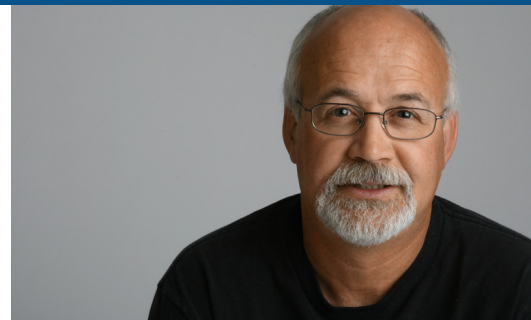


CELEBRATING OLDER ADULTS AND THE COURAGE IT TAKES TO TRULY THRIVE



August 21 is World Senior Citizens Day, a time to recognize the wisdom, resilience, and contributions of older adults everywhere. It's a day worth celebrating. It's also a good moment to ask an honest question: are the older adults in our lives doing more than just getting by?

There's a phrase many of us have heard, or said ourselves, more times than we can count: **"I'm fine."** For many older adults, those two words carry a lot of weight. They can mean **"I don't want to be a burden."** They can mean **"I'm not sure anyone would understand."** Sometimes they mean **"I've gotten through hard things before, and I'll get through this too."** That kind of strength deserves its respect, but strength and struggle can exist at the same time, and learning to hold both is part of what it truly means to thrive.

THRIVING LOOKS DIFFERENT THAN WE THINK

For a long time, the conversation around aging has focused on physical health: managing medications, keeping up with doctor's appointments, and staying active, all of which are things that matter. However, mental and emotional wellbeing matters just as much, and it often gets left out of the picture.

Thriving in later life doesn't mean we need to feel happy all the time. Anyone who has lived a lot of life can tell you that isn't a realistic expectation. Instead, thriving means having the support and tools to navigate the hard seasons, including loss, health changes, shifts in independence, and grief that can come with a life that looks different than it once did. It's about staying connected to purpose, to people, and to a sense of self that goes beyond any single role or chapter.

WHEN "STRONG" BECOMES LONELY

Many older adults today grew up in an environment when struggling in silence was often seen as a virtue. Asking for help, especially for something emotional, could feel like weakness. That message ran deep, and for many people, it still does.

Check out the next page for more.

But silence for the sake of strength has a cost. Depression and anxiety are not a normal or inevitable part of getting older. They are treatable conditions, just as real as a broken bone or a viral infection. When they go unaddressed, they can chip away at quality of life, physical health, and the connections that matter most.

We may hesitate to reach out because we fear it's a sign that something is wrong with us, but that isn't true. It's a sign that we have something worth protecting: our own wellbeing.

STARTING THE CONVERSATION

World Senior Citizens Day is a fitting occasion to check in, beyond just a quick "how are you". For families and caregivers, that might look like sitting down without an agenda and asking open-ended questions that invite real answers. For older adults themselves, it might mean giving voice to something honest that has been simmering beneath the surface for a while.

If you are not sure where to start, a few approaches tend to help:

- **Ask specific questions.** "How have you been sleeping?" or "Have you been getting out of the house?" can open more than "Are you doing okay?"
- **Listen without fixing.** Sometimes the most supportive thing is to hear someone out without immediately offering solutions or reassurances.
- **Bring up professional support gently.** If you have noticed changes in a loved one's mood, energy, or interest in things they used to enjoy, encouraging a conversation with their doctor is a reasonable and caring next step.
- **Take your own wellbeing seriously.** For older adults reading this, reaching out for support can be an extension of the strength that has carried you this far.

A DAY WORTH CELEBRATING

World Senior Citizens Day comes and goes quickly on the calendar, but the intention behind it doesn't have to. The older adults in our communities have navigated decades of change, challenge, and growth. They deserve care that reflects that, including care for their mental and emotional health, offered consistently and without stigma.

"**More than fine**" is possible, and it starts with deciding that it's worth pursuing.



Happy World Senior Citizens Day!

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