

Adult Day Self-Care Newsletter

July 2021

Independence Day

As we all know, on July 4, 1776, the Continental Congress approved the Declaration of Independence. This remarkable document includes a statement of basic rights held by all citizens of our nation—life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. While we are young and healthy, we tend to take these rights for granted, pursuing what we believe will make us happy and believing we are free to make our own choices for a good life. As we move into adulthood, we realize that we must balance our rights and desires against our responsibilities and commitment to others. This is especially true when we are balancing working and caring for family members and find our “free” time is increasingly limited. As we continue to age, many of us find our independence and life choices are constrained by health challenges and the loss of our same-age peers. At the same time, as research suggests, many people experience natural gains in happiness and well-being. Planning ahead as we age can help ensure continued quality of life. We address these topics briefly here, as we have in previous webinars. As always, we hope our newsletter is interesting and useful to you. We welcome your feedback!

The Pursuit of Happiness

As a whole, older people gain in happiness and emotional well-being. This seems to be related to greater acceptance of life’s challenges and a deeper appreciation of what’s going well. Life experience helps develop knowledge, skill, and effective coping strategies. Recognizing the time left is less than time lived creates a new perspective, helping people make decisions about what is important to them and how they choose to spend the time and energy they have. These gains are often summarized in the term wisdom, which many believe comes with age.

Pursuing happiness is more than partying or shopping—it requires some “inside” work as well as outside resources. You can find quizzes, tools, and tips for increasing your well-being at the [Greater Good Science Center](#), one of our favorite resource sites. You can even download (or subscribe) to their monthly [Happiness Calendar](#) for suggestions for daily actions, such as *Remind yourself what motivates you to do the work you do.*



The Story of Agnes

The Age Lab at MIT has developed an “aging empathy suit” to help people experience aging. You can more about this suit, which they call AGNES at their [website](#). The suit was used in a recent PBS special called *Fast Forward*. While streaming the program is restricted, you can find clips and related information online on the [PBS website](#).

The Wisdom of Aging

What is wisdom? Dr. Dilip Jeste defines wisdom using these five components:

Managing emotions involves accepting reality while finding room for hope and positivity. This is not blind optimism or rose-colored glasses, but a recognition and appreciation of the good in life while facing the not-so-good.

Self-reflection involves thinking about what you do, what is working for you, and what isn't. The result is honesty with yourself about your strengths and limitations.

Helping others contributes to a sense of meaning in life. Showing kindness, being generous, and supporting others in ways that meet their needs and help you feel energized, happy, connected, and worthwhile.

Making decisions is part of every phase of life. Older adults (and all of us experiencing the ongoing pandemic) come to recognizing that life is unpredictable. Aging seems to bring a greater awareness of the value of setting goals and making choices in spite of the uncertainty of our future. In addition, there's a recognition of the need to base those goals and choice on the best information available.

Spirituality is having a sense of purpose in life and includes feeling connected to others while accepting and respecting the ways they differ from you. Faith, in whatever form it takes for each of us, contributes to gratitude for what we have and hope for the future.

While wisdom is important, so is planning ahead in practical ways. The Age Lab at MIT provides resources for planning ahead. We especially like their Three Questions booklet. It's a free [download](#), so check it out, use it, and share it with anyone wishing to age well.



visit our website www.care2caregivers.com for information on caregiver support groups

For More Information

If you are interested in learning more about the topics in this issue, we have included our references here.

Jeste, D. (2020). *Wisdom: The scientific roots of wisdom, compassion, and what makes us good*. Boulder, CO: Sounds True.

You can find Dr. Dilip Jeste on [YouTube](#), too.

Carstensen, L. et al. (2011). Emotional experience improves with age: Evidence based on over 10 years of experience sampling. *Psychology and Aging*, 26(1), 21-33.

Dr. Laura Carstensen describes her research in a [TED talk](#) on happiness in older people.

As always, you can access the Self-Care resources on our website for free.

Self-Care for Professional Caregivers

www.care2caregivers.com/self-care

Upcoming Caregiver Education 2021

Post Pandemic Living: Moving toward the "New Normal"

JULY 29th 1:00-2:00 pm

In spite of government assurances, many people wonder if it's safe to resume normal activities. Even people who are convinced that it's safe to re-enter society may feel hesitant and anxious about doing so. Many also realize that "normal" does not mean "just like the old days." This presentation will address how to adjust (and continue to adjust), the importance of acknowledging our feelings, hopes, and expectations, and tips for transitioning back to normal (whatever that may look like).

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For more info email Monica:

mlt4@ubhc.rutgers.edu

or call Care2Caregivers at 890-424-2494

1-800-424-2494