

Art & Science of Aging Conference, 2018

CLOSING SESSION

Telling their stories: Ways to help others and oneself overcome barriers to healthy aging

Sometimes the topic of 'overcoming barriers to healthy aging' seems to be either too abstract or too personal. Yet the reality is that many of those who face barriers do succeed in overcoming them, usually with the help of others.

The goal of this session is to illustrate through personal stories how three very different types of barriers encountered by older adults were overcome. Two stories derive from personal experiences, while the others are collected through interviews with older adults by a local researcher. Such barriers often seem insurmountable - a life threatening case of sepsis; the sudden death of a spouse resulting in a new widowhood and 'living alone'; and the disconnect from family and friends which can come from changing communication technologies.

Hear the panelists' stories as they share how they or others overcame setbacks and barriers, who they turned to for help. Interact with the panelists and participate with the audience to explore what you can do to help yourself, others you know, or those whom you encounter in your daily work and life, when facing such challenges.

Commit to leaving no elder behind!

Panelists

Lori Dillman, MA

David Rothbart, BS

Veronica Kirin, BA

Moderator:

Priscilla J. Kimboko, PhD

Learning Objectives:

Upon completion of this session, participants will be able to:

- 1) Understand the wide array of barriers that they and others may encounter in the aging process
- 2) Identify who older adults typically turn to for support in overcoming barriers
- 3) Describe ways in which each of us can, in turn, help others overcome such barriers in their personal and professional lives

References /Resources

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Telling Their Stories: Reflection Questions

Which elders are more likely to face barriers to healthy aging?

What types of factors and experiences are 'barriers' to healthy aging?

- Life events – death of spouse or other family member, move, etc.)
- Health Changes; acute or chronic health barriers
- Economic/Income deficits
- Physical/Mental decline
- Changes in environment (safety, residence, neighborhood, technologies)

What do people do when they encounter these barriers? What is the typical response?

- What would you do/have you done when faced with a big barrier or challenge?
- How typical do you think that is?

Who do they turn to, if anyone, when facing these challenges?

- To whom would you turn for help?
- To whom do others turn for help, if anyone?
- Do you think that everyone turns to someone for help?

What if they don't have anyone to turn to?

- Who watches out for them, if they have no close network of family and friends?

What can YOU do when you see someone is dealing with a barrier or challenge?

- Are you aware of individuals in your circles who are facing any such barriers?
- What steps have you taken to reach out to support them?
- Do you also note the challenges faced by the caregivers of these persons, if any?

What can WE do together to ensure that no elder is left behind?

No Elder Left Behind pledge

I pledge to reach out a helping hand to any elder I encounter who is facing tough barriers to overcome in order to experience healthy aging...