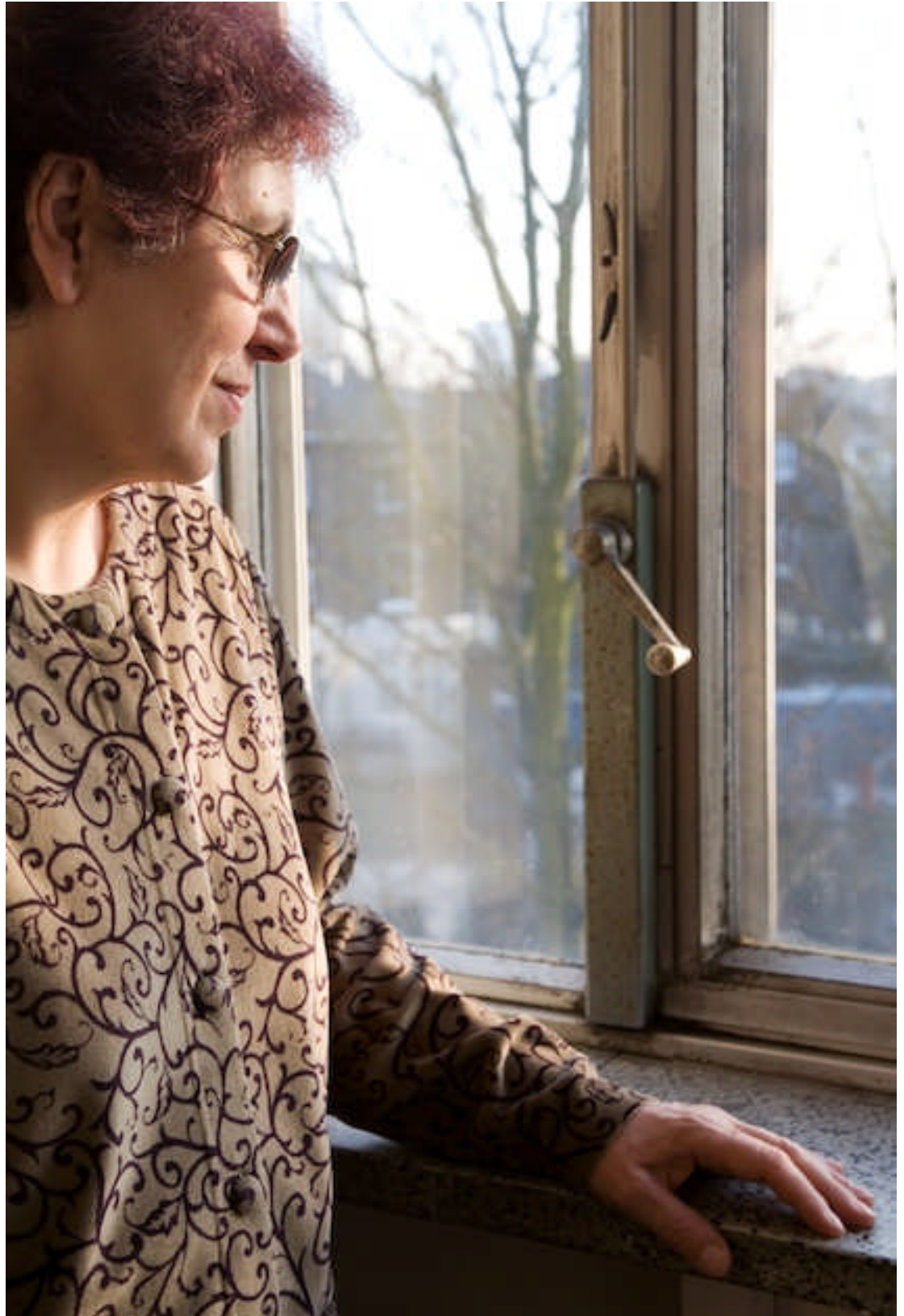


Well-being in later life and retirement



Approaching retirement or getting older can bring a range of possibilities, challenges and issues which some people may like help with considering.

This leaflet aims to look at some of the life issues faced as we get older, and provides some information about how we can promote our own wellbeing or how to seek help if more support is needed.

Getting older, for some people, perhaps at retirement or once family members have left home, will feel a significant milestone or mark the beginning of a new phase of life.

For others, it will feel less significant, perhaps not so different from life as it has been.

Whatever your circumstances, there may be help and support available should you need it.

Family and Relationship Issues

As you get older, responsibility for dependants, children or grandchildren is likely to change. Children or grandchildren may be leaving home, or moving back in as is increasingly the case as families struggle to cope or find their own home. Family circumstances can change meaning grandparents are caring for young children again. You may be caring for an older or sick relative.

