



*At the Center of it All*



## MASSACHUSETTS MEMORY CAFÉ TOOLKIT

This toolkit was developed through generous support from the Massachusetts Association of Councils on Aging (MCOA). Its purpose is to support the member communities of the Massachusetts Association of Councils on Aging as well as many other entities that are committed to improving the well-being of people living with dementia and their care partners.

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# INTRODUCTION

## What is a Memory Café?

A memory café, sometimes called an Alzheimer's café, is a social gathering for individuals living with dementia and their care partners. Guests are welcome whose dementia is due to any underlying condition, and at any stage of disease progression. Care partners can include spouses, children, friends, and professional caregivers. Cafés meet in accessible community locations. They strive for an atmosphere that's more like a coffee house or a neighborhood party than a clinical program. Typically, guests are not asked their diagnosis. This way, individuals who have not been diagnosed or are not comfortable with their diagnosis feel welcome. While information about resources and services is available for those who seek it, cafés provide a break from focusing on disease and disability.

## Why are cafés needed?

People living with dementia, and their care partners, often become socially isolated. This is due to the increasing difficulty of engaging in everyday activities, compounded by the stigma that makes people feel unwelcome or embarrassed when symptoms occur in public situations. For example, someone who was a devoted member of a faith community may stop participating for fear of not being able to remember the names of people they've known for decades, or because friends at the congregation talk to their spouse rather than to them.

It's not that people don't care. In most cases, they lack information about Alzheimer's and related disorders, and feel ill-equipped to interact with people living with these conditions. Service providers may also contribute to stigma without intending to, by calling anyone living with dementia a "patient" when they are not in a medical setting, and by treating them as more of a diagnosis than a full person.

The unfortunate result is isolation, which then brings many health risks, including the rapid worsening of dementia. Fear and stigma go hand in hand, and create a social environment in which many are afraid to acknowledge their symptoms and seek medical evaluation.

In a survey of 2,500 people living with dementia in 54 countries, the 2012 World Alzheimer's Report found that

- 60% of respondents have "been avoided or treated differently because of their diagnosis."
- 40% have been excluded from everyday activities.
- Almost 25% concealed their diagnosis from family or friends, due to fear of being stigmatized.

## What are the benefits of memory cafés?

- Cafés are a cost-effective way to support both the person living with dementia and their care partners, such as a spouse, children, grandchildren, friends, professional caregivers, etcetera.
- Because they are open to people at any stage of disease progression, many café guests are able to continue attending for months or years.
- For those who have not been diagnosed, they can be a way to “dip a toe in the water.” Sometimes when people see that life goes on with dementia, they start to open up to more services.
- They help guests form new friendships. Many people meet at cafés, enjoy seeing each other at each café session, and then exchange contact information and get together outside of the café.
- For care partners, cafés provide respite “with” the person who has dementia. They provide an opportunity to have fun together, not just to focus on problems and losses.
- Café staff and trained volunteers can model effective ways to communicate with those who live with dementia, and therefore offer a natural, low-key teaching opportunity to care partners.
- Many cafés involve creative arts, because these draw upon aspects of cognitive functioning that are affected last and least by most conditions causing dementia. Cafés can help care partners learn creative activities and techniques that they can do at home.
- Cafés offer a great volunteer opportunity. Volunteers help keep the cost of running a café manageable, and volunteers in turn have the opportunity to interact with people living with dementia in a positive, fun, strength-based environment. As one volunteer said, “I’ve learned that when you’ve seen one person with dementia, you’ve seen one person with dementia.”
- Cafés can bring in participation from many sectors of a community. For example, businesses can contribute food or sponsor a café. Local artists or musicians can facilitate activities. Students can volunteer. Cafés can help communities become more “dementia friendly.”

## Structure and decision-making

The first café was started in 1997 in Holland, and the model has spread as a grassroots movement across many countries including the United States. No one “owns” the concept.

Here in Massachusetts, each café is independently run and designed to fit its community. In autumn 2014, Jewish Family & Children’s Service (JF&CS) launched the Percolator memory café network to support those starting or sustaining memory cafés.

