



RETIREMENT

Planning for a Life Transition



Québec 



This project for an active retirement is part of a larger initiative, the Collective Impact Plan – Réseau Résilience Aînés Montréal (RRAM), which aims to promote resilience, inclusion, and social participation among seniors in the Montreal context.

<https://resilienceaineemtl.ca>

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- Association des grands-parents du Québec (ADGPQ)
- The Claude-Robillard 50+ Club
- Volunteer Bureau of Montreal
- COPSI
- Fédération des Centres d'action bénévole du Québec
- Intergénérations Québec
- Little Brothers
- Présâges
- YMCA Québec

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INTRODUCTION

For early retirees, retirees, and their loved ones

Transitioning into retirement, along with the life changes it brings, can raise many questions. To promote good health, resilience, and encourage active social participation at all stages of aging, it is essential to inform and support early retirees, retirees, their loved ones, as well as the caregivers and employers who assist them.

It is with this in mind that the Montreal Regional Public Health Department team has developed these educational leaflets. Compiled in a collection, they offer practical information, useful resources, and courses of action to help you better navigate through this period of transition.

This collection allows interested parties to access all the information in a single document. Each leaflet can also be downloaded and printed individually from the Réseau Résilience Aînés Montréal website.

Don't hesitate to share these leaflets with people in your circle who are going through these periods of transition.

For organizations and workplaces

This collection has also been designed to support organizations, groups, associations, and employers who wish to share this information within their network.

In addition to the leaflets, you will find the following in the toolkit:

- 8.5 x 11 and 11 x 17 posters to print and display (customizable with Acrobat or Canva to include your service offering)
- 1080 x 1080 image for your Facebook page
- 800 x 150 banner for emails
- 1200 x 630 banner for your website, newsletters, or social media
- Carousel ad for electronic bulletin boards in PDF and JPG
- Media kit including ready-to-use texts for your newsletters and social media posts

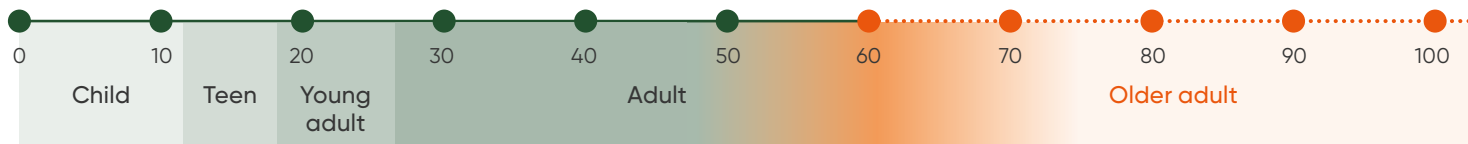
All these tools are designed to help you promote the project and facilitate its dissemination within your networks.



RETIREMENT

Planning for a Life Transition

**CONGRATULATIONS
FOR ALL THE WORK YOU
HAVE DONE.
IT IS A NEW BEGINNING!**



When you Retire, Significant Parts of your Life Change Overnight.

In addition to preparing financially, it is also important to plan how you want to spend your time so you can have an enriching social life outside of your job.

Thankfully, whether it is to seek information, consider options or get help balancing your time, many resources are available to support

you through this transitional phase:

- Presentations
- Workshops
- Books
- Courses
- Websites
- Webinars
- Discussions with family or friends who have been through this stage of life
- And many more

See available resources:

<https://resilienceaineemtl.ca/volets/planifier-pour-demeurer-socialement-actif-au-quotidien/>















Emotions That Change Constantly



During the period preceding or following retirement, it is totally normal to feel a mix of positive and negative emotions. It is an important stage in your life that involves opportunities as well as challenges. When you retire, you leave behind your professional identity, your social roles and the many years you spent working, to venture into the unknown.

Emotions such as stress, anxiety or sadness can be expressed through physical symptoms (e.g., headaches, difficulty sleeping, digestive problems). These emotions are part of adapting to this new chapter of your life.

Emotions experienced when retiring: a few examples*

POSITIVE/PLEASANT	NEGATIVE/UNPLEASANT
 Feeling of freedom	 Apprehension of emptiness
 No more work-related constraints	 Feeling loss of identity linked to work
 Free time for yourself and your loved ones	 Fear of solitude and boredom
 Finally have time for long-delayed projects	 Stress related to restructuring your life
 Develop new interests and activities	 Anxiety related to the role of caregiver
 Personal satisfaction with life accomplishments	 Fear of aging and limitations
 Possibilities to focus on your health and well-being	 Fear of not having enough money for activities and dreams

**It is important to note that emotions may vary from one person to another, and that it is possible to feel a combination of feelings.*

Avoid Isolation

One significant risk when retiring is finding yourself alone, isolated or experiencing solitude. It is well known that isolation and solitude can diminish physical, psychological and cognitive health. **Being around other people after you retire increases your chances of aging in good health!**

Take your time

Before you start new activities, it is important to take time to reflect on your interests, dreams and aspirations. Don't make impulsive decisions that you may regret. Trust yourself to discover and try out new activities. You will be surprised what you can achieve when you have support. **Remember: personal development and flourishing know no age limit.**

Prepare Your Retirement

Setting up a pleasant routine, creating enriching social connections and participating in stimulating activities can positively influence your sense of well-being. For example, take time for yourself, lend a hand to family or neighbours, do volunteer work or get involved with community organizations.



