

November/December 2022

THE GRAPEVINE

North Shore Caregivers Newsletter



SOLO AGING: A GROWING PHENOMENON

Written by C.A. Bryson

In September 2022, I participated in a free webinar put on by Right at Home (through the American Society on Aging) on Solo Aging, with Carol Marak, Solo Aging expert. If you are as I am and have neither spouse nor children, and most of your family live elsewhere, then you should consider Ms. Marak's expertise. (continued on next page)

Solo Aging (continued)

Here is an introduction to her recent book: 'Solo and Smart':

'No one knows what lies ahead. When asked: "What do you want and how do you want to live past 50 and beyond?" Most answer: "I don't know. I've never thought about it." It's why so many adults struggle when older.' Further:

'Nearly one-third of adults 55 and older are single. (In the U.S.) Even AARP reports that the largest segment of the American population is the single adult while nuclear families fall second. Solo aging doesn't necessarily mean single! And solo living shouldn't translate to having no one to count on.' (p. 24)

Ms. Marak's book: 'Solo and Smart: a Guided Roadmap for a Supportive and Secure Future', (2021) is based on her own plan as a single senior facing aging alone. It was her caregiving experience that revealed what's needed when looking ahead.

Who are the Solo Agers among us? They are often marginalized: people without children, family (or who are estranged from family), or live far from family. In the U.S., 14.7% of adults live alone.



Here are some startling statistics from Stats Canada:

- 15% of Canadians live alone
- For those 85+, 36.6% of women live alone, and 21.8% of men live alone
- 24.6% of the Canadian population 65+ and older live alone
- In Canada, 22% of the population is between the ages of 55 and 64 (2021 census)

There are definite risks to living alone—particularly as we age. Some of these are due to increased isolation. Such as:

- Accelerated cognitive decline
- Increased hospitalization
- Impaired executive function
- Obesity
- Anxiety
- And even, early death.

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Solo Aging (continued)

However, just because we're aging solo doesn't mean we're necessarily vulnerable. In her new: 'Roadmap for a Supportive and Secure Future', Marak explores the following ten domains:

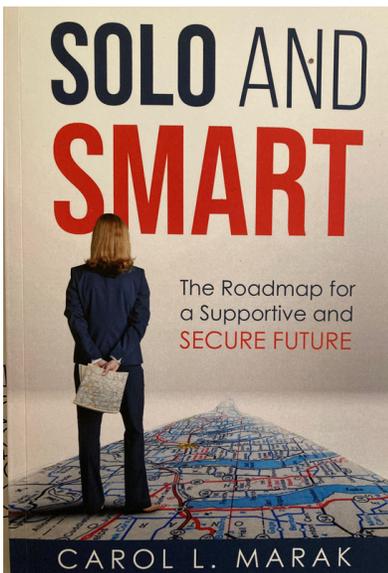
- Housing
- Family
- Spirituality
- Money
- Social community
- Transportation
- Health and fitness
- Legal
- Work/purpose
- Fun/engagement

And offers 'The Roadmap for a Supportive and Secure Future Assessment on pages 27-46.

Did you know that in the U.S., childless adults are 10% more educated? According to the 2021 Canadian census, one in five Canadian women will remain childless.

Marak explores how we find purpose—either through a job, hobby, or volunteer work. It's that sense of meaning that makes it all seem worthwhile, or, as Friedrich Nietzsche wrote: "He who has a why to live for can bear almost any how."

'Try new things: Join a club, acting or an improv class, lifelong learning class. Pick up a new project or learn a new skill. Get out of your comfort zone. Develop confidence and don't allow anxiety, fear of failure, fear of rejection, or fear of humiliation get in your way. By practicing new activities, you are confronting your fear of the unknown.' (p. 17)



There are important legal matters to be attended to when living alone, Marak emphasizes. Legal documents such as a Living Will and Advance Directive, estate planning, a health care proxy (or Representation Agreement) and financial proxy (or Power of Attorney, covered in recent posts to the Caregiver Blog, see <https://northvancaregivers.wordpress.com>.

Ms. Marak warns against relying on strangers for help. 'While over a third of those turning 65 are projected to never receive help from family, three out of ten will rely on family for more than two years of needed care' (p. 155).

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Solo Aging (continued)

How do you select next of kin for a medical emergency?

