

Five pillars facilitating Ageing Well

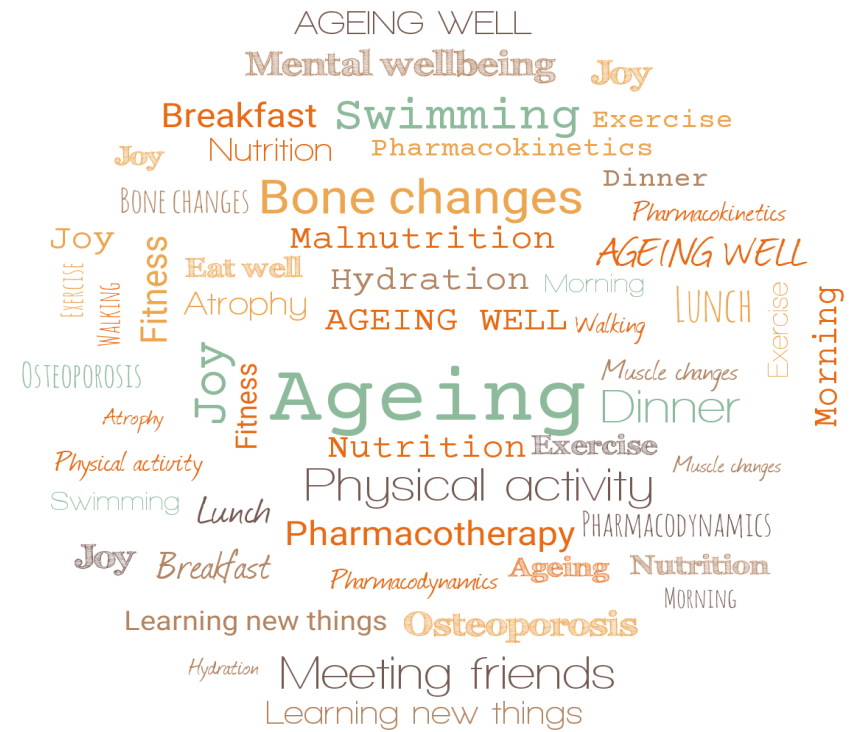
Nutrition

Hydration

Physical stimulation

Social stimulation

Cognitive stimulation







- Tiredness of our systems – when young we have it too but we can sleep it off – not so easy while ageing as many other things come together.
- Multitasking – stress and ageing enhance further changes on hormonal and cognitive and physical levels
- Stress management (different set of hormones)

**Ideal response:**

**Good lifestyle choices** can make these changes **partially reversible** – **'The Five Pillars of Ageing Well'**



**Normal**

**Neuron**



**With stimulation**

**Healthy, Human  
Brain**



**Aged, Human  
Brain**

# What else is normal for cognitive ageing?

- General slowing of neuronal and sensory processing & perception and increased spatial segmentation

—————> Becoming slower when responding or reacting (**slower postural reflexes lead to higher risk of falls**) and worsened orientation in space.

- Decreased complex, divided, and sustained attention, primary and working memory, retrieval of stored memory

—————> Shortened attention span (very important when it comes to memory)

- Accentuation of certain personality traits

—————> Personality traits & chronic conditions may **become more prominent**

# Are we winners by choice?

Five pillars facilitating Ageing Well

Nutrition

Hydration

Physical stimulation

Social stimulation

Cognitive stimulation





- The brain is capable of producing new brain cells at any age (at much slower rate when older), but still significant memory loss is *not* an inevitable result of aging.
- But just as it is with muscle strength, we need to exercise /stimulate it if we don't want to lose the function.
- Our lifestyle, health habits, and daily activities have a huge impact on the health of our brain.
- Whatever our age, there are many ways we can improve our cognitive skills, attention span and prevent memory loss.

- Furthermore, many mental abilities are largely unaffected by normal aging, such as:
  - Our ability to do the things we've always done and continue to do often
  - The wisdom and knowledge we've acquired from life experience
  - Our innate common sense and ability to form reasonable arguments and judgments
- For most people, **occasional lapses in memory** are a **normal part** of the **aging process**, not a warning sign of serious mental deterioration or the onset of dementia.

