Identifying And Addressing Barriers To Equitable Care For Older Adults: Challenges And Opportunities
Presented By Karen Bullock, PhD, LICSW, FGSA, APHSW-C
The population aged 65 and over in North Carolina is expected to grow more than 60% by 2037. Social Workers will be central to the health and well-being of this growing population. COVID-19 shed light on areas that we need to pay particular attention to as we go forward with a commitment to ensuring that North Carolina continues to be a place where older adults can age in place, with grace and fortitude. Social workers have an ethical and professional responsibility to provide the best possible care for all individuals, families, and communities that seek and need our services. The COVID-19 pandemic highlighted challenges that many older adults have in accessing services and it illuminated the importance of addressing disparities and creating greater health equity. This presentation takes an evidence-based approach to highlighting the need to emphasize older adults as an essential population for social workers’ attention, identifying health care disparities across groups, discussing a framework for critical assessment of gaps in services for older adults; and making pragmatic recommendations for addressing inequities.

CONFERENCE AGENDA

8:15am-8:30am ET  Welcome and Announcements
8:30am-10:30am ET  Identifying And Addressing Barriers To Equitable Care For Older Adults: Challenges And Opportunities
Presented By Karen Bullock, PhD, LICSW, FGSA, APHSW-C

8:30am-10:30am ET  Guiding the Way: Insights and Support for Grandparent Kinship Caregivers
Presented By Tyreasa Washington, PhD, LCSW
Kinship care is when biological parents are unable or unwilling to care for their children, and grandparents or other close family members and friends (e.g., aunts, uncles, Godparents) take on the role of caregivers. There are approximately 2.5 grandparent caregivers in the United States, with African Americans more likely to be kinship caregivers than non-persons of color. Kinship caregivers have a unique set of challenges including financial strain, aging concerns, and custody issues to name a few. These caregivers are committed to the unselfish act of caring for related children that benefits their families, the child welfare system, and society in general. Thus, social workers and other practitioners play a crucial role in supporting kinship caregivers and addressing the challenges they face. In this session, we will discuss the history of kinship care, benefits for caregivers and children, physical and mental health considerations for the caregiver, and opportunities to support and provide resources for kinship care families.

10:30am-10:35am ET  Break
10:35am-12:05pm ET  Supporting Individuals Living with Dementia and Their Care Partners
Presented By Kendall McMillan, MSW, LCSW
As our population ages, we are seeing more and more people living with dementia. This disease not only impacts the life of the person experiencing it, but their friends, family, and community. In this session, participants will gain an understanding of dementia, best practices for communication across the different stages of the disease, tactics for supporting families, and the resources available across our state.

12:05pm-12:35pm ET  Lunch Break
12:35pm-2:05pm ET  The Journey’s End: Conversations Around Quality End-of-Life Care
Presented By Jasmine Blue, M.A Gerontologist + Death Doula & Naomi Otano, MSW
Navigating end-of-life care requires compassionate support and informed decision-making, ensuring dignity and comfort for individuals nearing the end of life’s journey. In this session, participants will gain an understanding of the many aspects of end-of-life care, emphasizing the significance of planning and preparation. We will explore holistic and practical approaches to end-of-life care support and share insights into the physical, emotional, social, and spiritual aspects individuals may face. By the end of the session, participants will be equipped with the knowledge to effectively support individuals and their families who are navigating end-of-life care.

2:05pm-2:10pm ET  Break
2:10pm-3:40pm ET  Hidden In Plain Sight: Serving the Solo Aging Demographic
Presented By Nancy Ruffner, BSW, GCCE, BCPA
Unprecedented shifts in demographics are redefining who we are, how we live, and who will care for us. Whether the moniker is “Elder Orphan,” “Solo Age” or simply “Solo,” this fast-growing segment of the aging population is often underserved with little attention to their unique circumstances. This session will give professionals insights into the solo age demographic, their diverse needs, and how services within the social work profession can help them to succeed.