

# Erin Bonitto, MS, ADC

## Founder & Lead Coach — Gemini Consulting, Inc.



As a presenter at nearly 500 aging services and dementia care conferences, Erin Bonitto is a sought-after speaker, educator and dementia communication coach.

Erin has had a rich career in healthcare beginning in high school, as a Dietary Aide. Inspired to life-long service, she later earned a B.A. in Psychology, an M.S. in Gerontology; and an Activity Director Certification. In 1998, Erin founded Gemini Consulting. She is renowned as the innovator of *Life Enrichment Systems for Dementia*, a dementia education, programming and skill coaching framework.

As Lead Coach, Erin provides hands-on dementia communication coaching at partner communities across the nation – including CCRCs, nursing homes, assisted living centers and memory care providers. Erin also provides dementia education and coaching to family caregivers and community partners, including physicians and other acute care professionals, law enforcement and clergy.

Erin's innovative partner communities learn how to provide persons with dementia the gifts of pleasure, purpose and peace – while making measurable impacts on clinical and operational goals related to psychotropic use and behavioral outcomes, fall rates, team member morale and family satisfaction. This skill-based system – with coaching modules for each team member and the challenges they face – has been described by many communities as their 'missing link' to culture transformation. In collaboration with Life Enrichment partner communities across the country, Erin's award-winning projects have been grant-funded in many states – and explored even by international providers.

When Erin is not providing hands-on coaching, she can be found as a popular featured speaker at aging services conferences. Erin provides keynote sessions, day-long workshops and breakouts for entire disciplinary teams. Erin has been described as a speaker who *"can bring tears to your eyes and make you laugh out loud – all within seconds,"* all while delivering real-world, nuts and bolts tools that participants can put to use immediately.

Erin's most-requested seminar topics include dementia education, dignity and sensitivity boot camps, publicity and marketing sessions, and discipline-specific sessions for direct care staff, activity professionals and dining services team members. Care providers across the country have lauded Erin's down-to-earth style and real-world wisdom.



## Key Projects & Recognitions

Erin Bonitto, MS, ADC – Founder & Lead Coach

- **2005:** New York State Department of Health presented a **Patient Safety Award** to Huntington Living Center for their **Alzheimer's Lounge Program**, which was linked to a significant reduction in falls.
- **2005-2007:** New York State Department of Health **Dementia Grants Program** awarded a grant to Finger Lakes Health to implement **Life Enrichment Systems for Dementia** at 4 nursing homes in New York state. The award included funding for several modules, including: Alzheimer's-Dementia Lounge Program, Therapeutic Small Groups, and Soft Sensory Approaches; plus all-staff dementia education.
- **2007:** Erin Bonitto and **Life Enrichment Systems for Dementia** included in a *Provider Magazine* article on innovative memory care.
- **2009-2010:** New York State Department of Health **Quality Improvement in Long-Term Care Initiative** grant awarded to Eddy Memorial Geriatric Center to continue implementation of **Life Enrichment Systems for Dementia**. The award included support for: Alzheimer's Lounge Program, Therapeutic Small Groups, Soft Sensory Approaches, Roving Cart, and Dementia Standards of Practice.
- **2009-2010:** New York State Department of Health **Enhancing Abilities and Life Experience Program (EnAble)** grant awarded to Northeast Health & Eddy Retirement Living for implementation of the **Alzheimer's-Dementia Lounge Program** and **Buddies Forever Dementia Communication Coaching** at 6 sites, including sites for: Assisted Living, Memory Care Assisted Living, and Skilled Nursing.
- **2009:** **National Trade Unions Congress of Singapore (NTUC)** sent a representative to visit **3 Life Enrichment Systems for Dementia** sites as part of a study tour of best dementia care practices in the United States. The representative explored The **Alzheimer's Dementia-Lounge** concept, along with **Therapeutic Small Groups** and **Buddies Forever Dementia Communication Coaching**.
- **2011:** **National Care Association of Great Britain** sent their Executive Director and Board Chair to visit **3 Life Enrichment Systems for Dementia** sites in order to explore the feasibility of adapting the Alzheimer's-Dementia Lounge model for care providers in England.
- **2012-2013:** Heritage of Foley Care Center implements **Buddies Forever Dementia Communication Coaching**, funded by the Minnesota Department of Health **Performance Incentive Payment Program (PIPP)**.
- **2013-2014:** Dow Rummel Village of Sioux Falls, SD implements **Buddies Forever Dementia Communication Coaching**, supported by the generosity of the donors of the Dow Rummel Village Annual Campaign Fund.
- **2013-2015:** Vetter Health Services of Omaha, NE kicks-off a 3-year initiative toward 'world class dementia care,' using the **Buddies Forever Dementia Communication Coaching** system at its 30+ communities in 5 states.
- **2014-2015:** Eddy Memorial Geriatric Center launches intensive 'Coach-the-Coach' **Buddies Forever Dementia Communication Coaching**, supported by the generosity of the Life Enrichment donors.
- **2014:** Minnesota Veterans Home – Silver Bay, MN launches the **Firefly Pilot Project** with Gemini Consulting, aimed at preventing & reducing the severity of behavioral symptoms with the use of strength-based activities.



# National & International Conferences

Erin Bonitto, MS, ADC – Founder & Lead Coach

- 2014 **American Health Care Association – Washington, DC**  
**Skill-Based Dementia Coaching:** Transforming organizational culture, developing highly-skilled interdisciplinary coach-champions, and preventing challenging behaviors without the use of psychotropic medications  
Co-presented with Cameo Rogers & Miekka Milliken, Vetter Health Services
- 2011 **Leading Age – Washington, DC**  
**Hands-On Dementia Coaching**  
Co-presented with Peter Young, Eddy Memorial Geriatric Center and the Interdisciplinary Coaching Team from The Eddy
- 2010 **National Care Association – London**  
**The Alzheimer’s-Dementia Lounge:  
Creating a Strength-Based World for Persons with Dementia**
- 2010 **American Association of Homes & Services for the Aging – Los Angeles**  
**Dementia Coaching to Prevent Behavioral Symptoms**  
Co-presented with Marvell Adams, Highland Living Center
- 2009 **International Association of Homes & Services for the Aging – London**  
**Alzheimer’s Lounge: Interdisciplinary Program for the Real World**  
Co-presented with Thomas Wright, RLS and guest presenter Marvell Adams, Highland Living Center
- 2009 **American Association of Homes & Services for the Aging – Chicago**  
**A Coach’s Guide to Excellence in Dementia Communication & Behavior Prevention**
- 2007 **American Association of Homes & Services for the Aging – Orlando**  
**A Year Later: Implications of the Revised Activity Guidance & Psychosocial Guidance for Long-Term Care Facilities**  
Co-presented with Cat Selman, Healthcare Communicators, Inc.
- 2007 **American Health Care Association – Boston**  
**A Year Later: Implications of the Revised Activity Guidance & Psychosocial Guidance for Long-Term Care Facilities**  
Co-presented with Cat Selman, Healthcare Communicators, Inc.  
**A Train-the-Trainer’s Guide to Excellence in Dementia Communication & Behavior Prevention**  
Co-presented with Chris Bonitto, Gemini Consulting, Inc.
- 2002 **American College of Health Care Administrators – Las Vegas**  
**Positive Publicity Made Easy**  
Co-presented with Chris Bonitto, Gemini Consulting, Inc.  
**Alzheimer’s Programming: A Quick Guide for Administrators**