



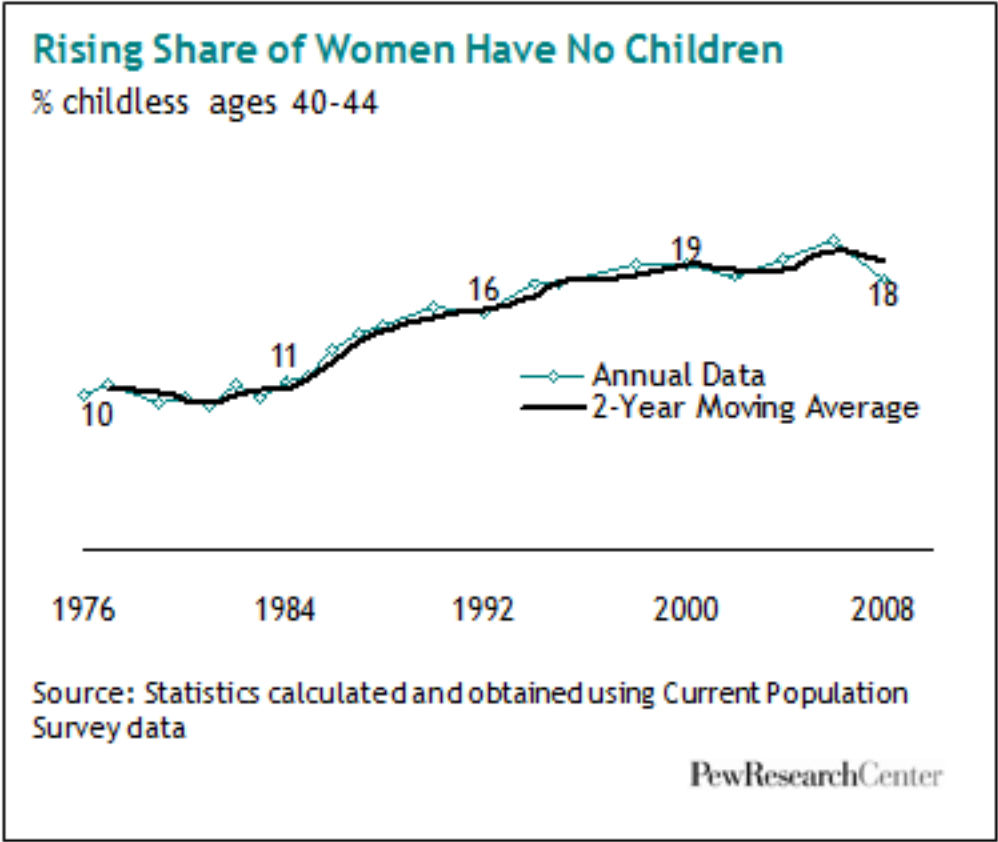
Fifty Plus, Minus Kids

Meeting the Challenges of *Solo Aging*

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The Statistics



By 2020, the U.S.G.A.O predicts the number of solo agers (no living children or siblings) will be 1.2 million – almost twice the 1990 figure.



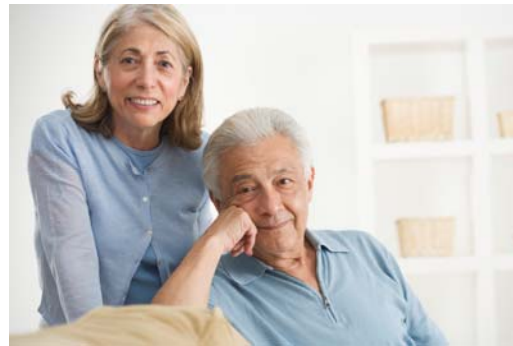
What the Research Tells Us

Social Support Networks are critical to a happy retirement and successful aging (antidote to episodic depression)



What the Research Tells Us

The most important figure in maintaining independence in later life is the spouse or partner



What the Research Tells Us

Blood relatives are viewed as the only reliable source of morally obligated support

