

Why Elderly People need Motivation?

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Abstract

Motivation plays a crucial role for every individual in the lives of individuals across all age groups. Motivation is essential for aged individuals as it contributes to their physical health, mental well-being, social connections, continued learning, and ability to cope with life transitions. Cultivating and maintaining motivation can empower older adults to lead fulfilling lives, stay active and engaged, and find joy and meaning in their daily experiences. There are researches on motivation which focused more on younger populations, but now there is a need for more comprehensive investigations into the motivation of elderly individuals. Understanding the factors that drive and influence their behaviors can have significant implications for promoting their well-being and quality of life. This paper makes an attempt to understand the implication of motivation on elderly people and how this factor plays a crucial role in enhancing their overall well-being and quality of life.

Introduction

A person is elderly if he/she is sixty years of age or older. Becoming elderly is a process of change which starts to occur after physical maturity has been reached in one's life. This process is called Senescence. It means to say that an elderly one is a person who completed physical maturity and started the process of degeneration. "Senescence affects different people of different rates. Also the rates of change in various body process affected by aging vary among people" [3].

The word 'elder' may again refer to experience, wisdom and authority as well as specific leadership roles. As experience is considered as the best way of having knowledge and wisdom, elders are counted as the most qualified to hold places of leadership. So, they are revered. In all religions and cultures, the basic meaning of the term elderly is 'old age'. Casually and generally speaking, a grown-up person is the elder one in its comparative and relative sense. They are considered as the head of the family, clan or society all over the world. Strictly speaking those who are 60 and above are considered as old, elderly or even being called as senior citizens.

"The demographers categorise the elderly into four: young old (60-69 years), old (70-79 years), oldest old (80-89 years), and the extreme old (90+years)" [4]. This way of divisioning help the Geriatricans, who handle the age-related health problems to categorise and give better treatment and care to the elderly. In the same way it is an aid to the social workers and spiritual animators of the aged. The extension of classification is being done even in an informal way on health basis as bedridden elderly, depressed elderly, dementia elderly, physically handicapped elderly and many more" [5].

Though the world appreciates and upholds ideologically the dignity and wisdom of the old, people are afraid to step into the category of 'old' [6]. People as a whole regardless of religion, nation or language practically have taken the term 'old age' negatively. There are lots of stereotyped notions about aging and elderly existing in all segments of the population. Many of the notions are myths. Then the aging are generally thought to be less intelligent, though the fact is different; they are slow to learn, more rigid, riskier as employees, burdensome and so useless. The incapability of fulfilling one's own need and hence the dependency on others as people getting aged is not something pleasing for both the dependent and the caregiver. There are lots of age related problems physical, mental, social etc., that accompany the old age. Pain and suffering, negligence and abandonment, unwantedness and loneliness etc. are seen as a common reality. The elderly are given low status in the society. Ageism is like sexism or racism because it involves discrimination and prejudice against all members of this particular social category. The prejudice against the elderly is shown in every day language by the use of the term that no racial or ethnic group would ever accept: "old buzzard", "old biddy", "pura vasthu", "scrap" etc. The population that has the above mentioned myths and watches the situation and the experience of the elderly will naturally be frightened to enter into the category of 'old age'. But the fact is that "age need not be a barrier to make major contributions. George Bernard Shaw wrote a play entitled *Farfetched Fables* at the age of 93. Pablo Picasso was producing engravings and drawings at the age of 90. Micheal Angelo designed the church of Santa Maria Degli Angeli when he was 88" [7].

At the biological level, ageing is caused by the buildup of numerous types of cellular and molecular damage over time. As a result, physical and mental abilities gradually deteriorate, disease risk increases, and eventually, death occurs. These changes are neither linear nor consistent, and they are only loosely associated with a person's age in years. Age-related diversity is not a coincidence. Aside from biological changes, ageing is frequently linked to other life transitions including retirement, moving to a more suitable home, and losing friends and companions.

Hearing loss, cataracts and refractive errors, back and neck pain and osteoarthritis, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, diabetes, depression, and dementia are common ailments among elderly people.