STAYING ACTIVE IN A GROUP AFTER RETIREMENT

Benefits to Discover



The benefits of regular exercise

Retirement is a new chapter in life ... and a great opportunity to take some time for yourself! It is also the ideal time to incorporate physical activity into your daily routine. Regular exercise brings many benefits for health and well-being.

Even small amounts of exercise are beneficial. Every step counts! And the more you move, the more you feel the positive effects, both on your body and your mind.

Getting ready to move

It's never too late to start being active. The important thing is to go at your own pace and choose activities that you enjoy. Before you start, take a moment to think about what you like to do. Look back at what you enjoyed doing when you were younger, or try something new!

If you have any health concerns, keep in mind that most activities can be adapted to suit your condition. What matters is that you exercise according to your abilities.

PHYSICAL BENEFITS ON:

- Muscle mass and bone density
- Aerobic capacity
- Balance and coordination
- Posture and flexibility
- Sleep
- Energy levels
- Resistance to infection
- Physical independence
- Physical reactions associated with stress
- Life expectancy
- Prevention of cardiovascular and respiratory diseases, diabetes, cancer, neuro-degenerative diseases (Alzheimer's disease)



PSYCHOLOGICAL BENEFITS ON:

- Control of emotions
- Optimism
- Self-esteem
- The feeling of being able to succeed
- Well-being
- Anxiety
- Stress
- Depression



COGNITIVE BENEFITS ON:

- Memory
- Concentration
- Reaction time
- Problem solving





Finding an Activity That's Right for You

Many clubs and organizations offer activities to help you stay active and meet other people. Taking part in outdoor activities or group classes can make the experience even more enjoyable and motivating. A number of individual activities can be done as a group, which will allow you to socialize or break out of your isolation. Here are a few ideas:



Outdoor activities

bike riding
swimming walking
cross-country skiing
hiking
snowshoeing



Fitness and mobility

strength training
line dancing tai chi
chair yoga
aquafitness
dancing



Racquet sports

tennis pickleball
table tennis
badminton
racquetball



Team sports

hockey volleyball
petanque soccer
baseball bowling

The main thing is to enjoy being active and do it regularly. Whatever activity you choose, it will help improve your health and quality of life!





Group Exercise: Other Benefits to Discover

When you take part in a group physical activity, you discover a multitude of benefits that go beyond the exercise itself. These benefits are breaking down isolation, warding off loneliness and making connections with new people.

Here are a few inspiring stories of people who move in different ways.

The group of 5: neighbours who meet up every evening to walk

For several years now, a group of five women—Maria (85), Angela (71), Sofia (68), Franka (63) and Arminda (63)—have made a habit of walking about 5 km every evening in their neighbourhood.

They have grown very close over the years. They look forward to their daily get-together, which provides an opportunity to share the day's news.

This group of neighbours has managed to stay in shape day after day, all thanks to their daily habit. It is an opportunity to break out of isolation and create a support group.

In the end, getting some exercise doesn't have to be complicated. Your neighbourhood can be an opportunity to build relationships while staying active.

Le Club 50 ans + de Claude-Robillard

This club offers a range of tailored physical activities and a program of nature outings. Here are a few testimonials from members that, at first talk mainly about the effects on their health:

"Playing sports is a matter of life and death."

"It's a great boost for the mind and the body."

"It's my outing of the week."

But what they share quickly goes beyond the simple act of physical exercise:

"It allows us to (positively) let off some steam as a group."

"It helps you keep fit and the group's energy pushes you forward."

"It's a great way to make friends."

"It gets you out of the house."

It's the perfect opportunity to meet new people, have a laugh and introduce a new healthy habit into your life!

Ethnocultural group—Get moving with COPSI

The mission of the [Centre d'Orientation Paralégale et Sociale pour Immigrants](#) (COPSI) is to help newly immigrated people break out of isolation and settle into the Quebec way of life. It also offers several services such as links to health resources, legal assistance and a range of physical activities.

Neri, 80 years old | Venezuela:

"I exercise because it gives me vitality, energy and strength, and I feel better. It also allows me to meet other people and have a good time."

Eduardo, 82 years old | Of Italian origin. Has been living in Canada for 55 years:

"I attend the physical activity class because I feel better when I'm moving. My shoulders and legs feel stronger, my body feels healthy. Plus, I get to socialize with other people."

Demecia, 72 years old | Argentina:

"Exercise makes us feel better and helps us manage pain. It cheers me up and encourages me to stay active on a daily basis."

Where to start?

A first step would be to check with your neighbourhood roundtables. Several organizations offer a variety of physical activity programs. To find out about the resources in your region, call 211 or consult their online directory.

You can also look into several organizations such as YMCAs, Sports Montréal, FADOQ, Cardio Plein Air, Rando-Québec, several 50+ clubs and many others.

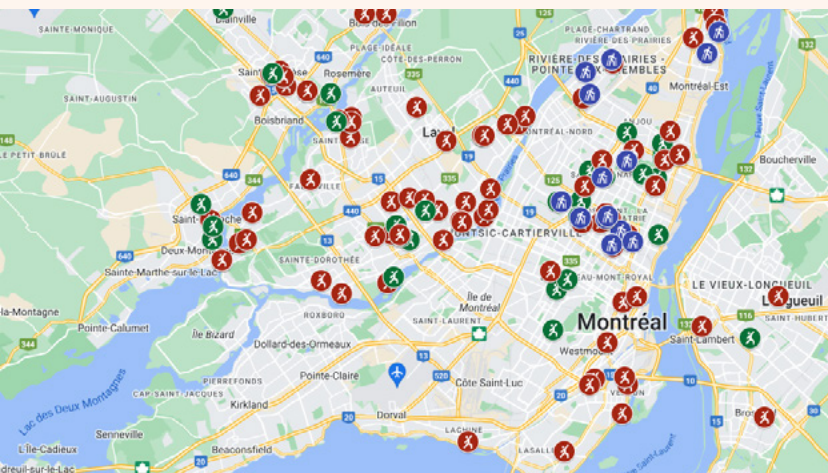
The **Viactive program** is yet another excellent way to stay active! This free program, intended for people aged 50 and over, is led by senior volunteers and is suitable for all levels of physical fitness.

