CarePartners INITIATIVE

MAY 2026 E-NEWSLETTER

caring for the caregiver

Celebrate Mental Health Month This May

Mental Health America founded **Mental Health Awareness Month** in 1949 and has led the effort every May to promote mental wellness nationwide.

They are excited to share Mental Health America's theme for 2026: ***More Good Days, Together***. This reflects the heart of their mission: helping people have more good days by meeting them where they are, supporting them as whole people, and understanding that "good" is defined by their unique experience and goals.

At Mental Health America, they know that there is no health without mental health. 1 in 5 people experience a mental health condition each year — and 5 in 5 are managing their mental health every day. Everyone has good days and hard days with their mental health.

This year's theme encourages everyone to reflect on what a "good" day looks like, both for ourselves, and for our communities. Together, we can use that insight to connect people to the right support at the right time, and shape advocacy, education, and community engagement to make more good days possible for all.

The path may look different for everyone, but we all deserve more good days, together. Click here to explore exciting events, free resources, and the 2026 Mental Health Month Action Guide.

MHA Mental Health America

Monthly Program Flyer

CarePartners INITIATIVE

CarePartners Initiative supports caregivers and their loved ones living with dementia and other forms of memory decline. We provide transformative programs that offer relief, connection and confidence at no cost. Listed below are the programs we offer this month.

Monthly Schedule of Programs – MAY 2026

ALL ARE FREE TO ATTEND

❖ Memory Cafe

Monday, May 11, 10:00 am - 12:00 pm

Horse theme - Giant Steps Equine therapy ponies coming to visit.

Address: 109 Patten Street, Sonoma. No RSVP necessary.

❖ Zoom Support Group

Tuesday, May 12, 12:00 - 1:30 pm

Space is limited. RSVP by 5/9 to Heidi at heidilagelmft@gmail.com to register and receive a Zoom link.

❖ Memory Cafe Out & About

Wednesday, May 20, 10:00 am - 12:00 pm

Sebastiani Winery, 389 4th St. E, Sonoma

Tour of the tasting room.

Space is limited. RSVP by 5/17 to Heidi at heidilagelmft@gmail.com.

❖ Memory Cafe

Monday, May 25

CANCELLED in honor of Memorial Day

❖ In-Person Support Group

Wednesday, May 27, 11:00 am - 12:30 pm

Address: 109 Patten Street, Sonoma. Space is limited.
RSVP by 5/24 to Heidi at heidilagelmft@gmail.com.

Helpline: 707-732-9436 **www.carepartnersinitiative.org**

Click HERE to print a copy of the schedule

Memory Cafe

Our **April 13th** Memory Cafe was **Spring** themed. We all shared our favorite things about springtime, many being the sunshine and new growth. Most participants came dressed in lively spring colors and floral prints. All enjoyed music from our music volunteer, Brady Hoff, along with another special visit from Heidi's niece, Ashley Seibel, and her bright eyed 5-month-old baby girl, Marley, who brought a contagious joy to the group. We often bring you pet therapy, now we have baby therapy too! We ended the day with socializing while planting a variety of succulents for participants to take home.

Our second Memory Cafe of the month was held on **April 27th** and was **Cinco de Mayo** themed. Many participants came dressed up in the spirit of Cinco de Mayo with sombreros, ponchos and even a colorful tissue paper flowered hat. Our very own Heidi and Matt Lage performed an impromptu swing dance enjoyed by all. We also had the pleasure of hearing songs performed by the Sunshine preschoolers, two of which happened to be celebrating their 5th birthday and are the twin grandchildren of one of our fabulous volunteers, Linda Piller. We finished up the morning enjoying socializing while having chips and salsa, virgin margaritas and a great couple of rounds of old-fashioned bingo - with prizes!

★ Upcoming Memory Cafe Dates ★

Our next Memory Cafe will be held on Monday, **May11th**. It will be **Kentucky Derby/Horse** themed. Wearing your best derby hat is encouraged AND if you do not have one we will be making them! The morning's highlight will be our annual visit from the Giant Steps Therapeutic Equestrian Center's therapy ponies in the courtyard.