The rise of various complex health conditions known as geriatric syndromes is another feature of older age. They include weakness, urine incontinence, stumbles, delirium, and pressure ulcers, and they are frequently the result of other underlying problems. Thus old age not only brings health disorder but also mental disorder. At such stage there is need of motivation.

Motivation

The term "motivation" describes *why* a person does something. It is the driving force behind human actions. Motivation is the process that initiates, guides, and maintains goal-oriented behaviors. Motivation contributes to a healthy aging process for several reasons. Firstly, it can be a tool to combat the inevitable stress of life. It also fosters creativity and improves cognition, and subsequently leads to success in all areas of life, including relationships and work performance. It helps to cultivate a stronger sense of self, which often leads to improved physical health and wellbeing [8].

According to experts, "Motivated individuals tend to eat more healthy, balanced meals and exercise more frequently. But most importantly, motivation allows us to feel human and connected to one another. "Many people question the purpose of life and feel lost and helpless without motivation," "Motivation allows us to spread compassion and positivity, and concurrently, attract more positive, motivated people [9].

Motivation is important because it [10]:

- provides you with goals to work towards.
- helps you solve problems.
- helps you change old habits.
- helps you cope with challenges and opportunities.

The issue of motivation is a critical issue which needs closer attention for a number of reasons. First, it would help to understand the factors that regulate behaviour in one of the most prominent age groups in society. Second, old age is such a period when there is physical decline, cognitive changes, a loss of energy, changing social roles and interactions, and often a change in living environment. These experiences may involve growing perceptions of incompetence or feelings of reduced self-determination—two factors that are known to affect motivation. Understanding the role of motivation in these changes is necessary for a more complete picture of the psychological processes involved in aging. Third, motivation research would lead to a better understanding of the factors that influence mental and physical health among the elderly, because research on young adults has found motivation to have a number of consequences for adjustment and well-being. Finally, understanding the nature of motivation in the elderly would suggest ways of restructuring living environments to enhance motivation and its associated consequences [11]. According to Wigdor, “a better understanding of motivational changes with aging would be useful in developing programs and environments which would result in optimal functioning” [12].

Experts believe motivation boosts mental health, fosters creativity, encourages promotes healthy lifestyle choices, and spreads compassion. Five ways to encourage and motivate older adults [13].

Giving them few manageable Goals

Often Young people and adults in their prime are frequently reminded to set and accomplish goals. But goals also play positive role for many older adults as well. Being goal-oriented can instil motivation, a sense of purpose, and pride in accomplishment. In the cases of aged create few and manageable goals daily, be it doing some stretches, completing a small project like planting a flowering plant, or something as simple as doing meditation for half an hour. Facilitate and assist along the way. Offer encouragement with each baby step, and compliment when the task is complete.

Encourage affirming Self-Identify

Affirming self-identity is a powerful way to promote well-being and foster a positive sense of self. It involves recognizing and acknowledging one’s unique qualities, strengths, values, and experiences. Self-identity affirmation can lead to higher levels of self-worth, self-assurance, and general life happiness.

If an elderly person resides somewhere other than their own house, such as a long-term care facility, surround the elderly person’s living space with pleasant memory triggers including pictures, postcards, posters, artefacts, scents, music, movies, trophies, honours, and awards. These memory anchors act as a reminder of the person’s prior experiences, accomplishments, and personal history, assisting in affirming the person’s sense of self and fostering a sense of continuity and connection with their life story. It offers opportunity for lively conversation and nostalgic reminiscing, which may be quite significant and entertaining for senior citizens. One can assist the older adult in recalling and sharing their memories, allowing them to relive those moments and feel a feeling of pride and fulfilment, by actively participating in talks and asking questions about the objects or the tales linked with them.

Encouragement of older persons to create a personal history, whether through oral storytelling or written narratives, is another beneficial strategy for reaffirming self-identity. Older persons can look back on their experiences, successes, and difficulties they have faced by discussing their life history. It gives them a feeling of purpose and fulfilment, boosts their self-esteem, and serves to justify their life’s journey. One can assist the older adult in recalling and sharing their memories, allowing them to relive those moments and feel a feeling of pride and fulfilment, by actively participating in talks and asking questions about the objects or the tales linked with them.

