



WELLNESS & WHOLENESS

Faith and Life Formation in Vital and Resilient Aging

WELLNESS & WHOLENESS

New Frontier of Older Adulthood

Elders are Rising

New VITALITY and RECILIENCY

Ability to contribute to their own and other's WELLNESS and WHOLENESS

At the center are FAITH and SPIRITUALITY

Beliefs shape life-enhancing values and encourage hopefulness

Faith communities are webs of life-giving relationships

Faith communities are avenues of service

Faith communities Anchor-Affirm-Heal-Guide-Sustain-Engender Hope

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New Generation of Elders - Lifecycle Transformation Underway

- **Age Wave** – Increased Quantity/Longevity/Quality in Older Adulthood
- **New Life Stage** – “Elderhood” – Unique; Long; Generative
- **Information Age’s Capabilities & Opportunities:** Connections ;
Communication; Relationships and Influence

“Pioneering a New Frontier of Aging”

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New Scientific Discoveries in Gerontology & Geriatrics –
(Stay Informed and Access New Resources- Utilize the Internet)

- Pew Research
- National/International Council on Active Aging
- Age Wave Inc.
- AARP

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Elders Rising: Gathering and Employing “Folk Wisdom”

- Interviews with 53 Persons Ages 62 to 97
- 60% Male 40% Female
- Six Regions Across the USA
- Faith Community “Related”
- Caucasians; African Americans; Latinos

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- ***Elderhood –An Emerging New Life Stage***

- Persons 65 and older? – Beginning of Elderhood ???
- Long and Complex Life Stage - 20-30 years for most people – 87% its 20 years
- Three Distinct Periods: Early – Middle – Late Elderhood – Yet Age Differently
- Elderhood: Unique, Substantial, Purposeful, Powerful and Essential = Its Promise
- Elderhood: Physical, Mental, Social, Financial and Spiritual Vulnerability = Its Peril

WHOLENESS AND WELLNESS

Promise & Peril - Strengths & Vulnerabilities of Elderhood

Strengths

- **Presence** – Available – Accompany- Engage
- **Relationships** – Sustain, Enrich and Delight
- **Purpose** – Contribute Significantly to What Matters
- **Passion** – Care Deeply; Have Compelling Interests;
- **Power** – Inform, Influence and Make a Difference
- **Playfulness**– Fun; Humor; Light-Heartedness; Leisure; Hope

Vulnerabilities

Decline, Transitions; Disease, Illness; Injuries; Losses;
Isolation; Impoverishment; Care-giving/receiving;

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“Old age

Is

Need not be a defeat but a victory;

Not a punishment but a privilege”

Abraham Heschel

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- **Elders in the Christian Faith** – Identity/valued/needed/engaged:
 - Endowed with dignity in birth and baptism – Sacred
 - Responsible with others for managing the earth
 - Bearers of the story of God's presence, action and truth
 - Conveyors of wisdom and mentors of the young;
 - Called by God to serve their “neighbor” - “the world”

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- **Elders in the Christian Faith** – Elders are:
 - Spiritually gifted to equip/build up Christ's Body
 - Gathered into and enlightened in faith communities
 - Vulnerable/resilient on a short journey to death
 - On the way to new life in a new heaven and earth

WELLNESS AND WHOLENESS

Elders Empowering and Empowered by the Church

- **Vital Aging Center**-Wellness; Wholeness; Resiliency; Vitality
- **Anchor Community** – Belonging & Becoming
- **Inquiry and Learning** - Faith Support; Life Issues
- **Spiritual Gifts and Strengths** – Building the Body of Christ
- **Service** – Grace in Action; volunteering in Church/Community
- **Finance** – Planning and Mission; Mission Capital;
- **Care and Caregiving** – Sharing the Responsibility
- **Intergenerational Innovation and Support** – Story-telling; Mutuality

WELLNESS & WHOLENESS ASSETS

- ***Existential Assets***

- *Identity and Self-Worth*—Reworking of self-understanding and self-respect,
- *Belonging* - Form new primary relationships and anchoring communities.
- *Making a Difference*—Larger sense of life purpose and day-to-day activities, doing something that contributed positively to another person's life.