Joining Viactive means:

- Having fun while staying active
- Getting regular exercise
- Connecting with other people

The sessions are designed to be accessible and motivating whether you are starting out or want to keep moving. Joining a **Viactive** group is a great way to take care of your health all while having fun!

To access the full Viactive map, click on the image below.



Can I do more?

Yes! Even as we get older, keeping active is essential for our health. The Canadian **24-Hour Movement** Guidelines recommend that adults aged 65 and over:



MOVE MORE

Get at least **150 minutes of moderate to high intensity physical activity per week** (e.g., brisk walking, bike riding, dancing, swimming). This amounts to 30 minutes a day, 5 days a week.

A simple trick: split the minutes up throughout the week. Accumulate time in increments of 10, 20, 30 or 60 minutes. Every active minute counts!



STRENGTHEN YOUR MUSCLES AND IMPROVE BALANCE

Do strength training and balance exercises at least **twice a week** to improve your posture and prevent falls (e.g., exercises with elastic bands, free weights and even with your own body weight).



REDUCE SEDENTARY TIME

Limit time spent sitting and take short active breaks throughout the day.

Simple tips for getting more exercise:

- Get up and stretch regularly
- Take a walk every day
- Take public transportation
- Take the stairs rather than the elevator (if possible)

The key is to move **a little more everyday**, at your own pace, all while having fun!



VOLUNTEERING SERIES

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Definition, Impact, Importance

SOCIAL PARTICIPATION IN RETIREMENT

Would you be surprised to learn that you volunteered at some point in your life, even if you have never set foot in a community group or given your time to a cause?

In fact, it is highly probable that you have done so in various ways, because there is not just one way to volunteer.



Changing Perceptions of Volunteer Work

Volunteer work is first and foremost an altruistic contribution to the community. It hinges on three basic principles: freedom to choose; no monetary compensation; exchange. There are two types of volunteer work: formal and informal. If you have ever helped a neighbour shovel their sidewalk, congratulations! You have already engaged in informal volunteer work. It is the act of offering your time spontaneously and in a spirit of solidarity.

On the other hand, formal volunteer work takes place mainly in non-profit organizations, but the same characteristics and motivations apply. You are free to choose the type of volunteer work that suits you, the time you can dedicate to it, and how you want to engage. In return, you gain a sense of personal satisfaction and a feeling of being useful. It is a mutually beneficial act of exchange.



Free to Choose

You freely decide to engage in volunteering by having control over the amount of time to invest and the ways in which you contribute..



No Monetary Compensation

Volunteer work excludes any expectation of financial or material payment. When compensation is offered, it usually involves paid work rather than volunteer work.



Exchanges

Volunteer work benefits yourself, community organizations and people in the communities you support by generating beneficial exchanges among all parties.



DIFFERENT FORMS OF VOLUNTEER INVOLVEMENT

- Volunteering alone or in a group
- Volunteering for a single event or activity
- Volunteering regularly on a weekly basis, according to the time you wish to devote to it
- Volunteering at home
- Volunteering remotely
- Volunteering within an organization

Motivations and Benefits

It is natural to ask yourself why you should put effort into volunteering. In fact, there are many reasons to engage in volunteer work. Ultimately, you must think about your personal motivations and the time you are willing to dedicate to volunteering. Keep in mind that there are no bad reasons for choosing to get involved.



First Steps: Where and How to Begin

Would you like to get involved but don't know how? Why not ask around? You might be surprised to learn that one or several people you know already do some kind of volunteer work and can give you precious information that can help you get started.

You can also contact organizations that act as intermediaries between people wanting to get involved and community or non-profit organizations looking for volunteers. For example, the [Volunteer Bureau of Montreal](#) lists volunteering offers through which you can find activities that correspond with your interests. You can also get advice to help you find the perfect match!



VOLUNTEER WORK CAN PROVIDE MANY PERSONAL BENEFITS

- Feeling useful and satisfied
- Giving meaning to your life or actions
- Having fun!
- Feeling less stressed
- Learning and trying new things
- Meeting new people and countering loneliness
- Participating in positive changes in your community
- Developing mentoring and skills-transfer relationships



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Interpersonal Volunteering: At the Heart of Who We Are as Humans

RETIREMENT AS SOCIAL PARTICIPATION

Interpersonal volunteering is defined as developing **genuine relationships**, being **attentive and comforting**, and offering **support** to a person or group of people of any age. The goal is to provide emotional and social support as well as a kind presence.

Individuals can build genuine relationships and positive connections. They can develop trust and open up to each other, which alleviates isolation and facilitates referrals to various resources. Interpersonal volunteering also contributes to strengthening the social network and fosters feelings of belonging to the community.

Types of Interpersonal Volunteering

Interpersonal volunteering can be done in person or online; there are various types (one-off or ongoing) and different objectives are targeted.

