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Barrow Alzheimer's and Memory Disorders Program

2026 Fall Symposium

Navigating Dementia Care: A Symposium for Care Partners

"Beyond the Diagnosis: Navigating the Realities of Dementia Care"

Presented by Tom Finkelstein, MD

Moving "beyond the diagnosis," this session offers care partners a foundational understanding of dementia's underlying medical realities. Dr. Finkelstein will explain how different dementia types such as Alzheimer's, Lewy body, frontotemporal, and vascular dementias impact cognitive and functional abilities, focusing on how care needs evolve over time. Attendees will gain practical medical insights into symptom management, behavior strategies, and current treatment approaches, fostering greater confidence and informed decision-making in their caregiving roles.

"Sustaining Care: Emotional Well-Being for Care Partners"

Presented by Michelle Zipser, LCSW

In the session, Michelle Zipser, LCSW, will explore how the caregiving role must adapt as dementia progresses. Attendees will receive guidance on navigating the shift from joint to sole decision-making and complex family dynamics. The presentation will discuss the disease's psychological effects, such as ambiguous loss and the grief associated with mourning a life once envisioned. Furthermore, the session will highlight practical self-care strategies to help care partners prioritize their needs and sustain their personal well-being throughout the caregiving process.

Thursday, Sept. 24, 2026
10:00 a.m. - 2:30 p.m. (Arizona time)

The hybrid event is hosted via Zoom webinar **and** live in-person at:

Phoenix Collaboration Center
3033 North Third Avenue, Phoenix, AZ 85013

Lunch will be provided

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This Event is Free of Charge

Registration is required and must be completed by Sept. 18, 2026.

If you have any questions, contact Tania Gomez-Morales at (602) 406-2792 or Tania.GomezMorales@CommonSpirit.org.

Agenda

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10:00 a.m.	Check-in and vendor visitation
11:15 a.m.	Lunch pick-up and seating
11:30 a.m.	Welcome and Opening Remarks Anna Burke, MD
11:45 a.m.	Tom Finkelstein, MD
12:45 p.m.	Break (Attendees may visit with vendors)
1:00 p.m.	Michelle Zipser, LCSW
2:00 p.m.	Question and Answer Session
2:30 p.m.	Closing Remarks and Acknowledgements

Speakers:



Tom I. Finkelstein, MD, MPH

Internal Medicine Physician
Alzheimer's and Memory Disorders
Barrow Neurological Institute

Tom I. Finkelstein, MD, MPH, is an internal medicine physician in the Alzheimer's and Memory Disorders Program and an assistant professor in the Department of Neurology at Barrow Neurological Institute. He holds board certifications in both internal medicine and hospice and palliative medicine by the American Board of Internal Medicine, and he is board certified in geriatric medicine.

Dr. Finkelstein's expertise includes the diagnosis and treatment of Alzheimer's disease and other memory disorders. He is a member of the American College of Physicians and the Delta Omega Honorary Society of Public Health.

Dr. Finkelstein earned his medical degree from Tel Aviv University in Israel. He completed his internal medicine residency, followed by fellowships in hospice and palliative medicine and geriatric medicine, at the University of Arizona in Tucson. He also holds a Master of Public Health with a concentration in epidemiology from the University of Arizona.

Dr. Finkelstein's research interests include early intervention strategies for geriatric syndromes, such as frailty, polypharmacy, and cognitive impairment, with a particular emphasis on memory disorders and dementia. He is also interested in the role of integrative medicine—including evidence-based nutrition and mind-body therapies—in enhancing quality of life and functional outcomes in older adults. In addition, Dr. Finkelstein is engaged in medical education and research aimed at improving serious illness communication, advanced care planning, and care-partner support. As a clinical educator, Dr. Finkelstein enjoys developing curricula and teaching trainees core concepts in geriatrics and palliative medicine.



Michelle Zipser, LCSW

Michelle Zipser, LCSW, is a psychotherapist who specializes in support for care partners of people living with dementia and other neurodegenerative disorders, including those navigating early stages of disease. With 18 years of hospice social work experience and five years in private practice, Michelle offers compassionate, practical guidance for coping with stress, grief, role changes, and communication challenges. Drawing on both professional expertise and personal caregiving experience, Michelle helps clients build resilience, strengthen support systems, and find steadier footing through each stage of the journey.