How to Help Your Senior Parents Find Happiness

Isolation & loneliness are two of the main causes for senior adult depression. Learn how you can help them find joy & contentment as they age.



Contribute to your aging parents' joy & satisfaction with these simple ideas

Just like our parents wanted the best for us growing up, we want the best for them as they age. Though getting older typically develops more medical issues, depression is not an inevitable part of the aging process.[1] With over 65 million seniors struggling with depression,[2] the widespread commonality is an unfortunate reality we have to acknowledge but not accept.

Probably the hardest part about senior depression is that we sometimes have a feeling that they are not happy... but are just too busy to really help them. We get right back to our daily routine and push it off til next time.

It's really not that hard to make your parents happy. Here's some simple changes you could make today.

Understand What Makes Seniors Happy

When we are younger, we enjoy more extraordinary adventures and exotic trips because we can hold on to these memories for the rest of our lives. As we age, ordinary experiences are more valued[3] because they are already associated with our sense of self.

What this tells us is that seniors aren't looking for wild getaways but interaction in their daily life. Having you by their side for appointments, their favorite television show or eating dinner means a lot more to them than you would think. This won't uproot your schedule either!



[1] http://www.helpguide.org/articles/depression/depression-in-older-adults-and-the-elderly.htm
[2] http://www.visitingangels.com/senior-depression-elder-care-is-a-solution-article_67
[3] http://newoldage.blogs.nytimes.com/2014/02/11/what-makes-older-people-happy/?_r=0

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Help Your Parents Get Involved In a Program



Have you ever tried to force your dad or mom into something they didn't want to do? Bet that was an experience!

From the first lesson, we need to understand that seniors might not want something new in their lives right away. But we also know that isolation and loneliness are the main reasons that cause depression.[4]

If you bring up exercising or joining a local book club, you must remember that they have different concerns than just having fun:

- getting ready before
- transportation to and from the event
- how they will feel afterwards (tired, aches, pain, etc.)
- potential disruption of their daily medication & treatments

With those in mind, here's what you can do to help them get started and maybe even become comfortable enough to do it on their own:

- Make it a bonding experience the first couple of times until you know they actually enjoy it
- Offer to help them get ready and drive them to the event
- Perform the "activity" by yourselves and then transition into social group

Not sure where to start?

- Book Club
- Dancing
- Exercise programs

Make Sure They Have Continual Support

Are you available to provide the daily assistance seniors need to fully function? More importantly, are you prepared to handle the extra care they will need as they get older?

Letting someone else take care of your parents might seem scary at first but can quickly lead to a better life for your parents and you.

Caregivers can help make seniors more comfortable in their daily lives from doing their weekly shopping to reminding them to stay on top of their essential medications. When your parents are ready to get involved in a program, caregivers can drive them to their destination.

Most importantly, caregivers are not caretakers. They are smiling, encouraging people that love working with elderly and helping them feel happy.

[4] http://www.visitingangels.com/senior-depression-elder-care-is-a-solution-article_67

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