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Aging Clinical Practice Workbook

A clinically branded, function-preserving edition retaining the original exercises, psychoeducation, checklists, logs, planning tools, and response space.

DSM-5-TR · ICD-11 CLINICAL ALIGNMENT

1 · Mental Health Challenges in Aging

2 · Retirement and Lifestyle Transitions

3 · Identify Your Values

4 · Loss and Grief

5 · Social Connections

6 · Challenging Ageist Beliefs

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How to use this workbook

- Use this workbook selectively and collaboratively; it is educational and does not replace individualized assessment, diagnosis, treatment, medical care, or crisis services.
- Skip, pause, or modify any activity that increases distress, danger, shame, or loss of functioning. Adapt language for culture, disability, neurodivergence, health, resources, and lived context.
- Ratings in this workbook are reflection tools unless a named, validated measure and interpretation are explicitly provided.

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Mental Health Challenges in Aging

The following is a list of common mental health issues related to aging. Check off the ones you relate to or add more to the list:

- ☐ **Depression:** Persistent feelings of sadness, hopelessness, and loss of interest in activities.
- ☐ **Anxiety:** Excessive worry, agitation, and fear, which can interfere with daily functioning.
- ☐ **Loneliness:** Social isolation and a lack of meaningful connections, leading to feelings of loneliness.
- ☐ **Grief and Loss:** Coping with the death of loved ones and adjusting to life changes.
- ☐ **Cognitive Decline:** Concerns about memory loss, cognitive impairment, or dementia.
- ☐ **Chronic Stress:** Managing stress related to health conditions, financial concerns, and caregiving responsibilities.
- ☐ **Substance Abuse:** Misuse of alcohol or prescription drugs as a way to cope with emotional or physical pain.
- ☐ **Sleep Disorders:** Difficulty falling asleep, staying asleep, or experiencing poor quality sleep.
- ☐ **Adjustment Issues:** Struggling to adapt to life changes such as retirement, relocation, or role transitions.
- ☐ **Self-esteem and Identity:** Challenges related to self-worth, body image, and role fulfillment.
- ☐ **Trauma and PTSD:** Coping with past traumatic experiences and their impact on mental well-being.
- ☐ **Communication Challenges:** Dealing with hearing loss, speech difficulties, or language barriers.

- ☐ **Ageism:** Facing discrimination or stereotypes based on age, leading to feelings of marginalization.
- ☐ **Existential Concerns:** Reflecting on life meaning, purpose, and mortality.
- ☐ **Relationship Strain:** Navigating changes in familial dynamics, friendships, and romantic relationships.
- ☐ **Financial Anxiety:** Worries about financial stability, retirement savings, and healthcare expenses.
- ☐ **Decision-Making Challenges:** Difficulty making complex decisions, especially related to healthcare, legal matters, and end-of-life planning.
- ☐ **Coping with Disability:** Adjusting to physical limitations, chronic pain, or mobility challenges.
- ☐ **Fear of Death:** Anxiety and distress related to the end of life and mortality.
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____

Retirement and Lifestyle Transitions

1. Retirement Goals

Set specific goals for your retirement years, such as traveling to new destinations, pursuing creative endeavors, or contributing to causes you're passionate about.

2. Contributions to Others

Explore ways to contribute to the well-being of others, whether it's through sharing knowledge and experience, providing emotional support, or engaging in acts of kindness within your community.

3. Learning and Growth

Identify opportunities for continuous learning and personal growth. This could involve enrolling in classes, attending workshops, or exploring new subjects of interest.

Identify Your Values

1. Reflect on Personal Meaning

Take some time to consider what brings meaning and purpose to your life as you age. What activities, relationships, and experiences are most important to you?

2. Consider Health and Wellness

Think about how you value your physical and mental well-being as you age. What practices and habits are important to maintain or improve your health? This might include exercise, nutrition, social connection, and emotional well-being.

3. Relationships and Social Connection

Reflect on the significance of relationships with family, friends, and community. How do these connections align with your values, and what steps can you take to nurture and strengthen these relationships?

