



## **Aging in Place & Home Safety**

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It's very common for a person to envision themselves aging gracefully and living independently in their home, throughout the course of their lifetime.

### **That's a nice image, but is it realistic?**

Would it surprise you to know that people spend more time planning a vacation, than they do planning for their aging?

According to a 2021 AARP Survey, 80% of older adults want to age in their homes and community.

Yet only 15% of these seniors have taken any steps, to help prepare themselves or their home for aging.

What most people don't take into account is that as we age, our needs change, and with change come challenges.

### **DID YOU KNOW**

- 55% of all falls occur in the home
- 40% of those who fall are unable to return to independent living
- Individuals who fall once, are 2-3 times more likely to fall again
- Every 11 seconds a senior is treated in the ER for a fall
- Every 19 minutes a senior dies from a fall
- Every year 1 in 3 seniors have a fall related injury

Source: CDC. Fatalities And Injuries From Falls Among Older Adults

### **ARE FALLS PREVENTABLE?**

- 43% of all falls are the result of accidents and environmental factors
- 30% of all falls result from the loss of balance and dizziness
- Some other contributing factors may include:

Dehydration  
Poor Nutrition  
Medication "Mixing"  
Chronic medical conditions (Diabetes, Parkinson's)  
Pain

## **IS YOUR HOME SAFE?**

According to the U.S. Consumer Products Safety Commission, more than 600,000 older Americans are treated each year in the ER, as a result of injuries sustained in their home.

***Don't wait for a crisis - take a proactive approach.***

Would you be surprised to know that 50% of all home accidents can be prevented through the implementation of 3 simple steps?

1. Home safety audit
2. Home repair of identified issues
3. Home modification as a person's abilities and needs change

Some areas of potential concern in the home include:

- Inadequate lighting
- Carpets or floor coverings that are torn or in poor condition
- Rugs that slip
- Furniture or clutter obstructing walkways
- Cabinets or shelves which are too high to safely reach
- Unstable chairs or tables
- Electrical or computer cords lying across the floor
- Unsafe electrical appliances
- Bathtubs or showers without access to grab bars
- Soap and shampoo that aren't easily accessible in the bath
- Glass shower doors that are not made of safety glass
- Toilet seats that are positioned too low
- Sloping, slippery, obstructed or uneven walkways

## **HOME SAFETY AUDIT**

As a Board Certified Case Manager and Advocate, one of Linda Ziac's roles in supporting Successful Aging, is to provide home safety audits.

### **Components of a Home Safety Audit**

1. Meet with the home owners to discuss current areas of concern, challenges that the homeowners may be experiencing, as well as the clients' potential evolving needs.
2. Conduct an in-depth tour of the home, in order to identify areas in need of repair, areas that may pose a risk to the home owners, potential areas of concern, as well as areas which may pose a challenge over time as the owners age.
3. Create a written Home Safety Audit Report for the home owners, broken down by each area of the home and outside property, outlining potential areas of concern and why; as well as identifying potential assistive devices and/or modifications that may improve the owners' quality of life.
4. Meet with the home owners to review the Home Safety Audit Report, and discuss a viable action plan moving forward.

## **A SUCCESSFUL AGING ACTION PLAN**

"Aging in Place is the ability to live in one's own home and community safely, independently, and comfortably regardless of age, income, or ability level."

Source: CDC

Successful aging extends beyond physical health; incorporating cognitive function, social support, and satisfying life experiences.

## **MAINTAINING INDEPENDENCE WHILE BEING PRO-ACTIVE**

No one looks forward to an unexpected personal or medical situation that catches you off guard; which can be overwhelming, costly, time consuming, and complex.

The time to plan for your aging is now, while you are still healthy, active and able to make decisions on your own.

A personalized "Successful Action Plan", can help prevent unexpected events from turning into a crisis, which have the potential to negatively impact on your health, safety, independence, and quality of life.

## **DON'T WAIT FOR A CRISIS – PLAN NOW FOR YOUR FUTURE**

One thing we can all be sure of is we're aging, and with aging comes challenges.

- Not all problems occur as a crisis, but evolve in a series of warning signs spanning weeks, months, or even years.
- While most seniors are healthy and function at a high level, it's inevitable that as we age, issues will surface related to our independence.

## FOR MORE INFORMATION

For more information about a Successful Aging Plan visit us at

<http://www.TheCaregiverResourceCenter.com>

or

Call Linda Ziac at 203-861-9833

Photo from Microsoft

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*Please consult your health care provider for an appointment, before making any healthcare decisions or for guidance about a specific medical condition.*

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*Linda Ziac is the owner and founder of The Caregiver Resource Center. The Caregiver Resource Center is a division of Employee Assistance Professionals, Inc. which Linda founded in October 1990. The Caregiver Resource Center provides a spectrum of concierge case management and advocacy services for seniors, people with special needs and families.*

*Linda's professional career spans more than 48 years in the health and mental health field as a CT Licensed Professional Counselor, CT Licensed Alcohol and Drug Counselor, Board Certified Employee Assistance Professional, Board Certified Case Manager, and Board Certified Dementia Practitioner. In addition, Ms. Ziac has 15 years of experience coordinating care for her own parents.*

*Linda assists seniors, people with special needs and their families; in planning for and implementing ways to allow for the greatest degree of health, safety, independence, and quality of life. Linda meets with individuals and family members to assess their needs, and develop a Care Team, while working with members of the Team to formulate a comprehensive Care Plan (a road map).*

*Once a plan is in place, Linda is available to serve as the point person to monitor and coordinate services, and revise the plan as needed. This role is similar to the conductor of an orchestra; ensuring that there is good communication, teamwork, and that everyone remains focused on the desired goal.*

For more information, please contact:

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