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Accountable Aging and Socialization

We at Accountable Aging are very aware of the need for socialization for all our clients. There are so many ways to introduce social interaction for a person whether they are in their own home, a family member's home or living in a residential facility.

As with most things, the individual's abilities and interests must be considered. We have clients that live in nursing homes and enjoy doing jigsaw puzzles and participating in Bible Studies. We have clients in all kinds of residences and many enjoy hand massages and manicures, all which provide human interaction, even if one has had a stroke or has serious dementia.

For persons with mild cognitive impairment or who are cognitively able, outings can be very significant...time with other family and friends, going to the beauty shop, taking exercise classes or going to water aerobics. Even going to the grocery store can provide quality social interaction. There are senior centers, adult day care centers and university classes available depending on needs. We have even helped arrange for musicians and persons to read to clients with eye sight issues. Our team understands the significance of social interaction. We tailor the recommendations and facilitate options that meet the needs, cost and interest of the client.

Benefits of Social Interaction and Different Options for Achieving Social Interaction.

Did you know that researchers are finding that a lack of social connections are associated with a significant increased risk of inflammation, becoming overweight and even developing high blood pressure? A report produced by the University of North Carolina, Sociology Department revealed that the risk of high blood pressure brought on by social isolation was actually higher than the risk of developing high blood pressure by virtue of being a diabetic. To read more about this study, here is the link: <http://www.pnas.org/content/113/3/578.abstract> .

Bryan James, an epidemiologist at the Rush Alzheimer's Disease Center in Chicago, has also studied the impact of social activity levels on a person's health. In one study, James looked at how social activity affected cognitive decline. Over 1100 seniors without dementia at baseline were measured on their social activity levels and then tested periodically on their cognitive functioning over a 12-year period. The rate of cognitive decline was 70 percent less in people with frequent social contact than those with low social activity.

"When you use your brain and body the way it was intended—as it evolved—you age better," says James. "We just aren't meant to be disengaged from one another."

In another study, James looked at a community-based cohort of older people free of dementia and measured social activity levels and their disability levels—in terms of their ability to care for themselves. Findings showed that those with more frequent social activity maintained lower levels of disability in several areas, suggesting that they would be able to live independently longer than their less social counterparts.

"The predominant theory is use it or lose it." says James. "Social activity is related to motor function, just like physical exercise is related. We can't determine which is most important—they each contribute a piece of the puzzle."

His results are truly dramatic. Even when he and his colleagues statistically control for risk factors like smoking or a history of disease, they still find that someone with high levels of social activity has 43 percent less disability than someone who has low levels of social activity, and about half the rate of cognitive decline.

To read more, here is the link: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3206295/>

Knowing the impact of socialization encourages us all to look at a person's needs in the home. Many seniors who live alone need assistance with remaining connected, especially if they are no longer driving or only driving in a small area. There are many options from day care centers, senior activity centers, senior groups at churches and in the community, phone and Skype programs as well as caregiver services. Frequently it is isolation that causes a family to discuss moving to a residential facility, either independent or assisted living. Certainly the pull of socialization has been the value to many of the 55 plus communities like Del Webb's Sun City.

In this addition of our newsletter, we are also providing some different examples of social interaction opportunities for both able-bodied seniors and persons with dementia and their caregivers.

AGING IS COOL

Why Friends are Better than Doctors

OK, we definitely DO NOT mean take your friend's medical advice over what your doctor says. But hanging around with friends has more of a positive effect on our mental and physical health than many of us realize.

Study after study (over several decades) has proven that good social relationships result in better physical health. In fact, when three researchers analyzed nearly 150 such studies, they found that people with good social relationships lived longer and healthier than those who did not.



This makes sense, if you think about it. Most of us find it much harder to get out of the house and go do something, especially if it's physical, by ourselves. Yet, if a friend or a walking club or some other type of group wants or expects us to join them, we show up. We have so much fun when we get together!

This year, Aging is Cool, a new business to connect you to fun, engaging activities, as well as new friends, launched in the Central Texas area. After nearly 40 years of combined experience in the senior services and fitness industries, Amy and Damien Temperley were tired of seeing the same old activities. If you were "of a certain age", the best you could hope for was bingo or a card game. Today's older adults want more.

"Getting older doesn't mean sitting in a chair. It means embracing the amazing person you are, having fun, learning and making a difference in your community," says Amy Temperley, co-founder of Aging is Cool. "We wanted to create the kind of programming we think older adults want and deserve!"

