



How Socialization and Purpose Can Positively Affect Aging

When you consider what your life will look like in retirement and in older age, you may have goals to finally participate in that Book Club that you have been eyeing at your local library or to devote more time to a cause that you love. With extra obligations that full time work requires gone, you are able to tailor a life that you love, and that includes plenty of time for socialization and for pursuing your life's purpose. In both instances, you are well on your way to what clinicians in the senior care field call "successful aging".



The MacArthur Foundation spent more than ten years researching what makes successful aging, and gave their opinion known as the Four Pillars of Successful Aging. Here at [Visiting Angels](#) Wayzata, we have taken these four pillars to heart. We gear our services and communication to reflect each of the MacArthur Foundation's recommendations, knowing that our clients can age in a healthy and independent way, no matter where they live, with the support of our caregivers and staff.

The first two pillars of successful aging reflect staying active, both physically and mentally. For the final two pillars, you can focus on cultivating friendship and maintaining a sense of purpose in your life. Each of these take a conscious effort to maintain, but the benefits are well worth the extra work to establish connections to friends and to your sense of purpose.

Maintain a Good Social Network

Studies have shown that seniors with a support system made up of encouraging peers are more likely to be physically and emotionally healthy. Everyone, no matter the age, needs a friend to talk and share with. Unfortunately, this once simple task of friendship can seem harder as we age. Medical conditions or limited mobility can keep seniors in their home more than usual, unable to grab lunch with a friend. Further, as seniors age, so do their friends; most seniors are left with a dwindling number of aging friends to rely on.

What is a senior to do who wants the cognitive and emotional benefits of a healthy social network but doesn't have a peer network? At [Visiting Angels](#), we excel in bringing socialization options to our

clients' days. Whether we provide transportation to the senior center luncheon or remind our clients to call a cherished friend, our loving caregivers gently cue this socialization. In addition, we become a part of our client's support network, providing encouragement and a listening ear every time we walk through the door.

Include a Sense of Purpose in Life

The final pillar of successful aging revolves around purpose. For many seniors, retirement brings a bit of an identity crisis. Without the job title they have had for decades, some seniors lose their life's purpose. A purpose in life is the driving force that gets us out of bed and fuels our goals. Without a noted purpose, seniors can struggle with depression or even anxiety.

Fortunately, a purpose doesn't have to be lofty – though it can be! It can be a volunteer role at a local senior center or a caregiver for an animal or plant. Perhaps it can be providing some help with a keepsake letter for the grandchildren, keeping a family legacy record or journaling. In other cases, it might be motivation reminders and recognition help for what is going on in the lives of their adult children. We are determined to discover what makes our clients feel purposeful, important, and alive! Our Angels get to know each of our clients; we think all our clients have a unique purpose and we are ready to help remind them of that as best as we can.

Ready to take a step in the direction of more successful aging? [Give us a call](#) to set up a consultation so that we can get to know your situation a bit better.

Ready to read more about senior issues that pertain to you or your loved one? Curious about other senior topics and challenges? [Check out our Family Resource Center](#) for insightful articles, caregiver tips and other important resources.

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