EXAMPLES	OBJECTIVES
Helpline	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Understand an individual's psychological distress.• Offer emotional support and resources• Support the person in their search to identify solutions (for example, women victims of domestic violence, abuse and mistreatment of older adults, suicidal individuals, parents, grandparents, natural caregivers)
Friendship visits once you have been matched with someone	Alleviate loneliness and isolation for people of any age
Accompany a person to recreational, cultural or sport activities	Facilitate integration of the individual into a group or recreational activity in their community
Intergenerational pairing activities between an older adult and a child who has no grandparents	Enable a child to experience having a grand-parent through an adult substitute
Accompany a person at end of life	Provide support and comfort to a person who is sick and in the last stage of his or her life



Skill Needed to Engage in Useful and Enriching Interpersonal Volunteering

- Strong interest in human relations
- Capacity for active listening and involvement in a non-directive helping relationship
- Capacity to exercise vigilance
- Ability to recognize your limits
- Capacity to put yourself in the other person's shoes
- Capacity to adapt
- Maturity
- Patience
- Autonomy
- Creativity

Active listening helps people make their way through a specific time in their lives, become aware of their own strengths and resources, and find their own solutions.

Listen beyond what is being said.

Organizations that offer interpersonal volunteering services provide **training and support** for volunteers to develop their skills and share their experiences. This training may also be helpful in their personal lives.



BENEFITS OF INTERPERSONAL VOLUNTEERING

- Give meaning to your life by helping another person find meaning to theirs.
- Set aside your own concerns by focusing on another person.
- Make a difference in someone else's life.
- Offer a glimmer of hope in a world in crisis.

Be Vigilant of Compassion Fatigue

Being confronted with human suffering for long periods of time can sometimes provoke emotional burnout. In these cases, many organizations provide support and training to help you prevent compassion fatigue.



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Skills-based volunteering: putting your know-how to good use

A FORM OF SOCIAL PARTICIPATION IN RETIREMENT

Skills-based volunteering involves offering expertise, transferring knowledge and sharing know-how. Skills-based volunteers seek to use specific skills or professional experience as part of their involvement. In this way, they contribute to the growth and effectiveness of the organizations that host them.

When it comes to skills-based volunteering, the possibilities for personal and professional growth are endless. In fact, many not-for-profit organizations offer flexible, practical opportunities for volunteers, while at the same time contributing to the realization of their mission in the community.



The different types of skills-based volunteering

Volunteering can take the form of regular involvement (e.g., participation on a board of directors), or one-time involvement according to a precise, time-limited mandate (e.g., graphic production of posters or flyers).

The skills-based volunteer has the opportunity to make a difference, whether by contributing directly to the organization's mission (for example, a hairdresser offering services in a refugee centre) or by contributing expertise to the organization's management (such as accounting).

Here are some practical examples of how professionals can use their specific skills to support organizations and causes close to their hearts, while adding significant value.

- Writing or translating texts
- Social media management
- IT support
- Creating or running training workshops
- Coaching services
- Administrative tasks
- Mechanical, construction or horticultural work





THE BENEFITS OF SKILLS-BASED VOLUNTEERING FOR RETIRED PEOPLE

- Feeling useful
- Sharing and putting your skills to good use in a no-pressure, more flexible environment
- Being part of a committed, supportive team
- Connecting with other volunteers
- Discovering how the community operates and how essential but often unknown services work.

TESTIMONY FROM A SKILLS-BASED VOLUNTEER

"As a skills-based volunteer in the field of adult education, I've had the opportunity to participate in the development of projects that wouldn't have been possible in my regular job."

My most recent involvement was with a major hospital in my region. I had the opportunity to co-create and co-facilitate a workshop on storytelling in a healthcare environment, for medical and support staff. It was an innovative and significant project that was very well received. As part of this activity, I had the opportunity to put my skills to work by conducting research, developing the workshop in collaboration with the staff and presenting the workshop at a conference."

How can I become a skills-based volunteer?



1. Reflect

- Why do I want to volunteer my skills?
- What interests and skills do I have to offer?
- What would I like to get out of volunteering?
- How much time can I devote to volunteering?
- What sectors and clienteles might interest me?
- What causes are important to me?



2. Search

- Register on the Volunteer Bureau of Montreal's website at cabm.net and browse through the available volunteer opportunities.
- Search your network, talk about it with friends and family, attend neighbourhood round tables, discover local organizations.



3. Get in touch

- Apply for a skills-based volunteering opportunity
- Connect with the organization

What are the points to watch out for and pitfalls to avoid?

DEFINING ROLES AND TASKS

Taking the time to clarify the role, tasks and responsibilities entrusted to skills-based volunteers avoids misunderstandings, tensions and even conflicts. It is important not to take control of the organization being helped, but rather to accompany and support it.

NEED FOR SUPPORT

Understand the need to be supported by the organization in order to avoid feeling lost or ineffective, and thus better meet the organization's objectives.

DIFFERENT PRACTICES AND RESOURCES

Volunteering skills within an organization whose resources are perhaps more limited than those normally required, requires an ability to adapt and flexibility in the way you carry out your tasks. The practices of non-profit organizations (NPOs) can offer different and enriching perspectives to those of a previous workplace.

RESPECT FOR PROFESSIONAL SCOPE OF PRACTICE

If the volunteer is not a member in good standing of his or her professional order, he or she may use his or her previous professional experience, but without performing acts reserved for his or her profession. It is essential to comply with Quebec and Canadian regulatory frameworks.

