

PLANNING FOR THE YEARS AHEAD

The topic for January's Lunch & Learn was Planning for the Year(s) Ahead. The comments and suggestions from the participants will help us all! Remember to make this a year of action. In 2023, we're going to pull those "should do" things off the shelf and get them done! For those of you who are Village members, watch out for those study halls!

Our **Lunch & Learn Archive** page: <https://seacoast.helpfulvillage.com/pages/10070-lunch-&-learn-archive> contains past Lunch & Learn sessions pertaining to the topics that we discussed about planning ahead. The dates are included in parentheses to facilitate finding them on the archive page.

Together, we discussed ideas in four areas of planning for successful aging—health, functioning, home suitability, and resources—and shared ideas to make plans a reality. As you read through this document, size up your own situation. Tap into the resource links that interest or inspire you.

Karl Singer mentioned some "fine tuning" steps to take his very healthy lifestyle up a notch – substituting olive oil for butter, sprinting upstairs and adding more cardio to his workout. He gave a presentation called **Maximizing Good Health**, which had other great ideas and tips. (1/18/22)

Getting your emergency health information on paper is an important aspect of planning ahead. I did a presentation called **Advocating for Yourself in Today's Stressed Healthcare System**. (2/15/22) With the feedback from that session, we also developed a template for an **Emergency Medical Information form** (2/15/22).

We discussed the importance of choosing a Durable Power of Attorney for Health Care and making sure that the person you choose knows of your wishes. Members shared ideas on how they've made their voices heard – from making a recording to sharing documents on a flash drive. To hear more about what kinds of decisions these agents will be asked to make, take a look at Sarah MacDuffie's presentation on **Palliative Care**. (5/4/21).

A lot of us wrestle with choosing our decision makers – especially in a family with lots of candidates. Andrea Sennott's presentation, **Powers of Attorney – Choosing Wisely** addresses these issues. (6/8/21)

We discussed ways to share documents and passwords – sensitive topics with many possible options. We will pursue this further in a separate session. One thing that came up often was the importance of setting up our systems in a manner that our agent can use them easily. A related reminder has to do with bill paying. It's important that someone knows how you would like to have this handled if you weren't able to do it yourself.

We discussed some proactive ways we can prevent falls in the first place. Katie Machaud presented **Preventing Falls: Strategies for Staying on your Feet**. (5/18/22) Kris Rench presented **Adapting Your Home for Safety and Easier Living** (3/15/22) which gave us lots of useful tips.

Karl took advantage of Kris Rench's skills and had safety devices installed in his home. He also does not carry things in two hands on the stairs. Another good tip is installing lever handles

rather than regular knobs – especially on doors that lead to entrance/exits – places where you might have your hands full. Another member installed hand railings on both sides of the stairs – a good move. And using motion sensor night-lights makes all the sense in the world. I love the light that helps you find the toilet in the dark.

If you need help, you need a system. We quickly talked about PERS devices (personal emergency alert systems) and agreed that it's worth a panel discussion this year. Also, please take a look at emergency access to your house and make sure that someone you call to help you can get in without breaking a window.

If you have someone who is counting on you (human or animal), make sure you have plans for someone to look after them if something happens to you.

What do you have for health insurance? With all the talk about changes to Medicare, it's important to know how your insurance works and what it costs. Member Alan Bennett and I will be holding in-person workshops in February and March to help members explore this important issue. To prepare by learning the basics about Medicare, view our presentation on **Demystifying Medicare & Medicare Supplements**. (9/7/21)

Don't forget that the Village is a valuable resource! Connecting with others to share ideas and resources, learning about things you can do to prepare to age well and volunteering to help others will keep you in good stead.

If things are changing for you, if you could use a hand with a project, a ride or some information, speak up! Sizing up your options early minimizes stress and gives you more choices.

VILLAGE MEMBERS

We have a lending library in our office. If you have a book you'd like to contribute or if you'd like to browse our offerings, stop in to see us! Cari is in the office weekdays except Thursdays.

If you would like to participate in our Storm Preparation program, let us know. If you can be part of a calling tree to reach out to members in your area, we'd love to have your help. If you would like to have a volunteer help with preparation and check in during bad weather, send an email to cari@seacoastvillageproject.org. We made 40 calls during the most recent storm and people were delighted to get the call.

NOT A MEMBER?

If you are interested in learning more about the Village and membership, please join us at one of the Membership Information Sessions (on Zoom). You are also welcome to attend our geographic meetups. You can see the schedule and RSVP by visiting our Events page: https://seacoast.helpfulvillage.com/events/index_list