



Healthy Living Programs

If you are looking for programs in the areas of healthy living, healthy relationships, or life enrichment, University of Illinois Extension family life educator, Molly Hofer, can deliver by sharing research-informed educational offerings that address issues that impact individuals and families. The programs listed below are offered as a themed series but can also be delivered as a single session. Each session is 60-90 minutes in length, customized to fit the needs of the audience. Programs may be delivered face-to-face or virtually.


Aging Well Series

- **I'm Positive I'm Aging** – What is the secret to successful aging? Believe it or not it has less to do with income, being free from illnesses, or a life free from disappointments. Studies have shown that successful aging has more to do with being optimistic, maintaining friendships, and choosing to live a healthy lifestyle, among other things. This session will include research related to positive aging as well as a discussion on ageism and how negative age-related stereotypes can contribute to prejudices and even discrimination.
- **Finding Your Get Up and Go** – Most people find that there are some days when it's hard to find the motivation to accomplish what needs to be done, even those things that are important. This session will cover what accounts for the ebb and flow of motivation levels and how to boost enthusiasm when it just seems hard to "get going."
- **Looking for the Funny Side: The Value of Humor** – Humor can be good for you. Do you look for humor in your everyday life? This session will help you look at ways humor can help when dealing with stress and change.

Brain Health Series

- **Head Strong** – Did you know that a healthy diet and exercise benefit both the body and the brain? In this session many lifestyle factors that contribute to brain health will be discussed.
- **Hold That Thought** – Have you ever gone into a room and forgotten why you went in there? If your answer is "yes," you are not alone. Memory does change as we age, but forgetfulness is common for people at all stages of life. In this session you will learn about the memory process, including types of memory, and strategies for helping with everyday forgetfulness.
- **Two Heads Are Better Than One** – Did you know that staying socially engaged with others and doing things together is not only good for your soul, but also good for your brain? Maintaining social connections is one of several things you can do to contribute to your own brain health. Come and learn a bit about the aging brain, and what you can do to keep your brain engaged.


Intergenerational Enrichment Series

- **Who Gets Grandma's Yellow Pie Plate?** – Almost all individuals have valued personal belongings. Participants explore ways to talk to family members about the difficult subject of distributing family items with emotional and sentimental value while still keeping relationships intact.
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- **Penning Your Past** – Many of us remember hearing stories from our parents, grandparents, and other relatives. Sharing how life was back when or telling stories of family lore is a way to bond and bring families together. Sometimes we remember or know only bits and pieces of stories and wish that our ancestors would have taken the time to write them down. Have you thought about writing your own life story as a way to share with others, or perhaps to leave a legacy? Come and explore ways to preserve your individual and family stories for future generations. No prior writing skills are needed – your writing is good enough! (This session can stand alone or be part of an eight session writing series called, *Life's Moments: From Memory to Legacy*).
 - **Addressing Ageism and Promoting Inclusivity** – Ageist attitudes influence how we think of others – and even ourselves. Applying a catchall approach to adults aged 55 or over can subtly suggest that they are more alike than different, which is a stereotype. Learn about ageism, how it impacts society, and ways to promote inclusivity in our communities.

Balance Your Life Series

- **Someday is Today** – Are there things in your life that you've wanted to accomplish but haven't? You know they would bring you joy and fulfillment, but are always put on the back burner because "life happens?" Do you say things like, "I'll do that someday," but that day never comes? If so, you may need to work on your bucket list – a list of things you'd like to accomplish or experience in your lifetime. Come and learn the benefits of goal setting throughout life, and strategies for creating your own bucket list so you can say, "Someday is Today!"
- **Where to Start – Declutter your Home and Finances** – Does the clutter in your home cause you stress? Is the clutter a cause for conflict with other family members? Do you want less clutter, but you are too overwhelmed to begin? Many of us struggle to keep up with the clutter in our lives, including all of the financial papers and other documents we accumulate. In this session you will learn ways to organize your life to clear the clutter and de-stress.
- **Mindful Moments: Breathing, Listening, and Awareness** – Mindfulness can be an important part of your self-care routine. Practicing mindfulness techniques may help you reduce your stress and increase your awareness of the present moment. In this session, come and explore several mindfulness practices including mindful breathing, listening, and awareness. Come prepared to participate and learn some easy mindfulness techniques!
- **Let's Talk About Stress...and Ways to Manage it for a Better Life** – Stress is a funny thing. It can be something that helps motivate you to get your work done. However, if stress builds without an outlet for relieving it, it can impact you mentally and physically. So, let's talk about stress and the importance of self-care. A variety of practical techniques will be presented that can be used to manage stress and improve health and well-being. Setting boundaries, time management, and the importance of accountability will also be discussed.
- **Journaling: Reflections Within Yourself and the World Around You** – Journaling is a great way to help you connect the experiences of life with your own feelings and observations. Come and learn how to get started.

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- **Happy Hacks for More Positivity and Improved Well-Being** - Our lives are bombarded with negativity, stress, and countless threats to our emotional well-being, work, and closest relationships. New research in neuroscience and positive psychology shows that when we experience happiness and positivity, it turns on all the learning centers in the brain and fuels positive outcomes in all aspects of our lives. Participants will learn about the common barriers to positivity and personal well-being and find out more about simple science-backed principles and practices, or happy hacks, to boost both positivity and productivity as well as mood and attitude.
 - **Don't Go It Alone: Improving Your Social Connections** – Social isolation and loneliness can deeply impact one's quality of life, especially for older adults. Learn the difference between social isolation and loneliness, identify risk factors for both, and gain strategies for staying connected with others.
 - **How High Do You Bounce?** – Resilience refers to the ability to adapt, recover, and grow stronger from adverse situations. We will explore the characteristics of resilient people and strategies for building self-resilience in challenging situations.
 - **Navigating Change As We Age** - Everyone is aging, and there are many changes that happen along the way – physically, mentally, financially – in about every aspect of our lives. Why can change be so difficult to manage? Come and explore ways to adopt a mindset that is more accepting of change and can result in improved well-being and potentially new opportunities!

Caregiving Programs

- **Communication Challenges and Strategies for Helping People with Dementia** – When a relative or friend has dementia, communication can be very difficult as the disease advances. Forgetfulness, agitation, repetition, and mood fluctuations can make visits stressful and frustrating, and many worry that they will say or do the wrong thing and make matters worse. Come and learn about common communication problems caused by Alzheimer's disease and other dementias, and strategies for better interactions and visits.
- **Caregiving Relationships: for People Who Care for Adults** – Caring for parents or other dependent adults is a concern for many individuals. The family, indeed, is a major resource in helping older members with emotional and social support, crisis intervention, and linkages with the health care system. Participants will have the opportunity to become more conscious of their needs as caregivers and develop a plan to meet those needs. Topics covered in this series include changing relationships, effective communication techniques, difficult emotions and losses, caregiver self-care, and eldercare services and resources. (Provider training of curriculum is also available).

Illinois Extension leads public outreach for University of Illinois by translating research into action plans that allow Illinois families, businesses, and community leaders to solve problems, make informed decisions, and adapt to changes and opportunities. **For more information, please contact Molly Hofer, family life educator, at 217-300-9207, 773-233-2900 or hoferm@illinois.edu**