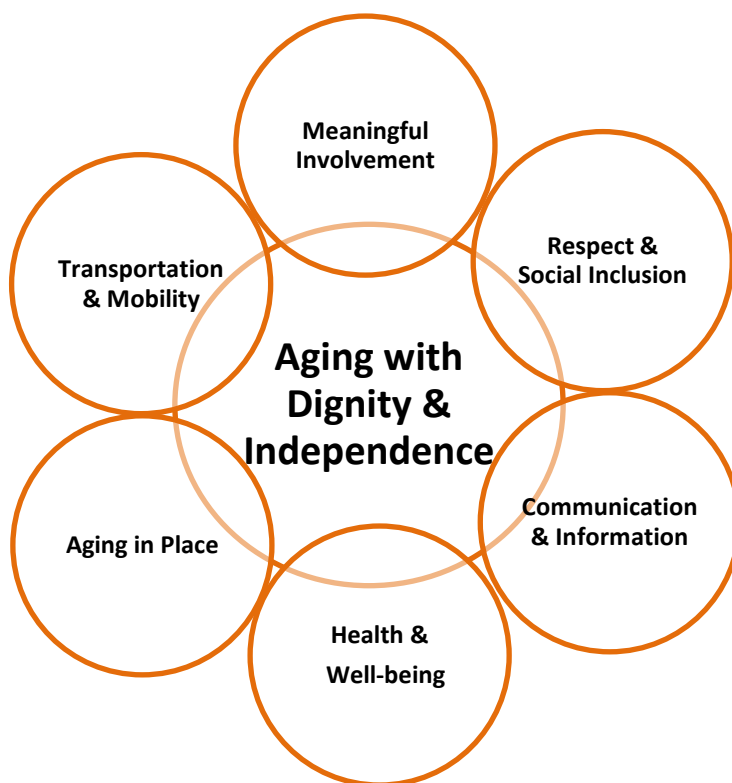




Aging with Dignity & Independence

Actionable Themes: Issues and Opportunities



October 2011

Prepared by

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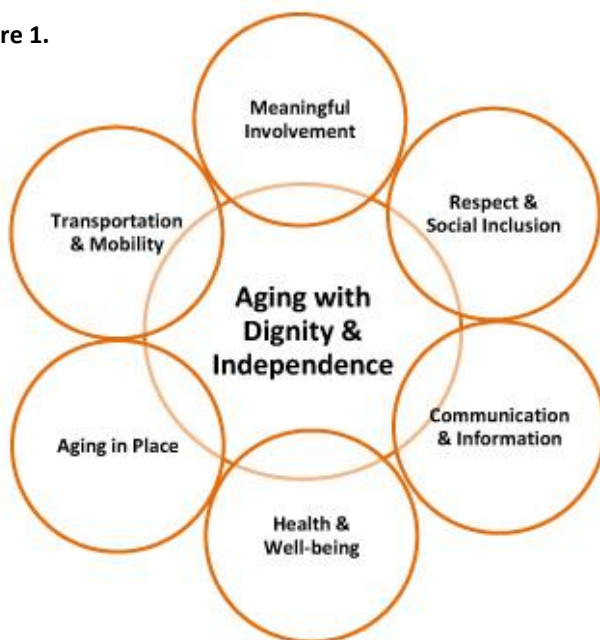
Actionable Themes: Issues and Opportunities

The **Aging with Dignity and Independence Initiative** was conducted as a partnership with The Patterson Foundation, SCOPE, and the University of South Florida Sarasota-Manatee. Issues of dignity and independence were critically important to the foundation's benefactor, Dorothy Patterson. As Mrs. Patterson aged into her 80's, she was resolute and successful in remaining independent throughout her life.

The broad goal of this initiative is to enhance aging with dignity and independence in Sarasota County. A yearlong discovery phase engaged over 500 persons, representing the full range of demographic and geographic diversity of the community. The project sought to listen and learn about the lived-experience of older adults as well as persons of all ages to better understand the experience of aging in Sarasota County. An advisory committee comprised of diverse providers, volunteers, experts and stakeholders in aging provided guidance and input throughout the project. (Table 1.) Through several modalities, an in-depth understanding of how persons experience dignity and independence within the context of the

community and social interactions was gained. (Table 2.) The data revealed what mattered most to people as well as both supports and challenges to dignity and independence throughout community life. The aggregate findings provide important information about the key issues faced by persons aging in this community, as well as many opportunities to enhance dignity and independence in the course of daily life throughout Sarasota County. The key findings are presented as "Actionable Themes," that could result in action to improve people's lives. (Figure 1.)

Figure 1.



Sarasotans informed this report via several ways of participation. The advisory committee helped guide the process. Hundreds of older adults contributed to focus group discussions and surveys. More than 200 community members of all ages and walks of life shared their input electronically and in community forums. Because concepts of dignity and independence are inherently subjective, this study prompted participants to personally define the concepts, which were later classified by themes across all respondents. In addition, people shared experiences and recommendations on tangible ways in which dignity and independence could be supported throughout this community. The stories solicited from the community provided a collective voice to capture the many positive interactions occurring among people aging in Sarasota County.

As described by the participants, the meaning of dignity was defined as: self direction, the opportunity to make personal choices, self-reliance and self sufficiency, respectful treatment of self and others, sense of self pride and self worth, self acceptance and by others, behaving with maturity, and making decisions through the end of life.

"Dignity means being treated as the competent, intelligent person I am. It means having someone ask what I would like rather than tell me what I need. It means having choices and having a voice."

"Being self-sufficient and not becoming a burden on or dependent on others."

