

Slide 1



Click here to start the module.

Common Life Issues for Older Adults

*At any time, feel free to select the **CC** button to see captions text
or the **Exit** button to leave the module.*

Use the forward arrow to continue.



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Learning Objectives


After this completing this module, learners will be able to:

- Identify older adult common life issues
- Discuss how these issues could affect mental health
- Identify referral sources
- Recognize barriers to using these resources

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Life Transitions

Many older adults experience life transitions which include changes in employment, finances, and living environment

Use the forward arrow to continue.

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Employment Changes for Older Adults

- Job changes, reduced hours, retirement, or transition from paid to non-paid roles
- Some may not retire for financial reasons or by choice
- Others may choose to re-enter the workforce after not working for years
- Can be a relief for some or a sense of loss for others



Use the forward arrow to continue.

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Volunteer Roles and Meaningful Leisure

- Volunteering, informal caregiving, civic life, hobbies, recreational activities
- LGBTQ communities have long valued intergenerational activities
- Paid or unpaid productive engagement in later life is important to older adult health and well-being



Use the forward arrow to continue.

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Financial Changes

- Many will live in significantly reduced economic circumstances relative to working years
- "Three legged stool"
 - Social Security
 - Savings
 - Pensions
- Additional expenses may include caring for grandchildren, helping to pay for education, supporting unemployed family members
- Financial stressors can be even more significant for women and minorities

Use the forward arrow to continue.

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Living Environment Changes

- Older adults may change their living situation for a variety of reasons
 - Live closer to loved ones
 - Better access to leisure activities
 - Financial
 - Extra support or assistance
 - Concerns about being a burden
 - Wanting to maintain independence
- Moving to a senior building or long-term care facility may provide a sense of relief and improved living conditions
- Consider the pros and cons of relocation before committing to a move

Use the forward arrow to continue.

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Aging in Place

- May be healthier to age in place
- Using community resources can help some older adults get the support they need
- Aging in place can mean making physical modifications to a home



Use the forward arrow to continue.

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Resources for Life Transitions

- May benefit from consulting with local Social Security office or Human Resources to understand more about benefits
- Get involved with new activities
 - Community groups, exercise programs, local Area Agencies on Aging or local SAGE affiliates
- Aging in place
 - City or county health department services
- Transitioning to a long-term care facility
 - aplaceformom.com and eldercare.gov
- State and local communities offer programs for low-income individuals

Use the forward arrow to continue.

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Barriers to Seeking Support for Life Transitions

- Stigma of accessing public assistance
- Navigating complex system of public benefits or community-based support can be overwhelming
- Often the assistance provided is inadequate



Use the forward arrow to continue.

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Learning Check

True or false? It is safer and healthier for all older adults to age in place.

A. True

B. False



Learning Check

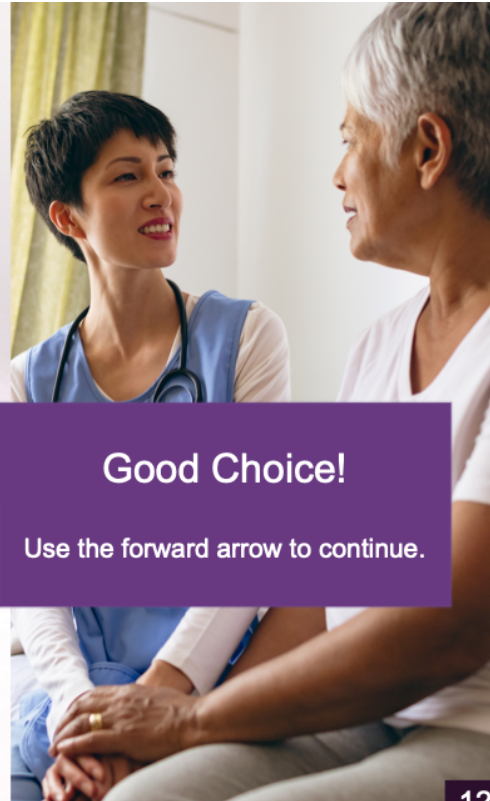
True or false? It is safer and healthier for all older adults to age in place.

A. True

B. False

Good Choice!

Use the forward arrow to continue.



