



## Psychosocial Consideration for Older Adults

The aging process results in many physical changes that impact the quality of life of older adults. In addition, there are many other factors to determine our overall health, or resilience: The ability of an individual to resist or recover from functional decline following common health stressors. Many changes take place throughout the aging process beyond just the impact on our physical bodies. Psychosocial health encompasses the mental, emotional, social, and spiritual dimensions of what it means to be healthy and these factors have a tremendous impact on how our bodies function and help determine our reserve: The capacity we have within ourselves to withstand stress. This article will highlight the social and spiritual dimensions of our wellbeing.

Social connectedness and overall health are correlated with one another as supported by many research studies. One study found that 50% of community dwelling older adults report being lonely or isolated and those who are socially isolated have a 25% increased risk of death by all causes. Social isolation can also increase the risk of chronic illness such as heart disease or dementia, emotional concerns such as depression, as well as premature death. The importance of social engagement for our overall health cannot be emphasized enough.

Many resources exist to help you interact with your community environment throughout the aging process. The area agency on aging, community/senior centers, and transportation services are all great options that are available in most local contexts, but religious institutions such as churches help provide many additional benefits to aging adults. Research literature supports spirituality to be important in the aging process with many known benefits including social connectedness due to the forming of close relationships, resilience to coping with hardship and loss, and a sense of purpose which leads to greater community engagement. Surrounding yourself with friends and family and having a sense of purpose and meaning help us to live happier and healthier lives.

More physically capable and confident movers are better able to access their communities and engage in social activities. Many barriers may exist to you being as active in your community as you would like, but our team of qualified therapists would love to help address those barriers and make you a more confident mover again, taking into consideration your pain complaints, medical history, and goals. Our team will provide you with a personalized plan to help assist you in getting out of the house and engaging all of life's most meaningful activities - like keeping up with your energetic pet, caring for your loved ones, attending regular religious services, volunteering in your community, playing with your grandkids, joining a community class, or confidently traveling to your top destination.

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