4. Self-Expression and Fulfillment

Identify activities and pursuits that bring you a sense of fulfillment and self-expression. This might include hobbies, creative endeavors, lifelong learning, or contributing to causes that are meaningful to you.

5. Legacy and Contribution

Consider how you want to leave a positive impact and contribute to the world. What values guide your desire to make a difference, whether it be through mentorship, volunteer work, philanthropy, or sharing your wisdom and experiences with others?

The following is a list of common values to inspire you:

- | | | |
|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|---|
| ☐ Adventure | ☐ Health | ☐ Optimism |
| ☐ Authenticity | ☐ Honesty | ☐ Patience |
| ☐ Balance | ☐ Independence | ☐ Peace |
| ☐ Challenge | ☐ Kindness | ☐ Resilience |
| ☐ Compassion | ☐ Leadership | ☐ Respect |
| ☐ Creativity | ☐ Learning | ☐ Responsibility |
| ☐ Empathy | ☐ Love | ☐ Security |
| ☐ Faith | ☐ Loyalty | ☐ Service |
| ☐ Flexibility | ☐ Morality | ☐ Spirituality |
| ☐ Freedom | ☐ Open- | ☐ Tolerance |
| ☐ Gratitude | mindedness | ☐ Wisdom |

Loss and Grief

1. Acknowledging Losses

Reflect on the various losses experienced in later life, such as the passing of loved ones, changes in health, retirement, or diminishing independence. Write about the emotional impact of these losses.

2. Rituals and Remembrance

Explore rituals or activities that honor and remember the individuals or aspects of life that have been lost, such as creating a memory book, planting a tree in remembrance, sharing stories, or participating in memorial events.

3. Finding Meaning

Reflect on ways in which you can find meaning amidst loss, such as engaging in activities that honor the legacy of loved ones, contributing to causes they valued, or finding new purposes that bring fulfillment in your life.

4. Honoring Self-Care

List self-care practices that can help alleviate the emotional burden of grief, such as meditation, spending time in nature, engaging in hobbies, or seeking professional support when necessary.

Social Connections

1. Identify Existing Relationships

List the current social connections you have, including family members, friends, neighbors, and community groups.

2. Communication Channels

Identify the various ways you stay in touch with others, such as in-person interactions, phone calls, video chats, or social media platforms.

3. Shared Activities

List activities or hobbies that you enjoy participating in with others, such as group exercise classes, book clubs, volunteering, or attending cultural events.

4. New Social Opportunities

Identify potential avenues for expanding your social network, such as joining interest-based clubs or organizations, attending senior center programs, or neighborhood gatherings.

5. Technology Use

Explore ways to utilize technology to connect with others, such as learning how to use video calling platforms or social media to stay in touch with loved ones.

Challenging Ageist Beliefs

1. Identifying Ageist Beliefs

Take the time to reflect on societal attitudes and stereotypes related to aging that you may have internalized. The following are some common examples. Check off the ones you relate to or add more to the list:

- ☐ Older individuals are resistant to change and new technologies.
- ☐ Older adults are less valuable and productive in the workplace.
- ☐ Older people are burdensome and financially dependent on others.
- ☐ Aging diminishes attractiveness and desirability.
- ☐ Older individuals lack interest or relevance in contemporary culture and trends.
- ☐ Emotional struggles and mental health challenges are typical and inevitable in later life.
- ☐ Sexual intimacy and desire diminish with age.
- ☐ The opinions and experiences of older individuals are outdated and irrelevant.
- ☐ Older individuals cannot contribute meaningfully to innovation or societal progress.
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____

2. Recognizing Personal Impact

Consider how these ageist beliefs have affected your self-perception and behaviors. Identify specific instances where these beliefs may have influenced your thoughts, feelings, or actions.

3. Questioning Assumptions

Challenge ageist assumptions by examining their accuracy and fairness. For each belief, critically evaluate the evidence for and against it. Consider alternative perspectives that counter ageist stereotypes.

