

WOOP Groups make a difference for caregivers

By Donna B. Fedus, M.A., Gerontologist & Founder, Borrow My Glasses, LLC

I first met Julie Pfab, Director of Community Services for Lyngblomsten, at the Brookdale Foundation conference in October 2024. I was presenting on WOOP, an evidence-based mental strategy whose four simple steps (wish>outcome>obstacle>plan) had recently been shown to provide positive benefits to family caregivers.

After learning about the strong science behind WOOP and experiencing the technique firsthand at the conference, Julie immediately saw how it could benefit family caregivers at Lyngblomsten. What I didn't know then was that eighteen months later, I would be partnering with Julie and her team to bring the WOOP for Dementia Caregivers program to Lyngblomsten Community Services to support family caregivers of individuals living with dementia.

What's WOOP for Dementia Caregivers?

WOOP for Dementia Caregivers is an online program that supports caregivers in learning WOOP, a strategy that can help them improve their capacity to fulfill wishes that matter most to them. WOOP wishes may focus on caregiving responsibilities, self-care, processing emotions, relationships, or other areas.

WOOP helps caregivers set challenging yet attainable wishes or goals that are important to them, and then helps them identify and overcome internal obstacles within their control to fulfill their wishes.

Caregivers in the program learn WOOP in facilitated WOOP Groups that are tailored to their needs. Caregivers in WOOP Groups learn WOOP while gaining community, tools, support, and validation.

Backed by decades of science

WOOP was developed by Gabriele Oettingen, PhD, and was rigorously researched over more than 20 years. WOOP has been translated into multiple languages and used to increase motivation and change habits across multiple domains in more than 100 countries (Oettingen, 2014).

More recently, researchers led by Joan Monin of Yale University demonstrated that WOOP improved wellness among dementia caregivers in a randomized controlled trial (Monin et al., 2022; Mroz et al., 2024). Caregivers who were taught individually to use WOOP and supported via telephone reported reduced stress and depressive symptoms and increased positive emotions and quality of life.

Next, a study to develop and test a scalable way to deliver WOOP to caregivers was led by Borrow My Glasses in collaboration with Joan Monin, Gabriele Oettingen, other researchers, and caregivers with lived experience (Fedus et al., 2025). Tailoring the delivery of WOOP to groups of caregivers via technology proved to be a highly feasible and scalable approach. Ninety days after their WOOP Group ended, many of the caregivers who participated reported that they still used WOOP as a helpful tool to figure out obstacles, solve problems, and master situations in which they felt stressed.

Lyngblomsten pilot shows real-world impact

In spring 2026, Lyngblomsten Community Services collaborated with Borrow My Glasses to host two information sessions and pilot two WOOP Groups for family caregivers in the Twin Cities. A total of 18 individuals participated, nine in each WOOP Group.

Participants reported experiences very similar to those highlighted in the research. Caregivers in the pilot said they found the process insightful, practical, and empowering. Caregivers were able to apply WOOP in their lives, with 77% of participants reporting they used WOOP at least two to three times per week. Some used it daily or more than once a day. This frequency of use and reported evidence of behavior change indicates strong real-world impact. Caregivers reported using WOOP to release stress from chaotic situations, manage feelings, regulate emotions, make decisions when feeling stuck, manage caregiving challenges, complete household tasks, reduce procrastination, and meet self-care goals. Overall, 92% supported continuing the program.

What's next?

As a result of the pilot, Donna Fedus, Julie Pfab, and Lisa Brown (Caregiver Services Program Coordinator with Lyngblomsten Community Services) have begun presenting together to increase awareness within Minnesota of the program and its impact on caregiver well-being. And in a full-circle moment, Lisa and Donna will present these pilot findings at the next Brookdale Foundation conference.

Virtual WOOP Groups are offered regularly through Borrow My Glasses. [Click here](#) to learn more and register for an upcoming WOOP Group.