# Main causes of age-related memory loss

- The **hippocampus**, a region of the brain involved in the formation and retrieval of memories, **often deteriorates with age**.
- **Hormones and proteins** that protect and repair brain cells and stimulate neural growth also **decline with age**.
- Older people often experience **decreased regular blood flow** to the brain, which can impair memory and lead to changes in cognitive skills - **lack of exercise**
- **Dehydration**
- **Sleeplessness**

- **Occasionally forgetting** where we left things we use regularly, such as glasses or keys.
- **Forgetting names of acquaintances** or blocking one memory with a similar one, such as calling a grandson by the son's name.
- **Occasionally forgetting** an appointment or walking into a room and forgetting why we entered.
- **Becoming easily distracted** or having trouble remembering what we've just read, or the details of a conversation.
- Not quite being able to **retrieve information** we have "on the tip of our tongue."
- More on differences between dementia, age related memory decline and reversible causes for memory loss - in our talk Ageing Brain [The ageing brain \(Dr Jitka Vseteckova OU & Prof Marco Calabria\)](#)



# Dr Helen Joannidi, Clinical Psychologist



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# What is the Self? – some theories

- Descartes – cogito, ergo sum : I am a thinking being
- Freud – id (biological needs / drives), ego (will), superego (morality, rationality/consciousness)
- Jung – The unified consciousness and unconsciousness – the central force that guides our development
- Self Concept.....

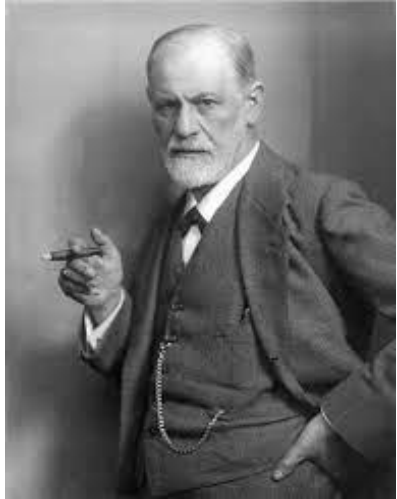


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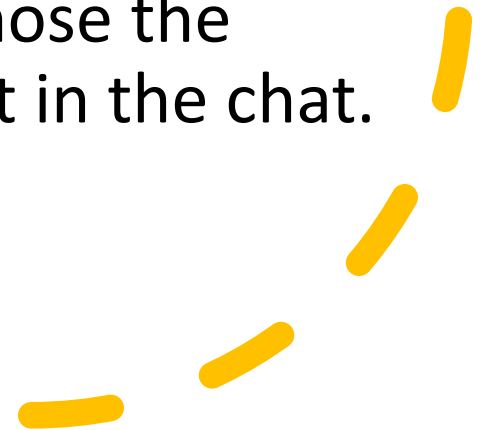
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# The Self (Self Concept) – Who Am I? An Exercise...

- On a piece of paper, write 'who am I?'. See if you can answer this question in 5 words.
- When you have your 5 words, chose the most important one, and share it in the chat.





# What can make up our sense of self?

- Our body image
- Our friends / relationships / community
- Our job / career
- Our past-times / hobbies / activities
- Our taste in music / food / art
- Our talents and skills
- Our culture / language
- Our family 'rules'
- Our Spirituality / Religion
- Our personality
- How we express ourselves through clothes
- Our deep-held beliefs and values





## Why beliefs and values are important in understanding our sense of self

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- Beliefs and values can be formed early in life and held for life
- Are connected to our Culture & family
- May be unconscious
- The longer or more deeply held, the more we hold on to them

# Self Concept and Self Esteem

- How do you think self concept is related to self esteem? Write in the comments.....



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# How can Aging affect the Sense of Self?