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Learning Check

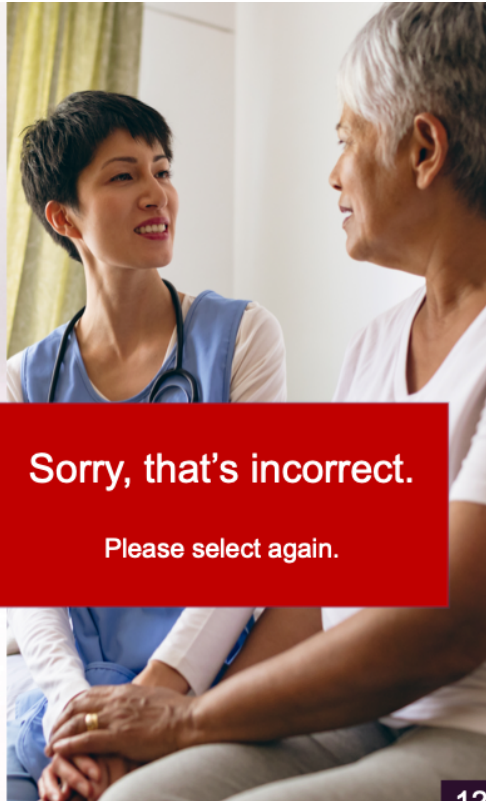
True or false? It is safer and healthier for all older adults to age in place.

A. True

B. False

Sorry, that's incorrect.

Please select again.



Take Home Message

- Older adults often experience significant life transitions
- Helping to educate about the support programs available and overcoming barriers to accessing them can be a valuable role for healthcare providers



Use the forward arrow to continue.

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Caregiving

- Many older adults have caregiving roles such as caring for other older adults, children with disabilities, and grandchildren

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Older Adults Caring for Older Adults

- Older adults take on a wide variety of roles as caregivers, in addition to roles they may already have
- Cultural values and norms play a role in amount of caregiving provided
- Tasks can be mentally, emotionally, and physically demanding but can also be rewarding and deepen relationships
- For more information about caregiving and older adults, please see our CATCH-ON 4Ms module



Older Adults Caring for Children with Disabilities & Grandchildren

- Families are the primary caregivers for individuals with developmental and intellectual disabilities
- Caregivers are over age 60 in 25% of these families
- A significant number of older adults care for their grandchildren
- Many grandparents do not get the necessary services to support them or their families



Caregiver Challenges

- Many neglect their own care health to meet the demands of caring for others, which can lead to or exacerbate health conditions
 - More likely to experience depression, anxiety, fatigue and sleep disturbance, poor immune functioning, higher risk for cardiovascular disease, substance misuse than non-caregivers
- Can be impacted by past relationships and family dynamics
- Caregivers of people with dementia have higher rates of depression than non-caregivers of the same age
- Many report caregiving to be very rewarding, with improved relationships and personal growth



Caregiver Resources

- Ask about stress levels, coping resources, positive aspects of coping
- Benefit from engaging in self-care, asking for help, and engaging community agencies
- Encourage conversations among family members about how to support caregivers
- Clinician referrals
 - Support groups or mental health treatment
 - Community services
 - City or county health departments
 - Family Caregiver Alliance
 - Local Area Agencies on Aging






Take Home Message

- Many older adults are caregivers
- Caregiving can cause significant emotional and physical stress which can lead to poor health outcomes
- Caregiving can be very emotionally meaningful and personally rewarding



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Changing Social Relationships and Supports

Interpersonal conflict, social isolation, grief and loss can effect older adults

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Interpersonal Relationships

- Interpersonal relationships are a part of life at every stage of development from childhood through late life
- May experience more opportunities for deeper relationships with families and friends but also experience interpersonal conflict
- Older adults who have intergenerational relationships with family and friends often benefit from the extra support, but can experience conflict
- Integrating multiple generations can be valuable for everyone involved



Social Isolation and Loneliness

- Over 20% of older adults in the United States are socially isolated which can lead to loneliness
- Lonely older adults are at higher risk for dementia, depression, hypertension, heart disease, obesity, weakened immune system
- Loneliness increases the risk for mental health concerns



Grief and Loss

- Experience of bereavement is more common
- Loss of a loved one may be felt more deeply
- Older caregivers might experience chronic anticipatory grief even before their loved one's death
- May experience grief due to role or functional ability loss
- Please see our module on grief and loss that accompanies this one



