

## OUT OF THE MOUTH OF BABES...



**Teacher:** "OK, today we are reading *Harry the Dirty Dog*."

Pre-K boy:  
"Ugh! I read that book in the '50s!"

**Teacher:**  
"Wow! That's amazing!"

Pre-K boy: "I was alive in the '50s."

Miss Sheridan Zuniga,  
Pre-K teacher

### OCTOBER SESSION

The October session of Grandparents and Other Relatives as Parents (GORP) was here before we knew it!

Attending GORP are caregivers who are raising their relatives. Similar to previous months, new participants joined long-time members.

The GORP session seeks to offer a blend of clinical and peer support each month. Once a quarter, we invite professionals from the community to come and talk about a topic the caregivers want to know more about.

In October, GORP members invited Dr. Anthony Dobner to attend and discuss psychotropic medications for children and adolescents. For more on Dr. Dobner see pages 2-3 and for group reactions to his presentation, read more on page four.

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## SPEAKER SPOTLIGHT



Dr. Tony Dobner is currently a Child and Adolescent Psychiatry Fellow at UW- Madison and he finishes his Child Psychiatry training in June 2019.

In October he joined us at GORP to answer questions generated by our members. Read his comments to their questions below.

His interests include depression and anxiety disorders in teenagers. A Wisconsin

native, he has experience working with children and adolescents in both the in- and outpatient settings. He has worked with children and families with anxiety and mood disorders, ADHD, intellectual disability, and autism.

Dr. Dobner has accepted a position as a psychiatrist at Rogers Memorial Hospital FOCUS. Adolescent Residential Mood Disorder Program.

***“Knowledge will bring you the opportunity to make a difference.”***  
***- Claire Fagen***

### **How do you know you need a psych evaluation?**

Discuss with your primary care doctor. Many pediatricians and family doctors treat psychiatric illnesses and are very comfortable prescribing medications and referring for therapy.

### **At what age can a child be diagnosed with depression?**

There is no minimum age at which a child can be diagnosed with depression. Symptoms of depression can be different depending on the developmental stage of the child. Even infants can display symptoms of depression and this has been called anaclytic depression.

### **How young is too young to put kids on medications?**

It depends how severe the symptoms are. Younger children are more likely to have side effects. The youngest children that we see in our clinic are 3-4 years old.



## **How do you explain to the child that medications are working and that's why they need to stay on their meds even though they feel better?**

It depends how old the child is. The youngest children are very unlikely to understand why they need to take medication. It is helpful to engage school aged children in discussion of why they do not like to take their medication. Some children may benefit from a reward system. Even teenager probably need to have close parental supervision and even observation of medication administration.

## **Are meds good for ADHD?**

Stimulant medications have the strongest evidence for treating ADHD. Stimulant medications were more effective than therapy alone or meds combined with therapy groups.

## **Do you believe that too many children/teens take psych medications?**

We know that depression and anxiety are very common in childhood. Probably goes under treated and under diagnosed. That being said, medications are not necessary in every child with a mental health concern and medication treatments do not go without risk of side effects. Many children with mild to moderate symptoms will not need medications. I see part of my job as protecting kids from being experimented on.

## **How do you tell if a child has autism, a mood disorder or both?**

Autism is a clinical diagnosis that is made based off of symptoms including impairments in social-emotional reciprocity, non-verbal communication skills, developing and understanding relationships, and restricted and repetitive behaviors. These symptoms can range in severity from very mild to very severe. The diagnosis is guided by the description of symptoms in the Diagnostic Statistical Manual or DSM-5.

Different specialists that work with children regularly can make the diagnosis of autism. Autism is frequently diagnosed and managed by pediatricians, neurologists, and psychiatrists.

Some symptoms of autism can overlap with severe depression. Sometimes it is good to have an autism specialist evaluate a child if there are mixed symptoms of autism and another psychiatric disorder or if the child is very high functioning, it can also be difficult to tell.

## **How is medication for ADHD monitored?**

- Blood pressure, pulse. Sometimes we get an EKG if h/o cardiac problems in the family.
- PDMP
- Stimulant contract
- Drug testing

## **When and how are children/adolescents tapered off of medications?**

Usually slowly over a long period of time. Better to go off meds during times of low stress, like summer vacation. Sometimes we have to taper medications more rapidly, for example, if dangerous side effects. This usually happens on an inpatient basis.





## What GORP Members are Saying about October's Session. . .

What did you find most useful about today's presentation?