The Percolator network developed a list of norms and standards entitled, “What a Memory Café Is and Isn’t.” While no one has the authority to enforce these standards, and cafés should be tailored to unique needs of their community, coordinators of new cafés are urged to give these standards careful consideration. They were developed based on the experience of many cafés. This is a living document. Please contact Beth Soltzberg to suggest a modification to the document.

[\*\*DOWNLOAD: Memory Café Percolator Norms and Standards ↓\*\*](#)



Create a Better Day Café, Marlborough; the first memory café in Massachusetts

## History

The first Alzheimer's Café was launched in 1997 by Dutch clinical psychologist Dr. Bère Miesen, in Leiden, Holland. Dr. Miesen recognized that fear prevented many people from seeking a diagnosis and getting support from others. He said, "If you attend Alzheimer's Café sessions you acknowledge that you have something to do with the disease...that's a significant step for nearly everyone and is crucial to being able to live and cope with it...I personally find it a sort of ritual for getting rid of your fear. We all know that tragedy is not deep and sharp if it can be shared with friends." (Miesen, 2010)

Dr. Miesen's new café met a clear need, and the model spread through Canada, many parts of Europe, and Australia. Many cafés in countries where there is a public health system include a public health nurse, and can offer a diagnostic screening right at the café.

In 2008, Dr. Jytte Lokvig started the first Alzheimer's Café in Santa Fe. That same year, Lori La Bey started Arthur's Memory Café in Roseville, Minnesota. In the United States, some cafés use the term "Alzheimer's Café," and others use the term "Memory Café." Some focus on providing information about dementia as many European cafés do, but most focus on socializing, and "respite from the disease."

In 2011, Tammy Pozerycki, owner of Pleasantries Adult Day and Consulting Services in Marlborough, started the first memory café in Massachusetts, the "Create a Better Day Café." The JF&CS Memory Café opened in Waltham in early 2014, and in autumn 2014 after receiving many inquiries and requests for technical assistance, JF&CS started the Percolator memory café network, a mutual assistance forum for those starting and sustaining cafés.

### [\*\*DOWNLOAD: Memory Café Percolator Description ↓\*\*](#)

One of the functions of the Percolator is to run a statewide memory café directory at [www.jfcsboston.org/MemoryCafeDirectory](http://www.jfcsboston.org/MemoryCafeDirectory), and to raise awareness of cafés through media outreach. Collaboration in a network makes cafés easier to start and run, and enables the public to more easily access the cafés. Some café guests attend multiple cafés throughout the month. Statewide or regional referral sources find it easier to refer when they have the list of cafés on the website, as opposed to receiving information from individual cafés. Café coordinators are encouraged to post the Percolator flyers as well as their own café flyer.

### [\*\*DOWNLOAD: Memory Café Network Flyer ↓\*\*](#)

### [\*\*DOWNLOAD: Memory Café Network Flyer with Tabs ↓\*\*](#)

To join the Percolator email list, email Beth Soltzberg at [bsoltzberg@jfcsboston.org](mailto:bsoltzberg@jfcsboston.org).

In 2015 and 2016, three statewide organizations offered seed grants to new cafés. These are the Massachusetts Lifespan Respite Coalition, the Massachusetts Department of Developmental Services, and the Massachusetts Association of Councils on Aging. The Massachusetts Department of Developmental Services appears to be the first in the nation to support integrated memory cafés that will serve the growing population of individuals living with both dementia and a developmental disability, as well as the general population.

### **What's in a name: "Alzheimer's Café" or "Memory Café"**

Dr. Miesen used the name "Alzheimer's Café," because Alzheimer's disease is the most common condition causing dementia. Some also view the use of the term "Alzheimer's Café" instead of "Memory Café" as a form of advocacy, challenging society to confront the word "Alzheimer's" and thus reduce their fear of it. Others find that the term "Alzheimer's" reduces participation by people living with dementia that is caused by conditions other than Alzheimer's. It can also be a barrier to participation for those who have not been diagnosed or do not accept their diagnosis.

