

Well-being among the Elderly - challenges for social policy

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The aim of this presentation is to explore the multidimensional concept of well-being among older adults and to identify the factors that can either support or threaten it. In the context of an aging society, the issue of quality of life in late adulthood is gaining increasing importance — not only from an individual perspective, but also systemically — as a challenge for social policy, healthcare, and local communities.

Well-being is understood here as a complex construct encompassing physical well-being (somatic health and functional capacity), psychological well-being (emotional balance, sense of purpose, autonomy, self-esteem), and environmental well-being (living conditions, access to social support, healthcare systems, infrastructure, and culture that promote and dignified aging). Special attention is given to the role of psychological well-being as a protective factor against exclusion, depression, and declining life satisfaction.

The presentation will also address threats to the well-being of older adults, including social pathologies such as elder abuse — physical, psychological, financial, or through neglect — which remain under-recognized and marginalized both in public discourse and institutional practice. The issue of age-related stereotypes (ageism) and their negative impact on self-worth and agency in older adults will also be discussed.

Furthermore, selected programs implemented in Poland aimed at enhancing the quality of life of the elderly will be presented — ranging from educational and integrative initiatives to psycho-preventive interventions. Simple yet effective techniques for supporting psychological well-being will be outlined, with an emphasis on their applicability in everyday caregiving and community settings.

This presentation seeks to frame old age as a life stage that, when appropriately supported, can be characterized by meaning, relationships, and dignity — not merely by decline and dependence.