



# Elevating Caregiver Voices: Storytelling to Change the Conversation

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Circles of Life Conference

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# A little about me

- Faculty at UW-Madison
- Extension specialist
- Research and outreach on family caregiving; what happens when families face a health crisis

# And...a little about me



- Retired high school teacher
- Family caregiver to my adult daughter who has epilepsy, autism and an intellectual disability
- Advocate for people with disabilities and family caregivers
- Starting a nonprofit:
  - Center for Caregiver Serenity



# Art and Storytelling in Advocacy





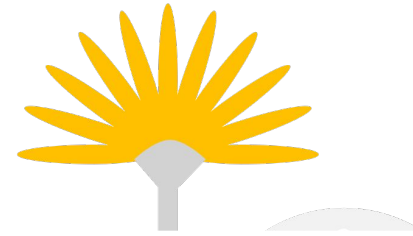
# Art and Storytelling as Self-Care



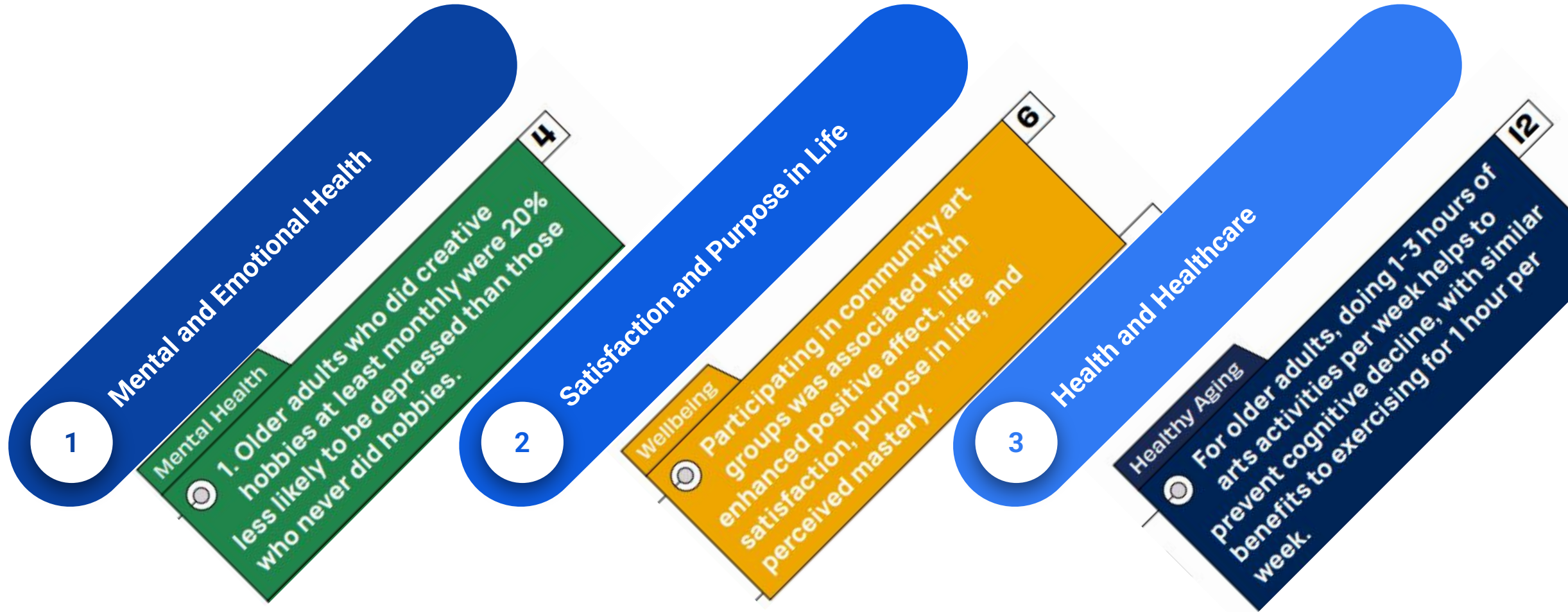


# A Metaphor

- Resilience/Thriving
  - Creating fertile soil
  - Sowing the seeds
  - Nourishing the seeds



