

Episode 177 Transcript : Who Is There For You?

08:06:39:25 - 08:06:14:28

Karen Brown

Hi, everyone. Welcome to episode 177. Let me ask you a question. In the event of an adverse health event that had you in the hospital for at least two days or more, would you have people who could step in at the time when you would be released and assist you on a long term basis with activities of

08:06:14:28 - 08:05:59:13

Karen Brown

daily living? Now by that, I mean eating, bathing and dressing. Could you identify people who could help you do that? I wondered when my cat was going to make an appearance in one of these videos, I'm sorry, you're just getting the back end.

08:05:58:25 - 08:05:40:03

Karen Brown

Anyway, he's looking out the window. A study was done of 4772 people. It was published on November 15th in the Journal of Internal Medicine. That's one of the JAMA publications. We did an article on the oldish about it on November 16th.

08:05:40:03 - 08:05:19:55

Karen Brown

You can go to our website and there's a link to the actual study there if you're interested in reading about this further. But this is a very important issue because at some point we will all be alone, whether that is because we are alone by choice or a spouse or partner predeceases us.

08:05:18:02 - 08:04:49:03

Karen Brown

You know, being alone has lots of negative consequences, some of them we've talked about here before. This, though. This identifies very clear and evident health outcomes for people. Now this study was done of these 4772 people from March 2006 to April 2015.

08:04:48:34 - 08:04:28:10

Karen Brown

They followed them. Periodically, for a mean average of 4.9 years, so the data analysis was just completed in May 2020 through March 2021, so pretty fresh data and they were all asked this question at the beginning of the study.

08:04:28:08 - 08:04:13:52

Karen Brown

I suppose in the future you needed help with basic personal care activities like eating or dressing. Do you have relatives or friends besides your spouse or partner who would be willing and able to help you over a long period of time?

08:04:12:42 - 08:03:38:01

Karen Brown

38% could not identify people who could support them. That's two out of every five people could not identify anybody who could support them. Do you find that surprising? I found it really surprising and very concerning. Now, through the term of this study, through the 4.9 years of the 4772 people, 68% of them did in fact have what

08:03:38:01 - 08:03:11:57

Karen Brown

the study termed a health shock. So that was a self-reported diagnosis of cancer, heart disease, or a stroke that sent them to the hospital for two or more days. 68%, so he you know. Those odds suggest that there is certainly a good chance that that could happen to any of us.

08:03:11:10 - 08:02:47:25

Karen Brown

Don't you think? And if two out of five of us can't identify somebody who could support us as we recover. That's problematic. Now, let me tell you the reality of the study in terms of the follow up. Participants who lived alone and could not identify support.

08:02:47:04 - 08:02:24:52

Karen Brown

So that's the two out of five were more likely to develop a new addle dependency. So activities of daily living dependency, they were dependent on somebody else for eating, bathing, dressing or perhaps some other more minor activity of daily living.

08:02:24:52 - 08:02:02:54

Karen Brown

They couldn't do it by themselves. They had to be dependent on other people. They were more likely to have a prolonged nursing home stay. Imagine. They were also more likely to die. Simply because they didn't have people around them who could support them on a long term basis.

08:02:00:48 - 08:01:47:10

Karen Brown

That is something. That we can rectify. I'm just going to look through this and see if there's something else that I need to actually bring to your attention from this study, because you can. You can actually read it yourself.

08:01:47:09 - 08:01:33:55

Karen Brown

We found that an identifiable support in older adults was associated with a lower risk of prolonged nursing home stay, primarily in the setting of health shock. OK, so that's important, you know, we've talked on the show before about.

08:01:32:57 - 08:01:04:13

Karen Brown

Isolation, social isolation and the importance of making sure that we do not isolate ourselves socially. I know it's been hard throughout this pandemic for many people to maintain their levels of social engagement. But as we discussed video conferencing, telephone calls, talking to people at a distance, so standing on the sidewalk and talking to them while they are

08:01:04:13 - 08:00:42:06

Karen Brown

in their doorway, little tough in Canadian winters, but you understand what I'm saying. Those kinds of things are really important for social engagement. They are important for our mental health. They are important for our overall health. Now social engagement also includes things like going to the store and talking to the cashier.

08:00:41:39 - 08:00:19:15

Karen Brown

I never literally never choose self-service checkouts in grocery stores or pharmacies or any place. I always go to a checkout with a real human. first and foremost, because I object to the potential that I'm contributing to somebody losing their job.

08:00:17:38 - 08:00:01:57

Karen Brown

Set that piece aside, and when you go to a cashier, there's always a conversation. Hi, how are you? They might ask, Did you find everything you were looking for? You know, there's an exchange back and forth yesterday. We were talking, we were talking about my nails at the pharmacy.

08:00:01:30 - 09:59:43:44

Karen Brown

The cashier liked my nail polish, so we talked about that. And you know, there's there's just always something. If you go to the post office to have a chat with the postmistress or master while you're collecting mail or sending a parcel off or buying stamps that counts.

09:59:42:31 - 09:59:25:42

Karen Brown

If you're out for a daily walk, which I hope you are encountering a neighbor or somebody who's familiar and having a conversation. These are these activities of social engagement are ever so important. How does that relate to this study?

09:59:25:41 - 09:58:53:47

Karen Brown

Well, it relates to the study because we need to actively proactively. one of my favorite words proactively. Contribute to our own socialization. That is how you build a network of people. The natural progression of social engagement is that you chat with people a few times, maybe you have a coffee, maybe you get together for some recreational activity

09:58:53:11 - 09:58:28:39

Karen Brown

, maybe. You go to the theater together, I mean, you understand what I'm saying. These people that you find common ground with, eventually you end up doing things together. And, you know, it's just as important to build that social network for ourselves as it is to build it for the people with whom we are socially engaged.

09:58:28:10 - 09:58:11:15

Karen Brown

You might be the one who helps them. This business of seeing somebody who is a friend live in a nursing home for longer than they need to simply because they can't go home and recover without proper supports in place is not OK.

09:58:09:55 - 09:57:52:29

Karen Brown

I understand all of the arguments about home care. And what the government provides and doesn't provide, and it's not enough hours and, you know, these strangers are coming into your home, I understand all of those arguments. I understand the arguments of unpaid caregivers.

09:57:50:34 - 09:57:30:04

Karen Brown

I can't get into that in this particular show. This is about you. This is about you proactively making sure that you have a support system around you, a social network. And that if something happened to you, there would be somebody you could call.

09:57:29:13 - 09:57:13:43

Karen Brown

I think it's really sad that two out of five people couldn't identify anyone that they could call. For a bit of help. I know several days, a longer period of time is a bit more than a bit of help.

09:57:11:51 - 09:56:51:13

Karen Brown

But I can think of a number of my friends that I would do that for in a heartbeat. It's not even a question. And I hope that you can identify people. Who could support you in the event of an adverse health event so that you aren't one of these people who needs?

09:56:49:46 - 09:56:31:14

Karen Brown

To be dependent on others for activities of daily living, to stay in a nursing home longer or to die sooner than you should simply because you didn't have that support in place. It is quite literally a real life renovation that we can.

09:56:29:53 - 09:56:06:36

Karen Brown

And we should and, you know, I don't like that word should, but in this case, I'm going to use it. We can, and we should be looking at actively developing so that we have the life we were meant to have and not the one we stumble into because the pieces didn't line up, line up the pieces, people.

09:56:05:22 - 09:55:51:10

Karen Brown

Line them up, do your own real life renovation until next Wednesday at twelve noon. Take care of yourselves, take care of one another and take care of those around you. Be well.