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- Changes associated with this time of life – changing body, life and family situation
- Changes that are associated with loss can affect our sense of self the most:
  - Retirement – loss of job & value of this
  - Loss of some physical or cognitive abilities
  - Loss of activities arising from this on activities
  - Loss of partner

# Practicing Compassion towards Self in Aging

- Compassion is defined by being moved to help or support someone whom you perceive to be struggling or in need
- This could be others or ourselves
- It is normally easier to have compassion for others, but self-compassion is very important.
- Compassion is acting towards ourselves with kindness and love
- Contrary to a common fear, self-compassion does not inflate ego, but helps us connect with our deeper, 'wise and nurturing' self
- This may be as simple as buying ourselves flowers, making a cup of tea, going for a walk when we feel we need it, or seeing friends



# Compassion – a practice

- Here is a simple compassion practice that can be done to help connect with, and grow a sense of compassion.
- First of all, make yourself comfortable with a good posture, and closing your eyes if that is comfortable.
- When you are settled, listen to the guidance.



# How to Build a sense of Self in Aging

- Keep active and engaged
- Keep socializing
- Discover new things
- Reminisce!
- Be creative!
- Record your story
- Connects with the 5 pillars of social, cognitive & physical stimulation



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What happens when our Sense of Self is challenged?

- Feeling of loss
- Feeling of disorientation / confusion
- Feeling of anger / resentment
- Feeling of fear
- Feeling of isolation / embarrassment





# The Opportunity of a Challenge to Self

- From Acceptance and Commitment Therapy – our pain is in our values – we cannot have one without the other
- The idea of breakdown as breakthrough
- The chance to start again – be a 'new' me
- Connect with what is important – the part of us that endures through change





# How mindfulness can help

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- Practicing mindfulness is about being present in this moment, and bringing our awareness to our senses
- This can help give our mind a focus, and a rest from worrying about the future, or from dwelling on difficult past events
- Mindfulness can help with a sense of peace and calm
- Mindfulness can be a useful coping mechanism when we feel challenged, uncertain, confused, upset or distressed
- By focusing on the present, we can ‘come back to ourselves’
- Mindfulness can also help connect us with our ‘wise selves’

# Mindfulness – a practice

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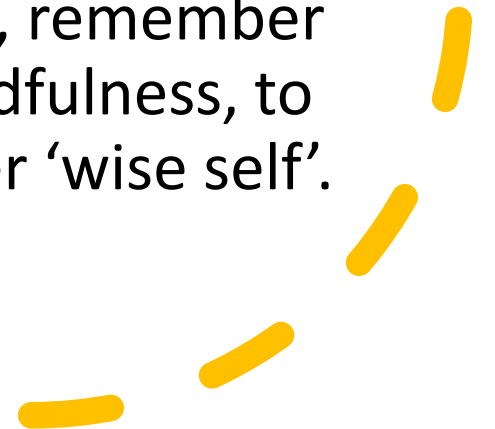


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- Here is a simple practice that is an introduction to experiencing mindfulness.
- Find your comfortable position again and close your eyes.
- Listen to the guidance.

# Top Tips to Take Home – how to preserve a sense of self

- Keep active and engaged with life – move!
- Keep socializing
- Discover new things
- Reminisce! – music, photos, stories
- Be creative! Dance! Draw!
- Record your story
- Be guided by your beliefs and values, as these make us what we are
- If things are difficult or challenging, remember to practice self-compassion or mindfulness, to help to connect with the deep inner ‘wise self’.



Any Questions or comments?



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# The benefits of the outdoors for preserving our Sense of Self



16<sup>th</sup> November 2022



# Mindfulness and the outdoors

- The great outdoors is a wonderful place to practise **mindfulness**.
- Remember to **take notice** of your surroundings.
- Observing seasonal changes e.g. life cycle of a tree.
- Walking therapy.
- Learning something new from nature.



# A sensory experience outdoors

- Full sensory experience fosters a feeling of **being** and **being in the moment**.
- Imagine walking through wet grass, brushing past leaves and smelling damp earth.
- Reduction in anxiety and improved concentration.
- Prompting shared experiences from common viewpoint.
- **Taking notice** of changes in the environment.