"Being respected, and treated as a resource for the years we have lived and experience/wisdom we have gained."

"Dignity means being able to live a lifestyle that provides the essentials of food, shelter, medical, and spiritual AND having quality connections with people that respect and value one another."

"I don't believe anyone can give you dignity. You give yourself dignity. What people or communities can do is give you respect and acceptance."

"...being able to make decisions for myself such as accessing or choosing not to access intensive medical care."

The meaning of independence was described as: self reliance for transportation and maintaining one's household, performing personal care activities, financial independence, making one's own decisions regarding living arrangements, freedom to choose activities and have a social life, and helping others through volunteering or caring for others.

"So I got my license...I got my independence. I got my life."

"Independence means the ability to dress self, feed self, bathe self"

"Privacy and living in my own apartment is important to maintaining my independence."

"Not having to rely on my children to send me money... or take me in to live."

"I do have a little fear that if I get older they [my kids] might try to take care of everything, I mean, say "this is what you're gonna do."

"Independence means the ability to take part in any and all aspects of one's community."

"I'd say many of the volunteer jobs that I'm doing, I feel welcome and I feel valued."

The six “Actionable Themes” represent both concerns and opportunities. Though presented distinctly, there is connection and overlap among the themes. For example, Respect & Social Inclusion is tied to Meaningful Involvement; Aging in Place is linked to Transportation as well as to Communications & Information. Consequently, collective actions that address individual themes are likely to benefit other issues as well. By recognizing these issues that matter most, the broader community can seize the opportunities to make Sarasota County an even better place to grow older. **This report is designed as a catalyst, as individuals, organizations, businesses and local government consider:**

What actions can significantly enhance dignity and independence for older adults in Sarasota County?

Table 1.

Advisory Committee	
Lauretta Anderson	Community Representative, minister
Pamela Baron	Jewish Family & Children’s Service of Sarasota-Manatee, Inc.
Silvia Blanco	University of South Florida Sarasota-Manatee
Bob Carter	Senior Friendship Centers, Inc.
Tom Collins	Community Representative, retired MD, CCRC medical director
Donna Dunio	ITNSarasota, Inc.
Doug Heinlen	AARP Florida
Sarabeth Kalajian	Sarasota County Library System
Carolyn Mason	Board of County Commissioners, Sarasota County
Erin McLeod	Senior Friendship Centers, Inc.
Charlene Monagas	University of South Florida Sarasota-Manatee, student
Tom Pfaff	Goodwill Industries
Nancy Schlossberg	Author, Professor Emerita, retired
Jim Shirley	Arts & Cultural Alliance of Sarasota County
Jane Smiley	Community Representative, retired executive
Jeff Troiano	Williams, Parker, Harrison, Dietz & Getzen
JoAnn Westbrook	Pines of Sarasota
Fay Williams	Sarasota Memorial Hospital
Project Staff	
Suzanne Gregory	Project Director, SCOPE
Kathy Black, Ph.D.	Principal Investigator, USF Sarasota-Manatee
Debra Dobbs, Ph.D.	Co-Investigator, USF Tampa
Tim Dutton	Initiative Manager, SCOPE

Table 2. Local residents were engaged using the methods outlined below.

Focus	Approaches	Participation
Older Adult (Age 65+)	Focus Groups	7 focus groups with 51 participants
	Surveys	216 surveys
Residents (All ages)	Community Forums	15 community forums yielded 113 stories
	On-line Stories	104 stories



MEANINGFUL INVOLVEMENT

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The importance of making a difference and giving back are part of what matters most and enhances one's dignity and independence. Older adults want the freedom to personally choose areas of interests in which to become involved. Pride in one's accomplishments help support one's dignity.

Participants report contributing in a variety of ways including utilizing leadership and skills, giving their time and energy to lifelong or newfound passions, or sharing their wealth of expertise with others. Involvement through such actions as volunteering, working and teaching provide people with not only a sense of meaning and purpose, but help foster connections and relationships that support active aging as well as benefit the broader community.

There is particular interest in peer-to peer support as a way to help others in daily living as well as significant life events. For example, many help others cope with the range of life experiences encountered in aging such as loss of partner, depression, health concerns, and care giving.

People want their personal contributions of time and talent to have meaning and value to others, as well as be respected for their contributions. This includes work, both paid and unpaid.

In some instances, community members viewed older adults as role models and expressed valuing the skills and passion brought to their community involvement.

What people said...

"Dignity means ...having choices and having a voice." Female, age 70+

"Independence means the ability to take part in any and all aspects of one's community." Female, age 70+

"I think dignity has a lot to do... with still learning and still being proud of accomplishment in your life... just because you're old doesn't mean that you can't add accomplishments in your life!" Male, age 75+

"Being active and a part of the community. Being an observer is not enough." Male, age 70+

"What matters to me most is giving back to this community." Female, age 80+

"It is important to have a purpose to my living and that I am valued for my involvement." Female, age 70+

"She was determined...not to feel sorry for herself, and that she was going to be the best that she could be, in order to preserve her mind, her health and her lifestyle, and she was a group leader in our discussions, encouraging others to do better." Male, 60+

Opportunities to Consider

How might our community develop more opportunities for meaningful engagement in all sectors?

In what ways might employers be educated regarding the untapped value of older employees and develop creative ways to offer flexibility in benefits and sharing of responsibilities?

How should the community maximize retraining opportunities for prospective older employees?

What opportunities might be developed to meaningfully engage and tap the talents of homebound seniors?

How might older adults be tapped to provide peer support for others challenged by life circumstances?

Ideas from the Community...