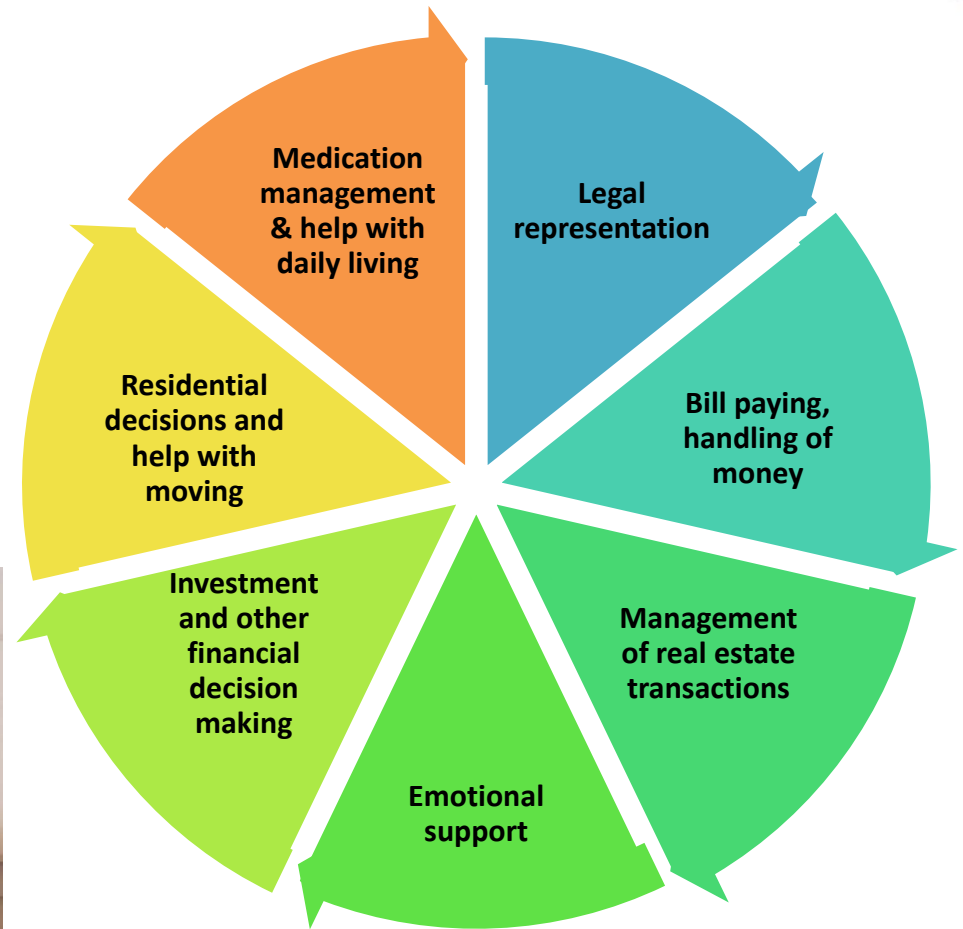


What the Research Tells Us

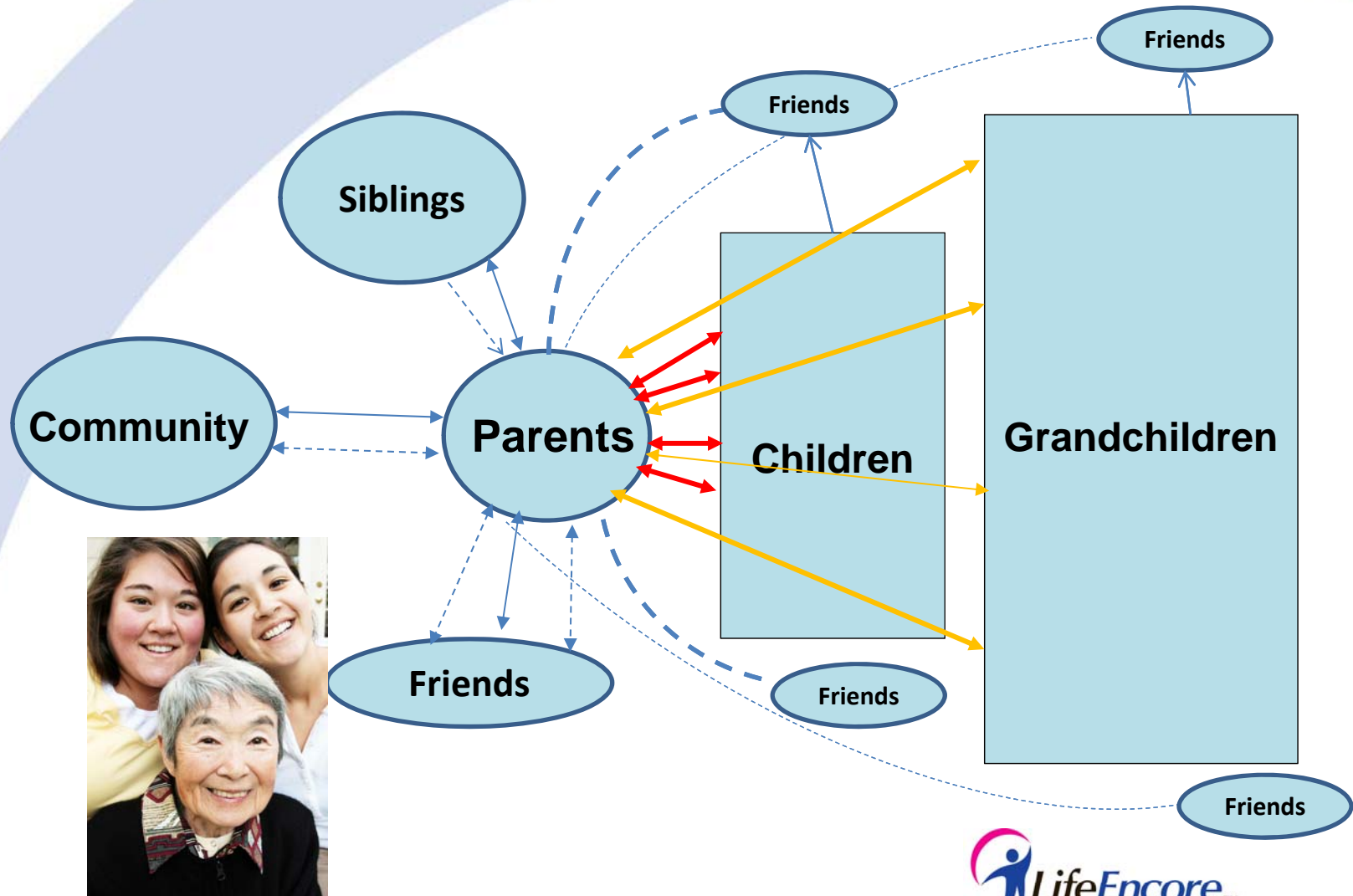
- Solo agers are much more likely to live alone than parents (4x for women; +40% for men)
and
- Women fare better than men