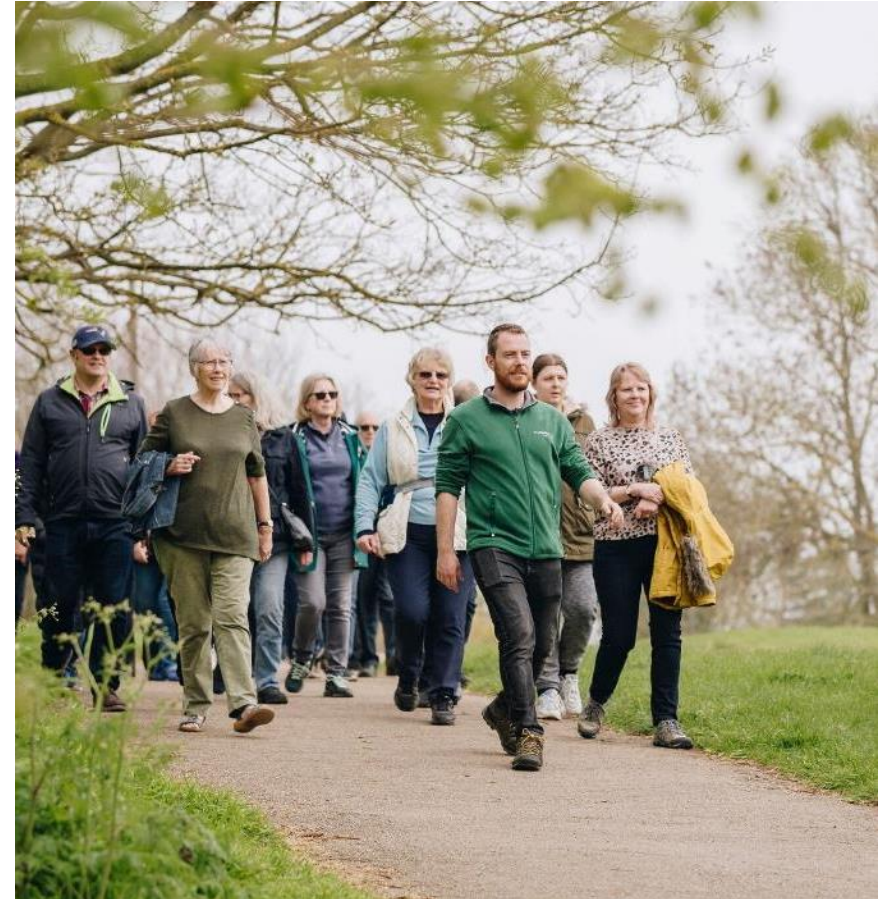
# Volunteering

- Over 200 volunteers.
- Events, outdoor learning, ranger and practical conservation roles.
- Many volunteers are retired and help out in their local park.
- Celebrating achievements.
- 31% volunteers serving >5 years
- 96% feel valued.
- Varied reasons for deciding to volunteer.
- Community days throughout the year.



# 5 Ways Café at St. Andrew's Church

- Started as 'Dementia Friendly Café' in 2019. Rebranded as 5 Ways Café.
- Every 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Tuesday of the month, 11am-1pm.
- Community café where all are welcome, including people experiencing dementia, their carers and families.
- Volunteers are Dementia Friends.
- Guided walks of the parkland and village.
- Impacted by covid.
- Open University research on barriers and facilitators to walking via The Walking Programme.





# Dementia Friendly Resources: Spotter Sheet

- Self-guided, free resource.
- Developed in collaboration with the OU.
- Return to childhood spotting games, e.g. I-Spy.
- Full sensory experience.
- What can you see, smell, hear and feel in the park?

<https://www.theparkstrust.com/spottersheet>

## Spotter Sheet

Welcome to Great Linford Manor Park! Now a public park, it was once the garden of the manor, designed in the 18th century as an English Landscape garden. Some interesting features of the garden still remain like the Doric Seat, water garden and the Haha ditch.



As you enjoy the park today, can you spot...