**“ All conversation helped;  
all was good information!”**

**“Answered a lot of questions regarding  
medications and diagnoses.”**

**“A good source of knowledge and information!”**

Please describe something you will change OR something that has been further reinforced in your daily practice as a result of this presentation?

**“Work with doctor's to try to determine if  
medication is effective.”**

**“We will try some trials with her meds.”**



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### REST (or INSPIRATION) FOR THE WEARY . . .

**“I don't feel old. I don't feel anything till noon. That's when it's time for my nap.”**

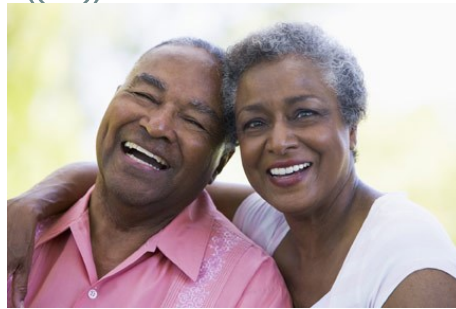
**- Bob Hope**

“She believed she could but she was really tired so she took a nap instead.”

- a very cheeky woman

**“Two things are infinite: the universe and naps; and I'm not sure about the universe.”**

**- Albert Einstein**



### NOVEMBER SESSION

The Grandparents and Other Relatives as Parents (GORP) members have grown to anticipate the November session with excitement. Attending GORP are caregivers who are raising their relatives.

Each November we set aside our typical structure in order to celebrate National Caregivers Appreciation Month. It's the Rainbow Projects opportunity to proudly partner with local businesses to celebrate and honor the consistent care each our members providers to their loved ones.

Caring for others is a noble pursuit. The immediate investment involves setting aside the worry of “is it enough?” or “what could go wrong?” and instead holding hope for future returns. Moment by moment our caregivers hold out hope for their loved ones bright futures. In doing so, it is critical they continue to invest in themselves along the way. Read more about the importance of self-care on pages 2-3. For more details about our festivities refer to page four.

Enjoy! We did.



## THE NECESSITY OF SELF-CARE

On April 16, 2014, in a talk at Stanford Graduate School of Business, Oprah Winfrey spoke of what it means to take care of herself. Winfrey, a single woman, loving without children, the cultural icon differs from the grandparents and relatives attending the monthly session of GORP.

Nevertheless, her words are timeless, stating: **“The truth is you don’t have anything to give that you don’t [first] have [for yourself]. So, you have to keep your own self full.”** Her parting words to future graduates? **“Keep your cup full!”**

Our GORP caregivers know the pressures of stretched finances, the disappointment of delayed retirement, and the debt acquired in an effort to help their adult children and now grandchildren, or other relatives.

Certainly, it’s a challenge to prioritize self-care when working full-time and continuing the grind that many of their peers are retiring from.



Not to mention, additional pressures of managing the transition from grandparent/relative to parent. Including, learning the evolving school system, connecting with therapeutic networks, catching up to the latest technology, and much more.

No doubt about it, the members of GORP are awake to the need for self-care. How, though, do they make sure their “cups” are full? When recently asked what they are able to do to take care of themselves, many members referred to the moments they're able to devote to small pleasures. Their ability to see joy in routine tasks reinforced the value of perspective and the delight of gratitude.

Certainly, a critical component to self-care includes finding ways to reduce loneliness and isolation.

One way to do that is to look for opportunities for connection and belonging, like the members of our group, Seeking such opportunities requires the willingness to be open and honest with ourselves and others.

And every day, the world  
will drag you by the hand,  
yelling, “This is important!  
And this is important! And  
this is important! You need  
to worry about this! And  
this! And this!” And each  
day, it’s up to you to yank  
your hand back, put it on  
your heart and say, “No.  
This is what’s important.”  
- Iain Thomas -

The latter also requires us to consider what boundaries we want to put in place around the information we share. When we share our life stories with intention and for the sake of taking care of ourselves, we open up to the powerful possibilities of receiving empathy and trust from and with others, and perhaps most importantly, ourselves.





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**It's November which means it's  
Time to Celebrate . . .**

# **National Caregiver Appreciation!!!**

**To celebrate, Rainbow Project partnered with  
Festival Foods and Studio Z.  
Festival Foods catered brunch for the  
caregivers.**

**A licensed message therapist from Studio Z offered  
neck and should massages, and yoga was offered  
to the kids during childcare**

**Each grandparent was provided with a thank you  
card, including a gift card to a  
local retailer.**

**Many thanks to our partners  
and especially our caregivers!!!**





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“If you really want to make a friend, go to someone’s house and eat with him. . .the people who give you their food, give you their heart.”