Belief: _____

Evidence for	Evidence against

Alternative perspective: _____

Personal Affirmations

Affirmations can be a powerful tool for promoting a positive and empowered mindset. The following are some examples. Check off the ones you want to use or add more to the list:

- ☐ "I am grateful for the wisdom that comes with age."
- ☐ "Each year is a testament to my resilience and strength."
- ☐ "I embrace my age with confidence and self-assurance."
- ☐ "I am empowered by the knowledge and insights I have gained."
- ☐ "I embrace the changes in my appearance as a natural part of aging."
- ☐ "I am worthy of love, respect, and fulfillment at every stage of my life."
- ☐ "I release any fears or doubts about getting older."
- ☐ "I focus on the present moment and savor the richness of life at this age."
- ☐ "I nurture my body, mind, and spirit with compassion and care."
- ☐ "I am open to the possibilities and adventures that come with each new year."
- ☐ "I trust in my ability to adapt and thrive, finding joy and purpose in each chapter of my life."
- ☐ "I am inspired by the resilience and grace of those who have embraced aging before me."
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____

Visualization Exercise

1. Find a Quiet Space: Begin by finding a quiet and comfortable space where you can sit or lie down without distractions. Take a few deep breaths to center yourself and relax your body.

2. Set the Scene: Close your eyes and imagine yourself in a peaceful and serene environment, perhaps a beautiful garden, a calming beach, or a cozy room filled with soft light. Visualize this setting as a safe and tranquil space where you can explore the concept of aging with a sense of peace and comfort.

3. Focus on Your Present Self: Start by bringing your awareness to your current self. Notice the unique features, experiences, and wisdom that you possess at this stage of life. Embrace any emotions that arise, whether they are related to uncertainties about getting older or feelings of gratitude for the experiences you've accumulated.

4. Embrace Each Stage of Aging: Begin to visualize yourself at different stages of aging, starting with your current age and gradually moving forward. Picture yourself navigating each stage with confidence, resilience, and a deep sense of self-acceptance. Envision your future self radiating with inner strength, wisdom, and an enduring sense of joy.

5. Engage in Meaningful Activities: As you visualize each stage of aging, imagine yourself engaging in meaningful activities that bring fulfillment and joy. This could include spending time with loved ones, pursuing personal passions, or contributing to your community in ways that align with your values.

6. Cultivate Self-Compassion: Throughout the visualization, offer yourself words of kindness and self-compassion. Embrace any feelings of vulnerability or apprehension about aging with gentleness and understanding.

7. Reflect on Resilience: Reflect on the resilience and adaptability you possess as you age. Visualize yourself confidently navigating life's changes, embracing new opportunities, and finding purpose and meaning in each chapter of your journey.

8. End with Gratitude: Conclude the visualization by expressing gratitude for the richness of life at every stage of aging. Acknowledge the unique gifts and experiences that come with getting older, and affirm your readiness to embrace the future with a sense of optimism and self-assurance.

Reflection Questions

1. How did you feel before, during, and after the exercise?

2. What strengths or qualities did you notice about yourself as you aged in the visualization?

Managing Worries

1. Identifying Worries

Take a moment to identify and list specific concerns or worries that are prevalent in your life as you age. This might include health-related worries, financial concerns, changes in social relationships, or uncertainties about the future.

2. Assessing Realistic Impact

For each worry identified, assess the realistic impact and likelihood of occurrence. Determine aspects that are within and beyond your control.

Worry	Likelihood (0%-100%)	Aspects within my control	Aspects beyond my control
<i>e.g., Declining physical health</i>	<i>70%</i>	<i>- Engaging in regular exercise and physical activity. - Maintaining a balanced and nutritious diet. - Seeking regular medical check-ups and preventive healthcare.</i>	<i>- Genetic predispositions to certain health conditions. - Natural aging processes that may lead to physical changes. - Unforeseen health challenges that may arise despite proactive measures.</i>

Worry	Likelihood (0%-100%)	Aspects within my control	Aspects beyond my control

Managing Pain and Chronic Health Conditions

1. Self-Reflection on Pain and Health

- Reflect on your experiences with pain and any chronic health conditions you may have. Consider how these aspects impact your daily life, activities, and overall well-being.