SKILLS-BASED VOLUNTEERING VERSUS PRO BONO WORK

Skills-based volunteering and pro bono work (for the public good) meet different needs and are governed by distinct principles.

Pro bono work remains within the scope of the individual's professional practice. This involves providing the same type of services, but free of charge or at a reduced price, following an unpaid services agreement, and the hours are included in the professional's work.

Skills-based volunteering is practised outside the usual professional framework and is not limited to the initial profession. It can be carried out outside working hours, and expertise can be shared in a variety of ways.



Resource

<https://www.cabm.net/volunteering/devenir-benevole-de-competences-1>

Email

benevolescompetences@cabm.net

Phone

514 842 3351, ext. 234



VOLUNTEERING SERIES

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Becoming a volunteer: resources to explore



What is a Volunteer Bureau?

There are volunteer bureaus (VB) in every region of Quebec, which are members of the Fédération des Centres d'action bénévole du Québec (FCABQ).

Volunteer Bureau Services

They offer services through volunteers or have links with community organizations or non-profit organizations to which they can refer volunteers:



Accompagnement-transportation



Thrift shops



Meals on wheels, food banks, collective kitchens



Tax clinics, occasional odd jobs, translation



Friendly visits or calls



Reception and referencing, safety check-up calls



Contacting a volunteer centre to become a volunteer

Thinking of volunteering at a volunteer centre?

To find the volunteer centre nearest you, visit the FCABQ website and browse the list of member volunteer centres.

You will then be able to contact a volunteer centre and apply.

Go to fcabq.org

Find your
local volunteer centre

Contact the reception desk or
department of your choice

State your needs



CRIMINAL RECORD CHECK



Organizations are encouraged to carry out criminal background checks on all their volunteers in “high-risk” positions, to ensure user safety as much as possible.

High-risk volunteer positions

A volunteer position is said to be “high-risk” when it implies that the volunteer works with clientele at risk of abuse or exploitation.

Je bénévolé

Jebenevole.ca is the provincial platform for matching Volunteer Centres and non-profit organizations (NPOs) with volunteers. The site features volunteer opportunities with search tools and filters to match organizations and individuals with volunteer human resources.

Explore jebenevole.ca to discover the wealth of volunteer work and find volunteer opportunities that match your aspirations and availability.



SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP

A Tailor-Made Form of Social Participation

More and more retired people choose social entrepreneurship as an appealing way to engage in social participation.



What is Entrepreneurship?

Entrepreneurship refers to the action of undertaking and bringing a project to fruition that will provide services, products or solutions that meet the needs of individuals and communities. Contrary to volunteer work, it is a form of social participation that helps generate income.



Social Entrepreneurship: Support for Communities

There are two ways to carry out this type of entrepreneurship:

1. Develop a new project independently, by proposing a product, service or solution to address a social issue. This can create a desirable and durable solution to a social, cultural, economic or environmental challenge. It functions in a transparent manner and financial profit is a means, not an end: having a social impact is the goal.

A few examples:

- Accompany older adults who are moving and must divest themselves of some of their belongings by helping them sort through their furniture, objects or keepsakes.
- Support parents by providing after-school help (help children with homework, participate in daily routines, play games, prepare snacks, etc.)
- Provide services for simple work to do in the home.
- Promote urban agriculture by offering workshops on seedlings or balcony planters.
- Offer outings on bikes to older adults in CHSLDs.

2. Create a new activity in an existing organization, to stimulate innovation and growth within the organization. In return, the organization gives the entrepreneur access to premises, resources and opportunities. Community organizations, municipalities and businesses can be fertile grounds to implement such projects.

A few examples:

- Propose neighbourhood visits to a community centre or offer language courses to new immigrants.
- Offer yoga workshops designed for older adults.
- Work with a company to develop a mentoring program.
- Develop a computer troubleshooting service.

What Are the Benefits and Risks for You?



BENEFITS

- Flexibility
- Autonomy and independence
- Expansion or use of your skills
- Motivation
- Pride
- Positive value of your actions



RISKS

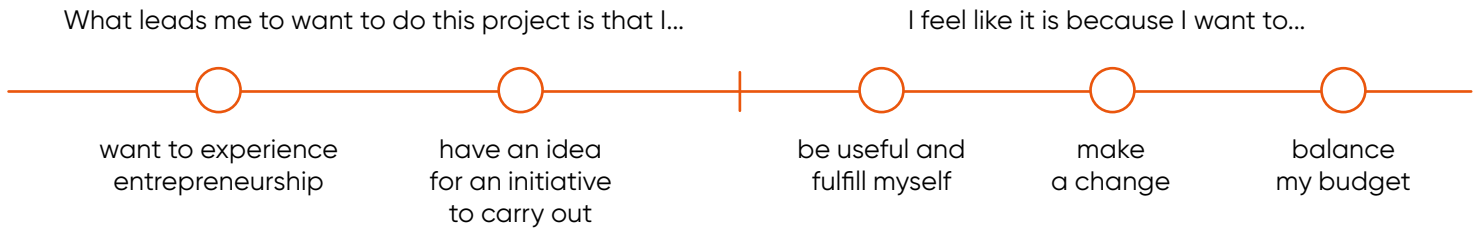
- Uncertainty related to income generated
- Discouragement and disappointment
- Pressure to perform