Aging is Cool provides engaging, smart, fun activities for adults 60+. A membership fee of just \$19 a month allows members access to a variety of activities geared for them including fitness, brain training, life coaching groups, high level conversations and presentations by interesting experts, and volunteer opportunities. Additionally, Aging is Cool has a first of its kind summer camp for seasoned adults. Camp Meraki will be held May 26-28th in Wimberley, Texas and will allow participants to relive their childhood with traditional camp activities like canoeing, archery, arts and crafts, sing-a-longs and a campfire (complete with cocktails of course!).

To find out more and stay connected, go to www.agingiscool.com and sign up for their e-newsletter or follow them on Facebook at www.facebook.com/agingiscool. Classes are launching in Austin and Lakeway on June 1st and Aging is Cool has plans to expand to other areas of the state in the future.

MEMORY CAFES

Memory Cafés Provide Socialization Opportunities for Persons with Dementia and Care Partner

Memory Cafés are growing in numbers across Texas and the country according to Geri Sams, Aging Life Care Professional in Denton, Texas. A memory Café provides persons with mild to moderate dementia and their care partner a place to connect, converse, laugh and socialize with others who are experiencing a similar

journey along the dementia pathway. Often, the isolation endured along with demands of caring for a loved one with Alzheimer's or other dementia leads to loss of social interaction and loneliness. Grief and loss issues and clinical depression can result. It is not uncommon that friends and family members begin to taper off in their interaction and assistance and feel uncomfortable in their attempted conversations with the person with dementia. Often the person with dementia retreats to watching TV and falling asleep in a recliner and no longer socializes. Cafés provide new opportunities and links to new friends who truly understand. During Café meetings, both person with dementia and caregiver find opportunities to reflect back on their lives and share stories about a favorite trip, a former job, their grandchildren or their special pet dog. It is a time to share a meal with others, laugh about life's ups and downs and re-cover some sense of life beyond isolation and caregiving. Find a Café by contacting the Alzheimer's Association in your geographic area or your local senior center.



AACM News

Accountable Aging Care Management now provides services in West Texas, principally in the Midland/Odessa area. We are thankful for the friends of the company who have been encouraging and supportive of this endeavor, and excited about the possibilities of learning about these new communities and how to serve its residents.

Of course we welcome referrals for these communities.

AACM News (cont'd)

Our staff continues to evolve. We were sad to say good-bye to Patty Hamilton, our Benefits Specialist. Patty and her husband retired and moved to Victoria, Texas to be near family and enjoy less traffic than Austin. We welcomed Michael Rodus to this position. Michael has ties to Social Security directly through his father-in-law and wife! Michael was an employee of the Disability Determination Service, the agency that makes medical determinations for Social Security and SSI disability benefits, and will be a great asset to the team.

This month, Juli Morrison, our client coordinator and the staff person who handled bill paying returned to her home town of Seguin, Texas. Family needs called her away. On the 24th of April, we welcomed Amanda George, who grew up in San Antonio and received her degree from the University of North Texas in Denton. She has big shoes to fill and seems more than able.

Mary Koffend and her friend Amy Praskac published an e-booklet from a presentation that they developed called "Having the Conversation." The feedback received from the presentation which they have presented multiple times was so significant that it was decided that the information and techniques should be shared with all families. Here is the link: [Available from Amazon](#). We would love your reviews.

Accountable Aging Care Management is on Facebook and has a blog!

Please look for current AACM thoughts and information at these sites.



Because referrals are the lifeblood of our business, the best way you can thank us is by referring a friend, neighbor or colleague to us! We appreciate all your referrals.

Accountable Aging Care Management Team

- Mary Koffend**, President
- Mick Koffend**, Director of Services
- Spencer Brown**, MSG, LNFA, CMC, Care Manager
- Mary Cooper**, BS, RN, Care Manager
- Elizabeth Edenfield**, BSN, RN, CMC, Care Manager
- Lessa Ennis**, Office Manager
- Amanda George**, Client Coordinator
- Shannon Gray**, Financial Coordinator
- Lindsey Hazlewood**, Administrative Assistant
- Nicole Kulas** MSG, Care Manager
- Michael Rodus**, Benefits Specialist
- Heidi Shanklin-Spock**, LMSW, C-ASWCM, Care Manager
- Mary Pat Smith**, MSN, RN, CNS, Geriatric Nurse Consultant

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Accountable Aging Care Management is an eldercare consulting and care management firm.

Accountable Aging is a single source for older adults and their families to attain knowledge, resources and on-going assistance with the challenges related to aging or caring for an elder loved one. We serve older adults in Austin, Bryan/College Station, Dallas, San Antonio and the surrounding areas.

With this newsletter, our aim is to provide a trusted conduit for eldercare information and resources and to highlight the services we offer that meet the needs of older adults and their families.

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