**-Cesar Chavez**

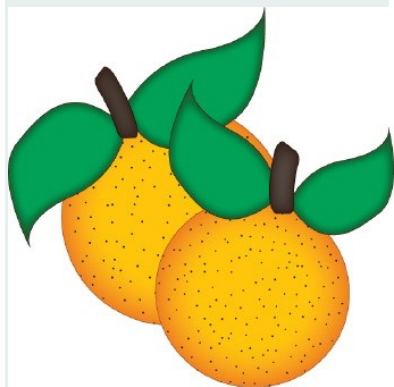


**DECEMBER SESSION**

December is a time to part with the past year, and welcome the start of a new one. For members attending the monthly GORP session, December can be experienced as a complicated time of high emotions.

Members who attend are raising their relatives, or wish they were. The circumstances of life for GORP members include sorrow and joy. The activities of December, have the potential to amplify these feelings for caregivers. With this in mind, we hit pause every December and take a break from offering structured peer support, or hearing from a speaker. Instead, we take a moment to celebrate our group and what it means to us. We do this by having a good old- fashion potluck!

The pot-luck is our opportunity to gather around our shared table and enjoy each other and our cooking!



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In the November issue of the GORP newsletter we talked about what it means to make sure our cup stays full.

Often times, the activities in December leave us feeling off-center and wondering where there is peace. It's in times like this that our cups can end up spilling!

In theory we can agree that peace brings a smile and

yet when we're experiencing stress, it might be the last thing we want to offer.

Not everyone experiences December to be merry. For many it is a reminder of deep personal loss.

In these times, it's hard to stay in the moment because it often feels too painful. If you can relate read on. . .

*“Peace begins with a smile..”*

*- Mother Theresa*

## The Power of the Moment

The troubles of this life add up. We are so resilient and capable of surviving that we often overlook it's accumulative affect on our lives. Enduring significant loss, deep disappointment and continual demands and responsibilities overwhelms our soul. Over time, we can easily forget the joy and wonder of childhood and instead feel like we are trying to wrangle the clouds of nostalgia in to submission.



Nevertheless, we find ways to cope and continue. Some look to religion, spiritual practices,, or other people to make meaning. Regardless of what approach suits you this December, be comforted too by your very breath. It's a powerful reminder of the moment. Right here, and now.

We all know our breath is often a strong clue about how we feel in the moment— some moments take our breath away, others cause us to hold it. Still others demand we stop and breathe deep.

Our breath gives us valuable information about ourselves in the moment and it is important to follow it all the way through. Each time, moment to moment, breath to breath.



Like our breath, children are a powerful reminder of the moment. In the same way our breath gives us clues about how we're feeling, so do children. They take our breath away, cause us to hold it and at times demand that we stop and breathe deep. At this time when of year, child-like wonder is celebrated anew. For those of us with children in our lives, we know this wonder is not an on-demand, December –feature. Instead, children carry this wonder and curiosity with them moment by moment, day to day. It's their gift to those of us who are wrangling nostalgia into submission!

For those looking for reminders on how to stop and enjoy the moment with the children you love and care for, take a minute to review what you already know:

**Stop, look, and listen:**

Talk about what you notice (i.e., sound of raindrops, sunny skies, marching ants). Narrating our sensory experience causes us to pause and take it in, and children benefit from such an exchange. Similarly, name things for them in their environment in age appropriate ways. For example, "Look that's a robin in the tree!" The art of naming the environment carries over to helping children/youth name their feelings.

Ask and answer questions— conversation is a powerful way to build language skills at any age!

**Pretend:**

Practice playing different roles with young children and taking on different perspectives with older ones, this skill helps children/youth develop empathy.

**Read together!** It's a free vacation!



## THROUGH YOUR EYES

Through your eyes I see the stars so bright,  
the moon, and the darkness of night.

I see butterflies and flowers that dance in the  
breeze.

I see the wind as it blows, and the leaves fall, the  
newness of snow, the glory of it all.

All of this so day to day, but through your eyes it all  
seems new.

So when life starts to get me down, and things start  
to give me trouble...through your eyes I'll look, my  
child.

For you see life like no other.



© SUZANNE EICHMAN

Source: <https://www.familyfriendpoems.com/poem/through-eyes-of-a-child-2>

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