Wellbeing courses for seniors (6 week courses, 2.5 hours per session)
How to live well in retirement and older age

Living longer is a cause for celebration yet older people often doubt their skills and need reassurance. The definition of old age is so broad that the old are often helping the older – helping with gardening, bits of shopping, taking friends on outings. Where there are plenty of people over 60 with vigorous and fulfilling lives, others may find it more challenging to navigate retirement and old age.

This course is designed to support seniors to flourish in retirement/old age, to make the most of and appreciate their lives, to keep in touch with their talents and interests and live fulfilling lives.

The course outline is based on learning from delivering two mindfulness sessions and a 6 week life coaching course for seniors at the ‘Art of Aging’ initiative in Tower Hamlets, east London, held to mark last year’s International Day of the Elderly. The course was made up of a diverse group of seniors with an age range of 59 – 75yrs. Eight participants completed the 6 week course. Here’s what they had to say:

Karen has a quiet way of allowing the group to explore each other as well as themselves, which created a remarkable feeling of affection and understanding within a group of very different people. – Kirsty

I have learned to go deeper in my experience; to be able to make better choices for myself and I feel more able to be aware of what happens in the moment. – Libia

The course has enabled me to become more aware of my behaviour. I am now more conscious about how I approach others and situations now. – Juliana

The 6-week course also draws from my years of experience as a life coach and mindfulness trainer. It is designed to give participants tools and methods for better management of the ups and downs of life as a senior such as: acknowledging and dealing with difficulties associated with aging, illness, isolation or loss; keeping purpose and meaning in life, helping participants to appreciate what they have, to enjoy the present moment, to learn from mistakes, to communicate compassionately and to be in control of the choices they make.

It also offers an opportunity to hear from other’s experience, to talk things through, to socialise and meet like-minded people.

A course outline follows. If you have further questions or would like to have an informal chat, please get in touch:

karen@greenspacecoaching.com or call me on 07815 591279
6 week Course Outline

NB. Each week will begin with a review of the previous week and opportunity to share feedback and experiences. The course will include a number of enjoyable exercises and discussion topics as well as some relaxation techniques to add to their *wellbeing life skills toolkit*.

**Week 1**

**Theme: What does it mean to grow older, to become a senior?**

**Session Goal:** Participants explore and share what growing older, becoming an elder and senior means for them as well as identifying and acknowledging some of the difficulties that come with aging.

**Session objectives**

1. To understand the overall purpose of the 6-week course including what they can expect to learn and be able to do as a result of participating in this course.
2. To share and explore in a safe environment what growing older / seniorhood means to them.
3. To explore some of their difficulties associated with getting old and to learn what happens when we turn towards and acknowledge the difficult rather than pushing it away (which makes it even worse).

**Week 2**

**Theme: Waking up to the auto-pilot**

**Session Goal:** For participants to increase their awareness of their actual experience and to begin to understand how this awareness can help them when they are feeling overwhelmed by worry (financial worry and other), anxiety, isolation, illness etc.

**Session objectives**

1. To understand the importance of direct, sensory experience as a way of better dealing with stress and anxiety. Moving away from over thinking things to acknowledging emotions.
2. To understand how living in auto-pilot leads to worry, catastrophising, anxiety and stress while mindfulness gives some choice in how we respond to worrisome situations.
Week 3

Theme: The pleasure of small things / appreciating life

Session Goal: For participants to understand and experience the value of seeking out the pleasure in everyday life, appreciating the small things, and learning how they can live more fulfilling lives in spite of difficulties that come with growing older.

Positive psychology research has identified certain activities that people can do which tend to make them feel more positive, more content. Many of these activities can be thought of as ‘life skills’ that people can learn to enhance their wellbeing.

The session will begin with a short exercise where pairs will share 3 things they appreciate in life and one thing they are proud of. Pairs to then feedback to group.

Session Objectives

1. To understand how our built-in “negativity bias” shapes the way we see and respond to the world around us and how paying attention to the pleasant, to what they appreciate in their life, can help them become more open to pleasant experiences, to connect with others, to make a contribution, to be more resourced when dealing with difficulties, to flourish.

2. To learn some new ‘life skills’ to help bring more enjoyment and wellbeing into their lives

Week 4

Theme: Working with thoughts and limiting beliefs

Session Goal: For participants to bring awareness to their thoughts so they can bring themselves back to the present moment when they either dwell in the past or worry about the future.

Session Objectives:

1. To understand how our thoughts influence our beliefs, our view of the world, our feelings and behaviour.

2. To learn how to look at their thoughts and how to let go of unhelpful/negative thoughts which can take over our way of thinking and affect our wellbeing. To learn to be more comfortable with who we are.
Week 5

Theme: Compassionate communication with self and others

Session Goal: For participants to understand and to learn what it means to communicate with compassion and how it can lead to feeling more connected rather than alienated and isolated.

Session Objectives:

1. To understand the difference between reacting versus having choice about how to respond to what’s happening in any given situation.
2. To learn how to use compassionate communication to better deal with difficult and challenging situations.

Week 6

Theme: Kindness and connection

Session Goal: For participants to understand and experience the value of kindness to self and others.

Session Objectives:

1. To understand that consistent self-criticism doesn’t help us to feel safe in our own company, let alone connected to others, family and friends.
2. To understand how practicing kindness to self and others can help reduce worry, isolation, stress and anxiety and build more meaningful relationships with others.

This session will include a review of the course and group sharing of what participants will take forward from the course into their day-to-day life.

About me:

I am an experienced life coach and accredited mindfulness teacher. I work with individuals and groups to foster personal development; to help people to live a more fulfilled, resilient, happy and healthy life. I work and live in Bethnal Green, East London.

For more information please visit my website: www.greenspacecoaching.com or contact me on karen@greenspacecoaching.com or 07815 591279 for an informal chat.