- Write down any specific challenges or concerns you have related to managing pain and chronic health conditions as you age.

2. Understanding Pain Triggers and Patterns

- Identify the triggers and patterns associated with your pain, including environmental factors, activities, and emotional states.

3. Communication with Healthcare Providers

- List any questions or topics you would like to discuss with your healthcare providers to improve your pain management and overall health.

4. Pain Management Strategies

- Explore the different pain management strategies you have tried or are currently using, such as medication, physical therapy, relaxation techniques, or alternative therapies.

Pain Management Strategy	Effectiveness (1-10)

Self-Acceptance

1. Acknowledging Changes

Reflect on the physical, cognitive, and emotional changes that accompany the aging process. Acknowledge any feelings of apprehension or resistance to these changes and recognize them as a natural part of the aging journey.

2. Defining Personal Identity

Define aspects of your personal identity that extend beyond physical appearance or age-related factors. Consider your values, interests, relationships, and accomplishments as integral parts of your identity.

3. Shifting Priorities

Identify any evolving priorities, values, or aspirations that have emerged with age. Reflect on the significance of these shifts and their role in shaping your sense of purpose.

Identify Meaningful Activities

1. Reflect on Past Enjoyments

Recall activities or hobbies that have brought you joy and fulfillment in the past, such as gardening, painting, playing a musical instrument, or engaging in sports.

2. Exploring New Interests

List new activities or interests that you've always wanted to pursue but haven't had the opportunity to explore, such as cooking classes, learning a new language, or taking up photography.

3. Social Engagement Activities

Identify activities that involve connecting with others, such as joining a local club, participating in group outings, or volunteering for a cause that resonates with you.

Establish a Routine

Morning Routine

1. Wake Up Time: Set a consistent time to wake up each morning.

2. Hygiene: List personal hygiene activities such as brushing teeth, showering, and grooming.

3. Physical Activity: Include light exercises or stretches to promote mobility and flexibility.

4. Nutrition: Plan a balanced breakfast to start your day.

Afternoon Routine

1. Social Engagement: Schedule time for social interactions with friends, family, or community members.

2. Mental Stimulation: Engage in activities that promote mental sharpness, such as reading, puzzles, or hobbies.

3. Meal Planning: Plan and prepare a nutritious lunch.

Evening Routine

1. Physical Comfort: Incorporate activities for relaxation, such as meditation, gentle yoga, or listening to soothing music.

2. Dinner: Prepare and enjoy a well-balanced dinner.

Bedtime Routine:

1. Wind Down: Include calming activities before bedtime, such as reading, journaling, or practicing gratitude.

2. Sleep Schedule: Set a consistent bedtime to ensure adequate rest.

Weekly Activities

1. Intellectual Pursuits: Schedule time for intellectual stimulation, such as attending lectures, learning a new skill, or exploring new interests.

2. Physical Fitness: Plan regular physical activities, such as walking, swimming, or gentle workouts.

3. Community Engagement: Identify opportunities for volunteering, social groups, or community events.

Identifying Resources

1. Personal Strengths

Take a moment to list your personal strengths, skills, and qualities that have supported you throughout different stages of life.

2. Support Systems

Consider the individuals in your support network – family, friends, or community members who provide emotional, practical, or social support.

3. Health and Wellness Services

Identify the healthcare professionals, specialists, or wellness services available to you. This may include primary care physicians, mental health counselors, fitness classes, nutritionists, or any other resources that contribute to your overall well-being.

4. Financial Resources

List any financial resources or support available to you, such as retirement savings, pension plans, social security benefits, insurance coverage, or financial assistance programs.

5. Educational and Enrichment Programs

Identify any educational, creative, or skill-building programs that cater to older adults. This might include lifelong learning classes, art workshops, technology training, or other enrichment opportunities.

