

The Aging Process

As we age, we face many changes. It is important to know how to deal with these changes. Some people go through them more positively than others. Talk with others who went through the same experience and/or consult a health professional if necessary. Do not stay alone with your worries or questions. Here are tips to help you:

Physical changes

- Accept reality. Denying these changes will only make life less enjoyable for you and the people around you.
- Keep a positive attitude. Remember that slowing down does not mean you have to come to a complete stop.
- See your family doctor regularly and be careful with your medications.

Bereavement

- Do not deny your feelings. You need time to heal. Accept the range of emotions you will feel.
- Remember and talk about your loss. Although your grief will pass, your memories will always stay with you.
- Be supportive of those you know who have suffered a loss. They need the warmth and caring that friendship can bring.

Loneliness

- Everyone needs some time alone, but being alone against your will is painful. You risk losing your sense of purpose and self-worth.
- Stay active, and look for new social contacts. Explore what is available in your community.
- Spend time with younger people. They will brighten up your life with their enthusiasm and energy. Volunteer to help in a local school or day-care centre.
- Learn to recognize and deal with the signs of depression. Changes of appetite and weight, sleep disorders, loss of energy and motivation,

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and thoughts of suicide are signs of depression. Your family doctor can refer you to a mental health professional for treatment.

Retirement

- Retirement can be a source of stress because your job is an important part of your life. It can also be one of the best times of your life!
- Make a list of your abilities and skills.
- Enrich your life by spending more time with family and friends.
- Renew your interest in the hobbies and activities you like. You now have time to play - enjoy!
- If you can afford it, travel. There are probably places you have wanted to see all your life, even close to home.

Source: Canadian Mental Health Association
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