At this point in the development of the café movement, one term or the other tends to cluster in geographic areas. Massachusetts cafés thus far have all used the term "memory café," and this toolkit will use this term. It's important to note that cafés can have other types of names entirely. The name should be chosen to appeal to members of the community it will serve.



*Memory Connections Cafe, Brookline,* 7

# HOW TO START AND SUSTAIN A MEMORY CAFÉ

This worksheet provides space for taking notes as you make decisions about the following components of your café.

[DOWNLOAD: Memory Café Planning Worksheet ↓](#)

## WHERE TO HOLD IT

This is often the first decision to make when starting a café. Cafés have been held in museums, restaurants or coffee shops, historical societies, senior centers, community centers, outdoor gardens, houses of worship and many other locations. All locations have their pros and cons.

When choosing a location there are some “must haves,” and some “pluses” that are nice but not essential.

### *Must Haves*

- Fully accessible building, including accessible restrooms
- Sufficient parking
- Accessible via public transit if many guests, staff or volunteers will use this means of travel
- Generally convenient location for guests, staff, and volunteers

### *Pluses*

- Free, or nominal fee to use the space
- Available indefinitely
- Family restroom
- Kitchen access for easier food preparation/clean up
- Appealing/inviting location with a community feel

Also consider how the location is viewed by your community. If you are holding your café in a senior center, for example, will people with younger onset dementia hesitate to come? If you are holding it in a house of worship, how best can you welcome those from other faith traditions? (Of course, a residence or congregation may want to have a café just for its members and not open to the public, and this is also fine.)

Assuming that you want to reach out to a wide spectrum of community members, you might consider asking organizations or businesses associated with those you'd like to reach to be cosponsors or promotional partners. A cosponsor typically is involved in programmatic decision-making, and may also contribute funds or in-kind resources. A promotional partner has a more limited role. A promotional partner lets you use their name/logo, and agrees to share your flyer/announcement with their mailing list.



Whenever setting up cosponsor or promotional partner arrangements, put the terms in writing. The name that you give to the arrangement (i.e., “cosponsor,” “promotional partner,” or something else) doesn’t matter as much as the clarity with which you define what you will do and what the other party will do. In particular, be aware that some potential collaborators may wish to market their services to your café guests, and that you will need to set clear boundaries so that guests do not receive unwanted solicitations. See “How to sustain your café” for more information about financial sponsorships.

You can also use room decorations, background music, and the choice of activities strategically to set the tone you want. For example, a café held in a medical or social service provider’s building could use extra decorative touches like gingham tablecloths and LED candles to make the setting feel more like a café, and less clinical.



*Create a Better Day Café, Marlborough*

## WHO SHOULD PARTICIPATE

Next think about the guests whom you hope to serve. In your community or region, there may be many different groups of people could benefit from participating. One program can't be all things to all people. However, memory cafés are designed to be welcoming and accepting environments, and to engage people with a wide range of cognitive needs, so they can flexibility include and support people from many different life experiences. Inclusivity is a core value of the memory café movement, in recognition that these conditions affect people of all cultures, and that some populations additionally face health disparities and significant community stress, and have little access to services that they greatly need.

For example, here in Massachusetts there are many new cafés that were developed to serve guests with both dementia and a developmental disability, as well as the general population. Many of these cafés were launched by a partnership between an aging services provider and a disability services provider. You may think about different cultural and language groups in your community, and how to reach and engage them.

## POTENTIAL REFERRAL SOURCES

If there are a couple of referral sources that will be critical to the success of your café, you may wish to reach out to those organizations while you are developing your plan, to ask for their input, and in some cases to ask them to cosponsor the café with you.

On an ongoing basis, you will need to communicate with a broader circle of referral sources to share your flyer and other information about your café. Build a mailing list as you go. Invite professionals to come to your café so that they can see what it's like. Remember that cafés are an unfamiliar model, and professionals may hesitate to refer until they see a café in action. (However, let them know that your rule for visitors is full participation! They'll get more out of the visit that way, and guests won't feel that they are being "observed." Professional visitors may be accustomed to models where there is a distance between service provider and service recipient, so they may not jump in unless they are given this guidance. Visitors tend to have a great time, and truly appreciate your invitation to participate!)