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Encouraging the seniors to use technologies

For older folks, the internet and social networking are fantastic resources. For senior citizens, they present a variety of options and benefits. For instance---

- a) Technology enables older folks to stay socially connected, even when they are geographically separated from their loved ones and friends. Seniors can remain in touch, share updates, and have meaningful conversations using video calls, messaging applications, and social media platforms, which helps to fight social isolation and offers frequent opportunities for social interaction. One could argue that using technology is essential for one's mental and emotional health.
- b) *Access to information and resources:* Seniors can benefit from and find value in the information and resources available on the internet. They have simple access to news, publications, learning resources, and health-related data. This empowers them to stay informed, learn new things, and make informed decisions about their well-being.
- c) *Mental stimulation:* Seniors' use of technology can help keep their minds active. They can browse different websites, engage in cognitively demanding video games, take part in online classes, or engage in brain-training exercises. These activities support cognitive health, improve overall mental wellbeing, and help older persons keep their minds busy.
- d) *Convenience and accessibility:* As it provides older folks with convenience and accessibility, technology can be seen as a blessing for elders. From the convenience of their homes, they may shop online, handle their accounts, make appointments, and use a variety of services. Seniors with mobility issues or people who live in distant places may find this degree of convenience to be extremely beneficial.
- e) *Support and assistance:* Online platforms and communities provide support and assistance for older adults. There are numerous forums, support groups, and online communities that are designed expressly to meet the needs and interests of senior citizens. Seniors can interact with people going through comparable situations, exchange experiences, and ask for guidance or emotional support.
- f) *Engaging in hobbies and interests:* Technology also makes it possible for elders to explore and pursue their interests and hobbies. They can join online communities, participate in virtual interest groups, and access resources related to their passions. This can provide a sense of fulfillment, purpose, and enjoyment.

While technology can greatly benefit older adults, it's crucial to provide guidance, support, and education to ensure they can navigate the digital world safely and confidently. Encouraging seniors to embrace technology and helping them overcome any barriers or concerns they may have can open up a world of opportunities for social connection, information, and engagement, ultimately enhancing their overall well-being.

Encourage the Feeling of Usefulness

Many cognitively active older adults want to feel a sense of usefulness, even if their physical functions are limited. Identify and introduce conversational topics or tasks where the senior can feel wanted and needed. For example: a) Ask them for advice on practical as well as important life matters. b) Converse with them like they're mentors, c) Ask for their opinions on certain decisions you need to make. d) Introduce manageable projects or tasks for them to be in charge of where they'll feel a sense of accomplishment.

Encourage Adaptive, Flexible Coping skills

As an older adult experience increased cognitive and/or physical limitation, facilitate various types of coping skills to help the senior adjust with dignity. These can include: a) Fewer but workable goals as previously mentioned. b) Divide and conquer: break tasks down into baby steps that are more manageable. c) Assist the senior in identifying more realistic goals. d) Assist the senior in selecting alternative means to accomplishing goals. e) Allowing the senior to do what she's able, while helping just enough to complete a goal.

Conclusion

Motivation contributes to a healthy aging process. There are several reasons--- firstly, it is instrumental in combating stress of life, secondly motivation also leads to fostering of creativity and improvement in cognition which subsequently leads to success in all areas of life, including relationships and work performance. It aids in cultivating a stronger sense of self, which often leads to improved physical health and mental wellbeing. Motivation plays a crucial role in various aspects of our lives, including our physical and mental well-being. Motivated individuals often exhibit healthier eating habits, opting for balanced meals, and engaging in regular exercise. This connection between motivation and health can be attributed to the drive and determination that motivate individuals to prioritize their well-being. Furthermore, motivation extends beyond personal health and has a profound impact on our social interactions. Feeling motivated allows everyone including elderly persons to experience a sense of purpose and connection with others. When individuals are motivated, they are more likely to engage in acts of compassion and spread positivity. This positive energy attracts like-minded, motivated individuals, creating a virtuous cycle that fosters a supportive and uplifting environment.

Motivation empowers elderly person to lead healthier lives, connect with others, and find purpose and direction. By cultivating motivation within aged people can not only enhance their well-being but also inspire those around them.

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