

Listen to a Senior, Combat Loneliness

Senior loneliness is pervasive around the globe and a condition that can affect people's physical and mental health. And though most boomers and seniors want to stay in their home to age, it often can be a lonely endeavor.

Even in neighborhoods that are full of people, seniors often look outside and see no one.

Kids are busy with activities and school, parents are working and running the kids around, and there's often little time or opportunity to get to know neighbors.

In a New York Times essay (<https://nyti.ms/2Zzl6rd>), Spencer Morgan talks about his experience of a chance meeting with a senior in his neighborhood.

Morgan was approached by an 88-year-old man who chatted him up and then ended the conversation by saying, "But before I let you go ... you seem like a nice young man ... and well, this is a nice block, but it's changed a lot. And mainly people just keep to themselves, and, well, my wife and I, most of our friends have died, and, well, oftentimes we feel lonely."

Morgan invited the man and his wife to their Easter brunch. They accepted.

"We can do better," writes Morgan.

Yes, we can. His solution is dead simple.

"Next time you're out for a walk in your neighborhood and you spot an elder man or woman, introduce yourself. The task is simple: begin a conversation, tell something about yourself, listen for any interests they share with you so you can engage them in a meaningful way next time you see each other," he writes.

Finding a better life with dementia

NPR's Fresh Air host, Terry Gross, dove into the complex world of dementia with her guest Tia Powell, a bioethicist and author of *Dementia Reimagined Building a Life of Joy and Dignity from Beginning to End*.

Powell and Gross (<https://n.pr/2KWBC1t>) covered the wide range of challenges and complications – physical, financial, emotional – that accompany dementia.

Powell has firsthand experience with dementia, having watched her mom and grandmother suffer from the disease. She discussed whether those with dementia can get respite from its misery and enjoy a better quality of life and even find a bit of happiness.

She thinks that part of that entails planning and thinking about the small things that bring pleasure – whether it's being in a garden, listening to music, or spending time with animals – and creating advanced directives that incorporate those things. If music is a source of joy, consider making a playlist of your favorite songs, for instance.

That directive also can include wishes about medical intervention and what you consider too much. Powell pointed out that it's hard to predict the medial advances that will be made and said, "I wouldn't get too caught up in the specific interventions. I'd focus on what it is that you're hoping to accomplish. The best directive is the one that focuses on the goals. What is it that you're hoping us to use the tools of medicine to get to?"

Having a conversation about such issues with loved ones also is important, and Powell acknowledges that it's a hard conversation to have. "But it's actually a lot harder not to have it. You're much more likely to get the end that you would prefer than if you pretend it's not coming and let somebody else set things up," she said.

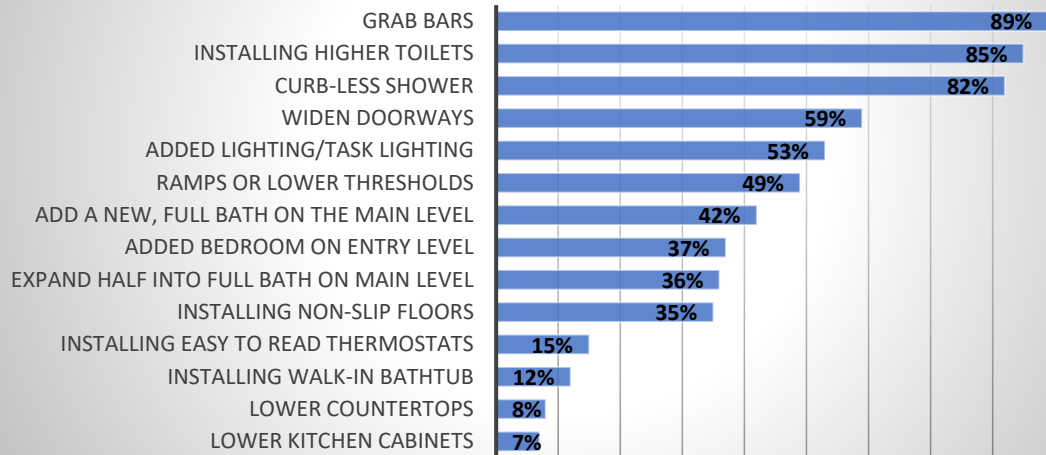
Aging-in-place upgrades

If you're among the 48 percent of Canadian baby boomers who don't plan to downsize – a statistic reported in a 2018 Ipsos survey – consider focusing on making your house more age friendly.

The National Association of Homebuilders' *What Home Buyers Really Want*, identifies the most common aging-in-place remodeling (<https://bit.ly/31yYKch>) projects.

Common Aging-in-Place Remodeling Projects

(Share of NAHB Remodelers Reporting Projects Were Common, Past 12 Months)



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