how comprehensive training equipped them with the skills needed to communicate effectively and sensitively. As one volunteer shared: “My mom had dementia, and after I had the training, I realised that I was saying the wrong things. Not intentionally of course; asking her questions that would baffle her. So, even if you don’t want to volunteer, if there’s anyone in your life that has dementia, any kind of training, take that bit of time. You’ll be so much more comfortable speaking with people who are living with dementia.”

Another volunteer mentioned that even when a person is unable to carry on a conversation, volunteers can still be a compassionate presence – honouring the emotions behind utterances or gestures, entering into the person’s world and meeting them where they are at in the moment. Another volunteer shared how she helped the person connect to the world around them through talking about the activities going on around – describing the physical and social environment.

At the heart of volunteer engagement is person-directed care, which emphasizes understanding each individual’s history, preferences, and abilities. “I leave it up to whatever the individual wants to do...they are the leaders of the interaction,” voiced a volunteer. This means that rather than following a one-size-fits-all approach, volunteers learn about favourite hobbies, past professions, and cherished memories. When activities are aligned with what truly matters to the individual, moments of connection and joy naturally emerge. A volunteer shared a story: “ I had a client that I will never forget. She was past the point of conversation, but she could sing. And I learned this...I noticed a nurse playing a song on her phone and she [the client] sang it! It was beautiful. So, I thought, “oh, she likes to sing.” So, every time I went, I noticed that she knew every old hymn that I could play. The Old Rugged Cross – she sang so loud, the staff from across the hall came and said ‘what?!’.”

While the work can be challenging, these volunteers are an extraordinary testimony to compassionate relationships – simply brightening a day, evoking a smile, or easing a family’s burden is a real success: “I’m there to make their life a little more pleasant, maybe put a smile on their face, get them to laugh. If I can do that, I’ve been successful.” Families have shared how empowered and comforted they feel by the support they receive from the volunteers. As a result, volunteer engagement is a beacon of hope – reminding us that human connection can promote dignity, spark joy, and strengthen the network of relations.





La nouvelle formation Nav-CARE est maintenant disponible en fran  ais : New Nav-CARE Training now available in French

We are excited to share that the new Nav-CARE curriculum is now available in French. To access the newly translated curriculum, click [here!](#) You will be guided to a registration page where you will need to enter a few details then away you go!

You can access the English version by clicking [here](#).

Upcoming Events



Look out for our Workshop! **Growing Volunteer Capacity: An introduction to training competent volunteer navigators**

Volunteer navigation is developing around the world as an important compassionate community intervention. Volunteer navigators have the potential to be an essential part of the continuum of care for those experiencing declining health. The purpose of this workshop is to provide an interactive experience with the Nav-CARE curriculum.

Workshop Outcomes: The overall goal of the workshop is to support participants to decide whether volunteer navigation education is a good fit for their own personal development or for the development of their organizational volunteers.

To register for the CHPCA Conference and our workshop, click [here!](#)
(Early bird registration closes on August 15th)



United Way
British Columbia

SAVE THE DATE: Thursday September 25th, 1-2pm

Supporting Communities Together: Exploring Nav-CARE Volunteers and Community Connectors in Action

Join us for an engaging conversation that explores two innovative community-based programs: Nav-CARE – a volunteer delivered initiative and Community Connectors. This session will feature a discussion between leaders from both programs, offering insights into their unique approaches, shared goals, and opportunities to work together to support people with declining health and increasing social needs.

Following the discussion, real-world insights from two individuals who have put these models into practice will be presented and the session will conclude with a Q&A, giving you the opportunity to ask questions and reflect on what might work in your own setting.

Research Corner

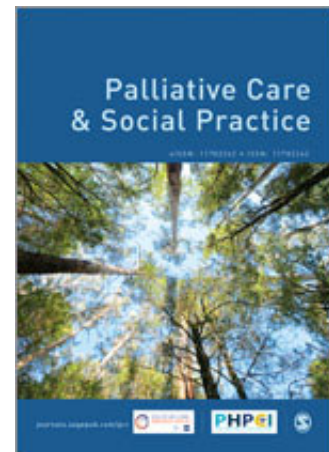
Developing a compassionate community: a Canadian conceptual model for community capacity development (Kelley, M. 2023)

The article describes a Canadian, research-informed model entitled '*Developing a Compassionate Community (DCC)*'. It places aging, dying, caregiving, and grieving as everyone's responsibility and offers a practical framework for building local capacity.

The model highlights that the growth of compassionate communities happens: in phases and evolves dynamically; is a long-term process that takes time; emphasizes the importance of empowering individuals with knowledge, skills and resources; that developments should be built on existing community strengths rather than trying to impose external solutions; and that the developments are community led - emphasizing the key role of community members who are motivated to make positive change rather than relying on health and social systems.

In practice this means, promoting community participation, mobilizing support networks (neighbours, friends, family), providing educational opportunities to equip members to take action and support one another, building partnerships with health and social services and championing a social model of end-of-life care. The DDC model has been applied in rural, urban, First Nations and long-term care contexts and offers a flexible public health approach to building a compassionate community.

To read the full article, click [here](#).



How compassionate communities are implemented and evaluated in practice: a scoping review (DuMont, K et al., 2022)



Sixty-three published articles about how compassionate community initiatives are being developed, supported, and evaluated were reviewed. The authors found that the majority of initiatives were being led by health professionals, with community members being participants or recipients of support rather than being involved as leaders or co-creators. Initiatives were typically focused on education and awareness raising or direct support and care, with very few directed towards strengthening community leadership and developing public policy despite these being core goals of compassionate communities.

Adapting to local culture, social attitudes (toward asking for and receiving help at end of life) and the local context were seen as the biggest barriers to effective implementation although increasing the amount of information available in a community and encouraging open conversations about end-of-life care helped to combat these. It was also noted that very few initiatives were aimed at, or led by, minority or marginalized groups. In terms of evaluation, activities are limited and typically focus on changes in individuals rather than communities or systems. In conclusion, the authors noted that while compassionate communities are growing, to reach their full potential, a greater emphasis on strengthening community leadership, inclusion and policy change is needed alongside robust evaluation.

To read the full article, click [here](#).

Resources of Interest

The following resources have been shared by members of the Nav-CARE community.

Compassionate Communities Toolkit | Take a look at the toolkit that has helped inform the work being completed in the Compassionate, Dementia-Inclusive Communities (CDIC) and the Compassionate Communities Volunteer Navigation (CCVN) projects. Developed by the BC Centre for Palliative Care, the toolkit is designed to guide community organizations and groups who are interested in building a caring, supportive network for people affected by serious illness, end of life, caregiving, and grieving.

The Building Capacity Project | The Project develops and evaluates effective ways to create sustainable opportunities for people living with dementia, and family/friend care partners, to remain active and connected in their communities. Their **Action Guide** provides a practical resource offering best and promising practices for building community capacity for dementia inclusivity.

If you have any resources that you would like to share in future issues, please let us know by sending a message to us at nav.care@ubc.ca!

Curious about Nav-CARE?

Visit <https://nav-care.ca/> to learn more!



Nav-CARE

Making Connections, Making a Difference

Do you have news, resources, or up-coming events that we can include in the newsletter?
Share them with us at nav.care@ubc.ca



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