# Arts Engagement Supports Well-Being



## PERSONAL

- + Active engagement and participation
- + Autonomy and choice
- + Feeling empowered and challenged
  - + Experimentation and curiosity
- + Learning creative and personal skills
- + Making something meaningful and original
  - + Self-expression
  - + Strategies for coping
- + Stress-relief, distraction and escape
- Feeling frustrated or overwhelmed
- Feeling vulnerable to criticism

## RELATIONAL

- + Social connection, and communication skills
- + Supportive environment for experimentation
- + Exhibiting and performing
- + Teaching and learning creative skills
- + Skilled and supportive facilitation
- Feeling excluded from decision making



## MECHANISMS



# Different activities can have different impacts





# Digital Storytelling



# A Story

<https://www.wevideo.com/class#view-media/3628168218>

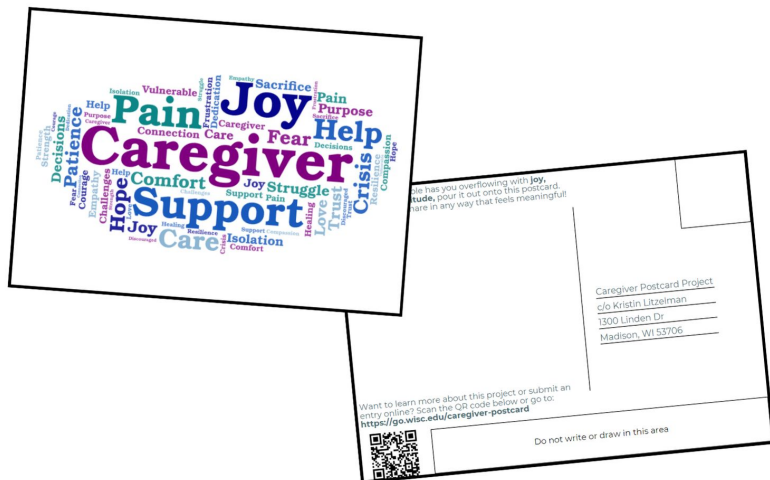


# Caregiver Postcard Project



Project leads: Kristin Voss and Kristin Litzelman. This project is supported by the Ira and Ineva Reilly Baldwin Wisconsin Idea Endowment.