Before You Begin

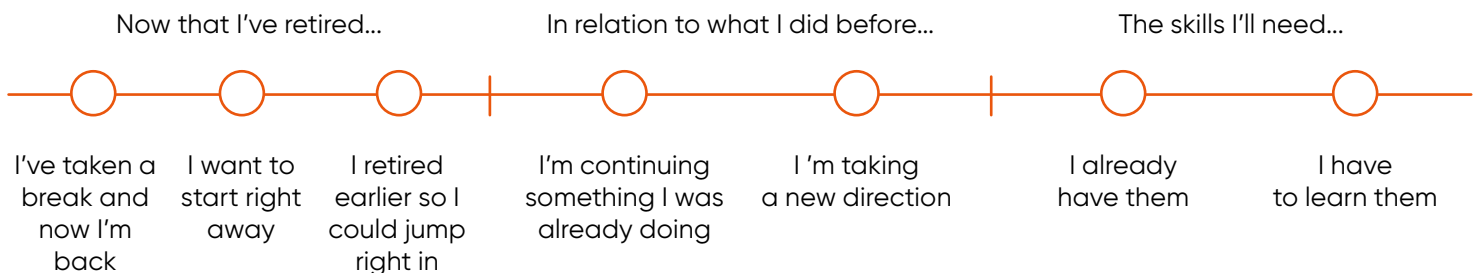
Retirement provides many possibilities for you to get involved. Take time to reflect and ask yourself what makes sense for you.

Who said that
entrepreneurship
is only for
young people

My Interest in Entrepreneurship



My Transition Between Retirement and My Project



How to Prepare Without Running Out of Steam



The organization [Présâges](https://www.murpourentreprendre.org) maintains that there is no age limit to start something new. Use your wisdom and experience to your advantage! Nonetheless, launching a social entrepreneurship project requires determination and self-discipline. It is an experience where you will face various challenges, whether related to obtaining funding or developing collaborations. Therefore, you need to take the time to prepare well and efficiently, while keeping in mind that your initial idea may evolve. Do not hesitate to talk to other people to validate and enrich your ideas.

Take the time and care you need to refine an idea, assemble all the pieces and create the necessary

collaborations. This way you will avoid running out of steam and be able to project yourself into the future as you juggle your multiple priorities.

If you would like someone to accompany you in your reflections on entrepreneurship, Présâges has a program called Mûr.e pour entreprendre: <https://www.murpourentreprendre.org/services>



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An important and meaningful social role



The role of grandparents: creating a new life balance

Being a grandparent brings health and happiness. The birth of grandchildren can even give new meaning to grandparents' lives and reinforce their sense of purpose.

Seniors are living longer, healthier lives than ever before. This enables them to provide greater support to younger generations. As well, they often have a full-time or part-time job when their first grandchild is born. In some cases, their children have only recently moved out of the house. Some grandparents are busy retirees, with schedules that are at times busier than when they were working.

Blended families are more common today, which can often make for more complex intergenerational bonds. Moreover, it is not uncommon for grandparents to break up and form new couples.

Grandparents therefore face a real challenge: finding the right balance between the role of a grandparent, adapting to retirement and meeting one's own need to participate in meaningful social activities.

How do you find your rightful place in a growing family?



A few facts and figures about families and grandparents

Today's families

In 2021, 59% of families are two-parent families, 30% are single-parent families and 11% are blended families.

A common role

In 2017, **three out of four people** aged 65 and over in Quebec were grandparents, for both women and men.

A role to play at an older age, for a longer period and with fewer grandchildren

The average age for becoming grandparents was **68** in 2017 in Canada, up from 65 in 1995. In fact, as the population ages and women become mothers at a later age than they once did, grandparents are older today than they were before.

More than three quarters of grandparents had fewer than five grandchildren in 2017. With fewer grandchildren, they have more time to devote to each one.

Living together

In 2021, nearly one in ten children aged 0 to 14 **was living with at least one grandparent** in Canada.

Grandparents born abroad are twice as likely to live with their grandchildren as grandparents born in Canada (9% vs. 4%) in 2017.

Mutually beneficial effects

Grandchildren and grandparents benefit from the relationship that develops between them over time. This gives them the opportunity to share in many social and family events.

BENEFICIAL EFFECTS OF GRANDPARENTS ON GRANDCHILDREN	BENEFICIAL EFFECTS OF GRANDCHILDREN ON GRANDPARENTS
Well-being and self-esteem <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Source of love and affection• Time spent playing, going out or telling stories• An open door for confiding and sharing	Joy and happiness <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Source of joy, happiness and wonder• Sense of youth• Sense of purpose• Sharing mutual passions
Safety and stability <ul style="list-style-type: none">• A reassuring presence, especially in times of family stress• Guidance in a variety of situations• Advice in times of need	Stimulation and learning <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Shared activities that evolve over time and lead to different learning experiences (games, reading, trips, outings, technology, and cultural, artistic and sporting activities).
Family memory <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Passing on traditions, memories, values and knowledge• Sense of belonging and affiliation	Openness and curiosity <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Interest in current social realities (youth culture, technological developments, topical issues, sexual and gender diversity)
Academic involvement and social behaviour <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Supporting academic perseverance• Reinforcing positive social behaviours	Continuity and transmission <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Transmission of knowledge providing a sense of continuity in their own family history• Developing the ability to open up to others and share with them
Reducing prejudice <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Fewer preconceived ideas about seniors• Better understanding of aging, illness and death	Reducing prejudice <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Fewer preconceived ideas about the young• Better understanding of the realities and concerns of the young



"The relationship between grandparents and grandchild is in a sense a meeting between the past and the future, where everyone reaps the benefits... This relationship makes the grandchild all the wiser and the grandparents all the younger."