- ❖ Create a training module to educate businesses
- ❖ Develop a library program to “check out a person” to share their experiences
- ❖ Older volunteers provide technology training for others
- ❖ Develop an assessment for organizations in order to develop meaningful volunteer roles
- ❖ Train peer volunteer coordinator positions in nonprofits and other businesses
- ❖ Create a team of homebound adults who could make weekly calls to other homebound seniors

Best Practices & Resources

Age Friendly Communities

<http://afc.uwaterloo.ca/>

Tools, resources and examples to help communities develop solutions to become more age-friendly

York Central Hospital and McMaster Medical Centre in Canada are benefitting from the Hospital Elder Life Program (HELP), an initiative designed to prevent delirium among hospitalized older patients. Volunteers are trained to carry out specific ‘protocols’ to assist hospitalized elders in staying oriented to their surroundings and improve their hospital experience. More information about HELP may be found at www.hospitalelderlifeprogram.org.

Aging Well in Communities

<http://www.civicpartnerships.org/docs/services/CHCC/case-studies.htm>

Case studies of 7 communities who found new ways to plan for aging well

Coming of Age

www.comingofage.org

A Philadelphia-based, national initiative designed to help individuals 50+ connect and contribute to their communities and to build the capacity of organizations to utilize the skills, passions, and interests of people 50+ to further their mission and revitalize communities.

Global Age-Friendly Cities: A Guide

http://www.who.int/ageing/publications/Global_age_friendly_cities_Guide_English.pdf

A guide with checklists of core age-friendly features

The Maturing of America – Communities Moving Forward for an Aging Population

http://www.n4a.org/files/MOA_FINAL_Rpt.pdf

This 2011 report provides information on current initiatives, policies and best practices

The Maturing of America – Getting Communities on Track for an Aging Population

<http://www.n4a.org/pdf/MOAFinalReport.pdf>

Comprehensive report with recommendations and examples

The Next Chapter

www.civicventures.org/nextchapter

The Next Chapter™ projects are community coalitions that are working to help people in the second half of life set a course, connect with peers, and find pathways to meaningful work and significant service. Next Chapter initiatives have been developed in ten states.

Regional Economic and Workforce Strategies: A Focus on the Mature Workforce

<http://www.compete.org/publications/detail/1359/regional-economic-and-workforce-strategies-a-focus-on-the-mature-workforce/>

Employer best practices for attracting and retaining the mature workforce

Retired Brains

<http://www.retiredbrains.com/Home/default.aspx>

The largest independent job and information resource for boomers, retirees and people planning their retirement.

RetirementJobs.com

www.retirementjobs.com

A free service for job seekers matching mature workers with employers certified as age-friendly. Any employer is eligible to apply to become a Certified Age Friendly Employer.

Strategies to Employ and Retain Older Workers

wdr.doleta.gov/research/FullText_Documents/Current%20Strategies%20to%20Employ%20and%20Retain%20Older%20Workers%20-%20FINAL.pdf

Urban Institute Report prepared for the US Dept of Labor

Volunteer Match

<http://www.volunteermatch.org/nonprofits/learningcenter/#cva>

Tools and Training for those who engage volunteers

Workforce Management

www.workforce.com/section/recruiting-staffing/feature/they-dont-retire-they-hire-them/index.html

Insight into successful workforce practices for hiring older adults



Respect & Social Inclusion

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Aging with dignity is enhanced by respectful behavior and social inclusion throughout our community. Though many people indicate positive interactions in general, others report experiences of disrespectful interactions in a variety of encounters. People report being judged on the superficial basis of hair color or slowed mobility; assumed to be incompetent due to vision or hearing difficulties; or talked around as if the older adult isn't present. Many identify these interactions as condescending and patronizing. Attitudes of impatience and indifference are evident from professionals as well as the general public. Of particular disdain for many is the language used in addressing people including terms such as "honey" or "girlfriend."

These negative experiences are noted in casual encounters with people of all ages – including other older adults- and in interactions with health care and other service providers and businesses throughout the community. Older adults identify the need to raise public awareness to counter ageist ignorance, in part, by increasing opportunities for intergenerational interactions.

Although many report the ease of maintaining social involvement and even prefer the camaraderie of others at the same stage of life, some report issues with isolation, the lack of family, and difficulties in developing relationships in the community.

Positive actions which support or enhance aging with dignity and independence include proactively inviting people into a range of new social networks as well as honoring the older adult's desires in all areas of daily life decision-making.

What people said...

"Dignity is being recognized as a full adult who is due respect, whatever the physical condition or appearance." Female, age 70+

"My most serious problem is trying to make people understand that because I'm 91, I'm not a moron." Female, age 90+

"As I get older some folks treat me as less intelligent because I take more time to make decisions or actions. I do this because I know my reaction time has changed." Female, age 75+

"I don't believe anyone can give you dignity. You give yourself dignity. What people or communities can do is give you respect and acceptance." Female, age 85+

"Some younger people think we are hopelessly behind with technology and they talk down to us sometimes." Male, age 65+

"The world can get smaller as we can get around less. It's easy to see how I could feel left out of what matters -- already technology is moving beyond me... It could become easy to feel forgotten." Female, age 65+

"My (older relative) shared...that she felt very isolated but didn't have the energy to 'start over' in her current retirement community ...I realized the best thing I could do would be to connect her with others..." Female, age 25+

Opportunities to Consider

What bold actions might this community undertake in all sectors (families, businesses, service providers) of society that will reduce ageism?

How might the community further promote natural intergenerational engagement?

How might the community showcase positive examples of respect and inclusion to resonate with people of all ages?