People playing sport?



A canal boat?



Someone walking a  
dog?



Someone cycling?



Ducks in the ponds?



The manor house?

# Dementia Friendly Resources: Sensory Scavenger Hunt

- Take notice and collect things from around the park.
- Grown-ups enjoy scavenger hunts too!
- Muti-generational.
- <https://www.theparkstrust.com/sensoryhunt>




## Sensory Scavenger Hunt




Everyone loves a scavenger hunt! You can use this sheet in any of our parks. Sensory hunts encourage us to pay attention to all of our senses and to take notice of the world around us.

Suitable for all ages!

Stick, draw or describe what you scavenge in the relevant box

 Rough	Smooth	Hard	
Squishy	Wet	Smells nice	Smells weird
Heavy	Light	Green	Patterned
	Small	Long	Warm

Share photos of your completed Scavenger Sheets with us on social media @TheParksTrust

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# Dementia Friendly Resources: Spring from Home

- Savour the spring season from home.
- Digital and printed versions.
- Distribution via food parcels and to local care homes.
- Volunteer effort from home – connecting people.
- <https://www.theparkstrust.com/springfromhome>



## Spring from home

**Bringing the park to you. A self-led activity resource.**

This pack contains some activities and ideas to help you enjoy your local park from a distance and connect with nature from home.

Here are some images from our parks, looking lovely in the spring. What is your favourite spring flower and why?

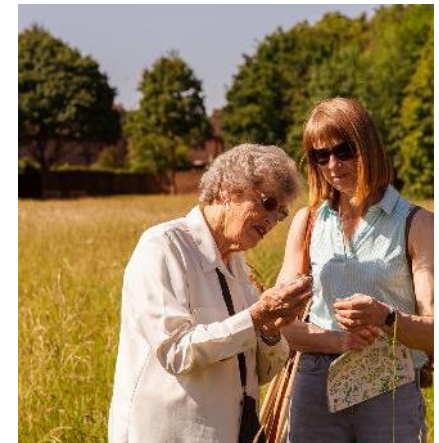
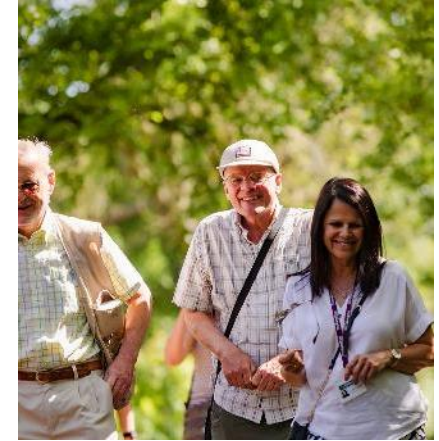


What thoughts, memories or emotions do these photos conjure up?



# Parks Trust Events and Activities

- 6000 acres of parks, woodlands, lakes and green spaces = 25% of MK city.
- Discovery Strolls
- Self-guided walks
- 5 Ways Café
- Outdoor Learning activities available to book or contact team directly: [outdoorlearning@theparkstrust.com](mailto:outdoorlearning@theparkstrust.com) on behalf of a group, care home or other organisation.



## 3 things to take away



Try to get outside at least once a day, wherever you live.



Consider volunteering as a way of ageing well and maintaining a sense of self.



Look at your local green space with fresh eyes, taking notice of your surroundings.



[www.theparkstrust.com/events](http://www.theparkstrust.com/events)





# Thank you

For further information please get in touch

Tel: 01908 233600  
[www.theparkstrust.com](http://www.theparkstrust.com)



Thank you for joining today 😊 were happy to take any questions



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Normal age-related memory changes	Symptoms that may indicate dementia
Able to function independently and pursue normal activities, despite occasional memory lapses	Difficulty performing simple tasks (paying bills, dressing appropriately, washing up); forgetting how to do things you've done many times
Able to recall and describe incidents of forgetfulness	Unable to recall or describe specific instances where memory loss caused problems
May pause to remember directions, but doesn't get lost in familiar places	Gets lost or disoriented even in familiar places; unable to follow directions
Occasional difficulty finding the right word, but no trouble holding a conversation	Words are frequently forgotten, misused, or garbled; Repeats phrases and stories in same conversation
Judgment and decision-making ability the same as always	Trouble making choices; May show poor judgment or behave in socially inappropriate ways

Lifestyles that combine **cognitively stimulating activities with physical activities and rich social networks** may provide the best odds of preserving cognitive function in old age (La Rue, 2010).

