

Senior Aging: Embracing Our New Normals

For many seniors, the sense of normal changes in a flash; for others it's a series of gradual shifts. Being forced to change our "old normal" to a "new normal" can force us to rethink who we are and how we need to adjust going forward.

Take Richard: an active, healthy 92-year-old who still mowed his lawn, danced regularly with his wife, and charged forward like a dynamo. Until suddenly he couldn't. When Richard fell he had been feeling good, but sudden lightheadedness caused him to drop. His wife called 9-1-1 and a trip to the emergency room followed. The fainting was caused by a urinary tract infection. Richard assumed that antibiotics would return to him normal but the doctor said Richard's "new normal" would include walking fewer steps per day and using walking poles for stability. Richard struggled to imagine how these changes would impact his quality of life and sense of emotional well-being.

For Andrea, a set of gradual changes forced her to rethink her sense of normalcy. At 81 she lived alone, went RV'ing by herself, and played competitively in a regular bridge club. But she found she was dropping things more often because of the pain in her hand, and the arthritis in her fingers made it hard to use a keyboard, cook, or open jars. She asked her doctor, "Why is the floor getting farther away?" And she wondered if this was normal or just her "new normal." Andrea and her doctor discussed the resources she could access to help her complete the tasks she'd always been able to do by herself.

Most of us expect to continue living the way we want until something happens that shifts that expectation. How will we live our lives differently so we can keep moving forward? Those questions and more will be tackled in the upcoming workshop, *Aging with Grace: Embracing Our New Normals*, sponsored by Viva Village*. Come hear the issues and learn about strategies that can affect you, your parents, your friends.

The workshop will feature Glenn Rodriguez, MD, talking about the physical changes we experience as we age, how our definition of normal evolves throughout our lives, when to seek professional advice, and how to navigate the challenges of the healthcare system. It will also include Jenny Sasser, PhD, a professor of gerontology at Portland Community College, who will focus on a holistic approach to growing older.

Aging with Grace: Embracing Our New Normals is open to the public. There will be opportunities for questions, answers and small group discussions.

Join us:

- November 11, 2023, 1:00 to 4:00 pm
- Southminster Presbyterian Church, 12250 SW Denney Rd., Beaverton, OR 97008
- \$10 per person; \$15 per couple (fee assistance available); no cost to Viva Village* members and volunteers.
- Register at vivavillage.org or call 503-746-5082.