Ideas from the Community...

- ❖ Develop a cadre of trainers to use the Aging Sensitivity Kit
- ❖ Sarasota County is a Community for a Lifetime – have zero tolerance PR campaign against ageism
- ❖ More training in businesses for handling customers who have cognitive deficits such as Alzheimer's
- ❖ Medical offices create space and structure to ensure that patients have the time to assimilate the information about health issues and medication
- ❖ Create a dignity awareness campaign directed at medical facilities
- ❖ Use libraries as a connection space for different generations
- ❖ Maximize naturally occurring opportunities for intergenerational engagement (ex. YMCA, Girl's Inc, Boys and Girls Clubs, etc.)
- ❖ Create more intergenerational opportunities (Tech Boot camp at Senior Friendship Center is a good example – www.friendshipcenters.org)

Best Practices & Resources

Age Friendly Communities

<http://afc.uwaterloo.ca/>

Tools, resources and examples to help communities develop solutions to become more age-friendly

Friendly to Seniors Sudbury aims to help improve the quality of life of seniors living in Sudbury and make the community an accessible and inclusive place. The project focuses particularly on businesses and organizations. The Friendly to Seniors Program offers local businesses an assessment of their senior friendliness. Businesses are given resources, awareness literature, and suggestions to help improve their senior friendliness. Those who participate are presented with a Friendly to Seniors Certificate to be displayed.

Aging Watch

www.AgingWatch.com

Aging Watch is an independent think-tank committed to ending ageism and the social marginalization of older people. They work to advance the protection, promotion, and participation of elders in American society.

Center for Inclusion in Health Care at UPMC

www.upmc.com/aboutupmc/CommunityCitizenship/inclusion/Pages/default.aspx

The website provides brochures and video for the Dignity & Respect Campaign. What began as an internal workplace initiative at UPMC has become a national initiative inspiring dignity, respect, and inclusion.

Elders in Action

<http://eldersinaction.org/programs/elderfriendly>

The Elder Friendly® Business Certification program educates and helps businesses better serve customers.

Fighting Ageism

<http://ssw.unc.edu/cares/sfc/ageism%20brochure.pdf>

Ageism brochure by Nash County Aging Dept, Nashville, NC

The Nash County Aging Department provides sensitivity training for businesses, organizations, schools, government offices, and others.

Global Age-Friendly Cities: A Guide

http://www.who.int/ageing/publications/Global_age_friendly_cities_Guide_English.pdf

A guide with checklists of core age-friendly features

Manchester's Generations Together Programme

www.manchester.gov.uk/generationstogether

This programme involved 13 connected Intergenerational projects designed to break down barriers between younger people, older people and the wider community; help younger and older people to come together, develop new skills and improve their local area; and, increase the numbers of younger and older people who volunteer.



COMMUNICATION & INFORMATION

The Aging with Dignity and Independence Initiative is a partnership with The Patterson Foundation, SCOPE, and the University of South Florida Sarasota-Manatee. This brief identifies one of six themes and serves as a catalyst, providing knowledge and resources to stimulate action. Further information about the findings, project methodology and additional resources may be found at www.scopexcel.org.

Access to information and resources is vital to aging with dignity and independence. Staying connected with events and activities and the ability to obtain timely, practical information to manage one's life is necessary to meet daily personal needs. Although there is a wide variety of information available to people through a multitude of formats, many residents remain unaware or ill-informed about what's available. For example, people report inaccurate, limited or contradictory information about many resources such as financial assistance, transportation, health care and home care. Rapidly evolving information and communication technologies are seen as helpful by some and limiting by others. Many older adults are online and able to access information, yet many report the difficulty of navigating conflicting informational sources. Others report feeling left behind by technology.

In addition, people report that knowledge of the programs, services, and activities is insufficient. People overwhelmingly express the need to further discuss information via feedback with others. Some people report problems communicating with automated sources in which there is no opportunity to speak to a live person. Of particular concern is information accessed by those who are isolated. It is critical to provide relevant information, readily accessible, to all people, with varying capacities and resources.

Positive actions which support or enhance aging with dignity and independence include assisting older adults in an internet search, making sense of care options and sharing links to resources.

What people said...

"I wish there were a centralized clearing house that listed activities... I wish there were an electronic bulletin board or something like that." Female, age 65+

"...I have found a lot of information that I have also passed on to others...you'll be surprised on what's available to you, but you got to get out there and ask for it" Female, age 70+

"Something that is lacking here... A lot of people don't know what to do about their medical bills or long term care, things like that. Every new person who comes should be with an older resident...or somebody in charge, to inform them of everything we have to offer here." Female, age 75+

"Not knowing where to go for help would be a barrier to my independence" Male, age 75+

"She was exposed to others with similar problems and everyone shared their thoughts and concerns in a 'safe' environment with caring individuals." age 65+

Opportunities to Consider

What community strategies could increase access to information about programs, resources and services?

What are the opportunities for creating on-line portals to information for older adults?

What possibilities are there to develop and test an interactive platform for listing resources and sharing recommendations from older consumers?

Ideas from the Community...