## What is your experience?

Recommendation	Rationale
Make time for cognitively stimulating activities that you've always enjoyed.	Continuing favourite activities can ensure sustainability of cognitive stimulation. Long-term exposure to cognitive stimulation may be needed for practical functional benefits.
Add some new cognitive challenges, as your time and enjoyment permit	Trying new activities may enhance brain plasticity by requiring new learning or development of new cognitive strategies <b>MUSIC LESSONS, LEARNING NEW LANGUAGE, AQUA</b>

Recommendation	Rationale
Aim to engage in cognitively stimulating activities several times a week or more...generate some “ <i>mental sweat.</i> ”	Current knowledge does not permit a prescription for how often or how long individuals should engage in cognitively stimulating activities. However, epidemiologic studies suggest that more is better, within clinically reasonable limits.
Be aware that there is no one cognitive activity, or combination of activities, that is uniquely good for reducing AD risk.	Many different types of cognitively stimulating activities have been associated with preserved cognitive skill. There are no data yet to show that cognitive activities prevent or delay AD.
Social interactions are a great way to stimulate the mind.	Group training of cognitive skills has been shown to be effective in sharpening specific cognitive skills, and broader social networks have been associated with reduced AD risk.

# Summary of related resources to The Ageing Well Public Talk Series

## Podcasts

- Vseteckova J & King J (2020) COVID-19 Interview podcast for The Retirement Café: '[Ageing Well Under Lockdown](#)'
- Vseteckova J & Broad E (2020) Podcast – Open University & The Parks Trust [Keep Me Walking - researching with people living with dementia and their carers](#) -
- Vseteckova J (2020) Podcast - [Areas of research with The Open University](#)
- Broad E, Methley A & Vseteckova J (2021) Podcast OU & The Parks Trust & Northamptonshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust - [Spotter sheet and mindful walking](#).
- Vseteckova J, Methley A, Broad E (2021) Podcast OU & The Parks Trust & Northamptonshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust [Preventing brain decline while ageing](#)
- Methley A, Broad E, Vseteckova J (2021) Podcast OU & The Parks Trust & Northamptonshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust [Walking therapy](#)
- Vseteckova J, Methely A, Broad (2021) Podcast OU & The Parks Trust & Northamptonshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust [Understanding our memory](#)
- The above podcasts can be also seen on [The Parks Trust YouTube Channel](#)



## **OpenLearn Resources:**

- Vseteckova J (2020) **Ageing Well Public Talk Series** <https://www.open.edu/openlearn/health-sports-psychology/health/the-ageing-well-public-talks>
- Vseteckova J (2019) **5 reasons why exercising outdoors is great for people who have dementia** <https://www.open.edu/openlearn/health-sports-psychology/mental-health/5-reasons-why-exercising-outdoors-great-people-who-have-dementia>
- Vseteckova J (2019) **Depression, mood and exercise** [https://www.open.edu/openlearn/health-sports-psychology/mental-health/depression-mood-and-exercise?in\\_menu=622279](https://www.open.edu/openlearn/health-sports-psychology/mental-health/depression-mood-and-exercise?in_menu=622279)
- Vseteckova J (2019) **Five Pillars for Ageing Well** <https://www.open.edu/openlearn/health-sports-psychology/mental-health/five-pillars-ageing-well>
- Vseteckova J (2020) **Ageing Brain** <https://www.open.edu/openlearn/health-sports-psychology/health/the-ageing-brain-use-it-or-lose-it>
- Vseteckova J (2020) **Ageing Well Public Talks Series II. Plan for 2020 – 2021** <https://www.open.edu/openlearn/health-sports-psychology/health/ageing-well-public-talk-series-plan-2020/2021>

