Health and Psychological Well-Being of Parents of Adults with Developmental Disabilities: Impacts of Lifelong Caregiving
Marsha Mailick, PhD, UW–Madison

Recent CDC estimates show that about 17% of US children have developmental disabilities – a group of conditions due to impairments in physical, learning, language, or behavior. Examples include autism, Down syndrome, fragile X, and intellectual disabilities. This talk focuses on their parents, who often experience high levels of stress due to the special needs of their children. Because developmental disabilities are lifelong conditions, these challenges extend across the parents’ life course and increase their health risks as they age. Counterbalancing these risks are the specific benefits of social support that uniquely enhance their quality of life.

Musculoskeletal Health with Aging: Perspective of an Aging Clinician Researcher
Neil Binkley, MD, UW–Madison

Independence is valued by older adults. Loss of bone and muscle strength threaten our independence. The processes leading to weak bones and muscles will be reviewed and approaches to optimize musculoskeletal health considered.

Caring for My Abuser: Adverse Childhood Experiences and Intergenerational Caregiving
Jooyoung Kong, PhD, MSW, UW–Madison

Prof. Kong will share highlights from her research on later-life intergenerational relationships when there is a history of trauma in the family system. The presentation will introduce conceptual and empirical discussions about adult children who survived childhood abuse/neglect at the hands of a parent and now, as adults, provide care to that parent. Recent findings regarding the prevalence and characteristics of such caregivers in national surveys and the negative health effects they experience will be discussed. The presentation will conclude with key takeaways and insights about the potential for resilience and growth in family relationships.

Expansion, Equity, and the Economy of U.S. Higher Education since the 1960s
Adam Nelson, PhD, UW-Madison

Access to higher education can enhance opportunities across the life course. Such access hinges on a wide range of personal and policy conditions, including public support to manage the costs of college attendance. This talk examines the economy of U.S. higher education since the 1960s. It notes that, as student enrollments grew, public subsidies did not keep pace. Increased participation was accompanied by a shift from public aid to private loans, which burdened an increasingly diverse student body. Put simply, during the 1960s, largely white and male students benefited from publicly supported higher education; thereafter, increasingly non-white and female students bore more privatized costs. These historical trends raise an important question for the future: will a more diverse electorate marshal the political will to revive public aid to higher education?