

Navigating Loss, Loneliness, and Aging: **RECONNECTING TO SOURCES OF STRENGTH**

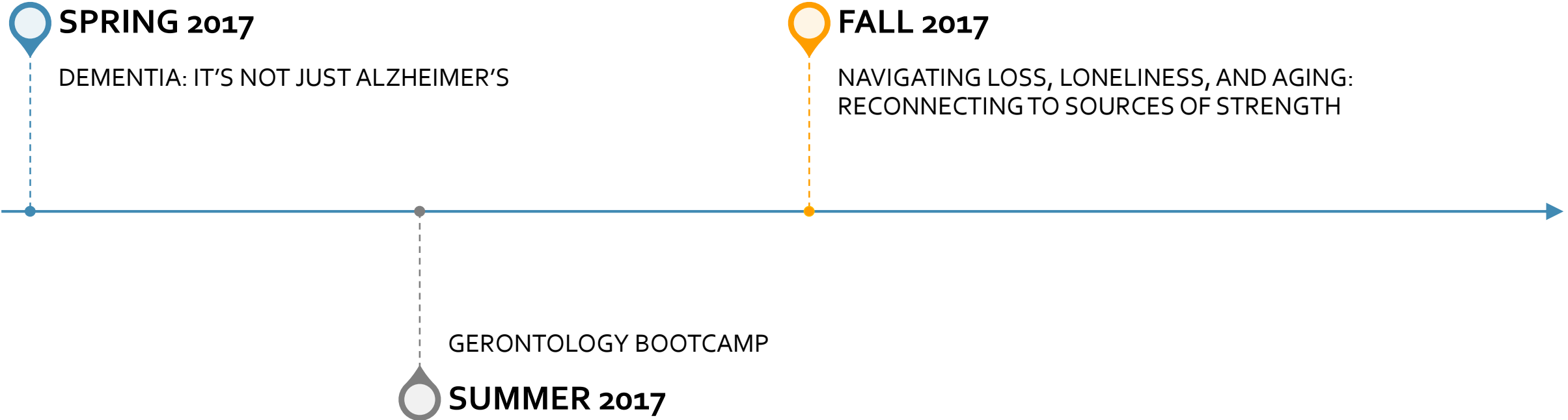
PART 3 – LOSS & THE PROFESSIONAL CAREGIVER

Developed by:

Gigi Amateau, Enid Butler, Annette Clark,
Annette Kelly, Jenny Inker, Raleigh Priddy, Jay White

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THREE SERIES





VCU Department of Gerontology

<http://www.sahp.vcu.edu/departments/gerontology/>



Virginia Department for Social Services

www.dss.virginia.gov/

A PROGRAM FOR PROFESSIONAL CAREGIVERS WORKING IN ADULT DAY CARE SETTINGS

A FOUR-PART WEBINAR SERIES

1

Part I: Loss

2

Part II: Grief & a
"New Normal"

3

Part III:
Loss & the
Professional
Caregiver

4

Part IV:
Social
Connectedness

At the end of this series, YOU will have an increased understanding of:

the difference
between **grief** and
loss

the areas of life
that loss can
impact

how to work
towards a "**new
normal**"

activities and
resources for
navigating loss

person-centered
care as it relates to
loss

the importance of
self-care for the
professional

the relationship
between **loss,**
loneliness, and
social isolation

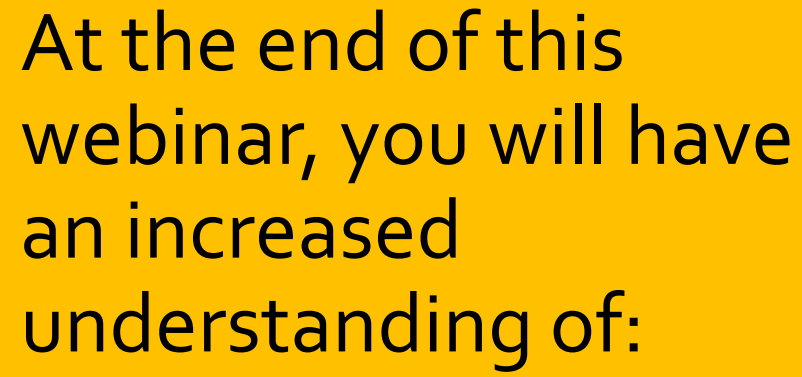
risk factors for
loneliness and
social isolation

the **health
consequences** of
loneliness and
social isolation

how loneliness and
social isolation
impact the body's
immune system

the health benefits
of **social
connectedness**

activities for
enhancing social
connectedness



At the end of this
webinar, you will have
an increased
understanding of:

