



PREPARING EMOTIONALLY FOR LIFE'S NEXT CHAPTER

IDENTITY • PURPOSE • CONNECTION • HEALTH • RESILIENCE

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LEARNING OBJECTIVES

A G E N D A



By the end of the session, participants will be able to:

- Recognize common emotional responses to retirement
- Understand the impact of retirement on identity and purpose
- Identify risk factors for depression, isolation, and burnout after retirement
- Explore strategies to maintain emotional wellness and social connection
- Develop a personalized mental wellness plan for retirement

RETIREMENT IS A MAJOR LIFE TRANSITION

Retirement may involve:

- Losses and gains occurring simultaneously
- Increased freedom and increased uncertainty
- Changes in routine and structure
- Changes in relationships and social roles
- Shifts in identity and self-worth
- New opportunities for growth and meaning



COMMON EMOTIONAL RESPONSES TO RETIREMENT

Normal reactions may include:

- Relief
- Excitement
- Anxiety
- Loneliness
- Sadness or grief
- Loss of confidence
- Fear of aging or mortality
- Restlessness
- Feeling “unneeded” or “unproductive”

THE HIDDEN ROLE OF WORK

**Work
often
provides:**

Identity

Routine

Social interaction

Structure

Purpose

Achievement

Financial security

Status and recognition



Reflection Question

“What has work provided for me beyond a paycheck?”

IDENTITY SHIFTS IN RETIREMENT

Common identity questions:



“Who am I without my job?”

“What gives my life meaning now?”

“How do I contribute?”

“What do I want this stage of life to look like?”



Retirement is not just leaving work — it is rebuilding identity.

MENTAL HEALTH RISKS DURING RETIREMENT

Increased risk factors may include:

- Social isolation
- Loss of routine
- Reduced physical activity
- Caregiver stress
- Financial stress
- Chronic illness
- Grief and loss
- Reduced cognitive stimulation
- Loss of community



SIGNS SOMEONE MAY BE STRUGGLING

Watch for:

- Persistent sadness
- Withdrawal from others
- Loss of motivation
- Increased alcohol/substance use
- Irritability
- Excessive sleeping or insomnia
- Anxiety or panic
- Loss of interest in activities
- Feelings of hopelessness



THE IMPORTANCE OF ROUTINE

Healthy routines support:

- Sleep
- Mood regulation
- Cognitive functioning
- Physical health
- Motivation
- Stress management

Retirement without structure can feel disorienting



BUILDING A MEANINGFUL RETIREMENT

Wellness in retirement often includes:

- Purpose
- Connection
- Movement
- Creativity
- Lifelong learning
- Rest
- Contribution
- Flexibility



PURPOSE AFTER RETIREMENT



Reflection Prompt

“What gives me energy, meaning, or fulfillment?”

Purpose can come from:

- Volunteering
- Mentorship
- Hobbies
- Faith communities
- Family roles
- Creative projects
- Advocacy
- Part-time work
- Learning new skills

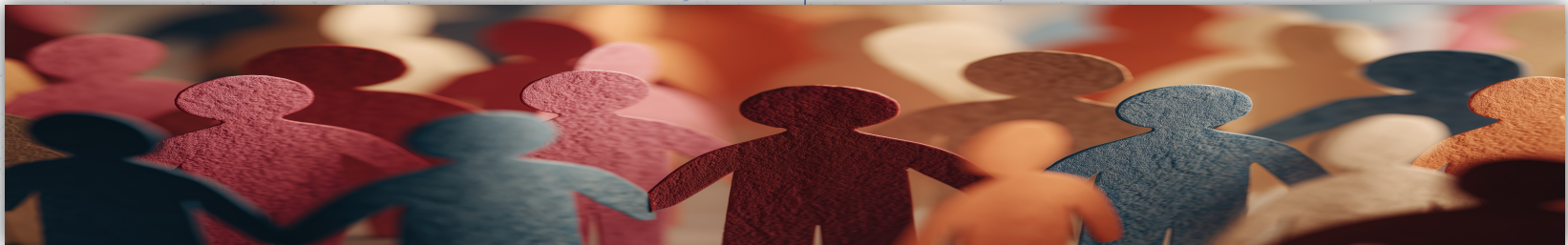
SOCIAL CONNECTION AND LONELINESS

Loneliness impacts:

- Mental health
- Physical health
- Memory and cognition
- Stress levels
- Mortality risk

Protective factors:

- Friendships
- Community involvement
- Shared activities
- Intergenerational relationships
- Support groups



RETIREMENT AND RELATIONSHIPS

Retirement can change:

- Marital dynamics
- Household roles
- Boundaries
- Expectations
- Communication patterns
- Time spent together

Healthy relationship strategies:

- Communicate openly
- Maintain individual interests
- Respect routines and space
- Create shared goals



GRIEF, AGING, AND EMOTIONAL ADJUSTMENT

Retirement may coincide with:

- Loss of loved ones
- Health changes
- Caregiving responsibilities
- Awareness of aging
- Changes in independence



Grief may be emotional, social, physical, or identity-based.

PHYSICAL HEALTH AND MENTAL HEALTH CONNECTION

Mental wellness is supported by:

- Sleep
- Nutrition
- Movement
- Stress reduction
- Medical care
- Cognitive engagement



Even moderate activity improves mood and cognition.