- ❖ Use libraries as a hub resource location
- ❖ Create a virtual senior center
- ❖ Create opportunities to encourage “peer to peer” information exchange
- ❖ Develop a cadre of volunteers who spread resource information
- ❖ Create a traveling speakers bureau of retired professionals who talk about issues
- ❖ Create a social media site for connections and referrals and links to information
- ❖ Create an Angie’s List for seniors

Best Practices & Resources

Age Friendly Communities

<http://afc.uwaterloo.ca/>

Tools, resources and examples to help communities develop solutions to become more age-friendly

Aging in Place 2.0

<http://www.metlife.com/assets/cao/mmi/publications/studies/2010/mmi-aging-place.pdf>

A framework with ideas for successful aging in place

Caring Connections

www.caringinfo.org/i4a/pages/index.cfm?pageid=3277

Resource for planning for future needs including policies for the workplace

Community Ambassador Program (CAPS)

www.capseniors.org

The Community Ambassador Program for Seniors (CAPS) is a nationally recognized, locally implemented program of the City of Fremont (CA) Human Services, funded by a two year grant (2007-09) from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. This program trains a cadre of volunteers to serve as a bridge between the formal network of social services and local residents. The volunteers serve seniors in their own communities, in their own language, within their own cultural norms, and do this where seniors live, worship, socialize, and learn.

Federal Long-term Care Insurance Program

<https://www.ltcfeds.com/index.html>

Federal long term care insurance (Links to a calculator for long term care costs in a specific location)

Global Age-Friendly Cities: A Guide

http://www.who.int/ageing/publications/Global_age_friendly_cities_Guide_English.pdf

A guide with checklists of core age-friendly features

The Maturing of America – Communities Moving Forward for an Aging Population

http://www.n4a.org/files/MOA_FINAL_Rpt.pdf

This 2011 report provides information on current initiatives, policies and best practices

The Maturing of America – Getting Communities on Track for an Aging Population

<http://www.n4a.org/pdf/MOAFinalReport.pdf>

Comprehensive report with recommendations and examples

Medicare.gov

<http://www.medicare.gov/LTCPlanning/Include/DataSection/Questions/SearchCriteria.asp?version=default&browser=IE%7C8%7CWinXP&language=English&defaultstatus=0&pagelist=Home>

Medicare long term planning tool with assessment for Long-Term Care Costs

Miami Dade Broadband Coalition

www.miamibroadband.org

The Alliance for Aging, Inc. is partnering with the Miami Broadband Coalition to design a project providing broadband, telephones if needed, computers and computer instructions to residents in a 1,000-unit elder public housing complex.

MoveSeniors

www.moveseniors.com

A national online resource for families seeking assistance with late life home transitions, such as moving, downsizing and remodeling. Provides a searchable database of specialists and service by zipcode.

National Clearinghouse for Long-Term Care Information

www.longtermcare.gov/LTC/Main_Site/index.aspx

Resource for Long-term care planning information

National Institute on Aging

www.nia.nih.gov

“Age Pages” for a range of future planning concerns

Retired Brains

<http://www.retiredbrains.com/Home/default.aspx>

The largest independent job and information resource for boomers, retirees and people planning their retirement.

Seniors Helping Seniors

www.seniorshelpingseniors.com/resources.aspx

Seniors Helping Seniors in-home services matches seniors who want to provide help with seniors who are looking for help. This service began in 1998 with a simple concept that seniors can help each other age better and that those who give and those who receive benefit equally. The service provides a full-range of home care, companion and home maintenance support services from seniors who enjoy helping at reasonable hourly rates for seniors who want services and reasonable hourly wages to seniors who provide them.



HEALTH & WELL-BEING

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One's personal, social and mental health impact aging with dignity and independence. While numerous participants express that they haven't yet experienced any "great" challenges to their dignity or independence, others describe a variety of health conditions and disabilities that adversely impact their lives. For many, sensory deficits in vision and hearing impact their social well being by limiting interaction with others. Others report that deteriorating health and mobility affects self-care abilities, thereby increasing their dependence on others. This can strain social networks.

Mental health issues are identified as another affront to one's dignity. Issues include dementia and depression, as well as difficulties coping with life course events such as declining health, caregiving and loss. Widowhood is widely reported as a particularly difficult time of adjustment. Maintaining control in the course of end-of-life care is identified as an important aspect of dignity.

Many people report a range of strategies to remain resilient in the face of health assaults. Personal attitudes, proactive health practices, and connecting with others who have undergone similar experiences are widely noted to help maintain one's sense of dignity and independence. In the face of health concerns, dignity was also supported by health care providers and services specializing in aging issues.

In the course of daily living, both tangible and emotional support were valued and appreciated by the older adults navigating health-related conditions.

What people said...

*"Illness is the greatest challenge to dignity..."
Female, age 75+*

*"Not being able to take care of myself.
Number one (challenge to dignity.)" Male, age 70+*

"The most serious problem in my daily life is the loss that comes as family and friends become ill and die." Male, age 80+

"My wife developed Alzheimer's... and of course I took care of her... so that has been a tough, traumatic experience." Male, age 75+

"It's a very, very different way of life when you lose somebody who you've been married to for a long period of time, even though you know there was an illness prior. It's very difficult to accept. You think you're prepared and you're not... it's just so overwhelming." Female, age 85+

*"The thing that helped me the most was the support group [after my wife's death.]"
Male, 70+*

"...being able to make decisions for myself such as accessing or choosing not to access intensive medical care." Female, age 75+

"The husband was her caregiver, but was very frail and ill himself. She was bed-ridden...How he loved and NEEDED to talk; to talk of his military service...his on-going volunteerism at the hospital..." Female, 75+

Opportunities to Consider

In what ways can older adults take charge of maintaining their own health?

How might older adults connect with the information, knowledge, services and programs needed to help them manage and cope with health issues and caregiving needs?

What mechanisms might be developed to help people take the time to make decisions for end of life planning?

How can older adults be more aware of and more willing to seek support for mental health issues?

Ideas from the Community...