Ms. Marak advises: 'Your support network of friends, places of worship members, senior centres and other professionals should provide ample choices for the selection of an executor named in your will, or proxy named in your healthcare Power of Attorney' (in British Columbia, Representation Agreement.) (p.168)

I close with the following quote from Carol Marak's book (a quote from Dr. Seuss):

"Do what you want to do, say what you want to say, because those who matter don't mind, and those who do mind don't matter."

Truly, an inspirational book. And a call to action.



RESOURCES

CAROL MARAK'S WEBSITE:
[HTTPS://CAROLMARAK.COM/INDEX.HTML](https://carolmarak.com/index.html)

AMERICAN SOCIETY ON AGING HOME INSTEAD PODCAST:
[HTTPS://ASAGING.ORG/EMPOWERING-PROFESSIONALS-AGING](https://asaging.org/empowering-professionals-aging)

FACEBOOK GROUP: ELDER ORPHANS
[HTTPS://WWW.FACEBOOK.COM/GROUPS/ELDERORPHANS](https://www.facebook.com/groups/elderorphans)

AARP (AMERICAN ASSOCIATION FOR RETIRED PERSONS) WEBSITE FOR
ELDERS LIVING ALONE:
[HTTPS://CONNECT2AFFECT.ORG](https://connect2affect.org)

NEXT AVENUE (CLICK ON 'CAREGIVING' TAB):
[HTTPS://WWW.NEXTAVENUE.ORG](https://www.nextavenue.org)

BOOKS:

'WHO WILL TAKE CARE OF ME WHEN I'M OLD?' BY JOY LOVERDE

'AGING ALONE' BY RUTH ALVAREZ

SELF-AFFIRMATION

Written by Mobina Fathi

In modern days, stress is sewn into the fabric of life. Whether you are a student worrying about an exam, an employee trying to meet a deadline, or even a parent maintaining a work-life balance, stress is part of your daily life. Although it is almost impossible to eliminate stress, some strategies can be used to manage it.

One way to reduce stress is through self-affirmation techniques. The self-affirmation theory proposes that people are motivated to maintain the integrity of the self and have a sense of personal adequacy (Sherman, 2013). As a result, events that threaten this perceived self-competence and positive self-view arouse stress and other self-protecting defenses that can lower performance and growth (Cohen & Sherman, 2014). The self-affirmation theory suggests that this threat could be mitigated if individuals consider a more expansive view of themselves and their resources, thus, weakening the consequences of the threat toward perceived self-worth (Cohen & Sherman, 2014). The coping process requires an individual's determination and reassurance of the available resources to cope with the stress (Sherman, 2013). Stressful events tend to dominate the individual's attention, hence, disrupting the ability to draw on one's adaptive resources (Sherman, 2013). Self-affirmation allows individuals to realize the valued aspects of their lives which will be sustained regardless of what may happen in the face of a stressful day (Sherman, 2013). The results of a study conducted by Sherman et al. (2009) indicate that self-affirmation strategies introduce a buffering effect to a stressor, as students in the self-affirmation conditions were found to have lower epinephrine levels during an exam compared to those in the control group. Similarly, Creswell et al. (2013) found that self-affirmation has positive effects on improving academic performance, especially in aspects that require creativity and problem-solving skills.

The physiological reason behind this can be partly explained by a Cascio et al. (2016) study that proposes self-affirmation strategies increase the activity of the brain's Medial Prefrontal Cortex (MPFC) region, which is associated with imagining positive outcomes rather than negative ones in future events. In addition, individuals who practice self-affirmation were found to show lower basal cortisol levels and cardiovascular responses compared to others (Creswell et al. 2005).

I was introduced to the self-affirmation theory by my older sister during my second year of university while I was struggling with extreme stress and anxiety because of school. I found the self-affirmation technique to be helpful with baseline stress which is caused by a routine and ongoing stressor, in my case, my school and work. I was tempted to try this technique since it does not take much time, can be done anywhere I like, and it does not cost money.

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Self-Affirmation (continued)

After one week of doing self-affirmations every day, I was able to recognize the positive effects it had on reducing my stress level and overall mental well-being. There are different ways of practicing self-affirmation: an individual can write down what they value in life and what they are grateful for, they can say it out loud, or in their head. For instance, I have a piece of paper on my mirror with the following lines which I repeat every morning while I get ready for school: "I believe in my dreams, myself, and all that I am", "I am enough and I love myself for who I am", "I create my own happiness", "I am loved by my family and friends", "grades are not a reflection of my abilities and intelligence", "I am proud of my achievements", "I can overcome whatever challenges that come on my way today", and "I got this". Furthermore, I also found it useful to repeat these lines a few times more before an exam, an important meeting, or an interview.

