

Appreciating the Unique Characteristics and Needs of High-Need, High-Cost Populations using *Personas*

Person-Centered Care

A persona is a research-based “empathy tool” that helps portray the experiences, motivations, goals, and barriers of a patient population too often seen solely through the lens of cost or clinical data.

This whole-person perspective allows us to consider health services and system-level changes that will more closely align care delivery with the underlying behavioral and socioeconomic realities of the human experience.

System Considerations

Personas are useful for identifying gaps in health system performance and design for a given patient population.

With a deeper understanding of the unique needs of key populations, health systems are better able to target and prioritize services as well as develop efforts to reduce costs.

Deep Insights

Instead of viewing a patient as a data point of what might be a short term intervention, personas lend rich insights into the underlying factors impacting a person's total health experience.

Personas convey the consumer's voice and shed light on a population's pain points and needs.

Patient vs. Person:

How Their Concerns Differ

Patient

Person

Health status

Provider
relationship

Caregiver training

Access to services

Affordable care
and meds

Care team
Collaboration

Resiliency

Anxiety

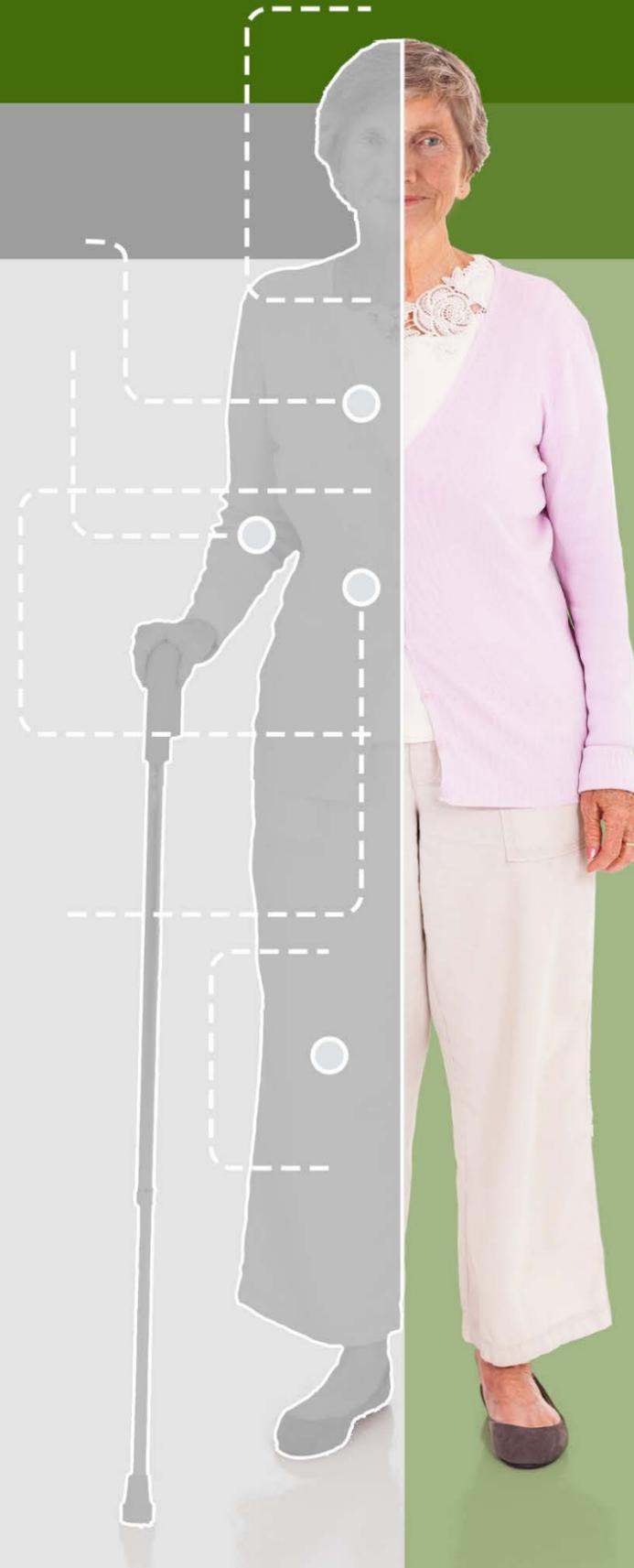
Willingness to
accept help

Fixed budget

Loneliness

Outlook on
aging

Sense of loss



Frail Elderly Personas

Perspectives of Adults Living with Severe Limitations

Declining Dorothy

Patient

- Hope my new doctor reads my records so I don't have to relive things
- Ashamed when my doctor lectures me about losing weight and I fail him
- Too embarrassed to tell my doctor I can't afford meds
- Irritated that insurance doesn't cover the cost of my treatment

Person

- Miss being able to get out in the sun for a long walk
- Worry how my knee is healing
- Resent that my health issues slow me down
