

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Looking to Add Years to Your Life? Positivity Can Help!

Did you know that having a positive outlook on aging can add up to 7 ½ years to your life? A smile or words of encouragement may seem like small things, but they sure add up! Dr. Erin Yelland, Associate Professor and Interim Director of the Center on Aging, has come up with an acronym that supports her belief and research that living with positivity is the healthy path for most. The acronym is SMILE BIG and Dr. Yelland describes it with the following:

- **Successful aging requires practicing positivity.** If we have a positive attitude, we are more likely to make changes and implement healthy behaviors into our lives that are going to help us be successful as we age.
- **Manage our expectations.** We are not always going to be at the pinnacle of healthy aging, and that's okay. We need to make our expectations something that are attainable.
- **Interact with positivity.** Research shows that when you interact with positive people and places, you're more likely to embrace positivity as well.
- **Looking for positives.** We know that bad things happen sometimes, but when you take the time to truly reflect, I bet you'll find something positive that came from the situation. Thinking about the COVID-19 pandemic, we were able to stay home more and make more meaningful connections with our family members.
- **Escaping ageism.** Make it a priority to escape stereotypes associated with aging. Your age does not define who you are.
- **Being healthy.** We know that there are a lot of healthy behaviors that we should be doing, but we don't always do them. Eating healthfully, exercising regularly, taking care of our brain...all of those things lead to successful aging.
- **'I Can' approach.** Instead of saying, 'I can't do this or that anymore,' take the 'I Can' approach. For example, 'I can utilize a cane that will help me move around more safely'.

- **Give yourself grace.** Sometimes, we're going to mess up or have a bad day. We need to give ourselves grace so we're not beating ourselves down when we don't always embrace positivity. It is okay to not be okay.

We know our community members are out there doing great things at all ages! Don't get into the mindset of what you think may be 'typical' aging. Make the most of each day no matter what age!

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