- The **areas of life loss** can influence
- **Person-centered** care as it relates to loss and grief
- The importance of **self-care** for the professional
- How better **to identify the influence of loss** in our own lives

SESSION 3

Learning Objectives

A wooden Adirondack chair sits on a wooden dock, facing a calm lake. In the background, there are green, forested mountains under a cloudy sky. The text 'INHALE' is overlaid in large, white, bold letters with a blue outline, and 'EXHALE' is overlaid below it in similar style but with a lighter blue outline. Both words are reflected in the water.

INHALE

EXHALE

**WHAT SHOULD
STAFF KNOW AND
HOW CAN WE HELP?**

**A
PRACTICAL
APPROACH**

What you can do to support participants through loss and grief and promote good mental health

1. Know

Know the individuals you care for, including information about their mental health



2. Provide

Provide compassionate support to individual and families



3. Identify and build

Identify and build on strengths



4. Be resourceful

Be familiar with mental health professionals and community resources for people experiencing loss and grief



5. Stay engaged

Don't give up!

Physical health

Illness and pain
patterns

Sleep patterns

Dietary routines

Change in
attitude

Interactions with
family, friends,
staff, participants

Engagement
levels

Behavior
patterns

Changes in desire
to be "left alone"

1. Know Your Participants

Potential Information Sources



Participant records

Interviews

Observations

Clues from family members or other participants

Asking the participants direct questions

Other center staff

Active listening

Responsiveness

Being your authentic,
genuine self

Displaying warmth and
friendliness

Being non-judgmental

Being empathetic and
understanding

Accepting people as
they are

Being present in the
moment with
participants

Inviting/including family
members and friends as
part of the care team as
appropriate