WELLNESS & WHOLENESS ASSETS

- **Spiritual Assets:** “Grounding, Centering and Hoping”
 - Enhance *Faith and Life* **understandings of God**, God’s presence and God’s action.
 - **Sacred Experience**—Participation in sacred spaces and experiences that make God real.
 - **Vital Faith Practices**—Need worship, hymns, prayer, faith and life conversations, Bible study that strengthens faith and carries through crises and provides healing
 - **Hope**—Cultivate trust in God’s presence and confidence in ongoing life with God

WELLNESS & WHOLENESS ASSESTS

- ***Ethical Assets***

- *Guiding Values*—New decisions challenge existing values.
- *Integrity*—Will the end of life fit with the values and actions of earlier lives.
- *Truth Telling and Honesty*—Honestly facing physical and mental decline, multiple losses, transference of power, and pervasive change.
- *Compassion and Care for the “Other”*-Feeling empathy for and acting on empathy contribute to self-worth and happiness.

WELLNESS & WHOLENESS ASSETS

- ***Physical Assets***

- *Nutrition*—Eating the right kinds of food and eating the right amounts at the right time.
- *Exercise*—Incorporate necessary, “right-fit for you” exercises into life routines.
- *Assessment*—Physical decline and chronic illness are ever-present.
- *Sleep*—Sleep at night, daily naps, and cat naps.
- *Balance and Mobility Skills*—Maintaining good balance and getting around.
- *Medical Care and Timely Medical Procedures*—Timely and responsive medical care.
- *Appropriate Medications*—Tend the complicated processes of getting medications right.
- *Replacements*—Significantly increase the quality and length of elders’ lives. Timing.

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- **Mental Assets**

- *Nutrition*—Add more fish, vegetables, and vitamins to meals; less caffeine and alcohol.
- *Activity*—Mental activities to maintain cognitive acuity,
- *Neurological Care and Assessment*—Regular appointments with a neurologist.

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- **Emotional Assets**

- *Emotional Intelligence and Expression*—Self-awareness; being in touch with oneself.
- *Taking Action*—Participating in groups, gathering with others, caring for one another.
- *Gratitude and Joy*—Ability to “count one’s blessings” and “to give back”.
- *Grief and Grieving*—Ability to grieve well as encounter one loss after another.
- *Depression and Despair*—Quality medical, psychological, and spiritual responses

WELLNESS & WHOLENESS ASSETS

- **Social Assets: “As their relationships go, so go elders.”**
 - *Primary Relationships with Families and Friends*—Day-to-day relationships for basic support, affirmation, problem solving, and enjoyment.
 - *Secondary Relationships with Groups, Colleagues, and Communities*—A variety of social circles in a web of relationships supporting identity, strengthening, and enjoyment.
 - *Social Intelligence*—Listen/hear empathically, authenticity, and trustworthiness.
 - *Communication Range and Skills*—Communicate in emotional and social situations.

WELLNESS & WHOLENESS ASSETS

- **Financial Assets**

- *Income*—Attention across the periods of aging; combinations of social security, pensions, investments, property, salaried work, and county welfare.
- *Budgeting*—Living within a fixed income.
- *Resource and Money Management*—Include a competent, trustworthy team
- *Long-Term Care or Not*—Secure long-term care insurance; if not what?
- *Dispersing of Wealth*—Getting finances transferred to the next generation
- Engaging with family.

WELLNESS & WHOLENESS ASSETS

- Your “Mosaic” of Wellness and Wholeness

• Existential	1.....5.....10
• Spiritual	1.....5.....10
• Ethical	1.....5.....10
• Physical	1.....5.....10
• Mental	1.....5.....10
• Emotional	1.....5.....10
• Social	1.....5.....10
• Financial	1.....5.....10

Authentic.....Accessible.....Integrated.....Balanced.....Life-giving

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