

Carmarthenshire opportunities

There are walking groups in Carmarthenshire called Walking Well, that encourage people to take their physical, social and mental health and take part in various groups to keep active with other people. Walking Well generally helps people to fit in the activities based on their fitness level and helps to gradually introduce them to longer walks, starting with simple strolls, to average walks as the individuals health gradually improves due to the regular exercise (Walking Well Carmarthenshire, 2020). Find out more information at: <https://walkingwellcarmarthenshire.org.uk/>

Other walking groups that you can join in the Carmarthenshire area is the Carmarthen and District Ramblers Group – similar to Walking Well Carmarthenshire – a group is taken to some of Wales’ most beautiful countryside (Carmarthen Ramblers, n.d.). More information at: <https://www.carmarthenramblers.org.uk/>

It is recommended that to ensure you are physically healthy to aim for at least an average of 150 minutes of exercise a week, but not to overdue yourself if the work that you did before retiring did not allow for you to do enough exercise in your life previously (British Heart Foundation, n.d.).

But if walking is not what you wish to do spending your time, while keeping physically and mentally and healthy, the link below helps people to open up to a newer range of possible groups to join:

The University of the Third Age opens opportunities for many people who wish to share experiences and learn without the needs of qualifications to join or that no degrees are given. The members share their experiences with others—without having to teach and learn each other (University of the Third Age, 2020). More information available at: <http://carmarthenu3a.org.uk/>

Positive Living in Retirement

Financial Check

Money is the main factor that people need to think of before retiring, according to Citizens Advice (2015). To have enough income is the most known thought to have when planning to approach their retirement in the future, with the main area of their focus being on their ‘secure and comfortable’ future. Free and informed information from Citizens Advice (2021).

Emotional Check

When approaching retirement prepare yourself emotionally for the changes from working to having a lot of spare time. Jay Cassie (70 years) shares her experience about how she prepared emotionally for her retirement from being an Exhibition Coordinator for Earls Court and Olympia for 22 years. She used a 3-point plan to prepare. This included a phased reduction in time spent working by changing jobs and then becoming a silent partner in a new business. Then setting up and being involved in a variety of unrelated projects which were of interest and which she had never had time to do when working (Age UK, 2020).

(Center for ageing Better, (2021) — Image 1).



Positive living lifestyle

Keeping your mental and physical health positive and healthy post retirement is important. Retirement can be seen as an exciting and happy prospect of another part of your life coming to a close for free time to do or learn new things in their lives when they still can, but for some retirement is something that could become bored of if not doing anything for a longer period of time. In which, for a positive form of living at post retirement—you should look after your mental and physical health. When retired you will have a lot of spare time to be able to take care of yourself by eating a more healthy balanced diet, exercising, making sure that you are drinking enough water and getting enough sleep (Mental Health Foundation, n.d.).

Take up a new Challenge

Developing a routine in which you can get used to when retiring, plan for different activities such as volunteering wherever your hobbies or previous work helped, challenge yourself mentally with different languages or returning to higher education—to learn something new (British Heart Foundation, n.d.).

Connecting with others

To avoid the harmful effects of loneliness it is important to stay connected with relatives and friends Having healthy relationships helps to lower anxiety levels, depression and help raise a person's self-esteem.

It is important that when you retire you do not lose connections with the people that you know most. You can also find new ways to create new connections with others beyond your co-workers to help you transition into your new life schedule post retirement (Mental Health Foundation, n.d.).

Some ways to connect with others are: setting aside a date each week or a monthly meeting with friends or family, attend events at local communities and participate in the preferred activities of your own choice, or participate in creating arts. People who engage in meaningful, productive activities with others are said to live longer, help boost their mood and productivity, and have a new sense of purpose in life (Mental Health Foundation, n.d.).

Create time for activities

For your mental well-being find what gives you a purpose to be yourself all the while keeping busy can come from contributing to something just for yourself, the family, friends, or the community. Some activities could be to simply learn to draw or paint—picking up new skills help to develop your mind and creates a happy and satisfied feeling from within. Spending time with the family—in particular the grandchildren help to create familial activities for all to enjoy (Mental Health Foundation, n.d.; Rousseau, 2021). Some such activities could include cooking and baking, creative arts, or going on a small trip on a nature path or shopping.

Another activity is gardening, whether it is your own garden, or an allotment gardening is another way to keep busy in terms at taking time and care into constructing a beautiful flower bed or growing your own fruit and vegetables. Which is good for your mental and your physical health (Mental Health Foundation, n.d.; Rousseau, 2021).



(Center for Ageing Better, (2021) - image 2 & 3)

Prevention of illnesses

The information in this leaflet is there to help with planning for a happy healthy and long retirement. Going to the doctor at the beginning of your retirement for a health check helps to possibly prevent various health risks such as '*heart disease, stroke, diabetes, kidney disease and certain types of dementia*', according to the British Heart Foundation, (n.d.) is important as understanding what you need to do to avoid illness, avoid loneliness and to keep physically and mentally active.