- Discouraged I have to rely on others for help
- Dismayed that I have to continually adjust to my limitations

Active Albert

Patient

- Appreciate how my primary care doctor patiently answers questions
- Pleased with my doctor when she stays on top of my blood tests and medications
- Enjoy having the ride service available for medical visits
- Appreciate how my doctors all know what the others are doing
- Do my own rehab to avoid weekly \$30 fee

Person

- Joined a group so I can talk about my concerns and ask for advice
- Stay on top of my health because my biggest fear is losing my independence
- Feel motivated to work on the muscles I use on stairs because I don't want to fall
- Choose not to use a car so I maintain my ability to walk
- Do exercises to improve my balance

Frail Elderly Personas

Perspectives of Adults Living with Severe Limitations

Declining Dorothy

“ It made me feel like I was losing control...like my health issues were making the decisions for me.”

“ Seems like I’m having more and more difficulties doing the things that I want to do.”

“ The heat is no good for me. Where do I go? I don't have many choices, really.”

“ I was really disappointed, because I was looking to have a good year and something always crops up and it’s just really upsetting.”

Active Albert

“ I wanna be master of my own fate...once I figured out that this is what's gonna happen to me, I just decided, "Hey, I wanna try to do what I can for myself.”

“ I started to realize that if I don't take care of myself, I'm gonna follow my parents' footsteps, and I don't wanna be a stroke victim.”

“ I like to be proactive, and I like to feel that we’re all on the same team.”

“ I’ve done a lot of studying on it. And I think I’ve got a pretty good handle on it now.”

Declining Dorothy

I used to love gardening and walking, but I just get so tired now. I feel so limited. But at this point I'm just having to learn to live with things. I'm nervous to do things because of how it might affect my health issues.