It's a good idea to write up "Frequently Asked Questions" that you can send your referral sources. Here is a template you can adapt for your café.

## [DOWNLOAD: Memory Café Frequently Asked Questions Template ↓](#)

In your FAQs, make sure to include your policy on participation from residences and day programs. It is recommended to require that those wanting to bring a group must talk with the coordinator first. Some cafés welcome groups; others do not. Some rules of thumb are to (1) welcome individuals who would benefit and can come with a family member or care provider regardless of where they live, and (2) ask activity coordinators NOT to simply consider your café as something to put on their activity calendar.

Another key piece of information to include in your FAQs is a statement about whether guests who require help with personal care (such as ambulating, eating, and using the restroom) must bring someone with them. This could be a friend or family member, or a professional caregiver.

Most cafés require this, because they do not have trained staff to provide this assistance. A few cafés do have aides on site who are able to provide this assistance. Either way, it's important to let your guests and referral sources know this clearly. Staff and volunteers who do not have the proper training should not be asked to provide personal care. By making your rules and resources clear in advance, guests who need assistance will have it, and everyone can be safe and comfortable.

### *Volunteers*

Volunteers offer a double benefit to cafés. They provide much-needed extra pairs of hands, and ensure that everyone will have someone to talk to (particularly important for drop-in cafés, where the number of guests coming on a given day is uncertain). In addition, volunteers get to see individuals living with dementia in a joyful, strength-based environment, and this often transforms their view. As one volunteer said, "I've learned that when you see one person with dementia, you've seen one person with dementia!" Volunteer then take this perspective on the enduring personhood and worth of those with dementia back out into the world, and help to reduce social stigma.

Café volunteers can be found in many places. Cafés have had partnerships with college sororities or clubs, and taken advantage of high school community service requirements and brought in high school students. Middle schoolers, and older adults have served as volunteers. With a little training, anyone with a reasonably outgoing personality can do a wonderful job.

Start by considering what resources you have in your community. You can certainly put out a call for volunteers through your town paper or other forum. However, it's a bit easier to work with groups of volunteers who have a central contact person to help you with any paperwork needed for new volunteers, give you a list of who is coming to each session, arrange transportation, etc.

The single best question to ask of prospective volunteers is this. "Volunteering at a memory café is like hosting a party. Would you enjoy this?" Some volunteers prefer tangible tasks and less social interaction, and this may not be the gig for them. While your volunteers will help with specific tasks, such as nametags, registration, and hanging up coats, their most critical role is to welcome guests and mingle.

If your café is run by a social service provider, the provider may have specific requirements, such as a CORI screening. These can be labor intensive, so you may wish to ask volunteers to make a semester or year commitment. It's good to ask volunteers to make a commitment in any case, so that volunteers have a richer experience and your café has this continuity.

Training needs will vary, depending upon the experience that your volunteers come in with. Some good resources are the Alzheimer’s Association, which offers many free online videos and informational handouts, and the Dementia Friends program. Dementia Friends originated in Scotland, and now is being used in many parts of the U.S. It is an hour-long training that covers basic information about dementia, and how to be a friend or a neighbor to someone living with dementia. A tip sheet specific to your café is also recommended. You can edit this Volunteer Tip Sheet Template to fit your café.

**[DOWNLOAD: Memory Café Volunteer Tip Sheet Template](#)** ↓



*Volunteers from Brandeis University, JF&CS Memory Cafe, Waltham*

## WHEN TO HOLD IT

Some cafés meet in the morning, and some in the afternoon, some on weekdays and some on weekends. Early evening cafés could be ideal for individuals who are working during the day. The day/time will definitely affect who attends your café; however, there is no day/time that will work for everyone.

