Golden Guidelines: Supporting Older Adults

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LifeCircles

A Brio Living Services PACE Partnership





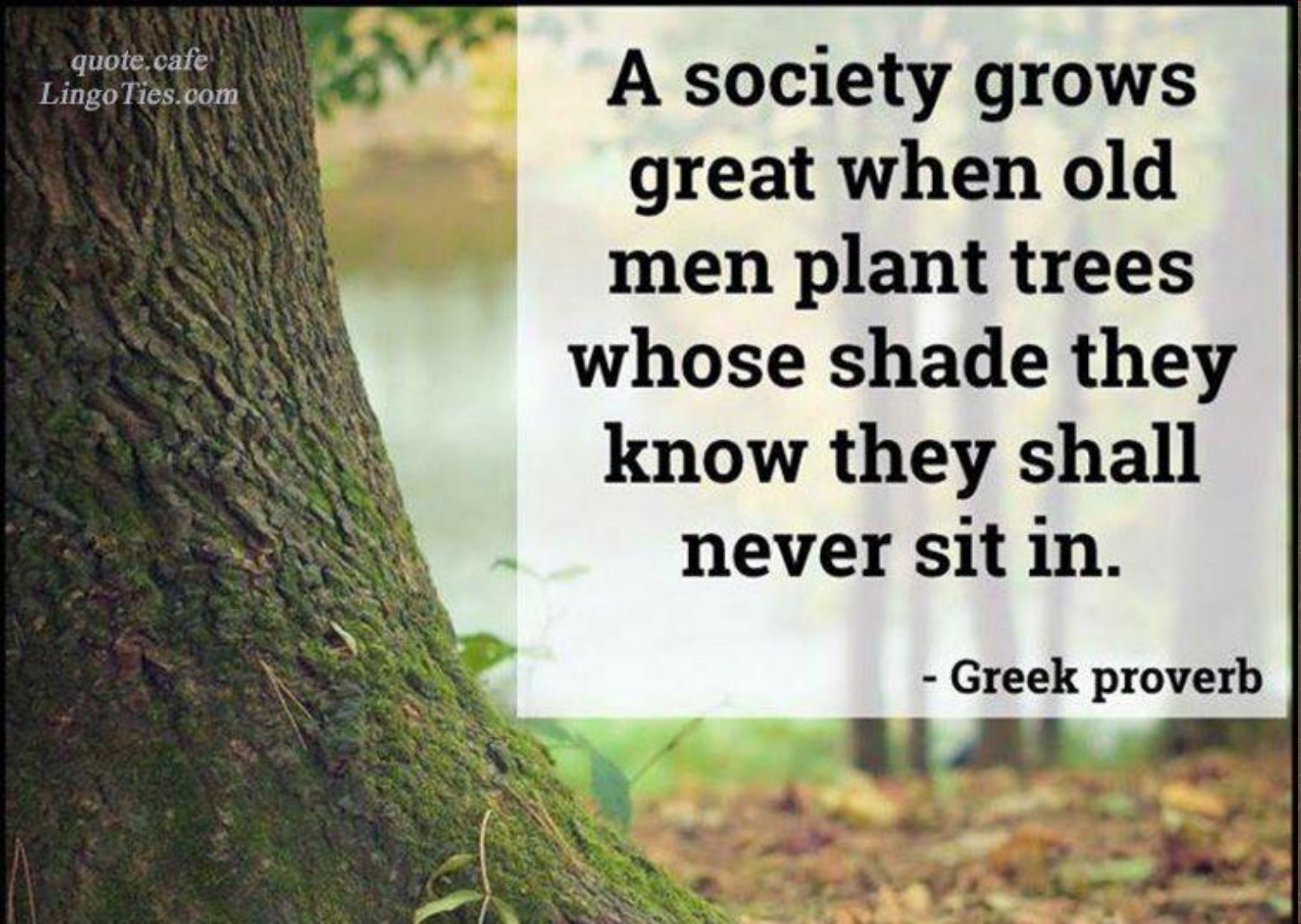

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My Gentleness Journey!


quote.cafe
LingoTies.com
A society grows great when old men plant trees whose shade they know they shall never sit in.
- Greek proverb

Agenda

- Behavior Plans or Relationship Guides?
- Older Adult “Need to Knows”
- Safe and Valuing Interactions

Differences between Behavior Plans and Relationship Guides

BEHAVIOR PLANS

- Focus on the behavior of participant
- Staff have authority
- Rewards/consequences designed to motivate, can be weaponized
- Expectation is on the participant to improve behavior
- Approved restrictions if needed
- Staff more likely to correct participant's behavior
- Numerous pages, data collection