Sara Qualls, PhD



Resources for Changing Social Relationships

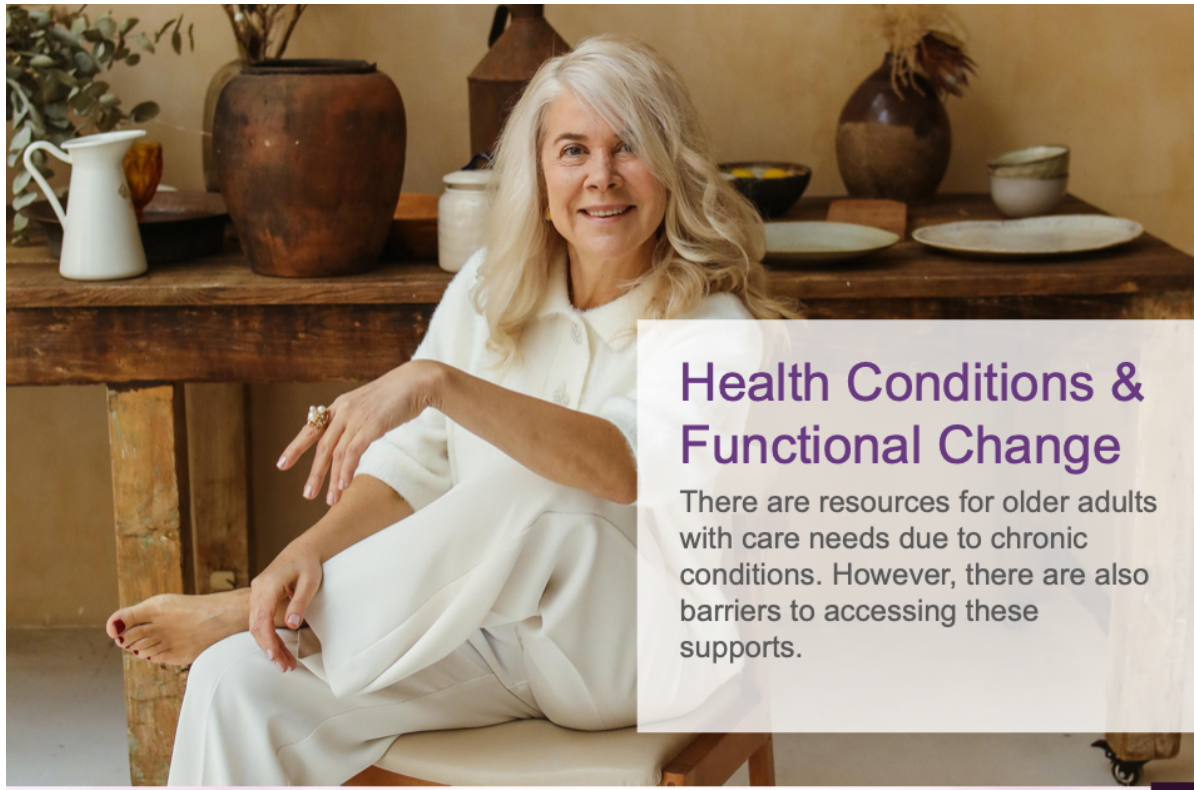
- Older adults may also benefit from connection to a social worker
- Identify a new living situation
- Connect to community services
- Grief groups and support groups may also be helpful
- Provided by most local hospice agencies and some faith-based organizations



Take Home Message

- Interpersonal relationships are part of life at all ages
- May benefit from a lifetime of experience and wisdom on how to manage interpersonal relationships
- At risk for social isolation and loneliness, which can impact health and well-being






Health Conditions & Functional Change

There are resources for older adults with care needs due to chronic conditions. However, there are also barriers to accessing these supports.

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Older Adults and Chronic Conditions

- Risk for medical conditions increase with age
 - Over 80% have one or more chronic conditions
 - Over 75% have two or more chronic conditions
- Prevalence of certain chronic health conditions differs by gender, ethnicity, and race
- Many of the negative effects are caused by modifiable health behaviors
- Diet, physical activity, and medication adherence provide opportunities for interventions that could improve health and reduce healthcare costs



Cognitive Impairment

- Normal changes in cognition that are expected with age
- Reduction in processing speed
- Attention
- Some kinds of memory
- Abnormal cognitive functioning can be caused by
 - Mental health issues (depression and anxiety)
 - Delirium
 - Acute medical issues
 - Mild cognitive impairment, major neurocognitive impairment
- Please see our modules on cognition and aging that accompany this one



Functional Impact of Chronic Conditions

- Ability to complete ADLs and IADLs often determines appropriate level of care needed to ensure safety
- Can be challenging to find consistent and stable assistance
- Most states have subsidized programs but with limitations
- COVID pandemic has exacerbated caregiving workforce issues
- Financial and logistical challenges can force older adults to move into institutional settings rather than aging in place