Therefore, consider what works best for the space, the café coordinator and other staff, your prospective guests and your prospective volunteers. In all of your decisions, consider sustainability. For example, maybe staff will be willing to help out on a weekend once in a while, but not on an ongoing basis. Or maybe the weekend is best, because you won't be competing to use the space with weekday programs.

Also check the online directory at [www.jfcsboston.org/MemoryCafeDirectory](http://www.jfcsboston.org/MemoryCafeDirectory) to see the day/time of other nearby cafés. You don't want to be in competition with other cafés that meet at the same time or even during the same week. Keep in mind that some guests will attend several cafés if schedules don't conflict. As one woman who attends several cafés with her husband puts it, they are "café groupies."

## WHAT TO DO AT YOUR CAFÉ

What you do at your café tends to flow from the decisions you've made up until now – where, who and when. Below are some basic guidelines and ideas.

However, cafés around the country have found that the original plan almost always needs to evolve. Get feedback from guests over the first few months, tweak things, and get more feedback! Depending upon local culture(s), guests may want lots of planned activity, or none. They may gravitate toward specific types of activities, and dislike others. It's best not to invest lots of resources in particular activities until you make sure these are what your guests really want to do.

Most cafés start with relaxed socializing, then have some kind of planned activity, and then end with more social time. The planned activity may take up about half of the café time. Examples include a facilitated activity by a guest artist, exercise and movement, lectures, garden walks, and adventure outings. Outings tend to be quite expensive, so make sure you have the resources to sustain this, or perhaps limit them to a couple of times per year. In northeastern Wisconsin, several cafés meet up for outings on occasion.

Many cafés involve the creative arts, such as music, dance, poetry, visual arts, and art education. Benefits of creative arts include:

- Guests can participate and be challenged no matter their cognitive abilities. There are no wrong answers.
- Engaging in the creative arts levels the playing field between guests with dementia and their care partners. In fact, care partners may be inhibited and hesitant to try something, while those with dementia may be able to "plunge right in."

- The creative arts put us in touch with our shared humanity, and can help guests feel connected to one another.
- You can encourage guests to try these activities at home, perhaps by talking as a group about how to do so, and offering a take-home handout.

Cafés tend to find that interaction is critical to the success of any planned activity. To foster interaction, consider having guests move into a circle. If you invite a guest artist, let this person know that you are not inviting them to *perform*, but rather to *facilitate*. If they have not worked with people with dementia, they may need to brainstorm with you about possible ways to foster interaction.

If you invite a guest artist or facilitator, you'll need to decide whether to offer an honorarium. You may find several people in your personal or professional circle with hidden talents who are delighted to facilitate a session for free. There are also some wonderful teaching artists who do this for their living and need to get paid. You may find business sponsors willing to cover a guest artist's honorarium a few times per year. (Again, it is important to clearly define a sponsorship agreement, as described in the section "How to sustain your café.")

You can adapt this facilitator's guide to help you communicate with potential guest artists.

### [\*\*DOWNLOAD: Memory Café Guest Artist Guide Template ↓\*\*](#)

Older adults in general and people living with dementia in particular may be on the alert for activities or a facilitation style that makes them feel they are being treated like children. (They've had bad experiences with this!) Beware of activities that appear like children's crafts, or facilitation styles that talk down to people. The best facilitators have a style that could be termed "dignified playfulness." They encourage guests to explore and even be silly, but within a context of mutual respect and acknowledgement that we are all adults. It can be helpful if they start out by giving a little information about the traditions and cultural context of a particular activity or art form. [These free modules](#) produced by the National Center for Creative Aging are good examples of "dignified playfulness."

Some cafés that have a guest facilitator announce this ahead of time, via a flyer or mailing list. Others just announce the café dates. We have heard instances in which guests opted out because they didn't like the sound of the activity. And, we've heard from guests who want to know the activity in advance, because it helps them motivate their care partner with dementia to attend. So, your decision may be based on resources and your work flow.

The Percolator network has developed a Massachusetts Guest Artist/Activity Facilitator Directory that is growing over time and that all café coordinators are welcome to use. Email Beth Soltzberg at [bsoltzberg@jfcsboston.org](mailto:bsoltzberg@jfcsboston.org) to request access to the directory or to join it.

