Swanson’s five caring processes illustrated in vignettes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Processes</th>
<th>Vignette Type</th>
<th>Caring</th>
<th>Uncaring</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>KNOWING</td>
<td>Recruiter is an expert in the study</td>
<td>Linda takes the time to walk Ms. Smith through the brain gift program and answers all of her questions.</td>
<td>After a brief explanation, Linda asks Ms. Smith if she would sign a consent form today to gift her brain to the study when she dies.</td>
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<tr>
<td>DOING FOR</td>
<td>Recruiter provides help on behalf of the participant</td>
<td>Linda asks where she may set up her testing tools to begin the memory games. Ms. Smith points to the dining room table.</td>
<td>Linda walks into Ms. Smith’s home and places her testing tools on the table to begin the memory games.</td>
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<tr>
<td>BEING WITH</td>
<td>Recruiter is authentically present and considerate</td>
<td>Linda arrives at Ms. Smith’s home, names her, and asks to come inside. Linda enters Ms. Smith’s home.</td>
<td>Linda walks out the door. As she leaves, she gives Ms. Smith a booklet about the study and doesn’t explain what it is.</td>
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<tr>
<td>ENABLING</td>
<td>Recruiter facilitates warm engagement</td>
<td>Linda smiles and hands Ms. Smith a booklet that explains the steps of the brain gift program and the required family support</td>
<td>Linda walks out the door. As she leaves, she gives Ms. Smith a booklet about the study and doesn’t explain what it is.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MAINTAINING BELIEF</td>
<td>Recruiter is optimistically supportive</td>
<td>Ms. Smith asks for more time to think about it. Linda says okay without making eye contact with Ms. Smith as she puts her testing tools away.</td>
<td>Ms. Smith asks for more time to think about it. Linda says okay without making eye contact with Ms. Smith as she puts her testing tools away.</td>
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**Methods**

**Design**
- Cross-sectional experimental study design
- Random assignment to one of two experimental conditions

**Experimental Conditions**
- A vignette simulates the real-world recruitment scenario of a high-commitment research study involving brain donation
- Experimental manipulation involved behavior of the recruiter (caring or uncaring) according to Swanson’s Middle-Range Theory of Caring

**Sample**
- Currently enrolled in 1 of 3 NIH-funded Alzheimer’s Disease studies
- Older adult (> 65)
- Self-identify as African American or non-Latinx White
- Not cognitively impaired

**Random Selection**
- From over 2,000 eligible individuals, 200 (100 African Americans; 100 non-Latinx Whites) were randomly selected to participate

**Measures**
- Demographics: age, gender, and education
- Participant Feedback Questionnaire - an author developed tool that assessed:
  - Participants’ judgment of the vignette-recruiter’s caring behavior (caring or uncaring)
  - Whether participants were willing to make a higher commitment to the hypothetical research study (willing or unwilling)

**Procedures & Data Collection**
- An introductory letter, informed consent, the vignette, and the pre-addressed envelope were mailed to the participants.
- Participants were given two weeks to respond.
- After two weeks, non-respondents were called and given the opportunity to complete the questionnaire over the phone.
- All respondents were mailed a $15 VISA gift card

**Results**

**Participation**
- Non-responders:
  - 11 (5.5%) deceased
  - 22 (11%) unable to contact
- Refusals: 47 (23.5%)
- Participants: 120 (60%)
- Refusals: 47 (23.5%)
- Non-responders: 22 (11%)
- Participants by phone: 37 (30.8%)
- Participants by mail: 83 (69.2%)
- 22 (11%) unable to contact
- Refusals: 47 (23.5%)

**Differences in Willingness to Participate by Race of Participant and Vignette Type**

- African American and non-Latinx-White participants did not differ in their likelihood to perceive the recruiter as caring across vignette type (caring vs uncaring)
- Participants who received the caring vignette were more than twice as likely to perceive the recruiter as caring regardless of race (p < .001)
- Differences in the impact of vignette type (caring vs uncaring) on perceptions of the recruiter as caring did not differ between African American and non-Latinx-White participants (p = .119)

**Discussion**
- The experimental study revealed that regardless of race, it is essential to be attuned to how research recruiters express caring recruitment approaches for older adults
- A more nuanced understanding of caring and uncaring behaviors may be warranted to employ appropriate strategies among underserved populations
- The experimental study sample may have been biased by participants’ concurrent enrollment in NIH-funded studies.

**Conclusion**
- When all five of Swanson’s interpersonal processes are enacted throughout the recruitment process, it may enable research recruiters to be more intentional in their recruitment efforts. Recruiters who invest time in building strong relationships with participants and prioritize trust as a foundational principle can break down recruitment and enrollment barriers.