2. Provide compassionate support

Focusing on positive
aspects

Identifying strengths

Building upon those
strengths

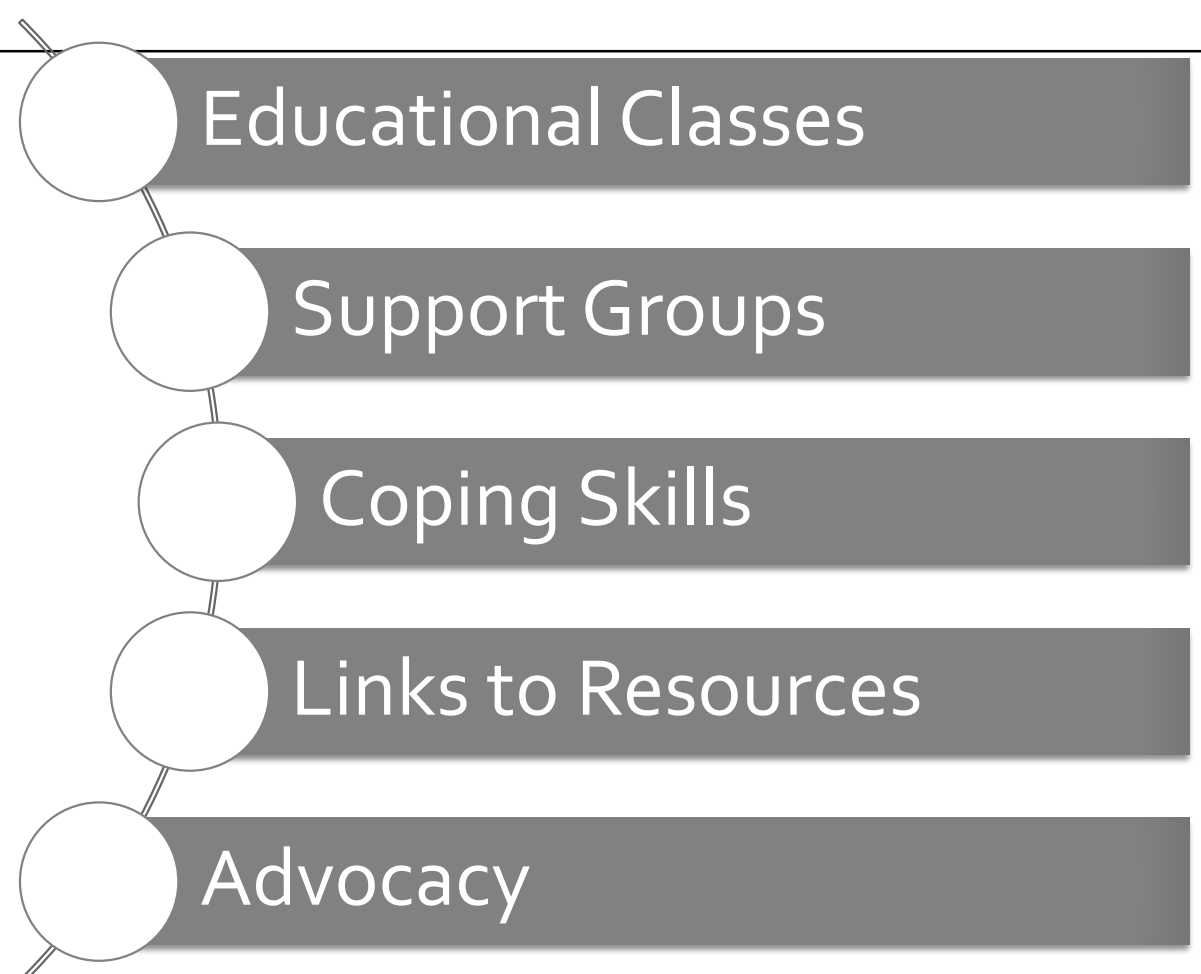
Promoting
connectivity with
people, places, events

Getting people
involved: family,
friends, volunteers,
therapy animals,
clergy, etc.

Other suggestions?

3. Identify Strengths

- National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI)
- Mental Health America
- Faith-based Groups
- Private Mental Health Practices
- Hospitals
- Community Mental Health Agencies
- Online communities/organizations



4. Be familiar with resources!

Encourage
participants
to:

- Be independent and autonomous
- Engage in physical activity
- Participate in group activities
- Try alternative therapies (music, aromatherapy, light therapy)
- Be creative and try something outside their comfort zone
- Mentor new participants
- Volunteer in the center
- Other suggestions?

5. Stay engaged! Don't give up!

Take 5: The Forest Awakens - Guided Imagery for Stress Relief (verbal, music & nature sounds)



The Forest Awakens

Take 5 Guided Imagery Series
Relaxation/Stress Relief



MORE VIDEOS

Center for Spirituality & Healing
since 1933

Videography by Craig Blacklock

0:00 / 5:43

YouTube

www.youtube.com/watch?v=gU_ABFUAVAs

LOSS & GRIEF

**Self-Care for
the
Professional
Caregiver**

Professional Caregivers' Loss and Grief

The personalities of most health care professionals have a strong empathetic and compassionate component.

