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Arbor View Senior Living hosts Dementia Boot Camp

By Rylee Dunn | July 9, 2026



Paula Levy addresses a group at Arbor View Senior Living for her Dementia Bootcamp.

Family members, caretakers learn skills from 38-year specialist Paula Levy

Paula Levy doesn't want folks to feel alone. She's spent the better part of the past 38 years educating family members, caregivers and patients on the ins and outs of dementia — a disease Levy says is both tough on the patient and on the patient's family.

Levy spent the afternoon of June 30 leading a Dementia Boot Camp at Arbor View Senior Living in Arvada, discussing the facts and science behind the disease while also giving folks tools they need to support their patients or loved ones as their brain health deteriorates.

One of the first things Levy told the room is that although she can offer tools, there are no concrete answers for dementia, an umbrella term for 125-130 brain diseases (including Alzheimer's) that have no known cure.

"This is not a sprint, this is a marathon," Levy said. "It's not anything that you're going to figure out. I'll just put it out there right now. You're not going to figure this out. If it was, I wouldn't be here today... It's a tough

disease, and it's not just tough on your person, it's tough on the entire family." Levy spoke about the importance of a caregiver surrounding oneself with a support system that is able to share the load of assisting the person with dementia.

"Nobody can do this by themselves," Levy said. "And the statistics are rising of caregivers who are dying. Last fall through December, I went to two caregiver funerals. They died taking care of their person.

Jessica Branaugh, the assistant director of resident life at Covenant Living in Westminster attended the bootcamp and spoke to the unique position that professional caregivers are in compared to family members.

"As caregivers, we don't have the emotional connection to those people and the emotional history," Branaugh said. "And we are sometimes able to see a little bit more of the black and white, and we don't take things personally, we're able to redirect and get them into a place that is very consistent, because we're not so emotionally connected to them."

Arbor View has about 30 people enrolled in their memory care program, according to

Director of Sales and Marketing Sarah Smith, though the senior living center's Executive Director Nikki Overby noted that dementia does not necessarily equal memory care.

"There's a common misconception that dementia means memory care, and that's not necessarily the case," Overby said. "We have plenty of people that have dementia (who are not in the memory care program). Memory care typically is for adults that are not safe.

"So, they're wandering away from home," Overby continued. "A lot of the residents (here) have dementia, but they're without behaviors, so they're not going to go to people's rooms, they're not a danger to themselves, basically."

Levy highlighted that dementia looks different for every patient, telling the story of a woman who competed in the Mrs. Colorado pageant after being diagnosed with early-onset dementia and kept her diagnosis to herself until the end of the pageant proceedings.

Levy also taught a handful of coping skills that family members and caregivers can employ, such as telling "therapeutic lies" to the person with dementia so that they are able to do things like go to doctors

appointments and keep other commitments without being confused or becoming enraged.

At one point, Levy handed out cotton swabs and told people to keep the acronym Q.T.I.P. — Quit Taking it Personal — in mind when their person with dementia is having mood swings.

"Keep this in your pocket when you're having a day when it's love — aggression, love — aggression," Levy said. "He's not raising your fist with you, it's the disease."

Levy also noted the importance of not correcting the person with dementia, offering that it's instead better to maintain a level of flexibility when dealing with them.

"We have control over how we respond to them," Levy said. "We're the ones that have to change."

In a short interview with the Arvada Press after the bootcamp, Levy said she has continued doing this work for nearly four decades because she believes in the importance of helping people through their journey with dementia.

"I want people to know that they're not alone," Levy said. "This journey is so hard and so changing and so full of loss that people need to know that it's survivable and that they really need to surround themselves with a team. The more support, the better it is.

"I just love to support people, whether it's care communities, or families or EMS or whoever," Levy continued. I just love to help people understand it and have some tools in their toolbelt to figure it out."

Smith said she hopes that Arbor View hosts similar events in the future.

"My hope is, in the future, we can continue in a series to get even more people to come in and continue the education of dementia," Smith said. "I used to be the memory care director, so I want to have my residents equipped, I want to have their families equipped so they're prepared for that journey."



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