- Vseteckova J, Broad E, Andrew V (2021) **The impact of walking and socialising through 5 Ways Café on people living with dementia and their carers: A volunteer's perspective** <https://www.open.edu/openlearn/health-sports-psychology/health/the-impact-walking-and-socialising-through-5-ways-cafe-on-people-living-dementia-and-their-carers>
- Vseteckova J, Methley A, Lucassen M (2021) **The benefits of mindfulness and five common myths surrounding it** <https://www.open.edu/openlearn/health-sports-psychology/mental-health/the-benefits-mindfulness-and-five-common-myths-surrounding-it>
- Methley A, Vseteckova J, Broad E (2021) **Outdoor Therapy: The Benefits of Walking and Talking** <https://www.open.edu/openlearn/health-sports-psychology/mental-health/outdoor-therapy-the-benefits-walking-and-talking>
- Vseteckova J, Methley a, Broad E (2021) **What happens to our brain as we age and how we can stop the fast decline** <https://www.open.edu/openlearn/health-sports-psychology/health/what-happens-our-brain-we-age-and-how-can-we-stop-the-decline>
- Methley A & Vseteckova J & Jones K (2020) **Green & Blue & Outdoor spaces** <https://www.open.edu/openlearn/health-sports-psychology/mental-health/the-benefits-outdoor-green-and-blue-spaces>
- Vseteckova J, Borgstrom E, Whitehouse A, Kent A, Hart A (2021) **Advance Care Planning (ACP) - Discuss, Decide, Document and Share Advance Care Planning (ACP) - Discuss, Decide, Document and Share - OpenLearn - Open University** <https://www.open.edu/openlearn/health-sports-psychology/mental-health/advance-care-planning-ACP-discuss-decide-document-and-share>



- Vseteckova J (2020) **Walking the Parks with The OU and The Parks Trust** <https://www.open.edu/openlearn/health-sports-psychology/social-care-social-work/keep-me-walking-people-living-dementia-and-outdoor-environments>
- Vseteckova J, Methley A, Broad E (2021) **Understanding our memory** [What do we need to know about our memory? - OpenLearn - Open University](#)
- Araya Y , Broad E, Vseteckova J (2022) **Engaging with our environment** <https://www.open.edu/openlearn/health-sports-psychology/mental-health/engaging-our-environment-what-are-the-benefits>
- Vseteckova J (2022) **Pharmacotherapy while ageing** <https://www.open.edu/openlearn/health-sports-psychology/pharmacotherapy-while-ageing>
- Mehta S (2022) **Medicines and personalisation while ageing** [Medicines and personalisation - OpenLearn - Open University](#)
- Gale B (2022) How can we prepare for death while ageing? [Ageing Well Public Talk Series related - https://www.open.edu/openlearn/health-sports-psychology/health/valuing-death](#)

## COVID-19 related

- Vseteckova J, **How to age well, while self-isolating** (2020) <https://www.open.edu/openlearn/health-sports-psychology/how-age-well-while-self-isolating>
- Vseteckova J, (2020) **SHORT FILM - Ageing Well in Self-Isolation** <https://youtu.be/LU4pXFgcGos>
- Vseteckova J, (2020) **ANIMATION - Keeping healthy in Self-Isolation** <https://youtu.be/M9yUC-MUugA>
- Vseteckova J et al (2020) **COVID-19 The effects of self-isolation and lack of physical activity on carers** <https://www.open.edu/openlearn/health-sports-psychology/social-care-social-work/the-effects-self-isolation-and-lack-physical-activity-on-carers>
- Taverner P, Larkin M, Vseteckova J, et al. (2020) **Supporting adult carers during COVID-19 pandemic** <https://www.open.edu/openlearn/health-sports-psychology/social-care-social-work/how-can-adult-carers-get-the-best-support-during-covid-19-pandemic-and-beyond>
- Robb M, Penson M, Vseteckova J, et al. (2020) **Young carers, COVID-19 and physical activity** <https://www.open.edu/openlearn/health-sports-psychology/social-care-social-work/young-carerscovid-19-and-physical-activity>
- Penson M, Vseteckova J et al. (2020) **Older Carers, COVID-19 and Physical Activity** <https://www.open.edu/openlearn/health-sports-psychology/social-care-social-work/older-carers-covid-19-and-physical-activity>
- Vseteckova J & Methley A (2020) **Acceptance Commitment Therapy (ACT) to help carers in challenging COVID-19 times** <https://www.open.edu/openlearn/health-sports-psychology/health/how-can-acceptance-and-commitment-therapy-help-carers-challenging-times-such-the-covid-19-pandemic>

