

The World Health Organization (WHO) describes the factors influencing healthy aging thus: Although some of the variations in older people's health are genetic, much is due to people's physical and social environments—including their homes, neighborhoods, and communities, as well as their personal characteristics, such as their sex, ethnicity or socioeconomic status.

According to the National Prevention Council (NPC), psychological and social components of well-being are as important to healthy aging as physical aspects. Approximately fifteen percent of women sixty-five and older and ten percent of men sixty-five and older have clinically relevant symptoms of depression. Additionally, older adults are at risk for social isolation.² What can help or be part of the solution? According to Vivek H. Murthy, a physician, "We need to create a culture where older adults are viewed as vibrant, important, and productive members of society." Here are a few things to keep in mind:

MEETING THE EMOTIONAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL NEEDS OF THE ELDERLY

It's just as important to pay as much attention to the psychological needs of an elderly loved one as you do to his or her physical needs. Psychological problems in seniors have the potential to affect behavior, sleep habits, concentration, cognitive functions, and many other aspects of daily life.

1. **Personal connections** are beneficial because they minimize depression and loneliness and boost emotional stability.

2. **A sense of community.** Being active in church activities, going shopping, to the park etc. Being active and part of a community will keep them in a better place emotionally.
3. **Maintaining a sense of purpose** by being of service to others and setting personal achievable goals are also helpful.
4. **Mental stimulation** reduces cognitive decline when they remain socially engaged with friends and family.
5. **Having a sense of safety and security.**³

A MEMBER'S PERSPECTIVE ON AGING

I had the privilege of chatting with Mrs. Olive Fletcher over the telephone to enquire about her health and to see how she was coping in the midst of the pandemic, since she is home alone most of the time. My chat with her was surprisingly uplifting and also an eye-opener on how important it is to reach out to our older members.

Mrs. Fletcher is eighty-seven-years old and has been attending Miami Temple Church since 1980. Since then, she has held positions as pianist, assistant choir director, and bell choir director until Covid-19.

When I asked her how she has coping with the pandemic, in her usual soft voice she assured me that she was feeling fine despite the many health challenges she is facing. Now a post-surgical patient, her greatest displeasure is having to deal with the miscommunication between her health care