

# Psychology has important role in helping older Americans as they age

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With more than 13 percent of Americans currently over age 65, and that proportion expected to grow in the coming decades, psychology has played and will continue to play an important part in helping seniors maintain their health, adjust to retirement and prevent cognitive decline, according to the flagship journal of the American Psychological Association.

In a special issue of *American Psychologist* entitled "Aging in America: Perspectives from Psychological Science," researchers review the current and potential contributions of [psychological science](#) to the well-being of older Americans, including promoting healthy cognition, preventing dementia, confronting ageism, recognizing the role of family members in long-term care and ensuring retirement security, both financial and emotional.

"Aging is often viewed in negative terms, with a focus on inevitable physical and [cognitive decline](#), dependence, vulnerability and [older adults](#) being a drain on society," noted Deborah A. DiGilio, MPH, director of APA's Office on Aging and one of the scholarly leads on the issue.

"The articles in this issue highlight actions that older adults, professionals and systems can take to promote aging well and to engage older adults as valuable members and contributors to society." said Karen Roberto, PhD, of Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, the issue's other scholarly lead.

The idea for the special issue originated from the 2015 White House Conference on Aging, during which APA presented a series of white papers outlining how psychology could help improve the lives of older Americans in the four areas identified as themes by the White House. After the conference, authors of the white papers were invited to expand those papers into full journal articles that comprise the special issue.

"Psychological research on the processes of aging informs how we address critical aging issues that have far-reaching societal impact for years beyond the 2015 White House Conference on Aging," Roberto said. "To further our understanding of the varied and competing issues facing an aging society, the articles in this special issue address individual, societal and technological shifts that influence aging well, including mind, body, wealth and relationships."

Provided by American Psychological Association

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