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## **For Immediate Release**

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### **BENJAMIN ROSE INSTITUTE ON AGING INTRODUCES SHARE, INNOVATIVE EVIDENCE-BASED EARLY-STAGE DEMENTIA INTERVENTION**

#### **Ground-Breaking Program Utilizes Technology to Empower Adults Living With Dementia to Participate in Their Own Care Planning**

CLEVELAND—A diagnosis of early-stage dementia can be overwhelming and stressful for both the adult receiving the diagnosis and their family members. Based upon 20 years of research, the Benjamin Rose Institute on Aging ([www.benrose.org](http://www.benrose.org)) is launching a groundbreaking new program for people with early-stage dementia and their families, announced the organization's President and CEO Richard Browdie. SHARE, a program that incorporates a specially designed iPad app, will be offered by licensed organizations to empower adults living with dementia and their families to get the most out of today while planning for tomorrow.

"Benjamin Rose has a long history of engaging in applied research that has a direct impact on practice with older adults," said Browdie. "We are excited to move into a new era by licensing other organizations and clinicians to provide research-based programs with technological components like SHARE."

Created for families facing the challenges of dementia, the five-session SHARE program (plus optional family session) is designed to engage both a person with early-stage dementia and their care partner in discussions about symptoms, communication, care values and preferences, healthy activities and planning for the future.

Under the guidance of trained SHARE Counselors, program participants outline a care plan for their families to follow as the dementia progresses. The SHARE

Toolkit includes a SHARE iPad app, which lists tasks that could be assigned to either their caregiver, family and friends, or service providers. SHARE involves the person with early-stage dementia visually as well as verbally, enabling them to participate in making decisions about how to best handle their daily activities should the time come that they need assistance with things such as managing finances, food shopping and preparation, personal hygiene or other tasks.

"SHARE has proved to be effective in helping families to develop care plans and cope with the life changes that accompany dementia," said Carol Whitlatch, PhD, Assistant Director of the Center for Research and Education at Benjamin Rose and principal investigator on the project.

"Upon receiving a diagnosis of dementia, the person living with dementia and their family often feel unsure about where to go for help and have no one to talk to," said Silvia Orsulic-Jeras, SHARE Program Manager and Senior Research Analyst at Benjamin Rose. "SHARE provides an outlet for individuals with dementia and their families to express their fears and concerns, as well as access to professionals who can help them plan next steps and provide them with hope."

SHARE is based on two decades of research by the Center for Research and Education, part of the Benjamin Rose Institute on Aging, and one of the nation's premier centers for applied aging research. The research indicates that individuals with early-stage dementia benefit from an intervention that increases their active participation in their care plan, develops positive communication techniques among the family, increases knowledge and understanding about available services, and assists the family through the emotional turbulence of a diagnosis of Alzheimer's disease or other form of dementia.

"Our motivation for early studies was that there were no programs that were specifically designed to meet the needs of both the person with dementia and their family members. Our research has demonstrated that there are better outcomes with families that participate in the SHARE program than those who do not," said Whitlatch.

SHARE is available to professional organizations who serve families and individuals living with dementia in the earlier stages. SHARE counselors are social workers, geriatric case managers, counselors, program educators, nurses, and other professionals who work with older adults and their families. An online training course offers videos to demonstrate techniques, interactive exercises to solidify knowledge, and real case examples to highlight concepts. They also have access to SHARE counselor coaching to enhance their training.

In addition to course access, the SHARE Toolkit enables professionals to deliver the SHARE Program effectively. The package includes:

- Program Manual
- Counselor's Guide
- Guide for Families
- App for iPad
- Magnet Boards and Magnetic Tiles

"There are some very powerful conversations during the SHARE sessions" according to Karen Elliot, who has been a SHARE counselor for five years. "Each person has permission to care for themselves, and the person who has dementia is confident that their care partner will make good decisions down the road."

Brenda Hendricks, another SHARE counselor agrees, "The SHARE Program is like buying car insurance. You hope you never have the worst happen, but if it does, you're better able and better prepared for it."

The name SHARE is an acronym that represents the program's goals: **S**upport care partners and help them communicate effectively and plan for the future; **P**romote **H**ealth and well-being, and decrease stress; **E**ncourage participation in fulfilling **A**ctivities; **L**earn about available **R**esources that reflect care partners' values and preferences; **P**rovide **E**ducation about dementia and how to manage changes that lie ahead. To learn more about the SHARE program, visit [www.benrose.org/share](http://www.benrose.org/share).

**About Benjamin Rose Institute on Aging** ([www.benrose.org](http://www.benrose.org)) The mission of Benjamin Rose Institute on Aging is to advance support for older adults and caregivers. Our work is accomplished by deepening the understanding of their evolving needs in a changing society; developing and delivering innovative, high-quality solutions; and promoting effective public policies. Founded in 1908, Benjamin Rose provides direct service to older adults and their caregivers, engages in applied social research, and leads advocacy efforts in support of older adults.

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