**Innovative Practice Discussion Descriptions**

**Programming on the Go!**

This interactive workshop will focus on two types of “on the go” or “at home programming” that you can replicate in your center.  First, we will discuss, then brainstorm Pandemic friendly special events with an emphasis on pairing a grab n go meal/dessert with entertainment shown on local cable.  Secondly, we will go over best practices for art and craft activity kit hand out and share ideas on partnering with others to expand your center’s offerings and work smarter, not harder.

*Bethany Loveless, Executive Director, Dracut Council on Aging*

**Strategies for Utilizing Volunteers**

Every Council on Aging’s volunteer force has had to adapt during the COVID pandemic. Learn about one site’s hybrid model of in-person and remote volunteer employment. And discover two volunteer models designed to engage volunteers, maximize their potential, and add value to their Council on Aging and community. Then share your strategies!

*Kelly Mackay, Program Coordinator, Andover Council on Aging*

*Ashley English, Volunteer Coordinator, Andover Council on Aging*

*Christine Beatty, Principal, Beatty Endeavors, LLC; Retired, Madison Senior Center, WI*

**Providing Nutrition During COVID**

When COVID hit, the Chicopee Council on Aging wanted to make sure its older adults received nutritious meals while staying out of the supermarket. Through grants and city funds, and ServSafe trainings and an all-hands-on-deck mentality, the COA is now serving more than 1,000 meals a week via curbside pick-up.

*Sherry Manyak, Executive Director, Chicopee Council on Aging*

**Beating the Blues and Promoting Mental Wellness during COVID.**

This important outreach demands creative engagement.  Join three professionals as they share their methods to connect that include utilizing the Academic Public Health Volunteer Corp; iPad education; promoting social engagement with immigrant participants and those living with Alzheimer’s. You will hear how one site collaborates with police, fire, and other community partners to connect services to at-risk individuals. And we will share an award-winning program from Tallahassee Florida called UPSLIDE (Utilizing and Promoting Social engagement in Loneliness, Isolation, and Depression in the Elderly). Then you can share your creative engagement ideas.

*Jim Reynolds, Director Wenham Council on Aging & ADA Outreach Coordinator*

*Linda Wincek Moore, Manager, Senior Services & Education, City of Worcester*

*Melanie Lachman, LCSW, UPSLIDE Program Coordinator, Tallahassee Senior Center and Foundation, FL*

 **“Who Knew?!” Getting the COA Message Out There**

Proactively spelling out to the public the specifics of your pandemic efforts, accomplishments, and challenges is key to creating a supportive environment for both your staff and your seniors.  Participants will discuss strategies for keeping local elected officials, older adults, family members, and the community at large updated on any innovative alternative programming and services that you’re offering as well as obstacles encountered and areas of concern.

*Tina Gorman, Executive Director, Westfield Council on Aging*

**Innovative Practices: Finding Community Resources to Support Senior Centers Initiatives**

This innovative practice discussion will look at how some senior centers have tapped a variety of community resources, organizations, businesses and more to support service and programming initiatives during COVID-19. We encourage you to bring your questions and be ready to share your challenges, as well as best practices with the group.

*Susan Curtin, Director, Norwell Council on Aging*

**Bridging the Digital Divide Discussion**

Learn how three professionals are bringing remote and virtual programming to their communities. Share your ideas of how to engage and educate participants and tell us about your innovative online programming and creative collaborations in this timely discussion.

*Emily Williams, Director, Bridgewater Council on Aging*

*Suki Lapin, Program Coordinator, City of Worcester*

*Jill Hall, Division Chief & Acting Nutrition Program Manager, Baltimore County Department of Aging, MD*

**What’s Next? Strategies for Surviving Winter**

Join 5 sites as they share where they are now and what they have planned for Winter. This virtual support group acknowledges the difficulties they face as they all innovate to build a new infrastructure, under tight constraints, while making decisions in the moment, trying, and testing to find what works and what does not. Come, learn, and share your survival story.

*Josie Dutil, Director, Bellingham Council on Aging*

*Kelly Bol, Director, Northbridge Senior Center*

*Mignonne Murray, Executive Director, Weston Council on Aging*

*Joanne Moore, Executive Director & Angela Sinnot, Program Manager, Duxbury Council on Aging*

*Michelle Bratti, Director of Elder Affairs, Town of Plymouth*