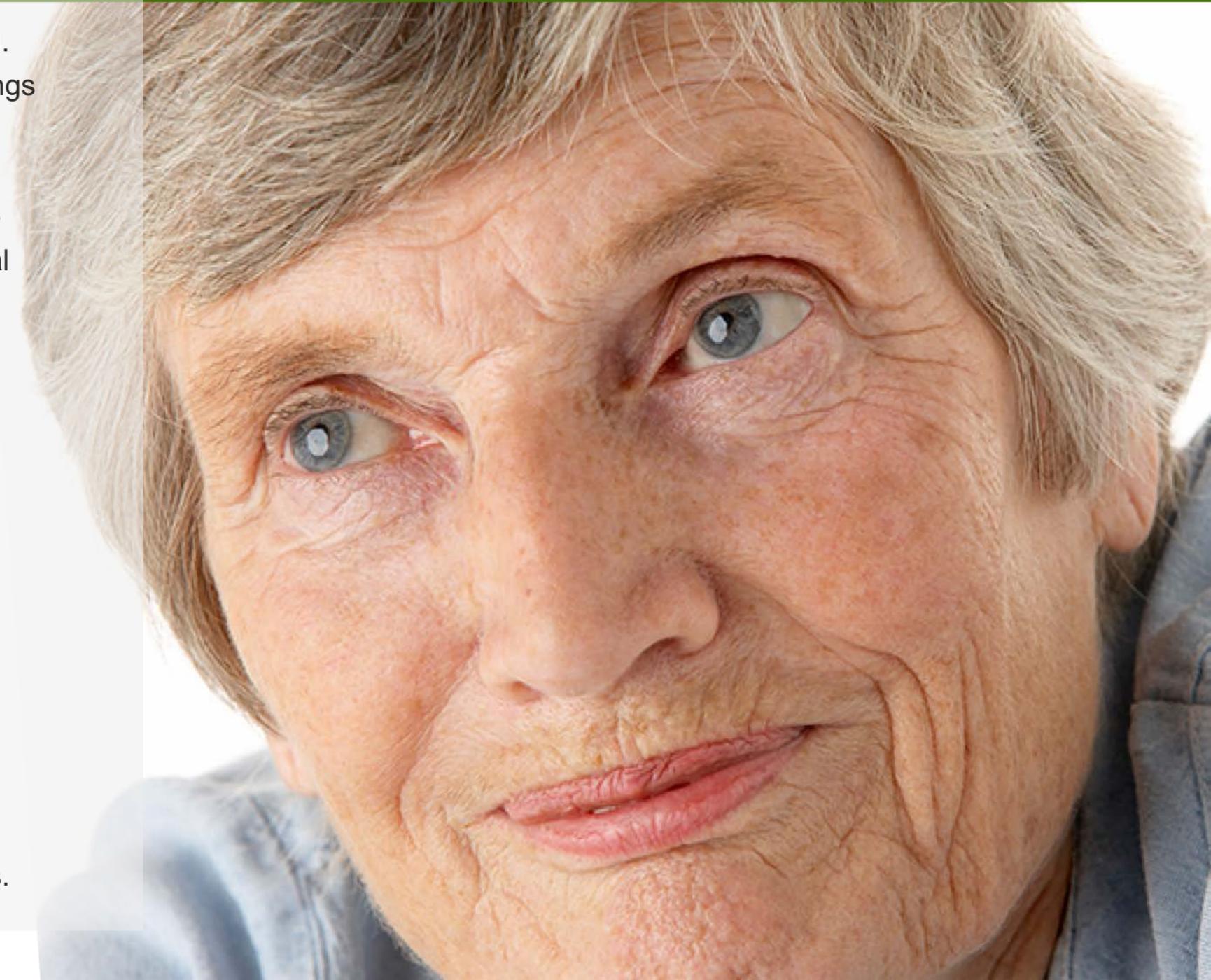
My knee is still in a lot more pain than I expected after the surgery. A new brace would help, but my insurance won't cover it, I don't think. Frankly, all the medical stuff is overwhelming to sort through.

Lately, it feels like I don't have a lot of choices and I'm kind of losing control. It's as though my health issues are making my decisions for me. I'm hardly my own person anymore.

If only my family were not so caught up in their busy lives. I see so little of them and wonder at times if they really care about me. Oh, how I do miss my dear William and my sister Kate. It's been over three years since they both passed.

I do appreciate my [personal care assistant] who helps me get to my doctor appointments. It can be tricky to figure out a time that works for all of us. Since it's such an undertaking to get to my appointments, it's frustrating when my doctor gets really busy and can only see me for just a couple of rushed minutes.

“ It seems like I'm having more and more difficulties doing the things that I want to do. I was pretty healthy growing up. But the last five or six years—it's like I don't want to say I'm a cripple, but it is really getting to me now.”



Declining Dorothy



Goals

- Work around my increasing limitations
- Get used to having others help me
- Feel less tired and worn down
- Understand my coverage better

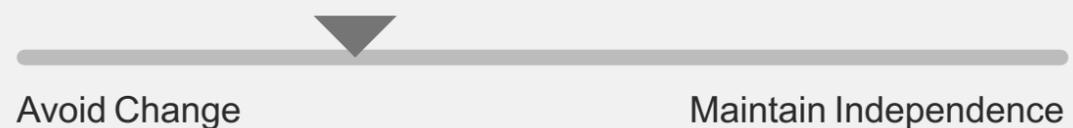
Motivations

- Feeling less anxious about my health
- Not being such a burden to caregivers
- Avoiding change; keeping to the familiar
- Getting the treatment/attention I deserve