Ferland & Ferland, 2023



A few words from grandparents

Maria, 70 | Grandmother of two young children:
"We're happy to be able to simply have fun with them and have a good time."

Marie, 78 | Substitute grandmother of a young woman: "Keep an open mind. Be attentive to young ones. Reassure them. Introduce them to role models and try to set a good example... Understand their need for freedom, for surpassing themselves. Make them aware of realities they haven't yet experienced, remind them of the history of both their family and their homeland."

Rémi, 75 | Grandfather of two young adults:
"Seeing them grow up is a balm for the aging soul: if growing old means giving way to a lively, involved younger generation, then I willingly accept."



WANT TO FIND OUT MORE?

Francine Ferland et Florence Ferland (2023). Grands-parents aujourd'hui : des réalités qui évoluent. Éditions du CHU-Sainte-Justine.



GRANDPARENTING SERIES

A commitment that evolves
and remains a source of pleasure

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A few words from grandparents

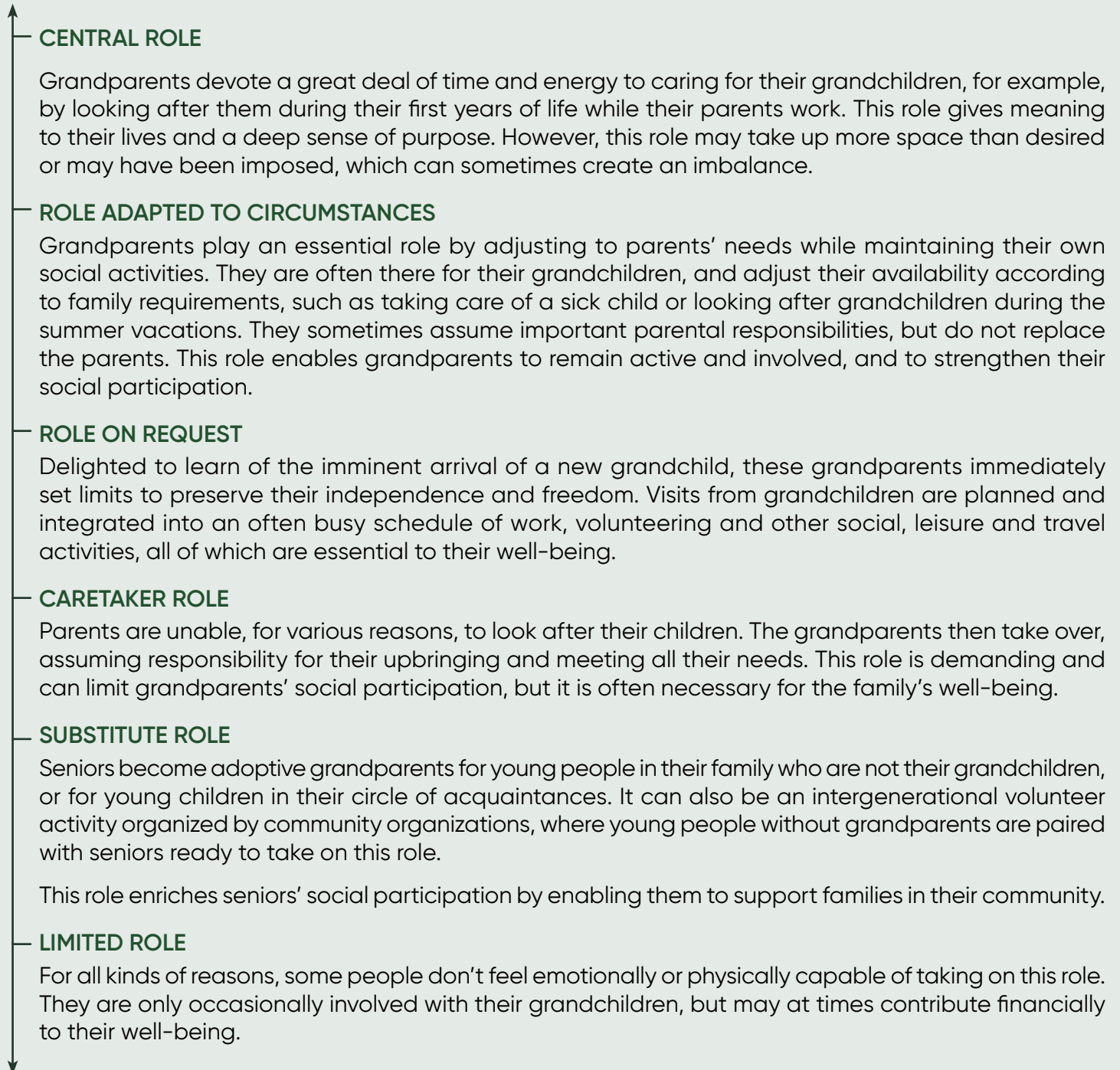
Simone, 76 | "Try to be available as much as possible to listen to your children while respecting your established limits especially during times that are difficult for them... In other words, be flexible in your relationships with your children."

Andrew, 68 | "Grandchildren bring us closer to our adult children."

A wide variety of grandparenting roles

Successful grandparenting requires adaptability and flexibility in interactions with family members. But also in the ability to maintain a healthy balance between grandparenting and participating in other social activities. For some, their personal fulfillment depends mainly on their relationships with their children or grandchildren.

