GLOW NEWSLETTER

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MEASURABLE OUTCOMES: WHAT ARE THEY WORTH TO YOU?

You’ve probably heard the saying ‘it’s not the years in your life that count but the life in your years.’ With people living longer, what kind of outcomes do we want out of those additional years as we age? The current experience for seniors in this country paints a different experience than what you might want. According to a study in the New England Journal of Medicine, 1 in 5 people aged 65 and older are re-hospitalized within 30 days, 1 in 3 within 90 days – where’s the ‘life’ in that? How can people find reliable options that enable them to break this cycle – what Lifesprk calls the roller coaster of health crises?

Dr. David Moen, Principal Consultant for MoenMD Consulting, explains “the best way to avoid over-using the ER (emergency room) and hospital is to create accessible and capable teams that build relationships with clients and families over time in the community where they live.” As an emergency physician, he saw how there were many solutions for acute problems but much less for those with chronic and complex health and social problems. “The ‘easy’ button,” according to Dr. Moen, “was often the ‘admit’ button, and that wasn’t the best button!” Lifesprk’s goal of preventing re-hospitalizations stemmed from this very issue – people need better care, not just more care. And the key to helping people making good decisions about their options for better care lies in the data.

Lifesprk has invested significant effort in building its outcomes tracking capabilities to demonstrate, with data, the efficacy of our model. We worked with partners and industry-leaders to define which outcomes to track. From a long list of options we settled on tracking hospitalizations and ER visits along with quality of life indicators including connectedness, happiness, control, and engagement because these were real issues our clients and other seniors across the state were facing. Last year, we conducted a baseline study by looking at the experience of actual Lifesprk clients one year prior to Lifesprk and then one year with Lifesprk services. The results: our Lifesprk model reduced ER visits by 52% and hospitalizations by 73% — a dramatic drop that translates into extensive long-term cost savings for both clients and the health care system.

According to Joel Theisen, RN, CEO/Founder of Lifesprk no one else in the private-pay industry is providing this level of data. “Minnesota has had better than national averages on readmission rates and has been able to reduce them by 19%, but our approach is reducing them by 73%,” said Theisen. “What’s more,” he continued, “by reducing the health care crises people face, they are able to re-focus that energy on what is most important in their lives – their spark. That’s almost ‘history’ in an industry that settles for way less,” adds Richard Leider, best-selling author of several books on ‘purpose’ and Chief Curator for AARP’s Life Reimagined Institute in Washington, DC.

Bottom-line, outcomes matter, and more families and professionals are looking for outcomes data about providers to make decisions about the options that will be best for them. Lifesprk’s outcomes as Leider points out, “are dramatically disrupting the senior and aging industry.” You want to know that the money you are spending on your wellbeing is worth something – that there’s someone in your corner doing everything they can to proactively protect all that’s important to you so you can enjoy your independence longer, and live life in a richer, more fulfilling way – and keep ‘life’ in your years.
Senior Housing

Toby Mullenger, Director of Housing Solutions at Lifesprk shares some advice on frequently asked questions he gets about senior housing.

Q: How will I be able to pay for senior housing when the time comes? What do you recommend is a good time to start planning?

A: Toby Mullenger’s advice for people – don’t wait until a crisis hits to plan for senior housing — too many people face limited options because they waited too long. “They think that when they need senior housing, their top choices will be available,” said Mullenger. “Some properties have wait lists or financial needs that could be an issue, and if a health crisis has occurred, the level of support needed may be a challenge.”

Toby also encourages people to seek support from experts like Lifesprk’s free Housing Solutions service who can help uncover financial options they didn’t know existed. “I’ve been doing this for decades so I know the ins and outs of the housing industry and can work with families to find ‘best fit’ options,” he said.

He shared one story of a daughter who was resigned to finding a nursing home for her father because he was running out of money for the apartment he had called home for the past three years. “She wanted me to find him a nursing home, end of story,” said Mullenger. “But I knew that’s not what her dad really wanted. And for her, she was given so much misinformation and not all of her choices were presented, that she didn’t even know what her options were.”

Mullenger learned that her father was a veteran and suggested they reach out to his veteran rep. What did they discover? Her father was eligible for $21,000 per year through the VA Aide & Attendance program (VAA). He then put them in touch with the property owner of her father’s apartment and because he’d been privately paying his rent for three years, he was eligible to use the Elderly Waiver Fund and his newfound additional income from the VAA, to pay for living right where he was. “No move was needed and everyone was happy,” added Mullenger.