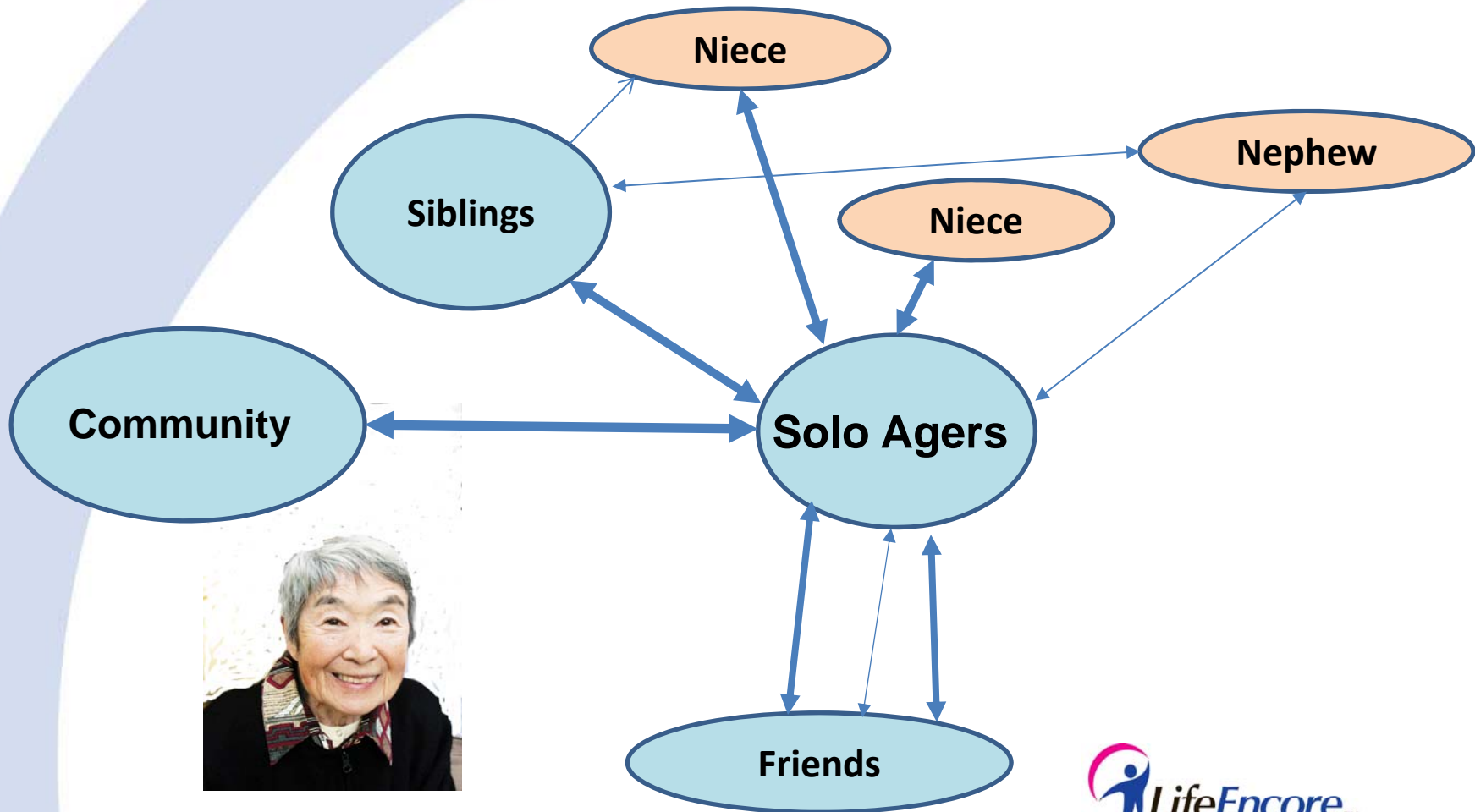
What Adult Children Typically Provide



Social Network of Parents



Social Network of Solo Agers



Questions for us to Consider

- Absent a spouse, who should a solo ager expect to turn to in an emergency?
- From a *financial and legal* standpoint, should solo agers plan differently than their counterparts with children?
- What unique and different demands might solo agers place on society?
- What messages can we pass along to help solo agers prepare for a secure and comfortable fourth age?
- What new residential models will help reinforce the social/emotional component in the lives of solo agers?



Get Over Your Denial!

- Have the conversations – spouse, friends, relatives
- Are you covered?
 - Legally – who will have your POA?
 - Financially – how will you pay for what you need and who will manage it?
 - Medically – insurance, records, DNR
- Who do you want to have control?
 - Five Wishes – www.agingwithdignity.org



Five Wishes

- *Five Wishes* lets your family and doctors know:
 - Who you want to make health care decisions for you when you can't make them
 - The kind of medical treatment you want or don't want
 - How comfortable you want to be
 - How you want people to treat you
 - What you want your loved ones to know
- *Five Wishes* meets the legal requirement for an advanced directive in 42 states
- Great conversation starter



New Social and Living Models

- Co-housing – elder and mixed (200+ nationwide)
 - Came from Denmark in the 1970s
 - Semi-communal with separate living units around a common kitchen, DR, gathering space
 - Elderspirit – Abingdon, VA
 - Glacier Circle – Davis, CA
 - Silver Sage Village – Boulder , CA
 - www.cohousing.org & www.eldercohousing.org
- Village Concept – aging in place with neighborhood support (~75 nationwide)
 - Example: Beacon Hill Village (www.beaconhillvillage.org)
 - Village-to-Village Network (vtvnetwork.org)
- Golden Girls Model – open up your home to like-minded, compatible solo agers



More Conventional Living Models

- Retirement (55+) Communities
 - Throughout the country, mainly in the sunbelt
 - Can arrange for own visiting caregiver or live-in aide
- Continuous Care Retirement Communities (CCRC)
 - Throughout the country
- Life Care Communities
 - Generally connected to a religious organization
- Assisted Living Communities
- Nursing homes



What can we do now?

- Find like-minded friends and begin to plan for the future – form a group; share thoughts about how you want to age
- Continue (or plan) to live near one another in some way
- Create “durable powers of attorney for health and finances”
- As the years go by, encourage younger people to join your group
- As a group, hire a geriatric care manager to oversee your collective health and wellbeing, and to offer advice as your needs change

