Aging,
It’s a Family Affair

Masterpiece Living – 2015
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Consider the view finder

- Aging is not a solitary pursuit
  - Aging scripts that drive personal health beliefs, behaviors, and outcomes
  - Family aging scripts
    - Beliefs/expectations related to elders
    - Family dynamics
  - Beliefs/expectations about the senior living
    - Downshift
    - Safety/security/healthcare
1. Do you expect to be healthy and active through your full lifespan?
2. Do you expect to be at least as strong and agile 5 years from now as you are today?
3. Are you intentionally physically active for at least 30 minutes each day?
4. Do you strength train (resistance exercise with weights, or moderate to heavy lifting during an activity) at least twice a week on a regular basis?
5. In the past 2 weeks have you made joking or serious reference to your physical performance being diminished by age?
6. Do you believe you have the ability to prevent loss of mental function?
7. In the past 2 weeks have you made a joking or serious reference to having a “senior moment” when forgetting a name or fact?
Intentions vs. actions

- Most people “intend” to live well
  - Exercise equipment in home (use regularly?)
  - Intend to eat healthy meals (follow healthy eating guidelines most of the time?)
- Are attitudes and actions in line with desired outcomes?
  - Most often – function/physique a direct result of habitual choices/patterns
- Temporal blindness- visible results not immediate; easy to miss the boat..
Oh, crap! Was that TODAY?
Interactions with Elders

Expectations can establish a family pathway
- Watch decline
- Wait for time to take over
- Crisis driven decision making

- If it’s “normal” to decline into dependence, then no action.
  - Common/predictable can seems unavoidable

*Common aging scripts?*
Family Scripts

- Response to health challenge
  - Protect, hover, take over
  - Support, cheerlead
  - Limited view of “successful aging”
  - “Dignity of risk” concept

- Conflict over different responses
  - Action vs. “stand back” approach
BACK...BACK... BACK...

BACK UP SOME MORE...

YOU STILL LOOK FAT

YOU'RE STILL TOO CLOSE
Elder Scripts

- Limited view of successful aging?
- Physical challenges + reduced self-efficacy can= behaviors that accelerate decline
- Reluctant “customer” of wellness ideas by family and staff
- Can individual and family envision
  - Stepping stones to fullest recovery possible
  - Pathway to living fully in-spite of challenges
    - Into the Blue
Family-wide plan?

- Medical directives and *wellness* directives
  - Value placed on emotional/social well-being, equal to physical body?
- Are family members answering the same questions they’re asking family elders to answer?
  - Medical directives?
  - What have you done to ensure your personal wellness directives are known?
- Two way conversation
“Customers” of illness management services?

- Consider months/years leading up to move-in

Make a *conscious* shift to wellness partnerships

What supports, what blocks fullest recovery/engagement

- Fear, resignation, habit, difficulty communicating
- “fixed” image of loved one – difficult to see them in a new light
**Viewfinder**

**ZITS**

- Well, this is disturbing.
- Your mom has me trying yoga.
- Stick around and watch if you want to.
- You look troubled, Jeremy.
- "Downward dad" cannot be un-seen.
Coping Strategies

- Negative coping
  - guilt, shame, passive aggression, denial, anger, etc.
  - “helicoptering” = fear, overwhelming sense of responsibility, hero/savior
  - Family roles gone amok

- Define and *Prioritize* resilience
Building Blocks of Resilience

- Self-efficacy
- Self-esteem
- Gratitude
- Hope, Optimism
- Mastery
- Social connection
- Purpose

Engage - regardless of challenges
Resilience
Reframe & Reboot in SL

- Opportunity to re-boot established roles
  - What resident likes/dislikes about current roles/family interactions
  - What family members like/dislike about current roles/family interactions
- Mutual opportunities to impact well-being
  - Family member personal well-being/aging journey
  - Resident opportunity to renew, reframe, reboot
Change

- Must be desirable and doable
- The more one expects to be able to master the goal, the more effort they will exert to be successful
- Expectations will determine how much effort will be expended and for how long in the face of obstacles

*Bandura on Self-efficacy*
Confront Expectations

- Reaction?
  - Ageism as a negative force
  - Overt prejudice against those with cognitive/functional deficits

- Facts vs. myth
  - “Facts” have changed!
  - Lifestyle drives outcomes more than genes (70vs30%)
  - Frailty is not a normal consequence of aging

Replace the word old?
Meaningful Discussions

- Ageless attitude
  - personal beliefs/expectations

- Successful aging
  - Proactive vs. reactive
  - Intentions vs. actions

- Functional ability
  - Building reserves
  - Seeking fullest recovery
Don’t let a set-back become the new *Set-point*
Disability Movement Paradigm

Optimize tools/assets

- Disability is just one factor - doesn’t define who you are or what you’re capable of

- Adaptive strategies, possibilities
Believe in Self

- **believe** in possibilities
  - Reject ageist expectations
  - Seek strategies to live fully *in-spite of challenges*
  - Set goals and move toward them
  - Consciously practice resilience
  - Embrace purpose
Engage Families/Residents

- Prioritize emotional well-being “appointments”
  - engage the building blocks of resilience
  - Consider *emotional residue* of each interaction

*Grandma & Shirley*

- Working together towards a common goals or purpose
  - family photo album, community charity, shared concern, “Virtual” group activity (walking to reunion)

- Make positive efforts without being attached to specific outcomes

  *you won’t have all the answers*....
People will stop asking you questions if you answer back in interpretive dance.
Call to Action

- Shared responsibility for culture of well-being and inclusion (resident/family/staff & resident/resident)
  - Community cognitive reserve: Life Stories (part of my story lives in others, in the community)
  - What are you personally thinking and doing TODAY to embrace potential for self and others

- Engage the power of purpose as an “equalizer”
  - Resident opportunities to support family well-being
  - Elder-hood, adaptation, & possibilities as the “default” culture
  - No-one is “dropped” from the group due to disability