To conclude, practicing self-affirmation consistently has been shown to improve mental well-being, relationship outcomes, and academic performance (Sherman, 2013). Moreover, these benefits are not temporary, as they can last for months and even years (Sherman, 2013). Give self-affirmation a try!

REFERENCES

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COHEN, G. L., & SHERMAN, D. K. (2014). THE PSYCHOLOGY OF CHANGE: SELF-AFFIRMATION AND SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGICAL INTERVENTION. *ANNUAL REVIEW OF PSYCHOLOGY*, 65, 333–371. [HTTPS://DOI.ORG/10.1146/ANNUREV-PSYCH-010213-115137](https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-psych-010213-115137)

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Building caregiver resilience

Self-care tips and strategies to positively manage stress



Explore how certain demands can contribute to stress and burnout. Learn about positive coping strategies in this interactive workshop for caregivers. Free to attend.

Where

North Shore Community Resources
Online Workshop

Registration

Please contact Vic Gailiunas:
Caregiver Support Program Coordinator
604-982-3320 or vic.gailiunas@nscr.ca

When

Tuesday, November 1, 2022
7 - 8:30 p.m.

**We acknowledge the support
and partnership of**



Alzheimer Society
BRITISH COLUMBIA

First Link®
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NOVEMBER EVENTS

TUES 01 CAREGIVER SUPPORT GROUP MEETING (ZOOM) TIME: 6:30-8:30PM WITH GUEST SPEAKER JULIA SAVALLI FROM THE ALZHEIMER SOCIETY OF BC	THURS 03 MEN'S SUPPORT GROUP MEETING (IN PERSON) TIME: 10:30AM-12:30PM	WEDS 09 KOREAN GROUP MEETING (IN PERSON) TIME: 2:00-4:00PM
MON 21 PERSIAN GROUP MEETING (ZOOM) TIME: 6:00-8:00PM	MON 28 BEREAVEMENT SUPPORT GROUP MEETING (ZOOM) TIME: 6:00-8:00PM	

DECEMBER EVENTS

THURS 01 MEN'S SUPPORT GROUP MEETING (IN PERSON) TIME: 10:30AM-12:30PM
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THERE WON'T BE CAREGIVER SUPPORT, KOREAN OR PERSIAN GROUP MEETINGS IN DECEMBER. SEE YOU IN THE NEW YEAR!



CAREGIVER SUPPORT GROUP

North Shore Community Resources (NSCR) offers a monthly support group specifically for family caregivers who support their loved ones – either living together or apart.

The group's goal is to create community and offer a time of sharing, listening, and connecting for anyone with the unique experience of caregiving for family members.

Program participants are welcome to encourage and invite others they feel might benefit from joining the group.

Monthly Meetings

Next meeting: Tuesday, Nov. 1 (on Zoom – with Guest Speaker from the Alzheimer's Society of BC).

There will be no December meeting. Happy Holidays & see you in January!

Meetings are currently on the first Tuesday evening of each month from 6:30 – 8:30pm.

We will be meeting on Zoom. For the Zoom link, please contact NSCR directly.



Contact

For more information, details, or to find out more about NSCR's caregiver support programs, please contact:

Vic Gailiunas (Caregiver Support Program Coordinator) ~ Vic.Gailiunas@nscr.ca

Or Phone: 604-982-3320



PERSIAN WELLNESS AND EDUCATION GROUP

North Shore Community Resources (NSCR) offers a wellness and education group specifically for the Persian community on the North Shore.

The group was designed to create community and offer a time of sharing, learning, and connecting for our Persian community.

Program participants are welcome to join us for a 2-hour session, held entirely in Farsi, with guest speakers, resources, group interaction, and music.

Monthly Meetings

We are now back meeting in person in our NSCR Community Room. Our meetings run on the third Monday of each month, from 6:00-8:00pm.

Next Meeting: Nov. 21 *(There will be no December Meeting. See you in the New Year!)*

(photo credit – Paul McGrath)



Contact

For more information and details, contact:

Noushin Beheshtipoor (Group Leader) ~ noushinbeheshtipoor@gmail.com

Vic Gailunas (NSCR Caregiver Support Program Coordinator) ~
Vic.Gailunas@nscr.ca



KOREAN WELLNESS AND EDUCATION GROUP

North Shore Community Resources (NSCR) offers a wellness and education group specifically for the Korean community on the North Shore.

