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DayBreak Offers Year-round Connection

by Angie Thompson, Director of Development

Social connection is part of who we are. Humans are social creatures, and being surrounded by people who care about us can help us stay healthy in many ways. During winter months, when seniors tend to stay indoors because of outside conditions, engaging in activities or programs that bring seniors together can combat isolation that leads to loneliness. Long-term isolation and loneliness contribute to loss of mobility, depression, and risk of dementia.

In a study published by *Plos Medicine*, it was found isolation and loneliness in our senior years are almost as dangerous as lifelong tobacco and alcohol use and are even more detrimental to our health than morbid obesity or a complete lack of physical activity. This study found that people with strong social connections in their later years have nearly a 50% greater chance of living longer.

DayBreak at Elder Care can help combat issues associated with isolation and loneliness. DayBreak encourages socialization, enhances self-esteem, promotes a sense of purpose, increases physical activity, and improves cognitive function.

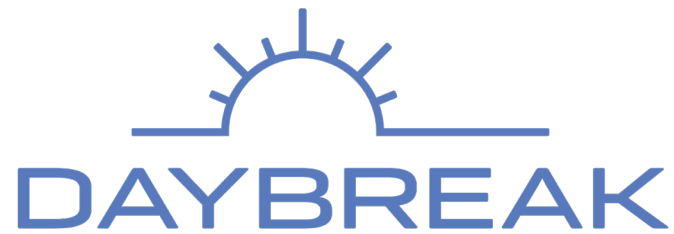
Participants enjoy socialization, which is a part of daily activities. The staff engages with participants through conversations that spark memories and conversation. Or bake favorite recipes, watch great films, play word games and board games, engage in light exercise, sing, laugh, and create beautiful art.



Carolyn said, “I think DayBreak does a lot of good for people. It helps me stay active, and I enjoy getting acquainted with new people. It would be boring to sit at home all day. DayBreak is a great place to spend the day. The activities are great and the people are great. I love everything about DayBreak.”

Kerrie says that the exercises at DayBreak have “helped my brain manage my thoughts.” Kerrie believes the story starters and conversational prompts are particularly useful because they “make us think as we answer.”

DayBreak offers meals, transportation, and social and therapeutic activities. Stay connected this winter at DayBreak. Call Shelia at 918-336-8500.

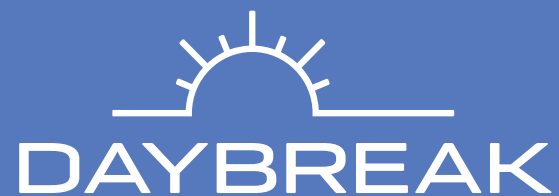


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Seven Gifts to Give YOURSELF!

What was once break-through research is now common knowledge: socializing promotes good physical, emotional, and mental health. It can reduce stress, ward off anxiety and depression, and reduce the risk of some physical health concerns. It may even slow the progress of memory loss and dementia.

But how does one incorporate meaningful socialization during the holiday season amidst the caretaking, the cleaning, the cooking, the shopping, the crazy?

Prepare.

To those who are new to caregiving, the National Institute on Aging has tips on balancing ritual with responsibility for an inclusive, heartfelt holiday season. Social interaction and well-being do not have to be compromised by the alternate reality of the year-end holidays. Simplifying and setting limits are key.

Decorate.

Lights! Candles! Holidays! Decorating with loved ones inspires creativity and puts cognitive skills into practice through planning and organization. Plus, one special ornament can prompt an interesting conversation.

Eat.

A family holiday meal has at least two advantages: (1) the interaction enhances cognitive development and (2) the protein.

Play.

A University of Edinburgh study concluded that game-playing contributes to mental agility including memory and thinking. Additionally, games promote hand/eye coordination and social skills like problem-solving, compromising, and collaboration. The caveat: the game must be old school, meaning non-digital. So, Go Fish, or call “Bingo” with friends and family.

Laugh.

Go ahead. Chuckle, chortle, giggle, or guffaw! The Mayo Clinic says laughter has both short- and long-term benefits. It stimulates organs (including the brain), relieves stress and tension, and improves the immune system. Turn that BAH into HA HA HA HA HA HA HA!

Sing.

With a plethora of carols, hymns, pop songs, this is the perfect time to warm up those vocal cords. Singing enhances memory, boosts lung function, lowers stress, and it just feels good! To quote The Carpenters, “Don’t worry that it’s not good enough for anyone else to hear. Just sing, sing a song.”

Give.

“It’s better to give than receive.” Studies have shown that the New Testament adage is true. Whether it is food, time, or money, giving encourages social connection and decreases stress. Oh, and be forewarned: it’s highly contagious, as well.

Engaging in Creative Arts Benefits the Elderly

Art plays a vital role in keeping seniors active as they age. Elderly adults benefit from exercising their creativity; some therapists suggest creative arts help older people.