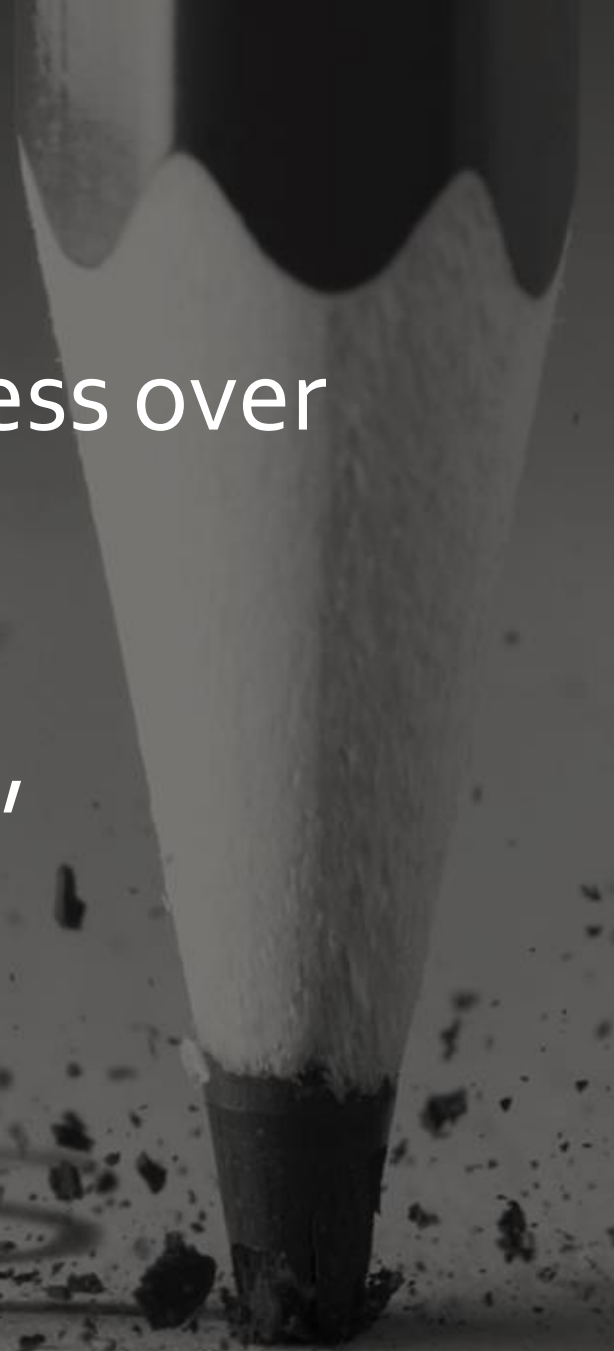
Often professional caregiver loss is not addressed in the workplace.

Professionally-related grief events, which accumulate over time, can be tied to emotional distress and burnout.

Compassion Fatigue

- The effect of accumulated losses and stress over time
- A form of burnout that results in physical, emotional, and spiritual exhaustion.

STRESS



Compassion Fatigue: Signs & Symptoms

Fatigue

Depression

Losing interest in
hobbies, enjoyable
activities

Withdrawing from
relationships

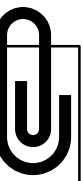
Physical symptoms
– headache, sleep
changes

Anger/Irritability

Obsession with
work related issues

Decline in work
satisfaction

Compassion Fatigue: Assessment



Ask yourself these questions, *yes* or *no*

	YES	NO
Personal concerns commonly intrude on my professional role.		
My colleagues seem to lack understanding.		
I find even small changes enormously draining.		
I can't seem to recover quickly after association with trauma or loss.		
Association with loss or trauma affects me very deeply.		
My participants' stress or grief affects me deeply.		
I have lost my sense of hopefulness.		
I feel vulnerable all the time.		
I feel overwhelmed by unfinished personal business.		

Self-Care

Some see self-care as "selfish" or not productive.

Honest self-reflection is important!

Professional caregivers tend to place a high priority on caring for others but not themselves.

"Self care" is a priority for combating compassion fatigue.

- What routines help me sleep best?
- What foods nourish me?
- How can I infuse my days with more movement and physical activity?