There are a variety of roles that can overlap and vary over time.





A source of pleasure, but also of tension

Taking on the responsibility of looking after grandchildren can be a great source of joy and personal fulfillment. A three-generation household means we get to know each other better and help each other out on a daily basis. On the other hand, these two situations can also create tension and stress. They can also limit the social participation of grandparents.

Possible solutions:

- Self-care is very important if we want to give the best of ourselves to our grandchildren.
- Tensions are best discussed and resolved as they arise.
- It is important to establish shared rules of conduct.
- Having your own personal space.

Grandparents who live with their children and grandchildren can become over-invested in their role within the family, which can sometimes be detrimental to their own well-being and lead to feelings of social isolation. As a result, their participation in activities outside the home and their social integration may be limited. This is particularly true for women and recent immigrants who speak neither French nor English.



GRANDPARENTING SERIES

**A harmonious intergenerational
communication**

3
OF
3



One of the keys to healthy intergenerational relations: the ability to clarify expectations and limits

It is highly advisable for the adults in a family to agree on the **role each should play** in the lives of the grandchildren. In this way, the children find a balance between the attention, affection and supervision of their parents or grandparents.

Clear, open and authentic communication between grandparents and parents from the outset is crucial to **the development of harmonious family relationships**. This is particularly true when there are differences in the education, values and culture of the adults in a family. It helps clarify expectations and limits. Grandchildren, for their part, as they grow up and become adults, are able to express their own expectations.

It is also important for parents and grandparents **to respect each other** in the close relationship that can develop, to preserve each other's roles and privacy. Another skill for everyone to develop is **the ability to say no** and feel comfortable with each other.

By maintaining activities outside the family, grandparents bring new perspectives and valuable experiences to their children and grandchildren, thereby fostering a dynamic intergenerational relationship.

Communicating better as grandparents with your children and grandchildren

Advice for grandparents on their relationship with their <u>children</u>	Explanations or examples
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ask directly: "How can we help you?" 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Preparing a meal, doing a load of laundry or cleaning up can be just as useful as looking after the baby.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Respect parental decisions and education rules. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Be respectful of bedtime and food choices. Spoil the grandchildren, while respecting the parents' rules.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regularly express your trust in their parenting skills. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Confirming and celebrating parenting skills makes it easier to share experiences and build confidence.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Avoid being too critical of your children and grandchildren. Do not discuss disagreements in front of a child. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Accept family members as they are, without judgment.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> State your availability and the activities you can do, and ask that they be respected. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This helps manage requests and strengthen bonds with your grandchildren. Avoid arriving unannounced.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Be open and tolerant. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This attitude makes it easier to talk, especially if there's tension with your children about your role.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Express your gratitude and the privilege of having a place in your grandchildren's lives. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recognize that this place is earned through mutual trust with parents.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recall what you appreciated about your parents. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Draw on positive experiences and avoid past mistakes.
Advice for grandparents on their relationship with their <u>grandchildren</u>	Explanations or examples
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Show kindness. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Give time and love in many ways: prepare their favourite meal, don't get angry over little things. These qualities show unconditional love and acceptance of the child as he or she is.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create a happy, tension-free atmosphere. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Put situations into perspective using your life experience.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Avoid constant worry or intransigent authority. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Avoid showing your fear of your grandchild falling while playing. Avoid adding rules that are stricter than the parents'.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Avoid complaining all the time. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Avoid talking often about your pain, illness or financial worries.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Avoid having unrealistic expectations of your grandchildren. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Don't demand hugs, kisses or frequent phone calls or visits.

Main source: Francine Ferland and Florence Ferland (2023). *Grands-parents aujourd'hui : des réalités qui évoluent*. Éditions du CHU-Sainte-Justine.



Words of a wise grandmother

"Despite their good intentions, grandparents experience a lot of clumsiness on the part of their children, and this makes their role more difficult.

Our children are often focused on their own needs and ask us about our availability to babysit, without checking in with us first.

What I would have liked was to hear from them from time to time and spend some time together. I therefore have to be content with looking after my granddaughters, and enjoy it, of course. Over time, we've developed a special bond that's been good for us.

For my part, I often walk on eggshells with my children and their spouses, but I persist because I want to preserve the bond I have with my granddaughters. They are very grateful to me, so I try to be patient and understanding with their parents who are going through various situations beyond my control."



When grandparents must assert their rights

Conflicts between grandparents and parents sometimes lead the latter to refuse grandparents contact with their grandchildren. Article 611 of the Quebec Civil Code allows grandparents to assert their rights:

“Personal relations between the child and his or her grandparents may be maintained or developed to the extent that this is in the child’s interest and that, if the child is 10 years of age or over, he or she consents to it, unless he or she is unable to express his or her will.”

The Association des grands parents du Québec (ADGPQ) is dedicated to fostering intergenerational family ties and defending the rights and relationships between grandparents and their grandchildren. If these ties are weakened, don’t hesitate to consult the Association des grands parents du Québec!

Help line (ADGPQ front door):
514 745-6110 | 1 866 745-6110

Website: grands-parents.qc.ca

Find a list of meet-up cafés, legal and psychosocial conferences.

Facebook and Instagram : @ladgpa

Association des grands-parents du Québec
365 St-Jean Street, Suite 035
Longueuil (Qc) J4H 2X7

WANT TO FIND OUT MORE?

Take a look at Naître et grandir [Parents and Grandparents: Fostering Harmony](#)