The group was designed to create community and offer a time of sharing, learning, and connecting for our Korean community.

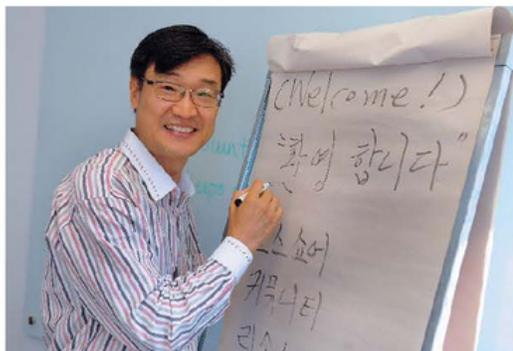
Program participants are welcome to join us for a 2-hour session, held entirely in Korean, with guest speakers, resources, group interaction, and creative arts.

Monthly Meetings

We will be meeting in person in our NSCR Community Room. Our meetings run on the second Wednesday of each month, from 2:00-4:00pm.

Next Meeting: Nov. 9 (There will be no December Meeting. See you in the New Year!)

(photo credit – Paul McGrath)



Contact

For more information and details, contact:

Yoonwon Lee (Group Leader) ~ infocwtc@gmail.com

Vic Gailunas (NSCR Caregiver Support Program Coordinator) ~ Vic.Gailunas@nscr.ca



CAREGIVER BEREAVEMENT SUPPORT GROUP

North Shore Community Resources (NSCR) is offering a support group specifically for caregivers experiencing grief/beravement in the loss of a loved one. The group is designed to create community and offer a time of sharing stories and resources, listening, and connecting with others with similar experiences.

Monday, November 28, 2022

on Zoom, 6:00-8:00PM



As we move into the Holiday season, things can seem more pronounced for those of us experiencing loss. It is a good time to consider our well-being, how to find meaning in grief, but also in renewal of spirit.

For more information, to register, and for details, please contact:

Vic Gailunas
Caregiver Support Program Coordinator
604.982.3320
vic.gailunas@nscr.ca



MEN'S CAREGIVER SUPPORT GROUP

North Shore Community Resources (NSCR) offers a support group specifically for male caregivers who support their spouses or partners – either living together or apart.

The group was designed to create community and offer a time of sharing, listening, and connecting for men with the unique experience of caregiving for their partners.

Program participants are welcome to encourage other men they feel might benefit from joining the group.

Monthly Meetings

We are back meeting in-person at the NSCR Community Room. Our meetings run on the first Thursday of each month, from 10:30am-12:30pm.

Next 2 meetings: Nov. 3 and Dec. 1.

Contact

For more information and details, contact:

Vic Gailunas (Caregiver Support Program Coordinator) ~ Vic.Gailunas@nscr.ca

Pat Dean (Group Leader) ~ pdean@telus.net





CONTACTLESS MONITORING AND REMOTE CARE FOR OLDER ADULTS: CALL FOR PARTICIPANTS

- **WHY:** to gain perspective on how remote monitoring can be used to provide quality care and help older adults age in place
- **HOW:** survey OR interview
- **LOCATION:** virtual
- **ELIGIBILITY:**
 - older adult (60+) OR
 - caregiver (19+) for older adult OR
 - healthcare professional who has provided care for older adults



SIGN UP

<https://bit.ly/AIPCMS>



QUESTIONS?

Email Sarah -
sarah.park@ubc.ca

Caregiver Interview: Yoonwon L.

