



Get Social: Staying Socially Active Leads to Successful Aging

The healthcare industry is constantly searching for the key to living a long and happy life. Between reports of eating the newest superfood and the most recently approved exercise, it appears that the answer has been in front of us the whole time. Studies are pointing to social engagement – or the involvement in meaningful activities and maintaining close relationships – as the key to living healthy and happy in your senior years.

However, it can be difficult to find and foster social engagement. Not only are many seniors facing mobility issues that keeps their social calendar limited to what they can do inside, or very near, their home, but most seniors have lost at least one friend or close family member. It can be difficult to find, and nurture, new friendships once you age past 65 years. We're here to offer you a few ideas that can get you on the path to social engagement, or give you the ideas to encourage your loved one to move in that direction.



Get involved with meaningful activities

Social engagement revolves around the idea of meaningful activities, not just activities to keep you busy. For example, heading to the local senior center to play Bingo might not be meaningful to most in the audience, but is just something to do. If you are looking to find a meaningful activity, consider what you define as meaningful. Perhaps you can call a loved one at least once per week, send cards to a local VA hospital, or knit baby blankets for a labor and delivery unit. Taking care of a pet, plants, or a garden can be extremely meaningful to some, as can yoga, Bible studies, or other spiritually driven activities.

Seniors who are socially engaged feel like they matter and are important to a process and a world bigger than themselves. Every senior can find this meaning or purpose from a unique activity. If your loved one finds great purpose in playing Bingo at the senior center, encourage it. As long as it fosters a sense of responsibility and meaning, it is helping your loved one age successfully.

Maintain close relationships

With friends and family members living far away or deceased, maintaining close relationships can be tricky as we age. However, these relationships are important to successful aging and worth pursuing. Encourage your loved one to make friends of all ages in the neighborhood – an intergenerational friendship with a high school student or a young mom on the block can be beneficial for everyone involved. You can also work with your loved one to find social activities to attend in the hopes of meeting new friends. Try local churches, senior centers, support groups, or neighborhood functions. Assure that your loved one attends the events they have selected, and then make sure they go back at least three times before giving up and moving on to another event. Making friends takes practice and persistence.

Your loved one would also do well to foster a relationship with one of our caring and compassionate Angels. [Our Visiting Angels](#) love working with seniors and finding ways to create meaningful activities and close relationships with our clients. Let's work together to assure your loved one is aging successfully in place.

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