# “ART IS NOT WHAT YOU SEE, BUT WHAT YOU MAKE OTHERS SEE”



EDGAR DEGAS



# Our Objectives

1

Lift up the  
voices of  
caregivers

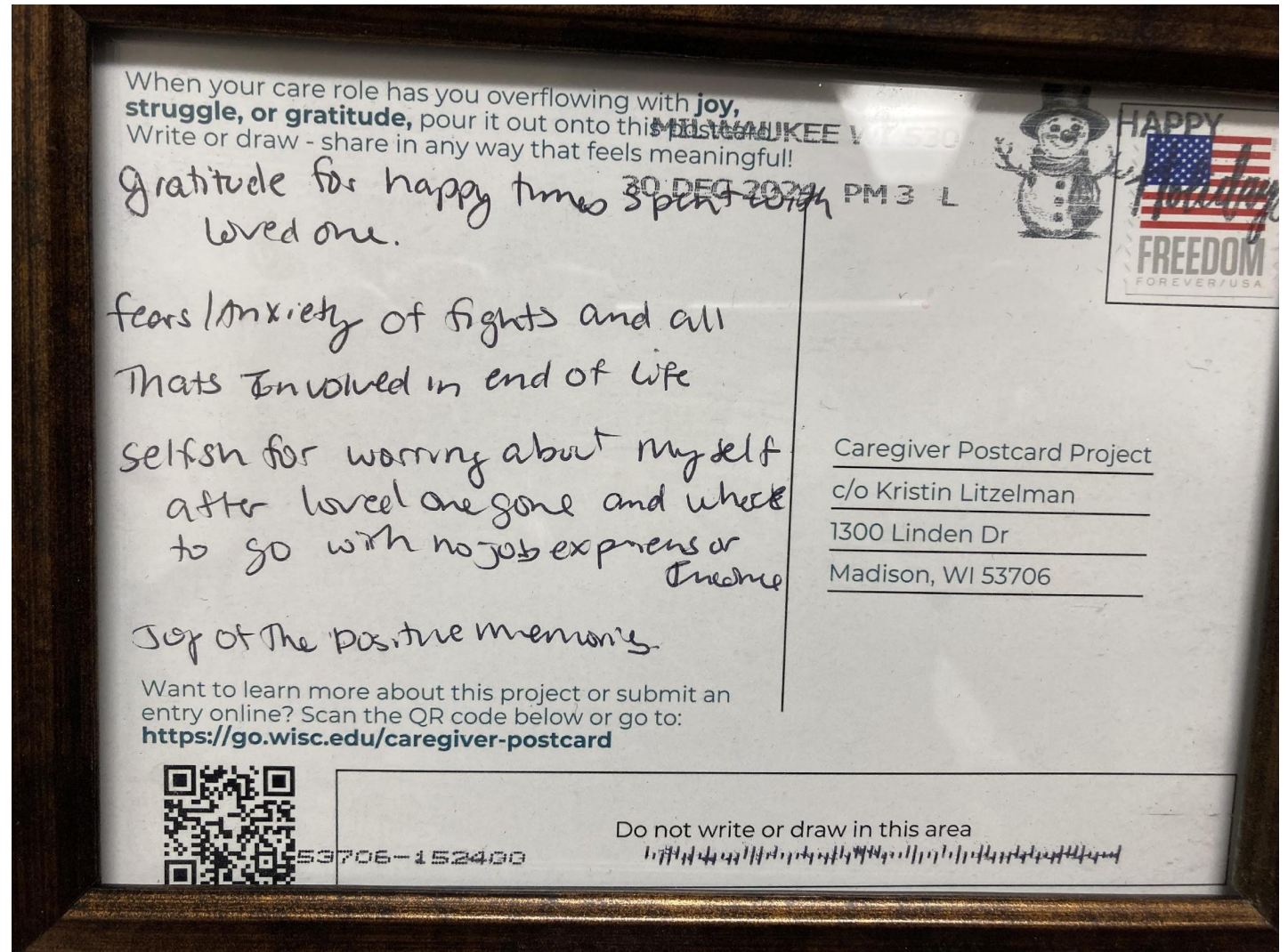
2

Raise  
awareness of  
the  
experience of  
caregiving

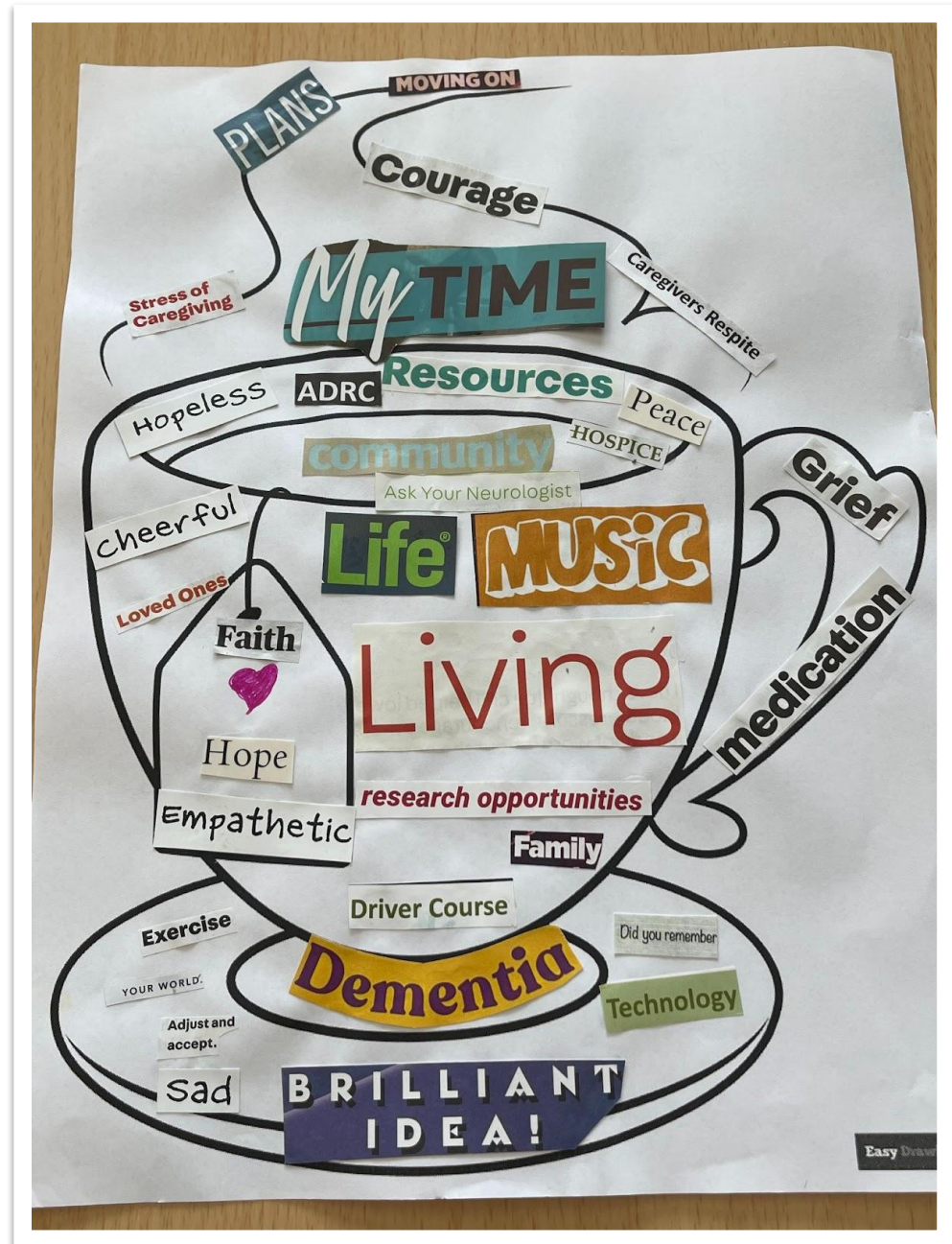
3

Inspire  
conversations  
about the  
needs and  
supports for  
caregivers

What  
caregivers  
are saying:



# What Caregivers Are Creating:









# What's Your Story?



Joys, challenges, and gratitudes of caregiving

Write, draw, discuss



# Are You a Caregiver Who Wants to Participate?

Go to [go.wisc.edu/caregiver-postcard](https://go.wisc.edu/caregiver-postcard) OR scan this QR code!

Share a few words, a poem, a drawing or painting, photo, or collage; anything that feels meaningful to you! You'll help others understand or feel less alone, and sharing can help you feel appreciated too.





# A Closing Invitation



# Closing invitation: How can art and storytelling help you?

## Performance

- Music, dance, theatre, singing, drumming

## Visual Arts

- Drawing, painting, design, photography, sculpture

## Crafting

- Knitting/crocheting, embroidery, quilting, cooking and baking

## Literature

- Writing, poetry, journaling

## Digital arts

- Animations, film-making, computer graphics

## Engagement

- Reading, listening, observing, enjoying