Again, not all cafés have guest facilitators at each session, or ever. Some have found that guests really just want to socialize. Or, they may have some simple activities that café coordinators can facilitate themselves, such as listening to music, sharing holiday recipes or photos, or telling favorite one-liners.



*JF&CS Memory Cafe, Waltham*

## HOW TO SUSTAIN YOUR CAFÉ

Now that you've decided where to hold your café, whom you'd like to involve, when to hold it, and what to do there, it's time to figure out HOW to set it up, get the word out, and pay for it!

### *Room Set Up*

A well-designed café helps guests living with dementia to feel safe, confident, and successful. This in turn provides a wonderful respite experience for care partners, who are able to take a deep breath and relax, chat with others, and enjoy seeing their partner having a good time. The following are some design elements to consider:

- Clear signage, with pictures as well as words when possible (to indicate the location of the café room, food and coffee, and restrooms)
- Sufficient lighting
- Clear pathways to prevent falls
- Background music kept to a soft level, so as not to distract or inhibit conversation
- Also limit the number of people per table, so that noise and stimulation level is manageable
- Decorations to make the environment festive. Some ideas: LED candles, silk flowers, tablecloths. Artwork produced at the café can be used as decorations
- Conversation prompts on the tables to help guests and volunteers mingle. Include photos as well as words, and avoid questions that require short-term memory
- Limit number of people to a table; keep background music soft

This list of suggested items to buy has been compiled by many new cafés. Again, you may want to hold off on expensive items or large quantities of items until you get a feel for what your café guests most like to do.

[\*\*DOWNLOAD: Suggested List of Items to Purchase for a New Memory Café ↓\*\*](#)



*JF&CS Memory Café, Waltham*



*Memory Connections Café, Brookline*



### *Registration Process*

You'll need a check-in area for guests arriving to the café. It's always good to keep things simple, but at a minimum you'll need nametags, and a way for people to join your mailing list. You will probably also want to have a photo/video release form, and a donation can for those who wish to pitch in. MCOA has provided this photo/video release template for their member organizations to use. See below for more information about registration paperwork.

**[DOWNLOAD: MCOA Picture and Video Image Release Template ↓](#)**

### *Communication: Outreach*

Outreach is one of the biggest challenges for new cafés. Most people have not heard of memory cafés, and as we know social stigma often keeps people isolated from services and hesitant to reach out. Therefore, potential guests may have to hear about the café three or four times before they give it a try. Expect it to take 3 – 6 months to build your attendance. Because most conditions causing dementia are progressive, you will find that over time many of your regular guests will become unable to attend due to disease progression. Outreach will be an ongoing process, though once you have steady attendance, word of mouth will help bring in new guests.

Make sure to list your café in the Percolator online directory, using this format:

**[DOWNLOAD: Percolator Online Directory Format ↓](#)**

We encourage you to post the Percolator network flyers as well as your own. Some referral sources will only be interested in the whole directory because of their large service area. Many cafés also include the online directory URL on their café flyer.

Consider collaborating with other cafés in your region to support each other's outreach efforts. For example, cafés in Greater Boston were able to get a Wicked Local article about cafés reprinted in a dozen town papers.

A Percolator working group came up with this list of outreach ideas that you may find helpful.

**[DOWNLOAD: Memory Café Outreach Ideas ↓](#)**

### *Communication: Keeping in Touch*

Once you've worked hard to build your attendance, you certainly want to keep in touch. Start a list of providers to whom you can send a reminder before each café session. If you send them a flyer, ask them to post it and share it with individuals whom they think could benefit.

Develop some kind of registration form so that you can add guests to your mailing list. You'll want to send an email, a paper notice, or both, to remind guests of upcoming café sessions.

When deciding what information to request on your registration form, keep in mind that you will want to evaluate the impact of your café, as discussed below. There may be demographic information you'd like to collect at registration and then refer to later when you are evaluating your café.

