

## **Memory Cafes Nova Scotia**

A Collaboration between Municipalities, Businesses, Artists, Health Care Providers and Support Organizations and Volunteers to help build Age -Friendly Communities in Nova Scotia

### **What is a Memory Café?**

Memory Cafes were first started in the late 1990s in the Netherlands by a Dutch psychologist, Bere Miesen. He wanted to help break stigma around dementia and create welcoming social spaces in the community for older adults with memory challenges and their families and caregivers. Since that time, Memory Cafes have sprung up in communities across Europe and North America. They are part of Age -friendly Community Initiatives and can have many forms, though all have two purposes: to ensure that those with dementia and their caregivers feel included and welcome in their communities and to share fun positive social experiences. To watch a TEDx Talk on Memory Cafes check out:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vje71rXP8Z0>

### **Why are Cafes Important?**

In Nova Scotia, we have many small communities where cafes are a central part of community life. They make great places to meet, and are a sustainable low cost setting for group get togethers. Research shows that social isolation is a significant risk factor for physical and mental health of caregivers and those with dementia alike. Caregiver burnout is one of the main reasons that persons with dementia go into long term care. Research also shows that one of the main concerns for people with dementia is to feel that they continue to belong in their community.

### **What Happens in a Memory Café?**

Memory cafes can have many forms: some happen in community centres or churches as well as actual cafes. At a Memory Café, attendees come together to relax, chat, enjoy some music or a guest artist who is invited to the café, and of course enjoy a hot drink and snack! Sometimes other guests may be invited to share useful information, including support for caregivers in the area, or for education on memory disorders.

### **Memory Cafes in Nova Scotia**

Two Memory Cafés are happening in Wolfville and in Kentville in the Annapolis Valley! They are running through the winter months (January through April 2020) every second Tuesday between 2-3pm in Wolfville and 3:30-4 30 pm in Kentville. While the Wolfville group is currently full, Kentville is open for registration and we are working on establishing other Memory Cafes in the area. You can register for Kentville with Ashley Alders at 902 679 2539 at [recreation@kentville.ca](mailto:recreation@kentville.ca), or add your name to the waitlist at the Wolfville Town Development office at [nzamora@wolfville](mailto:nzamora@wolfville) or 902-670-0131 and someone will get back to you!

### **How Do I Start a Memory Café in My Community?**

Contact Dr Beverley Cassidy or Dr Olga Yashchuk at Seniors Mental Health, Department of Psychiatry, Dalhousie University: [Beverley.Cassidy@nshealth.ca](mailto:Beverley.Cassidy@nshealth.ca) or [Olga.Yashchuk@nshealth.ca](mailto:Olga.Yashchuk@nshealth.ca)