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We all enjoy our alone time- it's a time to think, exercise, reflect, focus or just simply be in the moment. As we get older, lose loved ones and friends and go through life seasons, the idea of being alone can truly be altered by the fact that those that have been our support network are no longer there. While this is a humbling notion, it does not mean that your life is ending- in fact it could be a whole new beginning to learn, grow and realize how strong you truly are.

Growing Old Alone- Ways to Stay Active, Engaged and in Charge of Your Life

We all enjoy our alone time- it's a time to think, exercise, reflect, focus or just simply be in the moment. As we get older, lose loved ones and friends and go through life seasons, the idea of being alone can truly be altered by the fact that those that have been our support network are no longer there. While this is a humbling notion, it does not mean that your life is ending- in fact it could be a whole new beginning to learn, grow and realize how strong you truly are.

Goal Statement: Growing older can lead to many new opportunities for personal growth.

Directions: With information provided and in a discussion setting, try to generate ideas of how you or a loved one can stay active and engaged as aging occurs.

Did you know???

- A British study of over 6,500 adults showed that social isolation and loneliness each carried a higher risk of early death.
 - The study also emphasized that having no social contacts increased the risk of dying regardless of a person's health or other factors. Information courtesy: <http://blog.aarp.org/2013/03/27/risk-factors-of-elderly-isolation-social-isolation-may-speed-up-death/>
- Married People live longer and healthier lives
 - 28% of Americans are living solo
 - Positives of living alone include- individual freedom, personal control and self-realization
 - Information courtesy: <http://blog.aarp.org/2012/03/29/going-it-alone/>

A positive attitude compiled with other healthy habits can do wonders....

- Studies have shown that older adults with positive attitudes, good nutrition, regular exercise and social activities are more effecting at avoiding or dealing with problems and crises in later life than people without those habits.
- Studies have also shown that it is almost never too late to make positive changes in lifestyle to help maintain health and functioning

Active Aging

- Begins with having a positive attitude toward aging and toward life in general.
- Includes being aware of the importance of thinking and planning in our daily life.
- Despite the popular myths about health problems in later life, most people age 65 and over are in good physical and mental health and can take care of themselves.
- Many of the diseases and disabling conditions that were once viewed as normal or inevitable in later life are actually preventable, reversible or can be delayed for several years.
- To increase chances of living longer in a healthy condition:
 - Eat a balanced diet
 - Continue or make the change to a balanced, low-fat diet full of high-fiber foods, fresh fruits, vegetables and cereals.
 - low-fat high fiber diets are known to reduce the risk of cardiovascular (heart) disease and some forms of cancer
 - Exercise regularly
 - Physical activity lowers the risk of hypertension, heart attack, stroke, falls, some cancers and adult-onset diabetes, assists in weight control and lessens the disabling and painful impact of arthritis and other chronic diseases.
 - Get regular checkups
 - Don't smoke
 - Drink alcohol only in moderation
 - Practice good safety habits
 - Avoid over exposure to the sun and cold.

Information courtesy: <http://www.ag.ndsu.edu/ramseycountyextension/news/extended-to-you/2012-extended-to-you/active-aging>

Productive Activity ideas to help you get out and about...

Research has shown that engaging in an activities you enjoy may help maintain your well-being as you get older and possibly help you live longer.

- People who are involved in hobbies and other social/leisure activities may be at lower risk and less likely to develop some health problems including dementia.
- Social and Productive activities that one could engage in include:
 - Volunteering- try your local library, hospital or other community health facility
 - Joining a senior center
 - Playing cards or other game with friends
 - Going to theatre, movies or sporting events
 - Traveling
 - Visiting friends/family

- Trying different restaurants/foods
- Gardening
- Cooking classes
- Singing in choral groups- church, etc.
- Joining local theatre
- Forming/joining a book club
- Dancing
- Group exercise classes
- Learning a musical instrument
- Group hobby class- quilting, knitting or wood carving
- Getting a part-time job

Physical Activity Also helps to stay engaged....

Regular physical activity is needed – may help to prevent many age related illnesses and helps to maintain the ability to do day to day activities

- If you are 65 years of age or older, are generally fit and have no limiting health conditions
 - Muscle strengthening activities on two or more days a week that work all major muscle groups (legs, hips, back, abs, chest, shoulders and arms)
 - 2 hours and 30 minutes (150 minutes) of moderate intensity aerobic activity every week
 - Walking, swimming, bike riding
- 1 hour and 15 minutes (75 minutes) of vigorous-intensity aerobic activity (jogging or running) every week
 - Muscle strengthening activities on two or more days a week that work all major muscle groups (legs, hips, back, abdomen, chest, shoulders and arms)
- An equivalent mix of moderate and vigorous-intensity aerobic activity
 - Muscle strengthening activities on two or more days a week that work all major muscle groups (legs, hips, back, abdomen, chest, shoulders and arms)
 - Information courtesy:
<http://www.ianrpubs.unl.edu/epublic/live/g2110/build/g2110.pdf>

Now what did I do with that???....

We all forget things. With a million things on our mind, places to go and people to see we are bound to forget things or put things in places that they normally do not go.

- Plan to compensate for what is called “benign forgetfulness” by using memory aids
 - writing lists
 - reminder notes
 - putting prescription medicines in a sorting container that helps keep track of multiple medications and schedules

The key to successful aging is to keep busy....

- Pursue hobbies, volunteer work, take classes, attend religious services and visiting friends.
- Many say that too much time on their hands makes them bored/boring, preoccupied with their health or other problems.

- The drive to keep busy can lead some people to cram schedules full of trivial, unsatisfying activities- budget your time and plan activities so they are enjoyed not stressed about.
- Most satisfied retirees are those who keep up the same pace and participate in the same kind of activities they did before retirement.

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