Long-Term Care Facilities

- Challenges
 - Affordability
 - Concern for some older LGBTQ adults who fear discrimination and abuse
 - Medicaid system can be challenging to access and navigate
 - Can increase dependence or reliance on others
- Benefits
 - Routine medical care and functional support for older adults who may not be able to access such services
 - Opportunity for some older adults to thrive through frequent interaction with staff members and other residents



Resources for Chronic Medical Conditions

- Local hospitals, community centers and Area Agencies on Aging often have health promotion and disease prevention programming
- Geropsychologists, health psychologists and other specialty trained health professionals can provide interventions to improve health behavior for specific conditions



Barriers to Accessing Resources for Medical Conditions

- Challenges accessing services
 - Insurance
 - Navigation of the complex medical system
 - Transportation
- Telehealth
 - Way to address some access issues
 - Improves efficiency and outcomes but barriers exist
- Health literacy challenges
 - Interferes with treatment adherence
 - Medication mismanagement
 - Unintended difficulties with treatment adherence



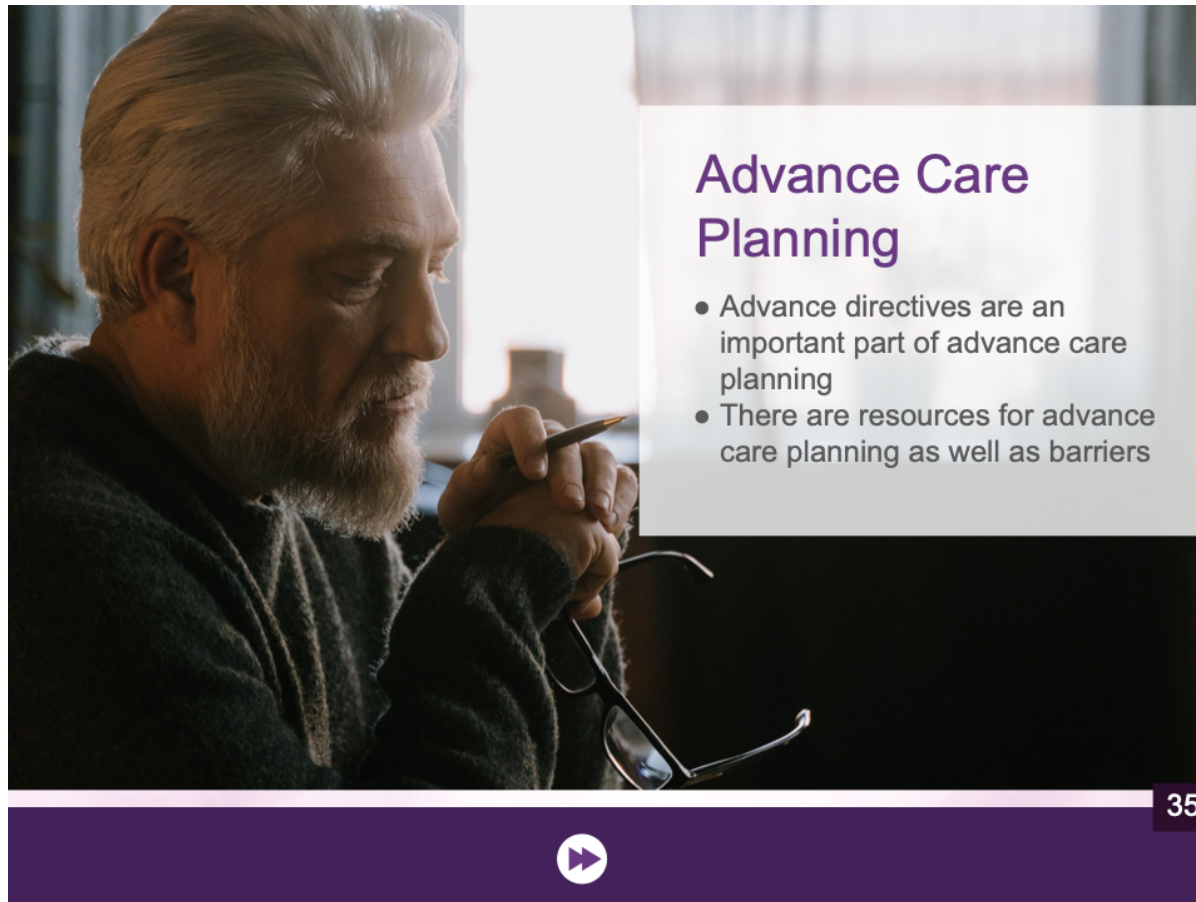
Take Home Message

- Over 75% percent of older adults have two or more chronic conditions
- Many of the negative effects of chronic conditions are caused by modifiable health behaviors
- Some older adults require extra help for completing essential daily activities



