

2022 Speakers and Workshops

Well Spouse Association Annual Conference

Keynote Dinner - How Caregivers Learn, by Dr. Blight

Aaron Blight, Ed.D., is an international speaker and consultant on caregiving, aging, and healthcare. He is the Founder of Caregiving Kinetics and has been recognized as a “Top 100 Healthcare Leader” by the International Forum on Advancements in Healthcare. Aaron’s passion for supporting caregivers is rooted in his personal experience as a family caregiver; his professional work as the owner of a large home care company and as a leader at the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services; and his study of caregiving as a phenomenon of social science. Dr. Blight speaks with groups all over the world about caregiving. In workshops and conference talks, he invites participants to think deeply about the meaning and significance of their individual caregiving experiences. He attends caregiver support groups to facilitate discussions related to his book, *When Caregiving Calls: Guidance as You Care for a Parent, Spouse, or Aging Relative*.



Aaron serves as an Adjunct Professor at Shenandoah University, an honorary board member of the Well Spouse Association, and an advisory board member of the Shenandoah Area Agency on Aging. He holds a bachelor’s degree from Brigham Young University, a master’s degree from the University of Baltimore, and a doctorate degree from The George Washington University.

Most caregivers are not innately endowed with the ability to deliver tasks of care, but they can grow into an emerging caregiver role. A care receiver’s evolving health conditions prompt caregivers to formulate responses which are appropriate for their ever-changing circumstances. As caregivers adjust to changes, they unconsciously develop an improved capacity to serve. This presentation raises consciousness of caregiver development, and can accelerate caregiver growth, by focusing on the learning process inherent in caregiving.

Frank Talk on Intimacy for Well Spouses, with Dr. Lee Phillips



This workshop will feature a discussion on the ways we can create and accommodate intimacy in our lives as well spouses. The loss of intimacy can be a powerful source of grief and sadness for people in relationships impacted by chronic illness. How do we adapt? There will be time for Q&A.

Facilitated by Dr. Lee Phillips. Dr. Lee Phillips is in private practice in New York City, Water Mill, NY, and McLean, VA where he specializes in sex and couples therapy. He is a Licensed Clinical Social Worker (LCSW) in Washington, DC, Maryland, Virginia, and New York. He is a Certified Sex Therapist (CST) by the American Association of Sexuality Educators, Counselors, and Therapists (AASECT). Dr. Phillips has been in private practice for more than a decade treating a diverse group of patients searching for relief from the complications resulting from debilitating, and often overlooked, combination of illnesses. He lectures on topics including sexuality, chronic pain, preventative services, anxiety and stress management, caregiving stress, depression in the elderly, mindfulness, and cognitive strategies for chronic pain, reclaiming sexuality for couples with chronic illness, ethical decision making, assessment of mental disorders, and exploring sexual communication, freedom, and pleasure for gender minorities with chronic illness, pain, and other disabilities. He has published in the Journal of Baccalaureate Social Work, conducting a research study on LGBTQ-Affirmative Teaching at Historically Black Colleges and Universities: Understanding Program Directors Views. He holds a Doctor of Education (Ed.D.) degree in Organizational Leadership with an emphasis in Behavioral Health from Grand Canyon University in Phoenix, AZ. He has been quoted in over 30 media outlets. He is the host of the podcast, Sex and Chronic Illness with Dr. Lee.

Cultivating Vulnerability and Resilience as a Spousal Caregiver, with Kelli Kolling

Exhaustion, stress, anger, overwhelm, guilt, depression. We spousal caregivers experience enormous strain, pressure and a myriad of emotions in managing our day-to-day responsibilities. These emotions can lead to the stigmatizing feelings of shame, loneliness, and isolation, which are hard to dispel. This seminar, based on the research of Dr. Brené Brown, will explore the concepts of vulnerability, empathy and self-compassion as antidotes to shame. It will offer space and an approach to unpack the stories and narratives we tell ourselves and to understand the emotions we may experience – so that we can process them more quickly.



Facilitated by Kelli Kolling. Kelli supports the growth and development of leaders in corporations, non-profits, educational institutions and government through consulting, facilitation, and leadership coaching. She is passionate about helping clients live and lead authentically and wholeheartedly. Kelli received her undergraduate degree from Virginia Tech and has an MBA from Tulane University. Kelli is a graduate and current Adjunct Faculty Member of the Georgetown University Leadership Coaching Certificate Program, a member of the International Coach Federation, and a Professional

Certified Coach (PCC). She has extended training in Team Coaching and Presence Based Leadership, and is certified in The Leadership Circle 360 Profile™. Kelli is also a qualified Myers-Briggs Administrator and is a Certified Daring Way™, Rising Strong™ and Dare to Lead™ Facilitator, based on the research of Dr. Brené Brown.

Joining our Voices Together - Political Advocacy for Caregivers

The wheels of change turn slowly but they can turn when we make our priorities known with a united voice. Bring your smartphones or laptops for this interactive session, where participants will dive into WSA's 2022 and 2023 legislative priorities and reach out to legislators on the spot, with a email-writing campaign, to share what spousal caregivers need from policymakers, politicians, and society.

Facilitated by Lawrence Bocchiere and Sheldon Friedman. Larry and Sheldon are Board members and co-chairs of WSA's Social Action Committee.

Larry is former Chairman and President Emeritus of WSA. Larry worked for the U.S. Postal Service for 33 years, as a postmaster in Goldens Bridge, Cos Cob, and Southport, CT. Early in his career, he established the Stamford CT Area Local American Postal Workers Union, AFL-CIO, bringing together smaller entities under the umbrella of a large labor organization. He was elected state president and pursued a policy of education and representation for smaller offices at the state level. He was asked to serve as chair of the APWU AFL-CIO's National President's Conference, serving over 70,000 members. He eventually served as Northeast regional coordinator.

Prior to retiring in 2017, Sheldon spent much of his career at the AFL-CIO, and he chaired the Federal Prevailing Rate Advisory Committee at OPM during the Obama administration. He has co-edited four books in the field of labor economics and industrial relations and authored or co-authored numerous publications.

Small Group Sessions

Meet with Well Spouses in facilitated small groups to discover and discuss shared experiences in caregiving:

- Younger well spouses - for well spouses in their 20's to 50's who'd like to connect with others juggling careers, finances, relationships, childraising, and family planning as well spouses.
- Former well spouses - for people who are no longer with their ill or disabled partner, due to their partner's death or divorce/ separation
- Men's group - for people who seek to meet other men to discuss the challenges and emotions of caregiving in a safe space.
- Women's group - for women seeking to meet other women to discuss their journey in a single-gender atmosphere.

As of 9/ 21/ 22. Subject to change or adjustment.