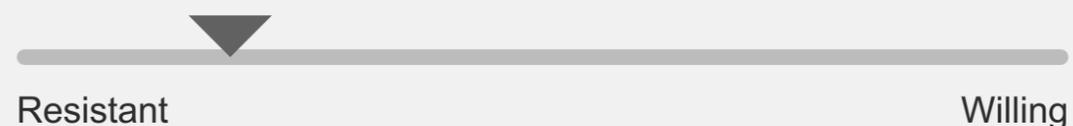
Barriers

- Inadequately trained caregivers
- Loneliness and depression
- Aches, pains, and mental decline
- Poor care team collaboration

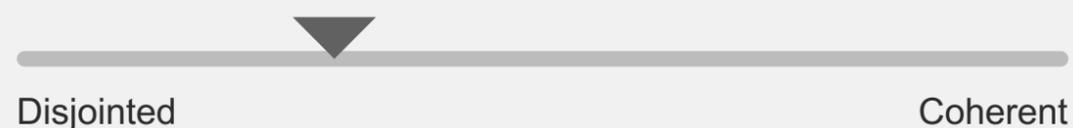
Motivation



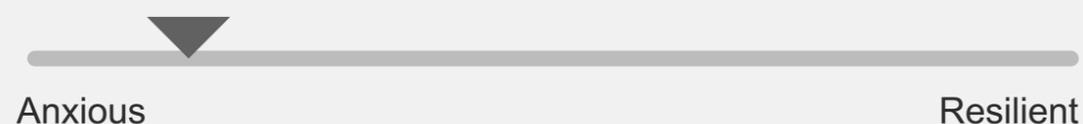
Willingness to Accept Help



Coordinated Care



Health/Aging Outlook



Patient Considerations

- Help me feel like I can age gracefully
- Dignify me by taking your time with me
- Talk with me about emotional health
- Take my concerns seriously

System Considerations

- Connect my care team members
- Invite me to engage with communities
- Help me find caregivers/personal care assistants
- Accommodate my limitations

Active Albert

With some adjustments, I'm learning ways to keep doing the things I love, which means a lot to me. Of course, I may not do them quite as fast I as used to, but I can live with that.