Sara Qualls, PhD





Advance Care Planning

- Advance directives are an important part of advance care planning
- There are resources for advance care planning as well as barriers

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Advance Directives

- Allow a person to document the type of care they want to receive if they cannot make or express decisions in the future
- Three kinds of advance directives

Please select the buttons below to learn more about these types of advance directives

Healthcare Power of Attorney

(also known as the Durable Power of Attorney for Healthcare)

Financial Power of Attorney

(also known as the Durable Power of Attorney)

Living Will

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Health Care Power of Attorney

- Legal document with which an adult appoints a person to make healthcare decisions for them if unable to make decisions for themselves
- Older adults should speak with their appointed Healthcare Power of Attorney about their health care priorities
- Form can be found on most state websites
 - Completed copies should be kept by the older adult, the appointed Power of Attorney, and the older adult's primary care provider or health system
 - A notary is not required for completion in most states
 - LGBTQ considerations

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Financial Power of Attorney

- Legal document that appoints another adult to make financial and estate decisions on behalf of an adult when they are unable to make decisions for themselves
- Financial and Healthcare Powers of Attorney can be two different people or the same person
- This form can be found on most state websites
 - Notary is required for completion in most states
 - Often recommended to engage a lawyer to complete forms
 - Important to keep a copy, provide a copy to Financial Power of Attorney, and keep a copy with the lawyer who helped create the document

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Living Will

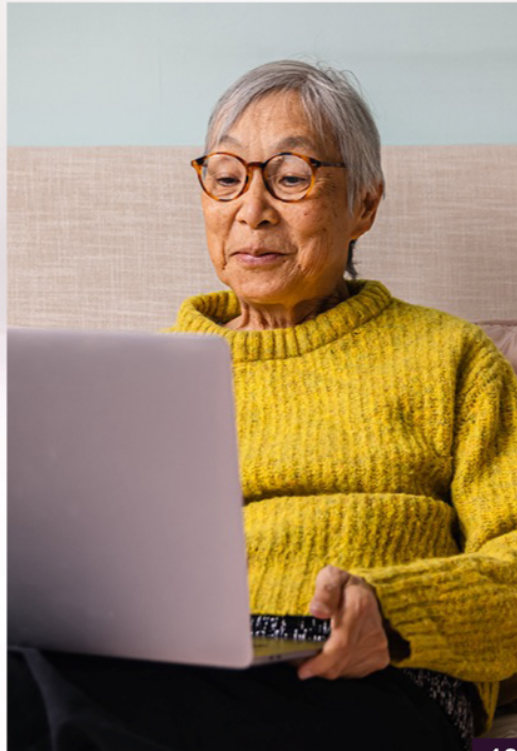
- Document specifying the type of care the older adult would or would not want if they are unable to make decisions for themselves
- In many states, they only go into effect when the adult is expected to die imminently and no longer has capacity to make their own decisions
- Templates for this document are accessible on most state websites
 - Attorneys can assist with forms, but that is rarely necessary
 - A notary is not required for completion in most states
 - Crucial that the older adult keep a copy, provide a copy to Healthcare Power of Attorney if they have one, ensure that the healthcare system team members have a copy

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Resources for Advanced Care Planning

- The Five Wishes organization
- Committee on Aging of the American Psychological Association
- Patient Priorities Care
- Older adult's health care team



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Simon Casperson

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Barriers to Advance Care Planning

- Barriers to discussions
 - Lack of knowledge
 - Limited time during appointments
 - Discomfort acknowledging the finite nature of life
 - Legal jargon
 - Distrust of the healthcare system
- Insurance reimbursement guidelines now support payment for time some healthcare professionals spend in advance directive discussions
- Healthcare professionals are strongly encouraged to open conversations with what matters, then move to options for documenting wishes



Take Home Message

- Discuss and document the type of care they want to receive if they cannot make or express decisions for themselves
- Three kinds of advance directives
- Important to medical healthcare professionals to educate older adults about advance directives



In Summary

In this module, we discussed:

- ✓ Life transitions
- ✓ Caregiving
- ✓ Financial stress
- ✓ Interpersonal conflict
- ✓ Health conditions with loss of function
- ✓ Advance care planning





Next Steps

- Please see the reference list for more information about common life issues for older adults

[Click here to end presentation](#)

Then click the close button to proceed to the post test

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