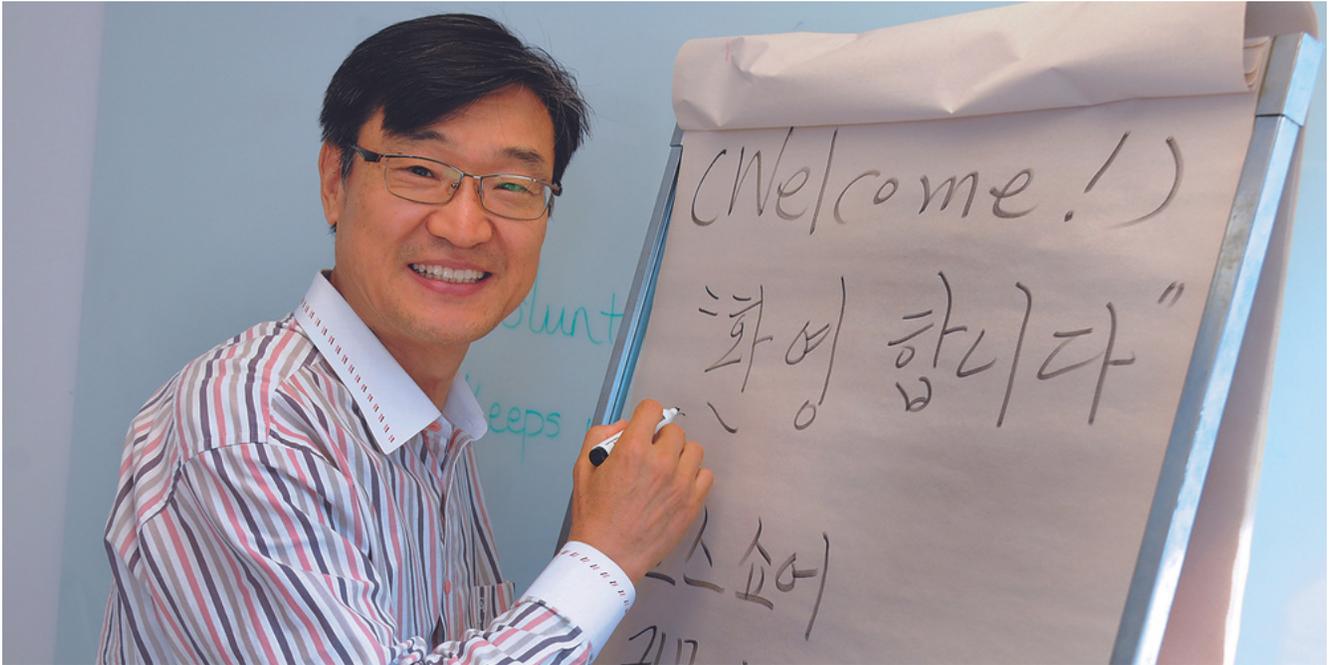


Photo Credit – Paul McGrath

Tell us a bit about your background and personal journey.

My name is Yoonwon Lee. I immigrated to Canada in 2006. I am currently a pastor and am interested in volunteering for seniors in the North Shore area. I want to work as a leader who can help the North Shore Korean community so that it can develop into a strong, healthy, knowledgeable community.

You will be our new Leader of NSCR's Korean Group. What made you want to be a group facilitator?

I have always been interested in seniors. Because we have many Korean seniors with difficulty in English, they have trouble joining in the community on the North Shore due to lack of information. I wanted to volunteer to help these people.

Tell us about your specific group. Where will you find new members?

My group will be seniors, but also anyone who speaks Korean can join, and I expect to meet and find them in the North Shore area. I've already met a few couples and I'm going to invite them to join our group.

(continued on next page)

Caregiver Interview (continued)

What kinds of things will you and guest speakers present to the group?

Guest speakers will give presentations on topics such as:

1. Introduction of old-age pension provided by the government
2. How to use mobile phones and how to use messenger
3. How to do stretching exercises for the elderly
4. Preparing healthy meals for the elderly
5. How to use computers, the internet
6. How to join a zoom meeting
7. How to design a website

What do you feel will be some of the benefits of attending your group?

All group members will receive a lot of useful information and make friends.

What do you do for your own self-care?

I like to take a trail walk alone to release stress and read a book. My hobbies are watching movies, playing soccer by myself, and going camping. My workouts are running on the treadmill at the gym, lifting dumbbells, and riding a bike. With these things, I train myself and take care of myself.

INTERESTED IN JOINING OUR KOREAN GROUP?

TO INQUIRE ABOUT JOINING OUR NEW KOREAN WELLNESS & EDUCATION
GROUP AT NSCR, PLEASE CONTACT:

YOONWON LEE, GROUP LEADER AT INFOCWTC@GMAIL.COM, OR
VIC GAILIUNAS, CAREGIVER SUPPORT PROGRAM COORDINATOR AT
VIC.GAILIUNAS@NSCR.CA.

WE LOOK FORWARD TO WELCOMING YOU!