6. Legal and Advocacy Support

Consider any legal resources, advocacy groups, or eldercare services that can offer guidance on legal matters, rights protection, and long-term care planning.

7. Transportation and Mobility Services

Reflect on available transportation options and mobility services that can facilitate independent living and access to essential activities and amenities.

Financial Planning

1. Income and Expenses

Track your sources of income (e.g., retirement savings, social security, pensions) and monthly expenses (e.g., housing, healthcare, utilities, groceries).

Sources Of Income	Monthly Expenses

2. Budgeting

Create a budget that aligns with your current financial situation and future needs. Consider factors such as inflation, healthcare costs, and potential long-term care expenses. Establish or maintain an emergency fund to cover unexpected expenses or income disruptions.

Expenses	Budget
Emergency Fund	

Gratitude for Experiences

1. Reflect on a specific experience or memory from your past that has brought you wisdom, insight, or joy as you've aged. Describe this experience and how it has influenced your perspective on life.

2. Consider the relationships and connections that have enriched your life as you've grown older. Name three individuals or groups for whom you are grateful and reflect on the positive impact they have had on your journey.

3. Reflect on a moment of self-discovery or personal achievement that has brought you a sense of pride and fulfillment in your later years. Describe this experience and its significance.

4. Write down three things about your current stage of life that you appreciate and value. These could be related to your relationships, personal growth, experiences, or any other aspect of your life.

5. Consider the opportunities and possibilities that aging has opened up for you.

Forgiveness and Healing

1. Identifying Your Pain

Reflect on past experiences, relationships, or events that may have caused emotional pain or distress. Write about the specific situations, individuals, or oneself that may be in need of forgiveness.

2. Understanding the Impact of Holding onto Resentment

Reflect on how harboring feelings of resentment or anger may have affected your emotional well-being, relationships, and overall quality of life.

3. Practicing Self-Compassion

Offer yourself kindness and understanding as you navigate the process of forgiveness, recognizing that releasing resentment can be a profound act of self-care and emotional liberation. Understand that forgiveness does not necessarily imply condoning or excusing the actions of others, but rather freeing oneself from the emotional burden of resentment and anger.

4. Recognizing the Humanity of Others

Reflect on the common humanity shared with those who have caused pain, acknowledging that everyone is capable of making mistakes and carrying their own burdens.

5. Reframing Perspectives

Consider the possibility of viewing past transgressions from alternative perspectives, seeking to understand the complexities and contexts that may have influenced the actions of others.

6. Engaging in Empathy and Compassion

Cultivate empathy for those who have caused pain while also extending compassion toward yourself.

7. Releasing the Burden

Explore the practice of letting go of resentment and grudges. Create personal rituals or symbolic acts of release, such as:

Letter Burning Ceremony: Write a letter expressing your feelings of resentment and pain towards a specific individual or situation. After completing the letter, safely burn it as a symbolic act of releasing these emotions and letting go of the associated grievances.

Symbolic Object Burial: Choose a symbolic object representing your feelings of resentment or hurt, such as a written note or a small token. Bury this object in a natural setting, signifying the burial of negative emotions and the opportunity for new growth and healing to emerge.

Forgiveness Visualization: Set aside dedicated time to visualize a scenario where you extend forgiveness to others and receive forgiveness in return. This practice can help in fostering a sense of empathy, understanding, and openness to the possibility of forgiveness.

Forgiveness Ritual Bath: Prepare a warm bath infused with soothing essential oils or herbs. As you soak in the water, visualize the cleansing and release of negative emotions, inviting forgiveness and emotional renewal to permeate your being.

