Does mid-life crisis exist?



We tend to make fun of the term mid-life crisis. However, decades of research show that most of us experience an emotional dip in midlife and that this is a normal part of the maturing process.

Looking back

Our 40s and 50s are a time when we become acutely aware of the passage of time. We question our past choices, dwell on failures and disappointments and ponder major life changes. We also experience physiological changes like hormonal drops (in both men and women) or other life events such as the death of a parent, divorce or children leaving home.

The good news is that this emotional dip doesn't last and we usually come out the other end feeling better about ourselves and the future. But for many people it can be a painful – and costly – time.

Looking forward

Here are some ideas to help navigate more easily through midlife:

- **Focus on your achievements, not regrets.** You never became company CEO or wrote a bestselling novel, but you have raised great children, have wonderful friends, and had some pretty interesting experiences.
- **Communicate your needs.** Keeping feelings of frustration, anger and sadness bottled up only causes more stress and may lead to impulsive acts or behaviours. Let your partner and friends know what you're experiencing and let them help you work through any problems. People who care about you will offer perspective and sound advice.
- **Focus on health.** In midlife we tend to become more sedentary, our metabolisms slow and our muscle mass begins to decline, so a healthy diet, regular exercise and plenty of sleep become even more important to our physical and emotional health.
- **Make time for fun.** Have regular date nights with your partner, go out with friends, play sports and take vacations. Continue to explore, evolve and be excited by life.
- **Give back.** Volunteering is probably one of the best ways to give your life meaning and build a legacy.

Midlife can be a really great time. We're old enough to have acquired wisdom and perspective and young enough to get out and enjoy life. If you or someone you love is depressed or exhibiting concerning behaviours, contact us for support and resources or your family physician.