- ❖ Bring relevant programs to faith organizations (e.g. expand education on depression in a non-threatening manner in a safe environment)
- ❖ Medical offices create structure to ensure that patients have the time to assimilate the information about health issues and medication
- ❖ Meals on Wheels volunteers could deliver books and movies from the library for the homebound adult
- ❖ Meals on Wheels volunteers could phone the homebound person once or twice a week.
- ❖ A cadre of homebound adults could make weekly calls to other homebound seniors.
- ❖ Libraries could become hubs for opportunities to arrange opportunities for active aging
- ❖ Have the parks and recreation departments provide even more programs to help older adults stay active

Best Practices & Resources

AARP Caregiving Resource Center

<http://www.aarp.org/relationships/caregiving>

Tips and tools for all caregiving issues including planning for long term care and end of life issues

Age Friendly Communities

<http://afc.uwaterloo.ca/>

Tools, resources and examples to help communities develop solutions to become more age-friendly

York Central Hospital and McMaster Medical Centre in Canada are benefitting from the Hospital Elder Life Program (HELP). This quality enhancement initiative is designed to prevent delirium among hospitalized older patients. Volunteers are specially trained to carry out specific 'protocols' to assist hospitalized elders in staying oriented to their surroundings and improve their hospital experience. The procedures include keeping the hospitalized elders engaged in cognitively stimulating activities, meeting their needs for nutrition, fluids, and sleep and keeping them mobile within the limitations of their physical condition. More information about HELP may be found at www.hospitalelderlifeprogram.org.

Center for Healthy Aging

www.healthyagingprograms.org

Part of the National Council on Aging, the Center provides toolkits, research and examples of model health programs for communities

Global Age-Friendly Cities: A Guide

http://www.who.int/ageing/publications/Global_age_friendly_cities_Guide_English.pdf

A guide with checklists of core age-friendly features

www.HelpGuide.org

http://www.helpguide.org/mental/depression_elderly.htm

Information on mental health with resource links and a toolkit entitled “Bring Your Life into Balance”

The Maturing of America – Communities Moving Forward for an Aging Population

http://www.n4a.org/files/MOA_FINAL_Rpt.pdf

This 2011 report provides information on current initiatives, policies and best practices

A collaboration between community and medical partners created a center for training leaders, offering evidence-based programs to help individuals manage chronic illness, improve nutrition, engage in physical activity and support a happier and healthier life style. The programs have expanded statewide in Massachusetts.

Caregiver Resource Centers were established in all libraries in Westchester County, New York.

The Maturing of America – Getting Communities on Track for an Aging Population

<http://www.n4a.org/pdf/MOAFinalReport.pdf>

Comprehensive report with recommendations and examples

The city of Killeen, Texas has a mobile wellness clinic. The goal of the Wellness Unit is to provide preventative and primary healthcare to Central Texans, with special emphasis on rural, low income, pediatric and senior populations.

Project Independence

www.co.marin.ca.us/aging

Project Independence is a program of trained volunteers who help patients transitioning from hospital discharge to independence at home. Volunteers, under the supervision of a public health nurse case manager, help patients understand and follow-through with their discharge plan, providing guidance, resources, supportive companionship and health education to isolated persons in the community.



AGING IN PLACE

The Aging with Dignity and Independence Initiative is a partnership with The Patterson Foundation, SCOPE, and the University of South Florida Sarasota-Manatee. This brief identifies one of six themes and serves as a catalyst, providing knowledge and resources to stimulate action. Further information about the findings, project methodology and additional resources may be found at www.scopexcel.org.

Aging in place is essential to aging with dignity and independence according to people in the community. People report that their dignity is based on being self-sufficient and self-reliant, yet many express concern about being able to remain in their home. They report needing tangible assistance in order to continue to live independently. People report difficulties in completing housekeeping duties as well as the upkeep and maintenance of the home's exterior and yard.

Participants report several challenges impacting the ability to live comfortably and safely in one's home. Some report needing assistance to cook and clean, while others are home bound and unable to access needed goods and services. And while some older adults can manage activities to remain independent such as shopping, many report needing assistance in other areas like getting the groceries off of the shelf or carrying the groceries into the home.

Although there is some awareness of the need for assistance at home, people report safety and trust concerns in inviting others to help in their homes. Others report being unable to find such help or are unaware of supportive services to assist aging in place.

The continued capacity to age in place is of large concern. Issues included the affordability to remain in one's home and the limited range of other living options according to the participants who were considering a move to better meet their needs.

Positive actions that demonstrated support for aging in place include coordinating neighborhood efforts to provide lawn maintenance and helping an elder manage medications to prevent side effects and hospitalizations that might lead to nursing home placement.

What people said...

"The economy has affected all of us. It's harder and harder to survive financially." Male, age 75+

"I would like to know where I can get a handy man that I can trust to come into my home and do things we can no longer do." Male, age 75+

"My greatest concern is being able to take care of myself without depending on others." Female, age 70+

"Another problem is having to be so cautious about scammers and people out to take advantage of an older person." Female, age 70+

"Well, I love my children but I would not want to live with any of them...we have our ways and they have theirs and they think their way is the way you have to do it." Female, age 75+

"It really kind of bugs me that there are so few condos in Sarasota where you can easily walk to grocery stores, pharmacies, restaurants, etc. I'm worried about what will happen when I can no longer drive." Female, age 65+

"Wondering where I will be able to live when my money and health require another place. If I could afford a retirement place...But the places I have seen are VERY expensive." Female, age 70+

"People in my neighborhood don't traditionally stop working until they are about 80. They still take care of themselves and their immediate surroundings...We support them by doing the 'heavy lifting', helping them with the upkeep of their housing and yards." Female, age 60+

Opportunities to Consider

How might grocery stores make it easier for older shoppers?