Staying healthy and active can help a person live well with Dementia. Keeping well, physically active and keeping in touch with family and friends can help prevent depression. Being aware of what you can do to help yourself and where to get help from others is important in having a happy and healthy retirement. Depression is a disorder that does not discriminate in who it affects, but it is more than likely to affect older people who can be more vulnerable to particular factors that have affected their lives, such as becoming a widow, retiring without facing it out, a physical or mental disability, or suffering from loneliness and isolation (Mental Health Foundation, 2021 (a)).



(Jones, (2019) —
image 4)

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Loneliness and isolation is a risk factor at any age and can impact negatively on a person's mental health (National Institute on Aging, 2019). Loneliness and isolation can affect people in other ways and can cause: high blood pressure, obesity, a weakened immune system, anxiety and depression, and Alzheimer's disease. The people mostly at risk of suffering from the variety of these conditions might have unexpectedly feel lonely due to the death of a loved one, retirement or have lost some of their ability to move around (National Institute on Aging, 2019).

Look for a companionship and befriending service in your area using the links on the back page.

Rationale

The overall aim was to provide information for people to have a happy and healthy retirement. Many of the topics are interlinked and all play a part in people's wellbeing. Wanted to avoid being ageist and avoid negative stereotypes so researched organisations who specifically work with older people for example Help the Aged and Ageing Better who have created a library of photographs to avoid these stereotypes.

Approaching retirement is a challenging transition. People have concerns about a range of issues including coping with leaving work, financial obligations and personal health and wellbeing, and activities. In order that people have all the information available to them it was decided to create a leaflet in the style of a checklist so that people approaching retirement can be better prepared. All the items on the checklist are equally important and link to one another with the aim of creating resilience. Where well-being in retirement is connected towards the person's income, safety, education and employment when in need of making certain life choices that could affect you in any way possible and have a resilience to keep going, according to Nalin and França (2015).

The leaflet will contain universally important information and will also provide area specific activities to people living in Carmarthenshire.

Front page -

A significant issue relating to retirement is financial. People who were working and earning a salary will have a reduced income. The income of the individuals would influence their retirement in terms of how much they earned to how old are they when they decide to retire, according to Gough *et al.* (2008).

Signposting people to the Citizens Advice (2015; 2019) was considered appropriate because they are knowledgeable and offer their services free of charge for people looking to approach their retirement. The Emotional Impact of retiring is significant and can affect people's mental health and well-being which in turn can impact on their physical health.

The decision to use a real-life experience of a retiree is a vital part of the leaflet due to its psychological affects that makes the individuals to think of their decisions on retirement into more detail. Real-life experiences are important because when it is shared with others it has a number of possible positive effects on the reader's emotional well-being through psychological links that make the people want to create social connections to be able to talk about their experiences with each other more (Durlofsky, 2019; Jolly *et al.* 2019).

The 3-point plan that Ms. Cassie had used was a simple plan of wanting to do 3 things that she had always wanted to do in her life. These points were to write a book, create a blog for the over 50's and to help the children in her local primary school with extra lessons. Ms. Cassie had succeeded in doing her points by focusing on each point and to help connect and spend time in helping as much as she could and socialising with others to not lose contact with the younger generations as she grew older (Age UK, 2020).

Back Page -

On the back page provided information specific to people living in Carmarthenshire. This was considered important because it provided information about positive activities, events and new opportunities and challenges to enhance retirement.

Positive Living Lifestyle -

Getting the basics right, eating well, sleeping well, socialising and exercising are important in maintaining good mental health and wellbeing. Getting quality sleep, eating a nutritious diet and having regular physical exercise, promote good mental health and are 'thought of as three pillars of health' Wickham in Gillespie (2020). And according to Snow (2019), *'Brain health, like physical health, depends on lifestyle factors including diet, exercise and proper sleep, all of which reduce inflammation'*.

The importance of meeting needs are evident according to Maslow who identified that in order to achieve self-actualisation basic needs had to met first and built on (SimplyPsychology, 2020). And indeed the concept of ensuring the health and wellbeing of everyone is at the heart of the aims of the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act (2015).

Taking up a new challenge -

Learning new skills challenges the brain and is important for mental well-being. Learning a language or learning to draw, cooking or playing a new sport are all good examples of challenges that someone could take up in their free time to keep themselves active whether physically or mentally (Snow, 2019).

Connecting with others -

Having and creating relationships are important in the lives of individuals, the connections are crucial in how they affect their mental and physical health and well-being (Mental Health Foundation, 2021 (b)).

Impact of loneliness -

Loneliness is not in itself a mental health problem, but it is more commonly known for being linked together. In older people loneliness becomes more important in terms of losses of significant others or life long friends. If an individual is known for suffering with a mental health problem the chances of feeling lonely is increased (Mind, 2019; Gerst-Emerson & Jayawardhana, 2015).

Create time for activities -

Creating time for activities on overall health and well-being is important due to the fact that if you do not stay active—some activities might start to become harder to handle, such as spending time with the grandchildren. But if you do remain active as you grow older—you can remain independence for longer (National Health Service, 2018).

Images -

To avoid the stereotypes and counteract ageism, some of the images that are used in the leaflet from the Center for Ageing Better (2021) organisation.

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