These changes, of family members moving out or moving in or loved ones becoming more dependent can have a significant impact on our lives. Some of it may be positive, such as a sense of independence and freedom, or the opportunity to care for loved ones, but it can also bring stresses and create tensions and financial or practical worries.

Partner or spouse relationships can also undergo changes and tensions as we approach older age or retirement, with one or both partners facing their opportunities and choices, as well as losses and disappointments. Intimacy and sex can be affected, and if you are not in a relationship, or have lost a partner, you may be feeling isolated, lonely or fearful about the future.

Some people find that they can manage the changes and difficulties well, and have good support from friends or family. For other people it can feel very difficult to cope, and it can be helpful to get support or talk with others.

At the end of this booklet there are resources which may be of help.

Retirement

Retirement is less straightforward than perhaps it once was. As family, financial and employment circumstances change, decisions about retirement and working become more complex. Some people find themselves out of work before they are ready, or may need to go on working longer than they planned to because of money concerns. Help may be available in the

form of benefits, you can get more help on this from the sources listed at the end of this booklet.

Making the decision to retire or to continue working can have an impact upon your sense of self, your place in the family or within society. It can impact upon your social life and relationship in positive ways or may leave you feeling at a loss about what to do. For many people work is a

meaningful part of their life, which may be mourned in a similar way to the loss of any other important relationship.

Your physical and mental wellbeing in retirement can be helped by remaining active and engaged in life. If you are interested in finding local activities or classes, contact Age Concern (see below) or try your local library or Adult Education centre.



Health - Physical and Mental

Health, both physical and mental are important throughout life but increasingly in older age as we face new challenges and losses. Staying physically well and healthy can have a great impact upon our mental wellbeing, and mental wellbeing can help with physical wellness too. If we are stressed, worried or under pressure we can suffer mentally and physically.

People's bodies change as they age, mobility can be affected and changes in sleeping patterns and diet can influence how well someone feels. If you have concerns or would like advice about your physical or mental wellbeing you can speak with your GP if you have one or call NHS Direct (see the list at the end).

Finance, Benefits and Housing

Money concerns can impact upon our wellbeing and affect the choices that we're able to make. There is help and support available to older people. Some of the organisations listed below can help – from finding out which benefits or concessions you may be entitled to, and help with completing forms.

The Citizens Advice Bureau in your area should be able to assist you, or Age Concern who have information about housing, benefits, making a will and other issues.

Organisations that offer practical support and advice

Tavistock and Portman NHS Foundation Trust

We are a mental Health Trust in London which provide therapy services to people at all stages of life, from birth to death. We have a Patient Liaison Service which can help provide more information about what is contained in this leaflet and the services available. Call 0208 938 2523 or email PALs@tavi-port.nhs.uk

Citizens Advice

Citizens Advice helps people resolve their legal, money and other problems by providing free, independent and confidential advice.

To find your local branch, look in the phone directory or call 0207 833 2181. You can also search on the website: www.citizensadvice.org.uk

Age Concern and Help the Aged

Age Concern and Help the Aged – is a now a single, national charity that provides support and information to older people. There are also local branches nationally which arrange activities and services such as home visits, counselling or benefits advice. Free helpline 0800 00 99 66 www.ageconcern.org.uk

Carers UK

Carers UK is a national support organisation that helps people who care for others – they have a free telephone line that you can call for help and advice: Call 0808 808 7777 www.carersuk.org

Grandparents Association

Provides help and support for those grandparents who have caring responsibilities for their grandchildren, and can help with benefits advice. Call 0844 357 1033 www.grandparents-association.org.uk

Education, Social Life and Activities

University of the 3rd Age

The University of the 3rd Age are self-help, self-managed lifelong learning co-operatives for older people no longer in full time work, providing opportunities for their members to share learning experiences in a wide range of interest groups and to pursue learning not for qualifications, but for fun.
Call 020 8466 6139 www.u3a.org.uk

Age Concern and Help the Aged

Can provide details of local organisations that offer activities, friendship centres and special interest groups.

They also run an internet chat room for older people to stay in touch and make friends.

Call free on 0800 00 99 66
www.ageconcern.org.uk

Health and Well-being

NHS Direct

A telephone health advice line that's open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. In an emergency call 999.
Call 0845 46 47

Cruse Bereavement Centre

Free support, information and counselling for people who have been bereaved by death.
www.crusebereavementcare.org.uk
Call 0844 477 9400

Relate

Relate offers advice, relationship counselling, sex therapy, workshops, mediation, consultations and support face-to-face, by phone and website.
0300 100 1234
www.relate.org.uk

For a full range of leaflets visit our website www.tavistockandportman.nhs.uk/lifeissues

The Tavistock and Portman NHS Trust offers psychotherapy and mental health services for a wide range of issues. If you would like to talk to someone about the possibility of counseling or therapy, you can contact our PALS (Patient Advice and Liaison Service) on 0208 938 2523 or email dlampon@tavi-port.nhs.uk