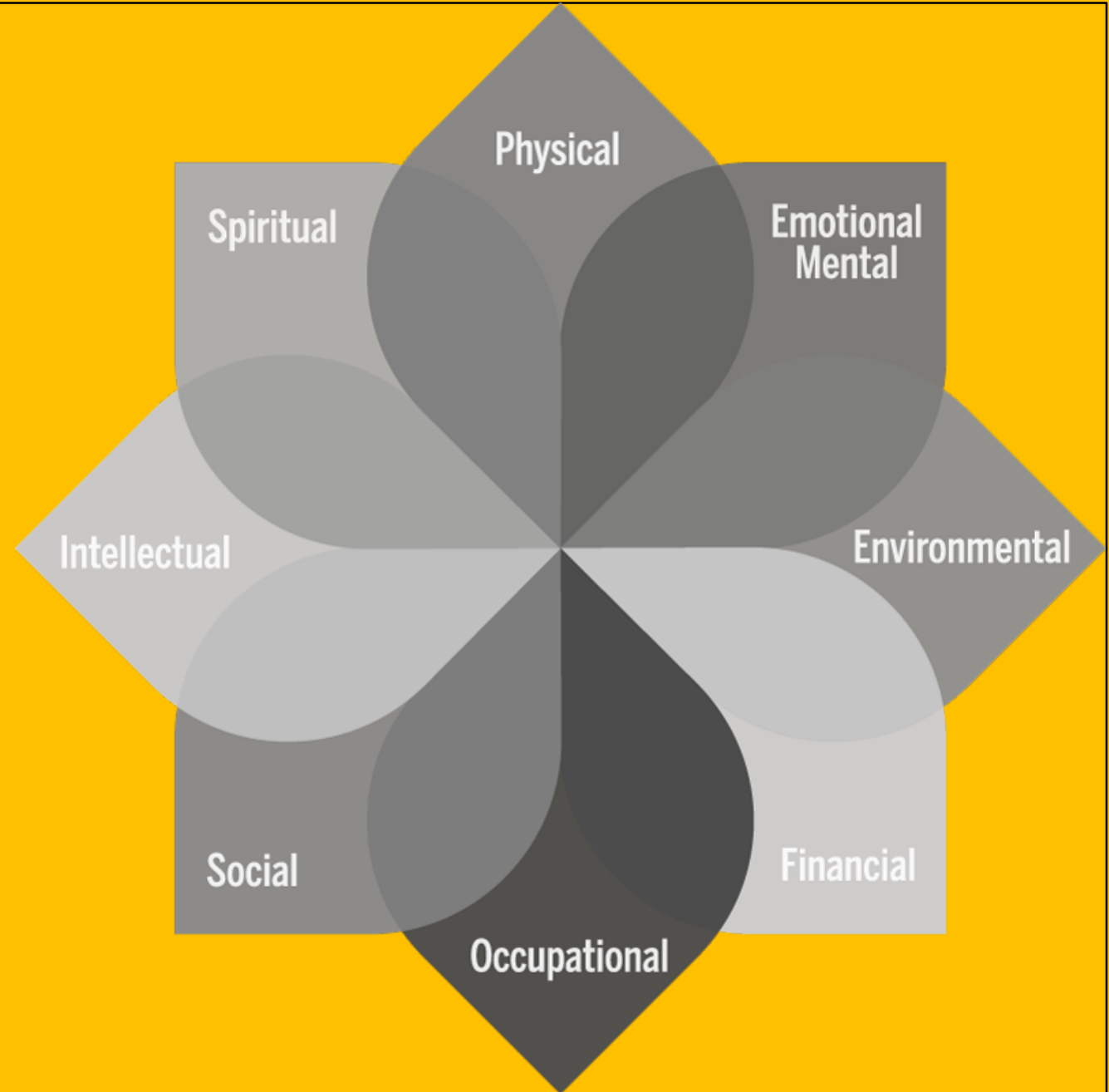
- Who or what calms me?
- What makes me laugh?
- When do I feel confident and strong?



- What gives my life meaning?
- What is the source of my greatest joy?
- What do I deeply believe in?

- Who can I call on for support?
- Who do I enjoy spending time with?

THE 7 DIMENSIONS OF WELLNESS







Finding a balance
between your work
life and personal
life is critical.

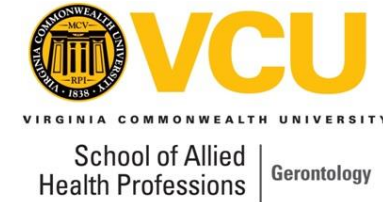
Recognize the
work you do is
important and
meaningful.

Enjoy your life and
live it to the fullest!

Be as gentle and
kind to yourself as
you would to those
you care for!

Humor can be
really helpful!

Self-Care



- Phone: (804) 828-1565
- Website: <http://www.sahp.vcu.edu/gerontology/>
- Email: agingstudies@vcu.edu
- Be sure to “like” us on Facebook
- <https://www.facebook.com/vcugerontology>

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