



Mercy Network on Aging Conference: The Ministry of Accompaniment **October 10-11, 2023, Virtual Conference**

Keep at the forefront of aging issues, including understanding the aging brain and best practices for working with difficult personalities, managing and recognizing grief, and caring for the caregiver. Register for the Mercy Network on Aging Conference [here](#).

Tuesday, October 10

Webinar 1: *Working with Difficult Personalities*

Presenter: Sister Mercedes McCann, Ph.D.

Sister Mercedes McCann, Ph.D., currently serves in leadership relations in the Consultation, Education and Outreach Department at the Saint John Vianney Center in Downingtown, Pennsylvania, where she was an inpatient psychotherapist for 15 years. She continues to serve as a therapist for Saint John Vianney Center's outpatient program. Before working at Saint John Vianney Center, she ministered at state and county institutions for the mentally ill. For nine years, Sister Mercedes served as a formation minister. Prior to serving as a formation minister, she was the assistant superintendent for special education at the Archdiocese of Philadelphia.

Mercedes has extensive experience speaking to and facilitating groups, including chapters and assemblies, in the United States, Latin America, Europe and the Pacific Rim. Her particular interest is the intersection of spirituality, ministry, community and good mental health in religious life. She holds a doctoral degree in clinical psychology from Seton Hall University and a master's degree in psychology from Marywood University. She also completed religious studies, with a concentration in Sacred Scripture, at St. Charles Seminary. (11 a.m. - 12:15 p.m. ET; 10 - 11:15 a.m. CT; 9 - 10:15 a.m. MT; 8 - 9:15 a.m. PT)

Webinar 2: *The Aging Brain*

Presenter: Dr. Susan Wehry, MD

Susan Wehry, MD, a board-certified geriatric psychiatrist with 40 years experience, has served as a clinician, educator, policy maker, advocate and advisor. From 2017 until recently, Dr. Wehry served as chief of geriatrics at the University of New England College of Medicine. During the pandemic, she provided weekly virtual drop-in sessions for people living with dementia and their care partners and led a post-pandemic recovery project for frontline workers. She now directs AgingME: Geriatrics Workforce Enhancement Program to create a more age-friendly health system. (3 - 4:15 p.m. ET; 2 - 3:15 p.m. CT; 1 - 2:15 p.m. MT; Noon - 1:15 p.m.)

Wednesday, October 11

Webinar 3: *Caring for the Caregiver*

Presenter: Rev. Dr. Brooke Barss, MD

Reverend Dr. Brooke Barss, MD, practiced as a psychiatrist and psychoanalyst for more than 30 years before graduating from the Upaya Chaplaincy Program in 2018. She was ordained in 2019 as a Buddhist Chaplain by Roshi Joan Halifax, Ph.D., and given Hoshi by Roshi Joan in 2022. During her chaplaincy training, she worked with the Sisters of Mercy in Burlington, Vermont, and continues to work with the sisters throughout New England. Brooke serves as a chaplaincy mentor and was a collegial leader in the SEBT program (2021-2023). She considers her associations with Upaya and with the Sisters of Mercy two of the great blessings of her life. Brooke now lives in Biddeford, Maine, and loves being close to the sea. (11 a.m. - 12:15 p.m. ET; 10 - 11:15 a.m. CT; 9 - 10:15 a.m. MT; 8 - 9:15 a.m. PT)

Webinar 4: *Reconceptualizing Anger and Grief*

Presenter: Abigail Nathanson, DSW, LCSW, APHSW-C

Dr. Abigail Nathanson, DSW, LCSW, APHSW-C, is a board-certified palliative social worker and trauma therapist in New York City and co-editor of the recently released textbook *The Practice of Clinical Social Work in Healthcare* (Springer Press). She is a part-time faculty member at New York University, where she teaches the course Grief, Loss and Bereavement. In her private practice, Dr. Nathanson provides specialized trauma therapy to patients dealing with healthcare work, illness, caregiving and loss. She has advanced training in AEDP, EMDR and Meaning-Centered Psychotherapy. (1 - 2:15 p.m. ET; noon - 1:15 p.m. CT; 11 a.m. - 12:15 p.m. MT; 10 - 11:15 a.m. PT)

You can register for the conference [here](#). We hope to see you there!

Mercy Network on Aging Board of Directors: Jennifer Giuffrida, regional director of health and wellness (Chair); Monica Jennings, life care coordinator (Secretary); Sister Kathleen Ann Kolb, regional director of health and wellness; Sister Life Minister Maureen Jessnik; Michelle Bieszczad, regional director of health and wellness; Jean Sassatelli, regional director of health and wellness; and Jim King, consultant.

Continuing Education (CE) hours may be available for licensed nursing home administrators and nurses. Pertinent information for each discipline will be provided at a later date.