

# Charting the LifeCourse



## Aging

### LIFE DOMAIN



### LIFE STAGE



Aging is defined as the period of life from 65 years old through end of life. As we age, our lives can change a lot. If we worked our entire adult life, retirement can be both welcome and scary. Our friends and family we lean on may not be around anymore or be able to be a part of our lives as they once were. Experiences and choices you make can help make the golden years more enjoyable and productive.

This 4-pager is designed to help you think about the common experiences, concerns, and questions for each life domain during this stage. Life domains are the different, but connected, aspects of life, like where we live, who we spend time with, and what we do every day. On the back, you will find questions to help you think about the supports you and/or your family may need during this life stage.

Individuals and families may focus on their current situation and life stage but may also find it helpful to look ahead to think about life experiences that will help move them toward an inclusive, productive life in the future. To see questions for other life stages, refer to the Life Stage Series of 4-Pagers and the *Charting the LifeCourse: Experiences & Questions* booklet at [lifecoursetools.com](http://lifecoursetools.com)

This publication is based on the Charting the LifeCourse Framework, which was created to help individuals and families of all abilities and all ages:

- develop a vision for a good life,
- think about what they need to know and do,
- identify how to find or develop supports, and
- take steps to live the lives they want to live.



## Daily Life & Employment

What a person does as part of everyday life—school, employment, volunteering, communication, routines, life skills

We all deserve to spend our days doing things that make us feel good about ourselves. As we get older, the types of things we do during the day may change. If you have a job, you might want to keep working but you also may want to retire and will need to plan how you want to spend your time. These questions can get you started thinking about what your everyday life might look like as you get older.

- What kind of senior or community classes am I interested in attending?
- What hobby, new interest or skill would I like to learn or find out more about?
- What funds or support have I put in place or considered to replace my income when I retire?
- What is important to me about my routine that needs to continue, begin to happen or should not happen?
- How could technology like magnification, assistive listening, special tools, or other technology assist me to live as independently as possible?



## Community Living

Where and how someone lives—housing and living options, community access, transportation, home adaptations and modifications

Sometimes when we get older, we need more help to live where we want and near the people and places we have always enjoyed. It is important as we get older to think about whether we can get into and around our home easily if our mobility changes. We might eventually need help taking care of ourselves (personal care, daily activities) and staying safe at home.

- How can I be supported to age in place (stay in my own home)?
- If I am still living at home with my parents, other family members, or others, where will I live and with whom, when they can no longer support me or live with me?
- What supports do I need to continue living as independently as possible in my own home or community as I get older?
- What home adaptations or modifications could be made (ramps, wider doors, other changes) to help me stay in my home and community as I age?
- How am I getting around to all the places I need and want to go, especially if I can no longer drive?



## Safety & Security

Staying safe and secure—emergencies, well-being, guardianship options, legal rights and issues

As we get older we need to make sure we take good care of ourselves and make sure we are safe and protected both physically and legally. These questions can help you as you think about your safety in your home and the community, as well as other issues about your legal rights and how to plan ahead to make sure important matters are taken care of ahead of time.

- What are my risks for falling or other hazards?
- What kinds of assistive technology might help me stay safe as I age?
- How am I making sure emergency responders are aware of my needs as well as my end of life wishes?
- What decision making supports (e.g. supported decision making, alternatives to guardianship) are in place or needed to protect my rights as I age?
- Do I have legal documentation of my end-of-life wishes?

As we get older, our bodies and minds need even more care and attention to stay healthy and feel good. We all age differently, so it is important to think about the diet and activities that will work for our own unique needs. The following questions can help you start thinking about the things you need to stay physically and mentally well and what to do if you do get sick or need health care from a doctor or a hospital.

- Who else understands my medical needs and is available if I need help communicating my needs and preferences to others?
- Who will help me create end of life documents (such as a will) and make my wishes known for medical directives?
- What disability-related aging and health issues should I be aware of?
- What am I doing to stay as physically active as possible?
- What support do I need to prepare and eat healthy meals and snacks?



## Healthy Living

Managing and accessing health care and staying well – medical, mental health, behavioral health, developmental, wellness and nutrition

When we have relationships we can count on and are connected to a spiritual life, the chances we will have the help and happiness that we want in our lives are much greater. Meeting and seeing other people in our daily lives, as well as in our faith communities, can help us as we age and experience major changes in our lives. These connections with others can help us live longer, happier lives.

- How can I use technology to help me keep in touch with friends and family over the phone or internet?
- What opportunities do I have to make/maintain friendships with people who share my interests or hobbies?
- How am I finding a senior center or other community options for older adults nearby where I can go for social activities?
- What extra support do I need to fully participate in my faith community as I get older?
- How am I making sure others know my end of life wishes pertaining to my faith?



## Social & Spirituality

Building friendships and relationships, leisure activities, personal networks, and faith community

Being known and valued in one's community gives a person a sense of worth and of being a contributor and a good citizen, not just someone who needs assistance. Being a good citizen is more than just voting. Now is the perfect time to find out how you can get involved by donating your time and talents as a volunteer or serving as a leader in your community to make a difference.

- What do I need to be prepared to lead my planning and support meetings?
- What updates do I need to make to my Charting the LifeCourse materials for future caregivers to easily follow?
- What causes or issues am I passionate about?
- Am I interested in volunteering or giving back to my community in other ways?
- Do I still exercise my right to vote?
- What extra assistance do I need to vote at the polls, or would I rather vote with an absentee ballot?



## Citizenship & Advocacy

Building valued roles, making choices, setting goals, assuming responsibility and driving how one's own life is lived



## SERVICES & SUPPORTS

Resources and strategies to promote the development, education, interests, and personal well-being of a person and that enhances individual and family functioning

We all use a variety of sources to help us get through our daily lives. We rely on our own assets and capabilities. Most of us have people in our lives who do things for us (and vice versa). We tap into technology as well as businesses, organizations and resources in the community. Even though you might need support or access paid services, remember to consider your personal strengths and other supports that are available.

- What personal assets and strengths do I have that will help me accomplish my goals and live a full life?
- Who do I have a relationship with who cares about me and can help me with the things I need and want to do?
- How can I use technology to increase my independence and social interaction?
- What places and resources in the community do all people use?
- What kind of eligibility supports could I access and how can they help me live a good life?



## FAMILY UNIT

What the family unit needs to support and be a successful part of their family member's life. Supports that are directed to the family will ultimately benefit the individual.

For many of us, family is a central part our lives. We are connected to our families throughout the life course, even though the roles of our family members may change as we age. Our family often has a key role in helping us as we get older. What does your family need to help you on your journey to the good life? Here are some things to think about and discuss with your family:

- Who will "be there" for me when both of my parents are gone?
- Are my extended family members and other supporters knowledgeable about the things that are important to me?
- Is there a "road map" on how to best support me in case my primary caregivers are no longer able to provide my care?
- Who will emotionally support me if a close family member or friend passes away?
- Are we celebrating important traditions and spending time together as a family?

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