RELATIONSHIP GUIDES

- Focus is on staff and how to create safe interactions
- Collaboration, no hierarchy
- Unconditional staff
- Expectation is on the staff changing their approach, to what is needed
- No restrictions
- Staff provide connection, goal is for the participant to feel seen and heard.
- 1-2 pages, no data collection

Behavior Plan Backfires

- “I don’t want to go to group”
- “Don’t tell them what you like”
- “If he has a snack drawer, everyone will want a snack drawer”
- Covering plate at mealtime
- Level Systems, Token Economies, and Relationships



Older Adult “Need to Knows”

- Changing environments (home, hospital, rehab) can bring on delirium.
- Best ways to treat delirium is plenty of fluids, rest, gentle movement as able and natural lighting during waking hours.
- More prone to infections that may go unnoticed until they look psychotic. Rule out infection before considering antipsychotic medications.
- Preferences may change from their younger years.
- Physical changes can be difficult to accept.
- Emotional, cognitive changes can be even more difficult to accept.
- Stop all the correcting, increase the connecting.
- We do not need to spend our time convincing older adults that life is changing.



Words we use matter.

When we document, is it from our experience or our understanding of the participant's experience?
How I feel vs how he or she might feel?

Aggressive or Defensive? Abusive or Scared?

Attention Seeking or Awkwardly asking for connection?

Rude or Experiencing pain?



Is this a staff approach issue or an inappropriate behavior?

Golden Guidelines for our Golden Population

- Universal precautions for strong emotions is trauma informed care
- Hands, Eyes, Words, Presence - including the position of your body
- Apologies – not because you did something wrong
- Validation – “That makes perfect sense” “I see your perspective”
- Be patient, no rushing, don’t show irritation – this isn’t about you!
- The slower you go the faster the participant can find emotional regulation
- Avoid thinking: “I don’t have time for connection, companionship, and community.”
- Full on crisis takes much more time than a slower pace with no crisis. Crisis will take all the time it needs
- De-escalation is not about meeting your needs, it is about meeting the needs of the person you are supporting. If it becomes about you, the situation will escalate more.

Safe and Valuing Interactions

Awareness of Participant's Tools (eyes, words, hands, presence). Noticing when the participant seems ready for a request. What did you see that contributed to your evaluation of readiness.

Awareness of Your Tools (eyes, words, hands, presence). Be mindful of your presentation. Help the participant co-regulate with you.

Validate the emotional experience of the Participant. Context is less important especially when the context is confusing/nonsensical.

Distraction activities (after you have validated the emotion). Keeping in mind, things given to participant need to be safe if thrown. Figure out preferred activities early on in relationship.

Evaluate Physical Unmet Needs. 1. Food/Liquid Intake 2. Sleep/Awake Cycle 3. Elimination 4. Sensory Discomforts 5. Pain

Safe and Valuing Interactions

Provide Space/Limit Words. An escalated brain has difficulty understanding words. Words can increase escalation. Provide space and know how the participant feels about touch. Anger can be transferred easily to the care partner once touch is involved.

Use Apologies. This is not because you are wrong. This is to connect when the other person is distressed and feeling disconnected. “I’m sorry, I was trying to help.” “I’m sorry, that was my fault.”

Substitution vs Subtraction. Instead of taking something away from a participant. Consider giving them more items to hold that are safe. Typically, the participant will give you the dangerous item or put it down.

Use Neutralizing Language. Don’t try to fix or solve problems. Be in the moment and express understanding. “Oh gosh that is hard.” “Oh boy!” “Holy Smokes, no way!” Feeling heard and seen helps de-escalate.

Safe and Valuing Interactions

Awareness of Your Body Positioning. Keep yourself at least 6 ft back when someone is distressed. This allows you to see impulsive actions more easily. Approach from the front and slide to the side to avoid an unintentional startle and confrontational stance. Keep the participant from getting behind you. Be careful about lowering yourself when a Participant is upset (especially on the floor). Grabbing a chair to set together is a great idea.

Repeat the Last 1-2 Words. This gives you an opportunity to get more information about the dysregulation and tips to distract. Try to slow up the pace the conversation. PRT: “I WANT TO GO HOME!” reply with “home?” “Tell me more about home?” “What do you love about your home.”

Tag Out. Recognize when you are not the right fit in the situation and ask for another staff member to try de-escalation. This is very effective to have a new face try. It has nothing to do with a lack of skill on your part. It shows more skill when you try a tag out.

Once De-escalation Starts Stay Present. Once a person is heightened and they start to calm, they are very likely to escalate quickly from mild stressful interactions/experiences of distress. Remember, slow return to baseline.

Relationship Guide



Thank you for making this world a gentler place to be!

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