To learn more about caregiver support and resources offered by Lyngblomsten Community Services, [click here](#).



ABOUT THE PROGRAM

WOOP for Dementia Caregivers (WFDC) is an online program in which caregivers join facilitated WOOP Groups to learn **wish > outcome > obstacle > plan (WOOP)**, a brief four-step evidence-based mental strategy. Caregivers use WOOP to set challenging yet attainable wishes or goals that are important to them, then focus on identifying & overcoming internal obstacles within their control to fulfill their wishes. The program offers caregivers community, tools, support, and validation.

PILOT SUMMARY



WOOP Groups & WOOP **offer ways to practice and promote self-care**



Practical, insightful, effective, and **empowering** were words caregivers shared about the pilot



Though minor opportunities for optimization exist, pilot findings confirm that WOOP for Dementia Caregivers is **well-received & practical**

Pilot funded in part from the Metropolitan Area Agency on Aging serving Greater Minneapolis-St. Paul

ABOUT WOOP

wish > outcome > obstacle > plan

WOOP is backed by **more than 20 years of science**. It has been translated into multiple languages and used in **more than 100 countries** for a wide range of domains.



WOOP helps caregivers **focus where they have control**



WOOP helps caregivers **take action and deepen goal-setting**



WOOP is **flexible** to meet caregiver's **changing needs**



2 WOOP GROUPS

HOSTED BY LYNGBLOMSTEN COMMUNITY SERVICES
FACILITATED BY BORROW MY GLASSES



18 participants total (9 in each WOOP Group):

91% attendance rate

92% support continuing WOOP for Dementia Caregivers

85% would recommend WOOP to others

What Participants Said About Program Structure:

92% Session length about right (60 min)

85% 3-Session format about right

85% Group size about right

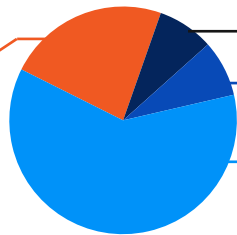
61% extremely/very confident applying WOOP

39% somewhat confident applying WOOP

Behavior Change Demonstrated: How often do you use WOOP?

Once a week **23%**

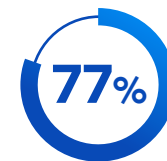
n=13 surveys collected
(72% participation rate)



8% More than once daily

8% Once daily

61% 2-3 times weekly



77% used WOOP at least 2-3 times per week

WHAT DID CAREGIVERS USE WOOP FOR?

- ✓ Make decisions when feeling stuck
- ✓ Release stress from chaotic situations
- ✓ Manage feelings
- ✓ Complete household tasks and caregiving challenges
- ✓ Reduce procrastination
- ✓ Meet self care goals

Most Valued

- Learning how others use WOOP
- Talking through their own WOOPs
- Practicing WOOP together
- Guided WOOPs & debriefs
- Can deepen other goal-setting

Consider Improving

- More applied examples
- Offer continued support
- Minor format adjustments
- Improve confidence applying WOOP

BACKGROUND

The evidence-based strategy WOOP, known scientifically as Mental Contrasting with Implementation Intentions (MCII), was developed by Gabriele Oettingen, PhD and is backed by more than 20 years of research (Oettingen, 2014). WOOP has been shown to increase motivation & change habits across multiple domains.

More recently, a research team led by Joan Monin of Yale University proved WOOP's effectiveness for dementia caregivers in a randomized controlled trial (Monin et al., 2022; Mroz et al., 2024).

Additional research led by Donna Fedus of Borrow My Glasses in collaboration with researchers at Yale University, Gabriele Oettingen, and other experts demonstrated a feasible approach to disseminate & scale WOOP to groups of caregivers via technology (Fedus et al., 2025).

WOOP
for DEMENTIA
CAREGIVERS

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Virtual WOOP Groups are offered by Borrow My Glasses (BMG). Visit borrowmyglasses.com to find upcoming dates and to register. Use the QR code to join the mailing list.

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