

# YOUR SUPPORT HELPS FUTURE GENERATIONS HOLD ON TO MEMORY LONGER

Bob and Pat Smith participated in two Kessler Foundation research studies that focused on healthy aging and memory. “It’s important to do our part in helping future generations of older people maintain memory for as long as possible,” says Pat.

As study participants, Pat and her husband Bob met individually with research facilitators to have their memories assessed, challenged with “mental exercises,” and retested. “Throughout my sessions, I actually did better than I thought possible in recalling words, objects, and the order of events in a story,” Pat remembers. Her husband Bob agrees, “I didn’t forget too much, but when I did, I tried to keep my sense of humor.”

Research that focuses on cognitive decline in older adults is crucial, according to Nancy Chiaravalloti, PhD, Director of the Center for Neuropsychology and Neuroscience Research and the Center for Traumatic Brain Injury Research at Kessler Foundation. “With major advances in medical science, we’ve increased our life expectancy,” Dr. Chiaravalloti explains. “Memory loss during our longer lifespans is a big concern for aging individuals and their families.”

Dr. Chiaravalloti’s initial memory research focused on cognitive impairment in people living with multiple sclerosis and traumatic brain injury. She and her team developed a treatment—the Kessler Foundation Modified Story Memory Technique® (KF-mSMT)—shown to improve new learning and memory in three areas:



Bob (left) and Pat Smith (right) with their grandson, Luke Smith (center)

objective behavior, brain functioning, and everyday life. “Now, we are expanding the research and testing the KF-mSMT® treatment in older populations to explore how long we can boost memory,” says Dr. Chiaravalloti.

“Like many older adults, my husband and I are trying to maintain our independence and health, including our brain health, for as long as we can,” says Pat. “The idea of losing memory is terrifying.”

Bob concludes, “I want to be able to engage with my grandkids and enjoy activities and social events with my family and friends for as long as possible because that’s what makes life worth living. I hope Pat’s and my participation in Kessler Foundation research now helps ensure that future generations will have a better chance of holding on to memory longer.”



Nancy Chiaravalloti, PhD

## MORE MEMORY RESEARCH IS NEEDED YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE

“Memory loss and dementia are devastating. Our memories are the very essence of who we are. When memories go, self-identity and place in the world disappear. It’s terrifying for us and heart-wrenching for our family,” says Dr. Chiaravalloti. While the initial results are encouraging, more research is always needed—we all age. With your renewed support, Dr. Chiaravalloti can find ways to stave off cognitive decline for as long a possible. Please send your gift today.

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# Newsletter



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IMPACT



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# YOU EMPLOY ABILITIES AT WORK

As American businesses recover from the chilling effects of the Covid-19 pandemic, hiring adequate staff continues to challenge. With two openings for every job seeker, many employers are motivated to broaden their applicant pool by actively recruiting people with disabilities. Although they may be aware of the benefits of building a workforce inclusive of disability, they may not have the resources and tools to find qualified candidates and ensure their success.

The solution to bridging this knowledge gap lies in education. “We need to equip the professionals responsible for filling job openings with skills to recruit, hire, onboard, train, and retain workers with disabilities,” says Elaine E. Katz, MS, CCC-SLP, senior VP of grants and communications at Kessler Foundation. By funding the implementation of a new continuing education program for human resource professionals and business leaders, we are part of that solution, thanks to your support.

“Employing Abilities at Work” by the SHRM Foundation, the philanthropic arm of the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM), is a free certificate training program to raise awareness of the benefits of hiring people with disabilities and provide practical guidance for achieving disability inclusion in the workplace. “To effect large-scale change, it was crucial that this resource be accessible to all professionals,” explains Katz, “so there is no fee for this certification, and membership in SHRM is not required.”

“Thanks to your support, “Employing Abilities at Work” is a fundamental step toward effecting changes in hiring practices framed by diversity, equity, and inclusion.”

– Elaine E. Katz, MS, CCC-SLP,  
senior VP of grants and communications  
at Kessler Foundation

With your generosity, “Employing Abilities at Work” went live in June 2022 at SHRM’s annual conference in New Orleans, to the overwhelmingly positive response of more than 16,000 attendees. Within just a few weeks, more than 800 professionals had accessed the program, with 110 completing their certification by the end of July, according to Ellen Christman, director of engagement and philanthropy at the SHRM Foundation. “We are well on our way to meeting our goal of training 2,000 professionals within one year of the certificate’s launch,” notes Christman.

Echoing this enthusiastic reception is Janice Beauchamp, Pfizer’s senior vice president for People Experience, Wellness & Workplace Engagement and Kessler Foundation Trustee. The new certification program is a welcome addition to Beauchamp’s corporate strategy for recruiting talent with disabilities, including veterans, for job and internship opportunities at one of the world’s largest pharmaceutical companies. “As a Kessler Foundation board member and an experienced HR professional at Pfizer, I cannot express how meaningful it is to me that Kessler Foundation, and its donors, are supporting the “Employing Abilities at Work” program,” says Beauchamp. Two of her staff members were among the first to earn the new certification, which will support their department’s concerted efforts to hire job seekers with disabilities and ensure their success in the workplace.

The 10-hour e-learning program, which consists of seven modules, empowers the professional to reduce barriers to people with disabilities; create company strategies for recruiting, hiring, retaining, and developing this talent pool; and convey the advantages of building an inclusive workforce to corporate stakeholders.

“This training will help professionals recognize the ability of candidates with disabilities to fulfill the pressing need for workers in many sectors of our pandemic-era economy,” foresees Beauchamp. Hiring remains strong in the recovering economy, creating opportunities for job seekers with disabilities, including options for remote work. “This new resource provides hiring professionals with the



**YOUR GENEROSITY SUPPORTS A NEW APPROACH TO  
ADVANCING DISABILITY INCLUSION IN THE WORKPLACE.**



confidence they need to tap this talent pool,” says Beauchamp, adding, “The timing is perfect.”

Katz agrees, noting, “The world of work is being buffeted by changes in policy, in culture, and in the goals of employers and the aspirations of job seekers. Thanks to your support, “Employing Abilities at Work” is a fundamental step toward effecting changes in hiring practices framed by diversity, equity, and inclusion.”



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