
In Their Own Words: The Social Convoy Spouse, Adult, Children, Grandchildren, and Friends

Program Overview

The Social Convoy is defined as the group of people who accompany us on this journey of life. The composition and size of one's social convoy changes constantly over the course of the human lifespan.

For some individuals in Late Adulthood, one's spouse is an integral member of the social convoy. This video shows us two long-time married couples talking about their relationships. It also presents a widow who discusses what her marriage was like before her husband died.

In the next section, seniors talk about their adult children and their grandchildren. It displays the diversity that exists among this population in the ways, the frequency, and the quality of their interactions with their extended families. We hear from three married couples, a widower and a widow.

The final section focuses on the network of friends that typical seniors have. Again, we see much diversity in the size of this network and in their interactions with them as nine seniors talk in their own words.

Introduction to this Guide

This guide is just that: a guide. It is not meant to encompass all the possible ways this video might be used. The underlying concept guiding the production of the video, however, was that it was designed with two different possible uses in mind.

One use was as a supplemental accompaniment to the video Late Adulthood: The Social Convoy (see the preceding chapter in this Workbook). As we listen to these seniors describing their lives, they illustrate for us many of the concepts presented in the Late Adulthood: The Social Convoy. The suggestions for discussion and/or written assignments presented below are intended to help the instructor or group leader help participants or students make these connections.

The second use was as a stand-alone video designed for a wide variety of groups and settings. In this case, the revelations of the seniors in the video are intended to stimulate discussion and thought. The questions presented below are examples of the types of directions the group leader can take. Again, these questions are not meant to be the only possible ones.

Possible Discussion/Written Assignment Topics

These topics can be used either to stimulate group discussion or as topics for a variety of written assignments. Some examples are term papers, research papers, in-class exams, or take-home exams.

An important point is that there are no right or wrong answers here. Many of the differences illustrate differences in values, not in right or wrong. They are intended to get participants to think about the issues that are presented.

1. Compare and contrast the marriage relationship between Don and Helen with that of Babs and Hy.
2. How did Mae's marriage differ from the two mentioned above in number 1?
3. If you viewed Late Adulthood: The Social Convoy video (see the preceding chapter in this Workbook), what points regarding marriage in late adulthood were illustrated by the seniors in this video?
4. Describe how the areas of disagreement have changed over time for the two couples.
5. Do you know any long-married couples? If so, how do their marital relationships differ from the ones you've seen in this video?
6. Interview several long-married couples. Compare what they tell you with what you've seen in this video.
7. Review the research on long-term marriages, and discuss how these marriages compare with the research results.
8. Has watching this video changed your opinion or your attitudes toward marriage? Toward long-term marriage? How or how not?
9. Compare and contrast the relationships with adult children and with grandchildren between Don and Helen, Bob and Eiko, Phil, and Mae.
10. If you viewed Late Adulthood: The Social Convoy video (see the preceding chapter in this Workbook), what points regarding seniors' relationships with their adult children and with their grandchildren were illustrated?
11. Compare your relationship with your late-adult parents and/or with your grandparents with those presented in this video.
12. Review the research on seniors' relationships with their adult children and with their grandchildren. Compare those findings with the real-life examples displayed in this video.
13. Interview several seniors and ask them about their relationships with their adult children and with their grandchildren. Compare their responses to the ones shown in this video.
14. Has watching this video changed your opinion or your attitudes towards the relationships between extended family members? How or how not?

15. There are wide differences in the composition and in the frequency of contact of these seniors' friendship networks. Describe those differences.
16. Do you agree or disagree with Eiko's "philosophy" regarding friends in late adulthood? Why or why not?
17. If you viewed Late Adulthood: The Social Convoy video (see the preceding chapter in this Workbook), what points regarding friendships in late adulthood were illustrated?
18. Review the research on friendships in late adulthood. Compare what you have seen in this video with those research findings.
19. Interview several seniors regarding their friendships. Compare their responses with those seen in this video.
20. Has watching this video changed your opinion or attitudes towards friendship? Towards friendship in late adulthood? How or how not?