Again, cafés typically do NOT ask guests for a diagnosis, or whether they are a person living with dementia or a care partner. Some cafés keep track of overall numbers by creating a field in their computer database for the staff person's observation of their role (person with dementia or care partner).

You can use this registration form template to get started.

### [DOWNLOAD: Memory Café Mailing List Registration Form Template ↓](#)

#### *Communication: Odds and Ends*

As you think about how to keep in touch with guests, you may consider whether or not to require an RSVP. Most cafés find that whether they request or require an RSVP or not, some guests who'd intended to come will not, because despite planning, dementia means that sometimes it's just not a good day for an activity. And, some guests will show up without an RSVP. That said, cafés with limited space or complex planned activities will need to require an RSVP, and should make this very clear in their flyers and announcements.

Also keep in mind that you may occasionally need to cancel due to weather or other emergencies. Cafés that have a firm RSVP policy will have an easier time contacting those who had planned to attend. In most cases, you will need multiple ways to let attendees know that the café has been cancelled – perhaps phone calls, an email message, and a recording on the contact person's voice mail. It's a good idea to write up a brief "Weather/Emergency Cancellation Process" handout to make available for your guests that lets them know how they'll find out if there's a cancellation.

Some guests who attend your café will want to contact one another. Making new friends is a wonderful benefit of cafés, but your organization probably has a policy about sharing personal information that will determine how you should proceed.



*JF&CS Memory Cafe, Waltham*

### *Finances: Costs*

One of the benefits of memory cafés is that they serve both people living with dementia and care partners at a modest expense. For most cafés, the coordinator's time is the largest expense. Cafés that provide transportation and/or offer outings can see large costs in these categories. The least expensive cafés are held at restaurants or coffee shops, so that guests purchase their own food. For those starting a café with grant funding, it's important to keep costs sustainable from the start, so that the program can be sustained when grant funding runs out.

Most cafés cost between \$8,000 and \$15,000 annually, with an additional \$2,500 - \$4,000 in start-up expenses.

This template can help you build your budget:

**[DOWNLOAD: Memory Café Budget Template ↓](#)**

Since the café coordinator's time is usually the biggest expense, you can forecast more accurately by taking a close look at the task requirements with this template, and then entering an accurate estimate into your budget.

**[DOWNLOAD: Memory Café Coordinator Task and Time Requirement Template ↓](#)**

### *Finances: Revenue*

Memory cafés have been successful in gaining support from many community businesses and organizations. Options include seeking in-kind contributions, for example of food or art supplies. In addition, many cafés seek financial sponsorships. Sponsorships can be for one session only, though a seasonal or multi-session sponsorship gives you more support and a more efficient process. It's wonderful when a representative from the sponsoring business or organization attends the café to participate and soak up the atmosphere. It can be a joyful and eye-opening experience that can encourage their interest in broader dementia-friendly business practices and community efforts.

It's critical to put what you are asking, and what you are giving on paper. While engaging the business community can help sustain cafés and also raise awareness in the business community, you want to ensure that your guests do not feel marketed to during cafés. This template can be used to design a handout for potential business sponsors. Tailor the specifics to your café, but do make sure to include clear information about your expectations and how you will acknowledge the sponsor.

**[DOWNLOAD: Memory Café Sponsor Guide Template ↓](#)**

Despite your best intentions, you may find that representatives from private businesses come to the café and hand out business cards, etcetera. Having the sponsor guide can help you to gently take them aside and let them know that unsolicited marketing is against café policy. If they want to support the café and get recognition for this, they are welcome to become a sponsor.

In addition to business sponsorships, you could create a system for honorary or memorial sponsorships. This could be a nice way for the care partner of someone who has died or can no longer participate to say thank you, and stay connected to the café. It could be a delightful birthday gift for a café regular, to whom everyone can sing “happy birthday” at the sponsored session. You may want to offer honorary or memorial sponsorships at a flexible rate, for those who really would like to sponsor but cannot afford a given fee.