**'Ageing Well Public Talks' Series 2022/2023 repository on ORDO Collections**

[https://ordo.open.ac.uk/collections/Ageing Well Public Talks 2022-23/5982802](https://ordo.open.ac.uk/collections/Ageing_Well_Public_Talks_2022-23/5982802)

**'Ageing Well Public Talks' Series 2021/2022 repository on ORDO Collections**

[https://ordo.open.ac.uk/collections/Ageing Well Public Talks 2021-22/5493216](https://ordo.open.ac.uk/collections/Ageing_Well_Public_Talks_2021-22/5493216)

**'Ageing Well Public Talks' Series 2020/2021 repository on ORDO Collections**

[https://ordo.open.ac.uk/collections/Ageing Well Public Talks 2020-21/5122166](https://ordo.open.ac.uk/collections/Ageing_Well_Public_Talks_2020-21/5122166)

**'Ageing Well Public Talks' Series 2019/2020 repository on ORDO Collections**

<https://doi.org/10.21954/ou.rd.c.4716437.v1>

**OpenLearnCreate Course on 'Ageing Well' 2019/2020**

<https://www.open.edu/openlearncreate/course/view.php?id=5016>

**Home exercise no equipment – no problem *Blog***

<https://selsdotlife.wordpress.com/2020/04/01/home-exercises-for-older-adults-no-equipment-no-problem/>





# Ageing Well series of Public Talks 2022/23- topics



- ***Are we prepared to live longer?*** (Jitka Vseteckova & Lyndsey Simpson & Catherine Pestano) **September 14<sup>th</sup> 2022**
- ***Taking control of dying*** (Barbara Gale & Victoria Hedges) **October 19<sup>th</sup> 2022**
- ***Memory and preserving Sense of Self while ageing*** (Jitka Vseteckova & Helen Joannidi & Ellie Broad) **November 16<sup>th</sup> 2022**
- ***Equality, diversity and inclusion in access and provision of care in health services*** (Carlos M Lequizamon) **December 14<sup>th</sup> 2022**
- ***General Practices 'COVID-19 and beyond'*** (Andrew Potter) **January 18<sup>th</sup> 2023**
- ***Living with diabetes and nutrition while ageing*** (Jitka Vseteckova & Alan Hastings) **February 22<sup>nd</sup> 2023**
- ***Relationships and couple intimacy while ageing*** (Andreas Vossler) **March 15<sup>th</sup> 2023**
- ***Lets' talk about sleep*** (Abi Methley) **April 19<sup>th</sup> 2023**
- ***Health Inequalities and Ageing*** (Sonal Mehta) **May 17<sup>th</sup> 2023**
- ***Ways to exercise and having fun at the same time*** (Jackie Richards & David Curry) **June 14<sup>th</sup> 2023**
- ***Ageing, later life and caring in LGBTQ communities*** (Joseph DeLappe & Tony Collins-Moore) **July 12<sup>th</sup> 2023**

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Useful resources:

<https://ordo.open.ac.uk/account/home#/collections/5982802>  
[https://ordo.open.ac.uk/collections/Ageing\\_Well\\_Public\\_Talks\\_2021-22/5493216](https://ordo.open.ac.uk/collections/Ageing_Well_Public_Talks_2021-22/5493216)





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