Mullenger encourages people to ask experts for guidance now, to learn about all your financial and senior housing options so that when the time comes, you’ll be right where you want to be.

For more information about Housing Solutions services, call Lifesprk Navigation at 952-345-8770 or email ShineOn@lifesprk.com.
At 96, Evelyn Macy sparked her life by getting her ears pierced. But getting there was not a straight path. Kristine Pederson, LPN, who has been Evelyn’s Life Care Manager for the past three years, shared that Evelyn is a stoic and serious woman.

As part of the regular Lifesprk Experience discovery, Kristine learned that Evelyn lost her mother at 13 and had to leave school to care for her younger siblings and their farm. “I asked her how she survived, endured, and thrived,” said Kristine. “Evelyn replied: ‘always hard work.’ She’s lived such a hard life, first raising her siblings and now living with chronic pain that it had me thinking there must be something I can do to help her shine.”

So Kristine asked: “If you could do anything outside of the building today, what would it be?” Her response: shoe shopping! So off they went to Macy’s to buy a really cool pair of tennis shoes and then to the Cheesecake Factory for a slice of banana cream cheesecake. As Evelyn began to relax more she turned to Kristine and said, ‘I’d like to get my ears pierced.’ Without hesitating, Kristine took her to Claire’s where Evelyn reveled in all the attention and they laughed trying on all the sunglasses.

“Knowing Evelyn, I thought she would choose earrings that were a little more cautious,” laughed Kristine. “But no, she said to me, ‘I think we need to go a little bigger.’”

The spark continued. Evelyn started to become more social especially in the dining room of her senior housing community. “She loved to show off her new earrings as friends ‘oohed and ahhed’ over them,” said Kristine. It was wonderful to watch. This experience ignited something within Evelyn and she’s more relaxed.”

It also changed their relationship. “She now likes to talk with me about things other than her pain,” said Kristine. “Because of that one joyful outing we shared, we are getting to know each other on a very different level and it’s wonderful for both of us.” Evelyn knows now that despite her medical issues, she still has it in her to go out and have fun. And enjoy her newfound sparkle.
DID YOU KNOW... In 2014, nearly 18% of Medicare patients who were hospitalized were readmitted within a month, costing an estimated $26 billion, with $17 billion coming from potentially avoidable readmissions. For Minnesota, the impact has hit 27% of our hospitals with 36 being penalized for high readmission rates.

Source: Kaiser Health News, October 2014
LIFESPARK NAMED A Top 150 Workplace

The Star Tribune named Lifesprk among 150 of the best places to work in the state of Minnesota, with a ranking of #13 out of 70 for small sized companies. Joel Theisen, RN, CEO/Founder of Lifesprk thanks everyone on the team for creating a workplace that is engaging, inspiring, and bleeds purple. “This award means we have the best of the best working on our team to spark lives,” said Theisen. “And that can’t happen if our culture isn’t sparked first. This and many other culture awards we’ve won this year prove that. This is the fourth time that Lifesprk has earned a Top Workplace honor.”

Top Workplaces recognizes the most progressive companies in Minnesota based on employee opinions measuring engagement, organizational health and satisfaction. Star Tribune Publisher Michael J. Klingensmith said, “The companies in the Star Tribune Top 150 Workplaces deserve high praise for creating the very best work environments in the state of Minnesota.”

Have you had a good experience with Lifesprk? Share On!

We are always so grateful to families, clients and partners who want to share with others their positive experience with Lifesprk. Testimonials and reviews are really about helping others in similar situations. Remember where you were when you were searching for support for yourself or an aging loved one – where did you turn? And what was the deciding factor? Recommendations and positive reviews always help offer advice from someone who’s been there. We want everyone to have the opportunity to feel that ‘sparked’ experience.

How can you help? Consider writing a review on the Better Business Bureau, Google+, Facebook, even Yelp –Lifesprk has a dedicated page on each of these sites. Call our Navigation desk for more information and we’ll be happy to email out specific instructions on how to do this. Thank you for helping us pass the spark.

Keep your life on track so you can focus on what’s most important to you.

Lifesprk is changing the experience for people in the second half of life. What does that mean for you? It means a better experience, with more opportunities to shine the way you want. We’ll help you discover your priorities and help you achieve your goals. More than shining, you’ll GLOW.

To learn more call or visit today
952-345-8770 | www.lifesprk.com