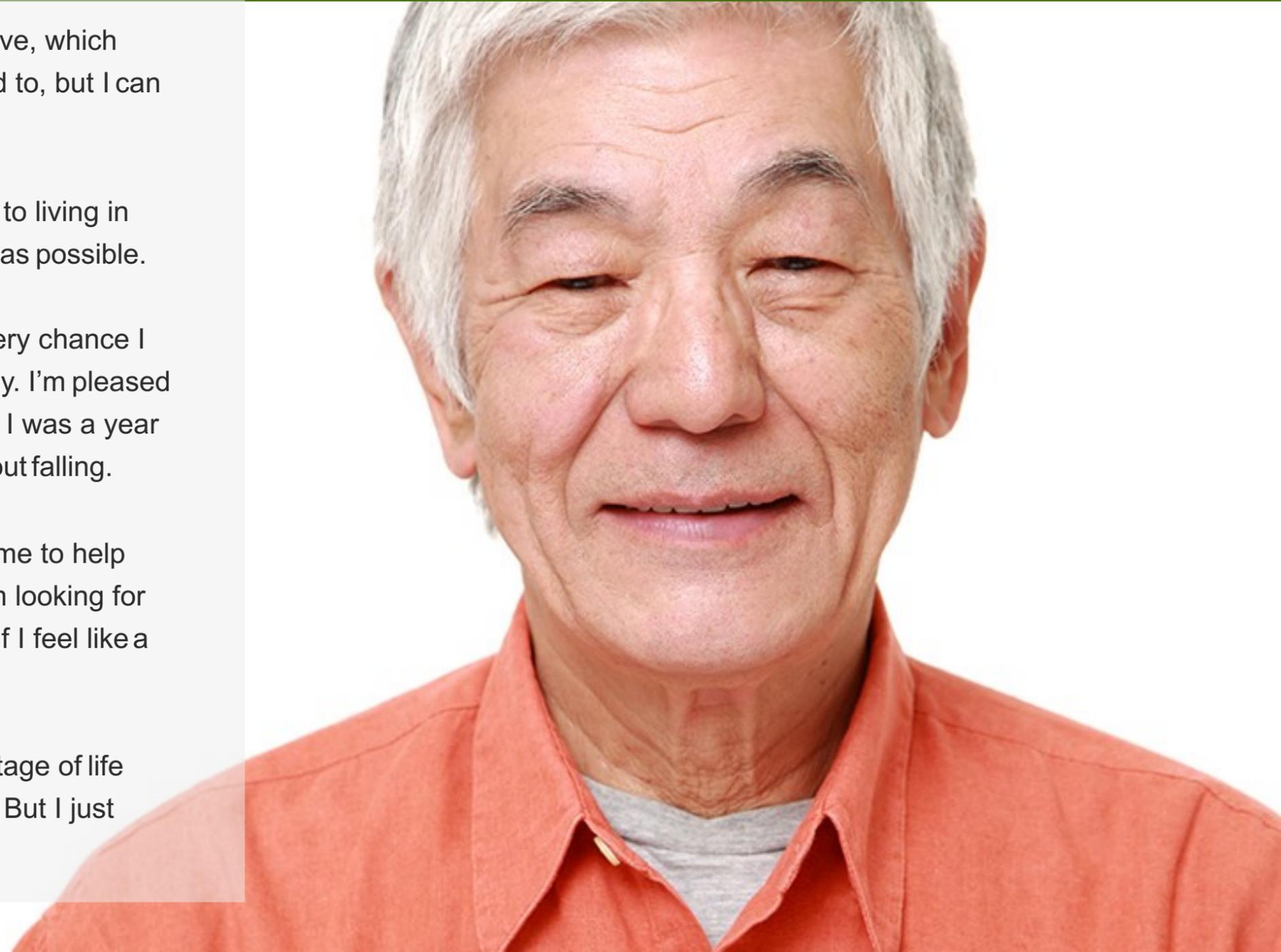
I'm concerned about losing my independence and becoming restricted to living in an institution, which is why I try and stay on top of everything as much as possible.

I'm all about doing everything preventative I can. I insist on walking every chance I get. I'm very careful about what I eat, and I check labels fairly religiously. I'm pleased with the progress I'm making; I actually feel a little stronger than I think I was a year ago. And my balance has improved, which makes me less anxious about falling.

I sure appreciate my cardiologist. He's honest with me and takes the time to help me understand my options. I always do a lot of asking around when I'm looking for a new doctor to make sure I get a good one. And I don't hesitate at all if I feel like a second opinion could be helpful.

I refuse to give into the idea that I am powerless. Many people at my stage of life begin to feel sorry for themselves and dwell on everything they've lost. But I just don't go there. It's not helpful.

“ I have two young grandchildren. I wanna be around for them for a long time. I saw my mother and father suffer at young ages. I don't wanna go through that. If it's only about diet and exercise, I can at least be in control of that.”



Active Albert



Goals

- Stay on top of my health; be proactive
- Be knowledgeable about my health
- Plan for emergencies; prevent falls
- Keep my mind sharp and my body able

Motivations

- Refuse to give in to my limitations
- Use my life experiences to help others
- Be there for my family and friends
- Speak up; ensure my voice is heard

Barriers

- Gaps in caregiving assistance
- Slow recovery and recuperation times
- Dealing with a fixed budget
- Complex health conditions

Motivation

Avoid Change

Maintain Independence

Willingness to Accept Help

Resistant

Willing

Coordinated Care

Disjointed

Coherent

Health/Aging Outlook

Anxious

Resilient

Patient Considerations

- Explain things carefully and patiently
- Make it easier to schedule appointments
- Help me with my independence goals
- Connect with my other providers

System Considerations

- Empower my team to care for me
- Incorporate my view into the care plan
- Remove barriers to utilizing services
- Make education available to me