What buddy systems could help older adults manage their lives, e.g. medications and diet?

What might be developed to vet and refer trustworthy professionals and handymen to assist in the home?

What systems might be created by neighbors, clubs, faith organizations or associations to help with the maintenance of homes?

Ideas from the Community...

- ❖ Establish vetted home maintenance services for older adults in Sarasota County
- ❖ Develop and promote “informal” neighborhood approaches to meet existing needs
- ❖ Create a service to match people who can provide simple services to older adults who need them
- ❖ Neighborhood newsletters could list “safe and trustworthy vendors”
- ❖ Future neighborhoods should be planned with basic services close by
- ❖ Provide low income grant or loan programs for adding Universal Design/aging in place features to people’s homes
- ❖ Develop services that can help people navigate and manage their medical bills
- ❖ Grocery stores could provide volunteers who help you shop

Best Practices & Resources

Age Friendly Communities

<http://afc.uwaterloo.ca/>

Tools, resources and examples to help communities develop solutions to become more age-friendly

Friendly to Seniors Sudbury aims to help improve the quality of life of seniors living in Sudbury and make the community an accessible and inclusive place. The project focuses particularly on businesses and organizations. The Friendly to Seniors Program offers local businesses an assessment of their senior friendliness. Businesses are given resources, awareness literature, and suggestions to help improve their senior friendliness. Those who participate are presented with a Friendly to Seniors Certificate to be displayed.

Aging in Place 2.0

<http://www.metlife.com/assets/cao/mmi/publications/studies/2010/mmi-aging-place.pdf>

A framework with ideas for successful aging in place

Aging in Place & Universal Design Resources

www.hcd.ca.gov/hpd/aginginplace.pdf

Bibliography of numerous reports and guides for consumers, businesses and local government

Aging Well in Communities

<http://www.civicpartnerships.org/docs/services/CHCC/case-studies.htm>

Case studies of 7 communities who found new ways to plan for aging well

Beacon Hill Village

www.beaconhillvillage.org

Beacon Hill Village is a membership organization that organizes and delivers programs and services to older adults aging in their own homes. Resource manual available.

Benefits Check-Up

www.benefitscheckup.org

An online service of the National Council on Aging, to screen for benefits programs for older adults with limited income and resources.

BrooklineCAN

www.BrooklineCAN.org

A clearing house of information about Brookline's network of services and activities that help older adults age in place. Includes a town-wide information exchange to vet home contractors and repairmen, using a short customer survey and a system to check references.

Center for Healthy Aging

www.healthyagingprograms.org

Part of the National Council on Aging, the Center provides toolkits, research and examples of model health programs for communities

Global Age-Friendly Cities: A Guide

http://www.who.int/ageing/publications/Global_age_friendly_cities_Guide_English.pdf

A guide with checklists of core age-friendly features

HIP Housing

www.hiphousing.org

This service matches homeowners with extra space available with low income individuals seeking housing. Match arrangements involve service exchange or payment of rent.

HomeShare Vermont

www.homesharevermont.org

The program offers older adults and those with disabilities three types of services: home sharing, live-in caregiving, and hourly caregiving.

ICMA Resource List: Sustainable Planning for Aging in Place

http://icma.org/en/icma/knowledge_network/documents/kn/Document/6587/Resource_List_Sustainable_Planning_for_Aging_in_Place

A descriptive list of resource links

Livable & Senior Friendly Communities

<http://ssw.unc.edu/cares/sfc/tools&products.htm>

Three pilot projects developed community-specific strategies to improve livability for seniors

The Maturing of America – Communities Moving Forward for an Aging Population

http://www.n4a.org/files/MOA_FINAL_Rpt.pdf

This 2011 report provides information on current initiatives, policies and best practices

The Maturing of America – Getting Communities on Track for an Aging Population

<http://www.n4a.org/pdf/MOAFinalReport.pdf>

Comprehensive report with recommendations and examples

National Summit on Affordable Senior Housing and Services

<http://www.practitionerresources.org/cache/documents/674/67408.pdf>

May 2010 report includes numerous examples of what some states / projects doing.

NeighborWorks

<http://www.nw.org/network/comstrat/agingInPlace/nwresources.asp>

Multiple resources for public private and policy issues pertaining to topic

Self Help for the Elderly

www.selfhelpelderly.org/index.php

Promotes the independence, dignity and self-worth of seniors by empowering seniors to help themselves and by providing a comprehensive range of multicultural and multilingual services.

Senior Housing Solutions

www.srhousingsolutions.org

Provides inexpensive, subsidized housing to low-income seniors by purchasing homes and remodeling them to accommodate up to five seniors who share the home.

Seniors Helping Seniors

www.seniorshelpingseniors.com/resources.aspx

Seniors Helping Seniors in-home services matches seniors who want to provide help with seniors who are looking for help. This service began in 1998 with a simple concept that seniors can help each other age better and that those who give and those who receive benefit equally. The service provides a full-range of home care, companion and home maintenance support services from seniors who enjoy helping at reasonable hourly rates for seniors who want services and reasonable hourly wages to seniors who provide them.