The second Memory Cafe which would have been held on Monday, **May 25th**, is **CANCELLED** in honor of Memorial Day.

CarePartners Initiative offers a free **Memory Cafe** twice a month on the 2nd and 4th Monday, 10:00 am - 12:00 pm, at the Sonoma United Methodist Church (Community Room), located at 109 Patten Street, Sonoma.

Attending a Memory Cafe is a very important time for loved ones and caregivers to socialize and enjoy activities. Loved ones must be accompanied by a caregiver, however, a friend or family member may bring the loved one in place of the primary caregiver. We hope to see you!

Memory Cafe Out & About
(formerly Memory Cafe Adventures)

CarePartners Initiative offers a free **Memory Cafe Out & About** program once a month on the 3rd Wednesday, 10:00 am - 12:00 pm, meeting at a different location in Sonoma each month.

On Wednesday, **April 15th**, Memory Cafe Out & About made our second trip to Pets Lifeline, also partnering up with LAPS (Loving Animals Providing Smiles). Our participants were treated to a morning shared with three therapy dogs who brought many smiles. Everyone enjoyed engaging conversation about our past and present pets. We ended our visit by inviting participants to visit the Pets Lifeline kitties that are up for adoption. It was a fantastic experience, and the turnout was one of our best yet. Be sure to RSVP early for our **Memory Cafe Out & About** monthly program as space is usually limited.

★ Upcoming Memory Cafe Out & About Date: Wednesday, May 20

Our next Memory Cafe Out & About will be on Wednesday, **May 20th**. It will take place at the Sebastiani Winery tasting room. We will be getting a tour of the historic tasting room. After the tour we will enjoy some grape juice with cheese and crackers at the outdoor picnic area. We are only able to bring 10 guests, so please RSVP here early if you would like to attend.

Support Groups for Caregivers

★ **CarePartners Initiative offers a free in-person support group each month.**
Location: Sonoma United Methodist Church Community Room,109 Patten St., Sonoma
4th Wednesday, 11:00am - 12:30pm | Facilitator: Heidi Lage, LMFT
Upcoming: Wednesday, May 27

Please consider joining us. It is a confidential space to share challenges and successes with other caregivers. It is truly validating to be in the company of others who intimately understand the journey of a caregiver.

Please **RSVP** here to let us know if you plan to attend. We are limiting the support groups to 10 people to be sure everyone has adequate time and space to share.

★ **CarePartners Initiative offers a free Zoom support group each month.**

2nd Tuesday, 12:00 - 1:30 pm | Facilitator: Heidi Lage, LMFT
Upcoming: Tuesday, May 12

Please **RSVP** here to let us know if you plan to attend. We are limiting the support groups to 10 people to be sure everyone has adequate time and space to share. You may attend both our two monthly caregiver support groups (one in-person and one via Zoom) as space allows.

Please contact Heidi for a short intake and the Zoom link. Telephone (707) 640-3734 or email here.

Social Activities Group

April Social Activities Group Event

The **Sonoma Conservatory of Dance** graciously invited us to attend a dress rehearsal of the Mexican Ballet, *Por la Luz de la Luna*. Many thanks to Patty O'Reilly, owner and producer, for our invitation. It was a delight!

At this time there is not a Social Activities event planned for May; however, we are working on a date for a **Transcendence Theatre** dress rehearsal the beginning of June. Watch your emails for a save-the-date announcement!

