

**Tena M. Alonzo M.A.**  
**Director of Education and Research | Director of Comfort Matters®**

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Tena Alonzo is a healthcare professional with expertise in caregiving practices for people with thinking or memory disorders. She has 39 years of experience as a long-term care provider and researcher working to enhance the lives of persons living with dementia. Her expertise addresses evidence-based practices in dementia care, specifically practices that emphasize a person-first, person-centered approach that improves quality of care and quality of life. Ms. Alonzo's research focuses on developing comfort-focused better practice for addressing dementia-related behavior, decreasing reliance on antipsychotic, anxiolytic and sedative medications, enhanced pain management, rejection of care, understanding behavior as a method of communication, dining, and nutrition concerns, fall reduction and education of families and caregiving staff in understanding the progression of dementia.

Currently, Ms. Alonzo is the founder/director of Comfort Matters®, a dementia care education program, developed at Beatitudes Campus in Phoenix, Arizona. Beatitudes Campus is a faith-based not-for-profit continuing care retirement community offering a wide spectrum of services for older people including independent living, assisted living, skilled nursing, memory support and home care services. The Comfort Matters® model has been introduced to thousands of long-term care staff, medical providers and students throughout the world and the concepts have been replicated in long-term care communities and assisted living organizations in the United States.

Ms. Alonzo's work has been published in 30 scholarly journals and books. Journal articles including *The Gerontologist*, *Journal of Hospice and Palliative Nursing*, *American Journal of Alzheimer's Disease and Other Dementias*, *Annals of Long-Term Care and Generations*. Her work has been published in the book, *Palliative Care for Advanced Alzheimer's and Dementia: Guidelines and Standards for Evidence-Based Care*, which won the 2010 American Journal of Nursing Book of the Year Award in both Gerontologic Nursing and Hospice and Palliative Care. Ms. Alonzo's work has also been featured in national media, including *The New York Times*, *Boston Globe*, *Global Mail* and *New Yorker Magazine*, as well as the Public Broadcasting System and British Broadcasting Corporation. Beatitudes Campus and Comfort Matters® have been honored with the Excellence in Research and Education Award from LeadingAge, the Award of Honor from LeadingAge Arizona, Promising Practices Award from Mather Lifeways Institute of Aging and the Public Trust Award from LeadingAge.

As an educator, Ms. Alonzo speaks nationally and internationally, as a keynote speaker, featured speaker, panel member and facilitator on evidence-based, person-directed, caregiving practices for people with dementia and serves as a technical expert for the Initiative to Improve Dementia Care and Reduce Antipsychotic Medication for the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid. Additionally, Ms. Alonzo has presented information on dementia and caregiving practices to hundreds of public audiences, interest groups, support groups and families to generate public awareness, communicate research outcomes and encourage public engagement on the topic of dementia care.

Ms. Alonzo earned a B.S. in Psychology/Biology (1983) and an M.A. in Theoretical Psychology (1985) from Northern Arizona University. She is currently completing a PhD. In Medical Ethics from Boston University.