

Look Out for the Well-Being of Yourself and Others

No matter what age you are, it is important to look out for your own emotional well-being. This is especially true for older adults because of the special challenges at this stage of life. Taking charge of your emotional well-being can make a big difference.

Are you in pain? Do you feel depressed?

Are you lonely? Have you experienced a loss?

You don't have to feel this way. Read on . . .

Take Care of Yourself

Your emotional well-being is affected by your health. If you need help or support, staff at your senior living community can help you see a medical or mental health provider. Your facility may also offer health and wellness activities.

Here are some suggestions to take care of your health:

- ◆ Make an appointment with a medical provider if you are in pain or have a physical illness.
- ◆ Seek treatment or talk to a counselor if you have depression or another mental health issue, or if you drink too much or abuse medications.
- ◆ Join a support group to help you cope with the loss of family and friends, financial problems, or other personal issues.
- ◆ Stay active and exercise regularly. Try taking a group exercise class or going on walks.
- ◆ Eat a healthy diet. Avoid too much sugar, salt, fat, and caffeine.

Taking care of your physical and emotional health will help you feel better and reduce feelings of helplessness.

Mrs. Williams

At 80 years old, Mrs. Williams was just settling into a senior living community when she broke her hip. Since she couldn't walk, she slept most of the day and seemed very withdrawn. She said she felt her life was over.

Another resident was concerned that Mrs. Williams was depressed and told the staff. They talked with her children and decided she needed to see a counselor. Mrs. Williams did not like the idea, but her children insisted.

The counselor had Mrs. Williams take anti-depressants for six months and go to physical therapy. Her family provided support to her.

The staff encouraged her to get involved in activities she could do, such as arts and crafts and welcoming new residents. These activities gave her a sense of purpose and helped her build relationships.

Now Mrs. Williams is feeling better physically and emotionally and enjoys spending time with other residents and staff.

Get Involved

Getting involved in intellectual and creative activities is a valuable way to build your skills and give you a sense of purpose. If an activity that interests you is not offered at your facility, find out how you can help get it started. Here are some possible activities:

- ◆ Attend a discussion group or presentation on a topic of interest to you
- ◆ Do arts and crafts activities
- ◆ Go to a poetry, music, or theater event at the facility
- ◆ Join or start a book club
- ◆ Take a class in sewing, computer, carpentry, or financial management

You can build skills or start a new hobby at any age. You just need to be willing to try.

Reach Out

The well-being of older adults is affected by **strong** relationships with family, friends, and other residents. Here are some ways to help you build relationships in your facility, share emotional support, and have fun:

- ◆ Go on group trips to social, sporting, and cultural events
- ◆ Attend parties to celebrate holidays, birthdays, and other special occasions
- ◆ Play bingo, bridge, or poker
- ◆ Join the committee to welcome new residents
- ◆ Mentor or be a buddy for new residents
- ◆ Join a committee involved in facility decision making
- ◆ Volunteer to help others in your local area

Reaching out to other residents and staff will also help you look out for the emotional well-being of others.

If You or Someone Else Needs Help

In this facility, contact: _____

In the local community, contact: _____

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: call 1-800-273-TALK (8255); 24 hours, 7 days

Helping Others

Look out for the emotional well-being of other residents. Someone might be helped by your friendship and encouragement to get involved in activities or to see a mental health professional.

Remember to be respectful. If you are concerned about a resident, decide if it would be more helpful to talk with a nurse or social worker about the person or to talk with the resident directly.