COGNITIVE WELLNESS

Ways to support brain health:

- Reading
- Learning new skills
- Puzzles and games
- Social interaction
- Physical exercise
- Creative activities
- Lifelong learning



REST VS. WITHDRAWAL

Healthy rest:

- Restores energy
- Supports healing
- Increases balance



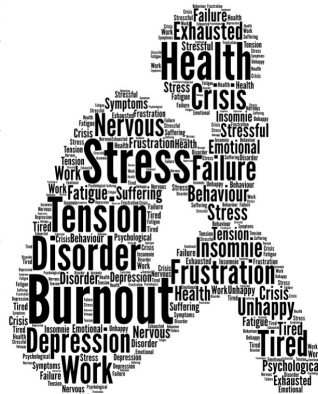
Unhealthy withdrawal:

- Isolation
- Avoidance
- Emotional numbing
- Loss of engagement



Reflection Prompt
“Am I resting, or am I disconnecting?”

Fear of dependency



Flexible expectations

HEALTHY RETIREMENT MINDSETS

Helpful beliefs:

“My value is not based solely on productivity.”

“I can continue growing at every age.”

“Rest and purpose can coexist.”

“Adjustment takes time.”

“Connection matters.”

“It is okay to redefine success.”



CREATING A PERSONAL WELLNESS PLAN



Emotional Wellness

- How will I manage stress?
- What supports my mood?

Social Wellness

- Who are my people?
- How will I stay connected?

Purpose and Growth

- What gives me meaning?
- What do I still want to learn?

Physical Wellness

- What habits support my health?

PRACTICAL STRATEGIES FOR EMOTIONAL WELLNESS



Maintain routines

Schedule social contact

Move your body

Practice mindfulness

Engage in meaningful activities

Limit isolation

Seek support early

Stay curious and open to growth

WHEN TO SEEK PROFESSIONAL SUPPORT



Consider support if:

- Symptoms persist for several weeks
- Mood interferes with functioning
- Anxiety feels overwhelming
- Substance use increases
- Isolation worsens
- Grief feels unmanageable
- Thoughts of hopelessness emerge

Seeking help is a sign of strength, not weakness.

FINAL REFLECTION ACTIVITY

Reflection questions

- What am I looking forward to in retirement?
- What concerns me most?
- What strengths will help me navigate this transition?
- What kind of life do I want to build in this next chapter?



Retirement is not the end of purpose — It is an opportunity to redefine it.



Mental wellness in retirement grows through:

- Connection
- Meaning
- Flexibility
- Self-compassion
- Intentional living

Well-being Resources



Whole person support - at work and at home.



Mental health

- In person or telehealth at no cost



Personal resilience

- Health coaching
- Tobacco cessation
- Headspace



Personal finance

- CAPTRUST
- Savi student loan forgiveness



Physical activity

- Gym memberships
- Group classes
- Step challenges



Nutrition

- Meet with a dietitian
- CSA vouchers



Well at UK portal

- Challenges
- 1,000 Online fitness classes
- Education resources

HR Calendar:
Work Life and Well-being



Learn more at
hr.uky.edu/wellness

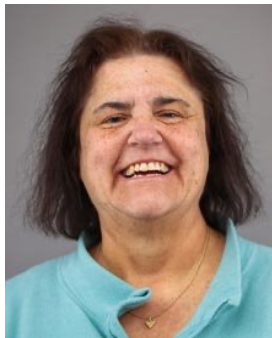


Mental Health



Counseling with a therapist

There are many reasons to connect with a therapist. We offer empathy and understanding plus assistance in figuring out what's next. Consider us your supportive starting point.



Ann Bassoni



Rhonda
Henry



Kim Releford



Eric
Wilkinson



Mental Health



Telehealth from LiveHealth

Conduct a video visit with a professional for therapy and medication prescriptions.

On-demand resources

Mental health fact sheets, digital tools and recommended apps

Anthem emotional well-being resource

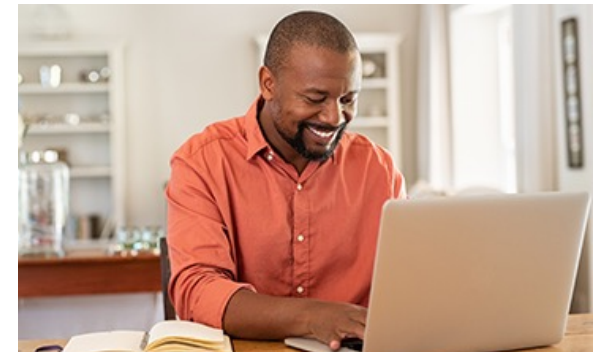
Digital tools for resilience, stress and mindfulness, available to employees on a UK health insurance plan

Suicide prevention

Learn to save a life through QPR (Question, Persuade and Refer) training. Three simple steps anyone can learn to help save a life from suicide.

Presentations

Work with our speakers and facilitators to plan a session that works for you and your group.





THANK YOU

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[Click here to schedule an In Person or Telehealth Appointment](#)

or Dial 859-257-9355 and select option 1