Resource Corner

Caregiver 101 Class via Zoom
Date: Tuesday, May 19 | Time: 1:30 - 3:30 pm
For the family members or caregivers of loved ones with dementia.
Discussion: Strategies for dealing with dementia associated symptoms and the importance of advance planning. Who should attend: Family members or caregivers of patients who have a diagnosis of dementia. It is recommended that patients with dementia should not attend this class. Click **here** to register. Phone: (707) 582-2329

Demystifying Dementia via Zoom
Date: Tuesday, May 12 | Time: 2:00 - 3:30 pm
Most people associate dementia with memory loss. However, dementia is far more complex than most family caregivers understand. Dementia affects more than just memory, it impacts identity, communication, movement and relationships. Join us for an opportunity to hear gerontologist and author of "A Loving Approach to Dementia Care", Laura Wayman. Click **here** to register. Phone: (800) 541-8614

Mental Health While Caregiving via Zoom
Date: Wednesday, May 20 | Time: 10:00 - 11:30 am
Most people associate dementia with memory loss. However, dementia is far more complex than most family caregivers understand. Dementia affects more than just memory, it impacts identity, communication, movement and relationships. Join us for an opportunity to hear gerontologist and author of "A Loving Approach to Dementia Care", Laura Wayman. Click here to register. Phone: (800) 541-8614

Family Conflict via Zoom
Date: Friday, May 29 | Time: 2:00 - 3:30 pm
Caring for a loved one can sometimes create unforeseen situations that place stress on family relationships. These pressures may cause tension to build over time and lead to family conflict. In this class, we will discuss common sources of family conflict and share practical tips to help you navigate challenges throughout your caregiving journey. Click here to register. Phone: (800) 541-8614

Understanding Grief and Loss - via Zoom
Date: Tuesday, May 12 | Time: 10:00 - 11:00 am
Join us to learn about coping with grief and loss for yourself or another person. Grief is the reaction to loss, and any kind of loss can trigger grief. People grieve for the loss of someone they love but also for the loss of independence, usefulness, cognitive functioning, and physical abilities. Grief is also a lifelong process: a journey rather than something that is cured. This course will teach people to recognize grief and how to respond appropriately to the grieving person. A final section on compassion fatigue, burnout, and secondary stress includes strategies for professional self-care.
Reservation required. Click here.

Champions of Chaos Supportive Peer Weekly Meeting via Zoom
Date: Weekly on Wednesdays | Time: 12:00 - 1:00 pm
The virtual gatherings are always free and always optional. A supportive peer weekly meeting for individuals navigating the aging process for someone else, this is a mutual self-help group, not a therapy group. Everyone is encouraged to participate to whatever extent comfortable whether you need to vent, need to brainstorm resources or solutions, or just know that you are not alone.

How the meeting works: Complete the registration form. Receive a link to the one-hour weekly call. Join as you can/need to. Click here to learn more or to register.
Phone: (415) 828-3733

Please Consider Making a Donation

Click Here to Donate

We need your help as we expand our **no cost programs** to support caregivers and their loved ones impacted by memory decline. Our programs touch lives and make a difference, and you can too.

Your tax-deductible donation helps drive our efforts to expand our programs and reach many more people whose lives can be transformed. We appreciate that you have many choices when it comes to your charitable giving, and we are grateful for any amount you choose to give.

Inquiring Systems Inc. (ISI) is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit fiscal sponsor of CarePartners Initiative. ISI 's Tax ID: 94-2524840

Volunteer

CarePartners Initiative is looking for volunteers with **experience in fundraising, program management**, and hands-on help executing our many cost-free programs.

If you are looking for a rewarding volunteer experience, please contact us here or call our Helpline (707) 732-9436. We look forward to hearing from you!

Dementia Friendly Sonoma Valley

Sonoma is a Dementia Friendly Community
Dementia Friendly America: https://dfamerica.org/
Part of our mission is to deepen awareness of the symptoms and signs of dementia. As a community, we can enhance the safety and quality of life for the estimated 1,000 people in Sonoma Valley with dementia and their caregivers.

Dementia is complex. Click here for a short video that summarizes it well. If you would like more information on Sonoma's program, please visit the Dementia Friendly Sonoma Valley information page on our website here.

Please visit our website to learn more!

carepartnersinitiative.org