

# HOLDING ON TO WHO YOU ARE THROUGH LIFE'S CHANGES



As we age, life naturally brings change. Retirement, shifts in physical health, the loss of loved ones, or changes in family roles can all reshape how our days look and how we see ourselves. For many older adults, these transitions can quietly raise an important question: Who am I now?

A sense of identity is deeply tied to purpose, connection, and meaning. While roles may change, identity does not disappear. With intention and support, older adults can continue to feel grounded in who they are, even as life evolves.

## **UNDERSTANDING ROLE CHANGES IN LATER LIFE**

Throughout adulthood, many people define themselves by roles such as worker, caregiver, spouse, parent, or community leader. When those roles shift or come to an end, it can feel disorienting. This experience is common and completely human.

Role changes do not mean a loss of value. Instead, they often signal a transition into a new season of life, one that may hold different but equally meaningful opportunities for growth and self expression.

## **RECONNECTING WITH CORE VALUES**

While roles may change, personal values tend to remain steady. Reflecting on what matters most can help older adults stay connected to their sense of self.

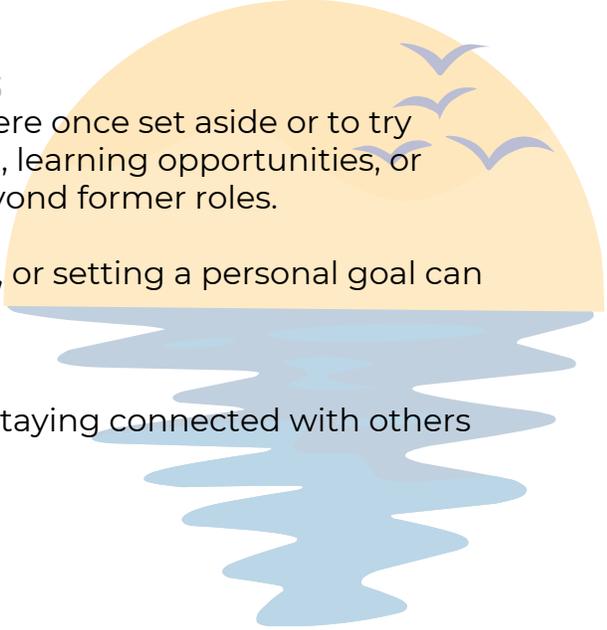
Questions that can help include:

- What activities have always felt meaningful to me?
- What qualities do others appreciate about me?
- What causes or values have guided my life?



Writing these reflections down or talking them through with a trusted person can bring clarity and reassurance during times of change.

***Check out the next page for more.***



## EXPLORING NEW OR REDISCOVERED INTERESTS

Later life can offer the chance to revisit interests that were once set aside or to try something entirely new. Creative pursuits, volunteering, learning opportunities, or community involvement can help reinforce identity beyond former roles.

Even small steps matter. Joining a group, taking a class, or setting a personal goal can provide structure and a renewed sense of purpose.

## MAINTAINING SOCIAL CONNECTION

Our sense of identity is shaped through relationships. Staying connected with others helps older adults feel seen, valued, and understood.

This can include:

- Regular conversations with friends or family
- Participation in group activities
- Sharing stories, memories, and life experiences

Meaningful connection reminds individuals that their voice and perspective still matter.

## GIVING YOURSELF PERMISSION TO EVOLVE

Identity is not fixed. It grows and changes over time. Allowing space for grief over what has changed while remaining open to what is emerging is an important part of emotional health.

It is okay to acknowledge loss. It is also okay to embrace new definitions of purpose, strength, and fulfillment.

## HOW MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT CAN HELP

Navigating role changes can bring up feelings of sadness, anxiety, or uncertainty. Mental health support offers a safe place to explore these emotions, build coping skills, and strengthen self understanding.

Our group based mental health services provide older adults with the opportunity to connect with others facing similar life transitions. Through guided conversation, peer support, and professional care, participants can rediscover confidence, purpose, and a strong sense of self.

## YOU ARE MORE THAN YOUR ROLES

Life may look different than it once did, but your experiences, values, and identity still matter. With reflection, connection, and support, older adults can continue to live with purpose and authenticity through every stage of life.

If you or someone you care about is experiencing emotional challenges related to life changes, our program is here to help.

## WE CAN HELP.

Our hospital-based outpatient program is designed to meet the unique needs of older adults experiencing depression and/or anxiety related to life changes that are often associated with aging or a chronic diagnosis. Anyone can make a referral to our program, including self-referrals, provider referrals, or community consultations.

**Call us today at**