

MY STORY: CAREERS IN CARING



EDUCATION



FITNESS
AND WELLNESS

[Dr. Candace Brown \(Dace\), PhD](#)

Dace Brown, PhD, serves as an Assistant Professor at University of North Carolina at Charlotte. She is affiliated with the Department of Public Health Sciences and the Interdisciplinary Program in Gerontology at UNCC and works with the Motivated Cognition and Aging Brain Lab (MCAB Lab) at Duke University. Her teaching efforts at UNCC are focused on health and aging among all populations. Her research interests lie in aging and motivation to exercise using mixed methodologies.

1. Describe your current role.

I am an Assistant Professor of Gerontology at the University of North Carolina, Charlotte. I do research in the field with respects to motivation to exercise among midlife to older adults. I choose to take a positive approach in understanding the aging process and feel learning why people exercise is one way to do this.

2. How did you become interested in the field of aging?

I spent time volunteering in a nursing home when I was 14 years old and loved being around older adults. However, my heart hurt for them because I could see how their sedentary lifestyles negatively impacted their health.

3. What are your motivations/ inspirations for being in a career in aging?

Actually, older people everywhere. I just love them. Seeing those who continue to thrive and push the envelope of social expectations to do what they love so they remain healthy throughout their life is what motivates me to learn more about how they accomplish this. Specifically, older Black women are my inspiration. I come from a long line of strong Black women who have learned to age well. I am blessed to have my grandmother who is still living her best life and a mother who is following in her footsteps. They both have taught me to forge my own path and accomplish what I have been sent on this Earth to do. When I see them and other Black women who are defying the odds that research so often focuses on, I am inspired.

4. Tell us something about your career that makes you feel especially proud.

The continuous learning process of being a woman who loves God, her husband, her children, and then her career. Balancing all of these is not easy. But, when I see that everyone I love in my life is pleased then I am too.

5. What is the number one thing you look forward to every day at work?

My new colleagues who started at UNCC with me this past year. I have made new friends who are not in Gerontology but respect my craft as much as I do theirs. That is the cool thing about being an interdisciplinary researcher. I get to work with others who know a whole lot more than me about other topics that I can related back to Gerontology.

6. What is your most memorable/rewarding experience working in your current role?

The most memorable experiences are when my students achieve the goals they set forth in my classes. I love to see them smile or send an email of expressed happiness. That's what teaching is about!

7. Do you have any tips for individuals considering entering the field of aging?
Find your passion within the field and stick to it- no matter what other people may tell you. I may not do the 'trending' research, but I do the research that I know is important to me and to others. I do what makes me happy. Find your happy and do not let it go.

8. What is one thing most people might not know about aging services?
If you are unable to find a service to meet your need or the need of a loved one- you may not have looked in the right place. If you have looked in the right place and still cannot find it- maybe you're supposed to fill in the gap.

