

MINUTES
MCKNIGHT BRAIN RESEARCH FOUNDATION
COMMUNICATIONS WORKING GROUP CONFERENCE CALL
October 11, 2018

The McKnight Brain Research Foundation's Communications Working Group (CWG) conference call began at 1:00 p.m. Eastern on October 11, 2018.

The following working group members participated in the call:

Michelle Albert, University of Arizona
Jennifer Bizon, PhD, University of Florida
Christian Camargo, MD, University of Miami
Elaine Cunningham, University of Arizona
Susan Fox-Rosellini, MBA, University of Miami
Vicki Hixon, University of Alabama Birmingham
Valerie Patmintra, Senior Communications Advisor
Amy Porter, MBRF Executive Director
Todd Taylor, University of Florida

1. Roll Call and Welcome

Ms. Porter opened the call, took roll and welcomed those in attendance. She let the group know that this is the last scheduled meeting of the Communications Working Group until after October 30th and thanked everyone for their active participation. Ms. Porter informed the group that the MBRF Board of Trustees will be meeting in Miami on October 30. As part of the meeting, the Board will review a communications plan that includes continuing the efforts of the communications working group and working with each MBI to develop materials and resources that can be used for communications efforts going forward.

2. Review of Minutes from the September 13, 20 and October 4th Calls

Ms. Porter then asked if anyone had changes to the September 13, 20 or October 4th call minutes that had been circulated along with the October 11 call agenda. She noted that the minutes will be posted to the MBRF secure website and asked the group to send any changes they have to Ms. Patmintra by October 15.

3. Suggestions for Key Message Vetting Process with MBI Leadership

Ms. Porter outlined a suggested vetting process for the key message document. The goal is to submit the Working Group's key message document to the MBI Leadership Council for their suggestions, to incorporate their feedback, then submit the revised and vetted messages to the MBRF Trustees for their review and approval. Members of the Working Group suggested they share the messages with a few key people at each MBI before they are shared with the Leadership Council. Ms. Porter agreed and said she would send a revised draft of the messages to the group after the call that they could pass along within their Institute.

4. Review/Editing Draft Messages

#1: What is Cognitive Aging?

Dr. Camargo likes the responding messages, especially that they highlight the positive and negative effects of cognitive aging. Ms. Fox-Rosellini said the hopeful message is a good balance of the panic people feel about cognitive aging compared to what's "normal." She noted that the message helps assuage the concern associated with memory loss and effectively communicates the balance. Ms. Porter noted the importance of including that cognitive aging is a natural process. The group agreed they had no edits to message #1.

#2: What is Successful Aging?

Dr. Bizon said she really liked the messages associated with successful aging and noted that there is scientific evidence that some of the suggestions offered can be helpful. Dr. Camargo said the messages were worded very well and communicate the promise of what can help with successful aging without over-validating the science. The group also had no changes to message #2.

#3: Importance of Cognitive Health Assessments/Steps to Minimize Risk

Dr. Bizon noted a few challenges with these messages because there aren't clear interventions to detect cognitive decline and she's not sure health care professionals know what assessments to conduct. Dr. Camargo said that recommending talking to your doctor is never a bad advice, but that implying there is an exam or screening to detect cognitive decline over-represents the current test's ability to detect memory decline since the test is geared to detect Alzheimer's. Drs. Bizon and Camargo suggested that the call to action could be to rule out Alzheimer's and other neurodegenerative diseases to keep the message positive and that once those are ruled out, the focus could shift to minimizing the effects of cognitive aging.

#4: Cost Associated with Cognitive Aging/Memory Loss and Prevalence

Mr. Taylor noted that using the term dementia with the Molly Wagster stat could be confusing and suggested removing the dementia mention when referencing the 87% statistic. Dr. Camargo suggested incorporating language that the other 87% (not experiencing Alzheimer's) are experiencing cognitive aging and may be experiencing symptoms related to it. After additional discussion, the group agreed to change the second bullet under the third key message to read "The remaining 87 percent are experiencing cognitive changes attributable to the normal aging process to varying degrees."

Mr. Taylor noted that he would send edits after the call to modify the language used in reference to the AARP Survey.

Ms. Porter concluded the discussion around the key messages and noted that before the messages are shared with the MBI Leadership, she and Ms. Patmintra will add an introductory paragraph to the document that describes how the messages can be used and will reword the 87% bullets to reflect the group's suggestions and incorporate the new AARP Survey language provided by Mr. Taylor.

5. Communications Plan Development Priorities

Ms. Porter then asked the group for suggestions of any communications materials or resources they would like to have included as part of the overall communications plan that's being developed for the MBRF Board of Trustees review. Ms. Hixon suggested brochures that could be distributed at speaking events would be helpful since consumer audiences always like handouts/materials to take away after a presentation. Ms. Cunningham suggested that a presentation with talking points on the collective efforts of the four MBIs and what they are doing in response to the increase in the aging population also would be helpful. Ms. Porter thanked everyone for their suggestions and said they would be noted as part of the overall communications plan development.

6. October 30 MBRF Trustee Review of Proposal to Support a Communications Plan

Ms. Porter reminded the group that as next steps, Ms. Patmintra was putting together a communications plan for the MBRF Board of Trustees to review at their October 30th meeting, which will include recommendations of continuing to work with the Communications Working Group.

7. Next Steps and Adjournment

Ms. Porter recapped next steps from the call saying that she would send the revised messaging document back out to the group and asked anyone to send any additional changes back to her and Ms. Patmintra.

She reminded the group that there were no more scheduled calls and the group would plan to reconvene sometime after the Board approves plans to continue the Working Group's efforts. Ms. Porter adjourned the meeting at 2:02pm.

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