

# Changes and losses are part of the aging process

Experiencing changes and losses is an uncomfortable part of the aging process, and the longer a person lives, the more losses they will see.

In middle to late adulthood, one of the first major changes that may occur is the transition from a career and employment to retirement.

As a person ages, health problems, chronic illness and even a disability can become problematic, often resulting in the loss of mobility, including the ability to drive a vehicle.

The loss of a life-long home, in lieu of a smaller residence, can be another significant loss. The death



## high plains mental health

- plain sense

of a spouse is often the beginning of having to live alone and may also involve financial losses and many other changes.

Older adults often lose their own adult children to death, which is extremely difficult.

Most parents just do not expect to outlive their own children, and in addition, those children may have

quaintances and family members experience similar difficulties, the circle of friends and caregivers also diminishes.

Older people experience strong emotional reactions when friends and neighbors move into retirement centers or become handicapped and enter long-term care facilities, especially when their friends develop

illnesses such as dementia or Alzheimer's, and communication becomes difficult or impossible.

Loneliness and problems associated with the tasks of daily living are two of the most common and difficult adjustments for older bereaved persons.

Living alone becomes even more difficult, as the survivor must learn new tasks and roles at the same time that they are experiencing extreme emotional loss. Successful aging requires coping with these losses,

grieving or mourning appropriately, and finally accepting one's new status in life.

Caregivers, too, often need outside help as they struggle to provide aging friends and relatives with assistance with daily tasks and with emotional support.

If you have concerns about an aging friend or relative, there are many sources of help including the local Area Agency on Aging, the faith community and mental health professionals.

*Contributed by Cora Lee Pfannenstiel, Consultation and Education Department. The views expressed here are those of the individual writer and should not be considered a replacement for seeking professional help.*

*Mail questions to High Plains Mental Health Center, Plain Sense, Consultation and Education Department, 208 East Seventh, Hays, Kan. 67601.*

*Internet site: [www.highplains-mentalhealth.com](http://www.highplains-mentalhealth.com).*

## Couple to be wed this July

Barbara Lynne Gilley and Nicolas Dean Hoover plan to marry Saturday, July 24, 2004, at the United Methodist Church in Hays.

Rod and Susan Gilley of Brewster are the bride-elect's parents, and Greg and Lora Alexander of Yoder, Colo., and Gale Hoover of Cheyenne Wells, Colo., are the prospective groom's.

The bride-elect's grandparents are Virginia Smiley and the late Dr. W.A. Smiley Jr. and Lyle and Carmelita Clark, all of Goodland. The prospective groom's are Larry and Donna Michel of Cumberland, Wis., and Jerry and Norma Hoover of Rush, Colo.

The bride-elect graduated from Brewster High School and Colby Community College. She



Hoover and Gilley

is pursuing a bachelor's degree in nursing at Fort Hays State University and works at Hays Medical Center.

The prospective groom graduated from Cheyenne Wells High School and Colby Community College. He will graduate from Fort Hays State in May with a bachelor's degree in business administration. He works for the Daylight Donut Shop in Hays.

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