DayBreak at Elder Care offers therapeutic and engaging activities that connect people with peers and engage mind and soul through art.

For many elderly, one of the most significant problems they face is that of isolation and loneliness. When older adults remain at home all day without many opportunities for interaction, their overall sense of health and well-being suffers. Depression may set in, and some studies show that isolated and depressed people are more susceptible to physical maladies such as chronic disease and even death. They provide a way for an older adult to establish and maintain strong contacts with others; the creative arts help to build strong relationships. This, in turn, leads to an enhanced quality of life and even the possibility of a longer life for your elderly loved one.

Christine (age 72), a DayBreak participant, said she has gained strong relationships with other DayBreak participants who share painting techniques with her over the years. “Melvin was a wonderful mentor. He showed me techniques for shading and using color in my art. I enjoy the art at DayBreak; it is a place I can go, learn new things, and focus on what I like to do.”



As people age, they sometimes lose the ability to communicate effectively or engage in activities they once enjoyed. Losing the ability to communicate freely can be frustrating and overwhelming and contribute to a poor quality of life or other issues. Art can serve a healing purpose and allow communication with others. By painting, crafting, or otherwise creating art, older adults can continue to leave their mark on the world. As this is therapeutic, it can especially be if they are experiencing a loss of ability in other areas.

Valerie Unruh, a professional artist and DayBreak’s art instructor, underscores that she sees the transformations of the human spirit through art. “Art helps people relate. As DayBreak participants look at their finished art, their eyes are lit from within. They do not see who they used to be. They see who they are now.”

Preoperative PT is Planning for Success

by Josh Lindblom, PT, DPT



Surgery is not a picnic and it can be a daunting process. After all, it is a planned trauma, no matter what type you are having. Rightly so, patients have most often arrived at this

destination as a last resort. However, if you are undergoing elective surgery, you have one advantage: planning time. Studies are showing more and more that patients who take advantage of preoperative care experience more efficient recoveries.

A Journal of Bone and Joint Surgery study of over 4,500 patients with knee and hip replacements suggests that as little as one to two preoperative physical therapy visits can reduce postoperative care by nearly 30%. This translates into an average health care savings cost of over \$1,000 per individual. The authors translate this savings into “reduced payments for skilled facility and home health agency care” and suggest that this is due to advanced knowledge of assistive devices, expectation management, and recovery planning.

Preoperative physical therapy gives you the ability to focus on preparation, strengthening,

and education. Preparing for surgery requires that you have an understanding of what is to come. You must prepare by learning beneficial exercises and how to perform them correctly. You must learn to recognize your movement patterns that are compensating for your painful joint and how to correct them or you risk falling into those same patterns post-operatively.

Strengthening is another reason for preoperative physical therapy. If you are seeking orthopedic surgery, it is very likely that the muscles surrounding the affected joint are already weak due to disuse or compensatory patterns. Even though you know the surgery is coming, your muscles don't and they need to be prepared for the challenge ahead. Maximizing available range of motion and beginning the strengthening process pre-op develops appropriate movement patterns and muscle memory that can speed up the overall recovery process.

Education molds a patient into an informed advocate and decision-maker for themselves. Spending as little as one or two visits with a physical therapist prior to surgery can greatly affect a patient's outcome. A therapist can review the surgical process, troubleshoot logistics with recovery, and teach appropriate use of canes, crutches, or walkers. Even more than that, preoperative visits can help mold your recovery mindset and expectations. Knowing where you

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“The creative process helps them feel worthy and noticed. Self-validation is the highest level of pleasure for artists. And artists, no matter what skill level, feel accomplished when they complete a painting.”

If your elderly loved one is experiencing frustrations with the age-related decline in their physical abilities, consider a creative arts program that can give them a great way of positively letting out their feelings. Participatory creative arts programs can lead to an increased sense of well-being as well as decreased rates of psychological issues such as depression. Replacing the “isolation” with positive relationships and activities may help boost their outlook and well-being.

Learn more about the benefits of art therapy at DayBreak Adult Day Health & Activity Center. DayBreak offers a 5-day free trial. Call Shelia at 918-336-8500 to learn more.

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will likely feel discomfort, how long of recovery to expect, and when to push through pain or rest are all very helpful questions to ask. If you know what to expect, patients tend to have less anxiety with each recovery phase.

If you are planning an upcoming surgery, we would love to help! Our Foundation Therapy team specializes in administering excellent individualized care in a compassionate environment. We dedicate ourselves to providing high-quality skilled services to manage multiple medical conditions and the impairments that accompany these conditions. You can access treatment with or without a physician referral via direct access to physical therapy. Check us out at www.AboutElderCare.org/Foundation or contact us directly at 918-766-0391.

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