Unrestricted donations for your café may be available through town clubs and other sources. Rotary International has been a key supporter of cafés in the UK. Most towns have additional clubs, too. A town cultural council may support a guest artist honorarium. Though this is not likely to bring in much money, it is a good idea to have a donation can for guests who wish to chip in.

No matter who supports your café or how they do it, make sure to thank and acknowledge them. Ways this can be done include a thank you letter, a sign on your registration table, verbally announcing their support during the café, and an end-of-year list thanking all supporters, which is included in a café mailing.

Finally, some cafés elsewhere in the country have run on a fee basis. These tend to be cafés with expensive activities, such as outings. One café in San Francisco started on a fee basis, and then after a year or so was able to get corporate donations and to stop charging a fee. It is also possible to charge a fee on a sliding scale so that those who can pay do, and no one is prevented from participating due to resources.



*Rest.Stop.Ranch Memory Cafe, Topsfield*

## EVALUATION: HOW TO IMPROVE

Evaluation starts at the beginning, so think ahead. If you have funders, consider their requirements, plus what you would like to learn in order to improve your café. Plan to conduct a simple annual evaluation even if it's not required.

Perhaps the simplest approach is a written survey. It's great to survey staff and volunteers as well as guests. If you have the resources, conduct a few follow-up interviews with guests who are willing to have an in-depth conversation with you. The few in-depth interviews combined with your survey data will give you a lot of important information to improve your café.

This template can help you develop your guest and volunteer/staff survey.

[DOWNLOAD: Memory Café Evaluation Templates ↓](#)

For in-depth interviews, consider these questions:

- How does attending the memory café affect you?
- Have you been able to meet people at the café whom you enjoy seeing at café sessions?
- Have you met anyone at the café whom you have gotten together with?
- Does participating in the café have an effect on your relationship with your care partner?
- Have you tried any of the café activities at home?
- If you could wave a magic wand and change anything about the café, what would it be?



*Memory Connections Café, Brookline*

# RESOURCES

## *Café Resources and Toolkits*

- [Memory Café Catalyst](#)
- [ACT on Alzheimer’s Meaningful Engagement Resources](#)  
(see “meaningful engagement”)
- [Alzheimer’s Café](#)
- [Memory Café UK](#)

## *Individual or Regional Cafés*

- [Massachusetts Memory Café Directory](#)
- [Fox Valley Memory Project Cafés, Wisconsin](#)
- [J. Arthur’s Café, Minnesota](#)
- [Memory Arts Café, NYC](#)

## *Other Resources*

- [NCCA Creative Caregiving Guide](#)
- [Dementia Friendly America](#)
- Belmont Public Media, [“Caring for Others, Caring for Ourselves: Memory Cafe Movement in Massachusetts,”](#) February 2016

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## Downloads

1. [Memory Café Percolator Norms and Standards \[PDF\] ↓](#)
2. [Memory Café Percolator Description \[PDF\] ↓](#)
3. [Memory Café Network Flyer \[PDF\] ↓](#)
4. [Memory Café Network Flyer With Tabs \[PDF\] ↓](#)
5. [Memory Café Planning Worksheet \[PDF\] ↓](#)
6. [Memory Café Frequently Asked Questions Template \[Word\] ↓](#)
7. [Memory Café Volunteer Tip Sheet Template \[Word\] ↓](#)
8. [Memory Café Guest Artist Guide Template \[Word\] ↓](#)
9. [Suggested List of Items to Purchase for a New Memory Café \[PDF\] ↓](#)
10. [MCOA Picture and Video Image Release Template \[Word\] ↓](#)
11. [Percolator Online Directory Format \[Word\] ↓](#)
12. [Memory Café Outreach Ideas \[PDF\] ↓](#)
13. [Memory Café Mailing List Registration Form Template \[Word\] ↓](#)
14. [Memory Café Budget Template \[Excel\] ↓](#)
15. [Memory Café Coordinator Task and Time Requirement Template \[Excel\] ↓](#)
16. [Memory Café Sponsor Guide Template \[Word\] ↓](#)
17. [Memory Café Evaluation Templates \[Word\] ↓](#)