

THE EFFECTS OF AGING

Cheryl Welch, BSN, RN, M.S., LPC-T

Getting Older is the Reality of Living but for some of us we go fighting and screaming into the aging stage of life. It seems as we move into our fifties we realize we have wrinkles, graying and thinning hair, arms that jiggle, the tone of the voice sounds weaker, the memory has been challenged, and somehow we are even two inches shorter than we were in our 30's. The process of aging occurs to every individual but when we look into the mirror and it happened to us, we panic. Part of this may be related to how our Western culture portrays old-age giving perceptions that older citizens are no longer productive, can't make effective decisions, and struggle with memory. These are aging myths. In cultures representing collectivist societies the older adults are considered knowledgeable and are leaders (Fastame, Penna, & Rossetti, 2014).

Although, genetics play a role in the aging process and life expectancy, individuals can take steps to improve their health and extend effective cognitive and physical activity. Two environmental factors individuals can avoid that cause wrinkles are ultraviolet sunrays and smoking. This might be the time to stop the sunbathing or smoking. Stress is another factor in the aging process causing physical signs of aging, as well increases the chance for illness and disease. Ways to decrease signs of aging related to stress, other than through cosmetic interventions, are to manage stress effectively by using relaxation techniques, exercising, having periods of alone time, prayer and meditation, enjoying a fun activity, healthy eating, effectively managing time and resources, etc.

Aging is a fact of life. How you perceive growing older is your choice. But you can improve longevity by taking care of yourself.

The upcoming holiday season places undue expectations that add stress. Relax and enjoy the season of faith with the celebration of Christ's birth.

Dear friend, I pray that you may enjoy good health and that all may go well with you, even as your soul is getting along well. (3 John 2, NIV)

Fastame, M. C., Penna, M. P., and Rossetti, E. S. (2014). "Perceived cognitive efficiency and subjective well-being in late adulthood: The impact of developmental factors." *Journal of Adult Development*. Springer, 21:173-180.

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P.O. Box 1676, Appleton, WI 54912 (920) 720-8920

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