Winning Strategies in the NeighborWorks Network

<http://www.nw2.org/WinningStrategies/display.asp?strategy=1069&offset=1>

Best practices mini-home repair program for older adults

Winning Strategies in the NeighborWorks Network

<http://www.nw2.org/WinningStrategies/display.asp?strategy=1079&offset=2>

Community program that involves volunteers to help older adults with yard maintenance

World Health Organization (WHO) Age-Friendly Initiative

www.who.int/ageing/age_friendly_cities

The Age-friendly Environments Programme is an international effort by WHO to address the environmental and social factors that contribute to active and healthy ageing in societies.



TRANSPORTATION & MOBILITY

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Transportation and mobility represent the key to independence for many participants and 80% were still driving. Yet anticipation was regularly voiced, “What options will be available to me when I am no longer able to drive?”

Issues of safety in transportation and mobility are also of prime importance to people. Many participants identify current driving and traffic conditions as particularly difficult to navigate and worsening. Public transportation options are described as costly and limited. Some concerns were based on misinformation about public transportation.

Some participants note a sense of vulnerability when walking in their neighborhoods. Pedestrians report a lack of “walkability” which impacts physical activity and socialization as well as obtaining necessary goods and services.

Participants describe self-reliance as key to both their dignity and independence and indicate not wanting to burden or rely on others for assistance in meeting their needs. However older adults will surely become increasingly socially isolated without the development of innovative and creative solutions to improve affordable and safe transportation options in the community.

Community members demonstrated support for the older adults’ dignity and independence by providing transportation, both urgent or recreational, or facilitating outings and activities to keep those without means, mobile and connected.

What people said...

“I’m like Cinderella, when I go out I have to make sure I’m home before dark.” Female, age 75+

“... take my car keys away and I’d be lost.” Female, age 80+

“I got my license, I got my independence, I got my life....” Female, age 70+

“It’s just beginning and I don’t like what I see for the future. I don’t drive as much or as far. My world is getting smaller.” Female, age 70+

“Without accessible public transportation, many people will live in isolation more because they won’t know who to ask, fear of rejection, and desire not to bother others. This will increase mental and physical decline.” Female, age 70+

“It really kind of bugs me that there are so few condos in Sarasota where you can easily walk to the grocery stores, pharmacies, restaurants. I’m worried about what will happen when I can no longer drive.” Female, age 65+

“Using SCAT bus system is not an option – I could not get to a bus stop and could not wait in the heat.” Gender/age unknown

“They could rely on this transportation (volunteer drivers) every Sunday morning rain or shine...” Male, age 70+

Opportunities to Consider

How are people/groups/organizations mobilized to better meet the needs of large numbers of older people who will be unable to drive?

How can local businesses be part of that solution?

What neighborhood strategies might be further developed and replicated?

How can communities create and promote ease of access to services without relying on use of a car?

Ideas from the Community...

- ❖ Encourage businesses to provide ITN scholarships and host open houses to obtain volunteers
- ❖ In parking garages, have small buses to take drivers from the garage to their destination
- ❖ Introduce smaller buses to penetrate more deeply into residential neighborhoods
- ❖ Bus benches and sun shelters should be a top priority

Best Practices & Resources

Age Friendly Communities

<http://afc.uwaterloo.ca/>

Tools, resources and examples to help communities develop solutions to become more age-friendly

Aging in Place 2.0

<http://www.metlife.com/assets/cao/mmi/publications/studies/2010/mmi-aging-place.pdf>

A framework with ideas for successful aging in place

Aging in Place, Stuck Without Options: Fixing the Mobility Crisis Threatening the Baby Boom Generation

www.t4america.org/docs/SeniorsMobilityCrisis.pdf

2011 report focuses primarily on transportation and includes specific examples of best practices

Aging Well in Communities

<http://www.civicpartnerships.org/docs/services/CHCC/case-studies.htm>

Case studies of 7 communities who found new ways to plan for aging well

Brookline Elder Taxi System (BETS)

www.brooklinecan.org/transportation.htm

BETS is a program that enables income-eligible Brookline residents to purchase discount taxi coupons at reduced rates. This program is sponsored by the Council on Aging, a Community Development Block grant, and all licensed Brookline cab companies.

Choices for Mobility Independence

www.eldercare.gov/eldercare.net/public/Resources/Brochures/docs/Trans_Options_Panels.pdf

Transportation options for older adults

Global Age-Friendly Cities: A Guide

http://www.who.int/ageing/publications/Global_age_friendly_cities_Guide_English.pdf

A guide with checklists of core age-friendly features

The Maturing of America – Communities Moving Forward for an Aging Population

http://www.n4a.org/files/MOA_FINAL_Rpt.pdf

This 2011 report provides information on current initiatives, policies and best practices

Marin County, California has opened a **Mobility Management Center** to provide “one-stop transportation information and referral” service and searchable database of providers designed to help residents find the right transportation service to meet their needs

The Maturing of America – Getting Communities on Track for an Aging Population

<http://www.n4a.org/pdf/MOAFinalReport.pdf>

2005 comprehensive report with recommendations and examples

The town of Chippewa Falls, Wisconsin has a **Shared Ride Taxi Program**. This is a demand response, door-to-door, public transportation service. “Shared Ride” means that you may travel with more than one passenger with different destinations and/or origins within the city limits.

National Center on Senior Transportation

http://seniortransportation.easterseals.com/site/PageServer?pagename=NCST2_about

Information for consumers, service providers and transportation providers.

Safe and Mobile Seniors

www.SafeandMobileSeniors.org/FindaRide.htm

Safe and Mobile Seniors is a virtual "one stop shop" for transportation safety and mobility information for drivers and pedestrians 65 years and older living in Florida.

USDOT – Federal Highway Administration

www.fhwa.dot.gov/publications/publicroads/07mar/03.cfm

Supplemental transportation programs in communities