Acts of Service and Giving

1. Explore opportunities for acts of service or giving back to others. The following are some common examples. Check off the ones you want to try or add more to the list:

- ☐ Volunteering at a local community center
- ☐ Sharing life experiences through mentorship programs for youth
- ☐ Assisting at a senior center or retirement community
- ☐ Offering to teach a skill or hobby to others
- ☐ Participating in intergenerational storytelling events
- ☐ Donating time at a local food bank or soup kitchen
- ☐ Supporting fundraising efforts for a cause or charity
- ☐ Engaging in advocacy work for aging-related issues
- ☐ Creating and maintaining a community garden
- ☐ Helping to organize community events or gatherings
- ☐ Assisting with animal rescue or care efforts
- ☐ Engaging in peer support groups for individuals facing similar challenges
- ☐ Creating handmade crafts or goods to donate to those in need
- ☐ Offering to help with administrative tasks for local non-profit organizations

2. Reflect on how these acts of service enrich your spiritual fulfillment and sense of purpose in the aging process.

2026 Clinical Alignment

DSM-5-TR (including Sept. 2025 update) · ICD-11 CDDR / 2026 MMS

Classification status

- DSM-5-TR: No standalone DSM-5-TR diagnosis under the workbook title · educational/contextual topic unless a separately assessed disorder applies
- ICD-11 CDDR: No dedicated ICD-11 CDDR mental-disorder code under the workbook title · educational/contextual topic unless another coded condition is established
- This workbook is non-diagnostic. A title, checklist, or completed activity never establishes a diagnosis.

Pages requiring the updated interpretation

- The audit identified source pages 2, 11, 22, 33, 38. The statements below supersede incompatible diagnostic, scoring, safety, or resource wording on those pages.

Diagnostic and differential limits

- Use Aging material to support assessment or intervention planning, not to assign a diagnosis. Evaluate duration, severity, clinically significant distress or impairment, developmental and cultural context, medical/substance causes, exclusions, and relevant differentials.

Document-specific corrections

- Keep Aging explicitly non-diagnostic; its exercises organize experience and goals but do not establish a mental disorder or causal explanation.
- Supersede diagnostic-sounding scoring on pages [2]: disclose whether each tool is validated or author-created, remove unsupported thresholds, and separate symptom monitoring from diagnosis.
- Clinically review medical or treatment statements on pages [22]; remove prescriptive medication advice, clarify coordination with licensed medical care, and update contraindications or urgent warning signs for the specific topic.
- Replace crisis wording on pages [2, 33] with the current U.S. 988 call/text/chat pathway, 911 or nearest emergency department for immediate danger/medical emergency, and a direction to use verified local services outside the United States.

Measures, scoring, and permissions

- Pages [2] contain named, implied, or author-created screening/rating content . These scores are not diagnostic unless the exact instrument, version, validation population, administration, and interpretation are established. Identify provenance for every item set and scoring rule. Obtain publisher permission/license when required; otherwise remove cutoffs and label it as a nonvalidated reflection checklist, or replace it with a properly licensed measure without altering its wording/scoring.

Intervention scope and contraindications

- Use Aging activities as psychoeducation and structured reflection, not diagnosis or a stand-alone treatment plan. Adapt or stop any exercise that worsens distress, functioning, conflict, pain, or dissociation, and escalate care according to the actual presentation.

Crisis and current resources

- For Aging, use: ·If there is immediate danger or a medical emergency, call 911 or go to the nearest emergency department. In the U.S., call or text 988 or use 988lifeline.org for 24/7 crisis support. Outside the U.S., use verified local emergency and crisis services.· Verify all topic-specific agencies and links at publication.

Authoritative references

- <https://www.psychiatry.org/psychiatrists/practice/dsm/updates-to-dsm/updates-to-dsm-5-tr-criteria-text>
- <https://www.psychiatry.org/getmedia/b68a5776-f88c-45c7-9535-fd219d7aa5cb/APA-DSM5TR-Update-September-2025.pdf>
- <https://icd.who.int/browse/2026-01/mms/en>
- <https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789240077263>
- <https://www.samhsa.gov/mental-health/988>

2026 Clinical Alignment

DSM-5-TR (including Sept. 2025 update) · ICD-11 CDDR / 2026 MMS

- <https://www.samhsa.gov/mental-health/national-behavioral-health-crisis-care>
- <https://988lifeline.org/>