

Ninety percent of elderly people prefer to remain in their home as they age.

This means the goal is to remain living as independently as possible. But along the way, people's needs tend to change, and grow. Small tasks that add up or bigger transitions that pile on over time.

Important to remember is that for every individual this change in independence looks different. We set out to see what this looked like for people living in the Chicago area, and arrived at strong insights that would help us build something for those who wish to age in place for as long—and as best—as they can.

The act of aging is often viewed in terms of loss, but the ability to give back remains essential.

"People, especially men, lose their purpose when they retire. They're at a loss as to what to do with themselves. Having the social contact is part of it, but it's not enough."

"I have a lot of skills that I can offer... There are a lot of people with huge skills."

"It's like Karma. It doesn't come back to you in the way you give it."

Some transitions appear to emerge suddenly, and can leave a person feeling debilitated.

"There's a severe need for planning for the future. People tend to be naive, unprepared—especially when transitions are sudden."

"They may no longer feel needed, lose self-esteem, and become depressed. It might not be in their personality to reach out."

"People forget they can ask for help."

Social connection and mutual support is crucial to building individual—and community—wellbeing.

"I like that sense of what family was. How do you create that family with neighbors and friends?"

"Often I think, 'I can't go. I can't do this.' And we encourage each other. We go to a place around here and have soup...and we talk. Interesting talks. We do that every week, it's very important to us."

"Young people, volunteering to help, get just as much—or more—benefit from spending time with an elderly person."

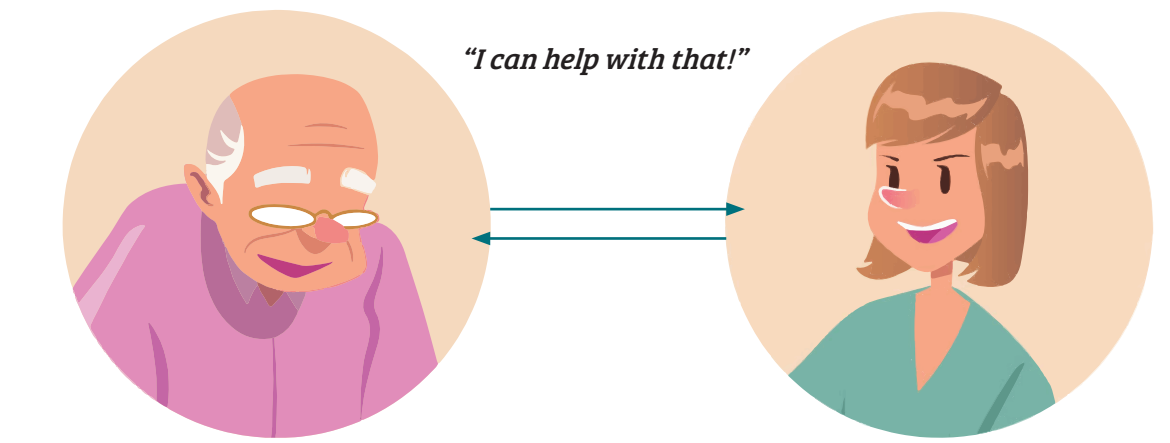
Technology is best used as a means to an end, making tasks easier and life more connected.

"We must be careful. Technology can be isolating, even when its job is to connect you to people."

"My cellphone has a little reminder that goes off for certain pills... I have also learned how to block calls, which is helpful."

"No new technology for the sake of it. It's more the functionality that matters to me."

Helping your new normal become a better normal



Thomas Russo
88 years old
Retired Lawyer

Italian language expertise



He needs to transfer all his data into his new laptop

Sara Bert
23 years old
Undergraduate student

Knowledge on the latest devices and technologies

She needs help translating classic Italian texts for school



Superpower gives



Needs

"I can help with that!"



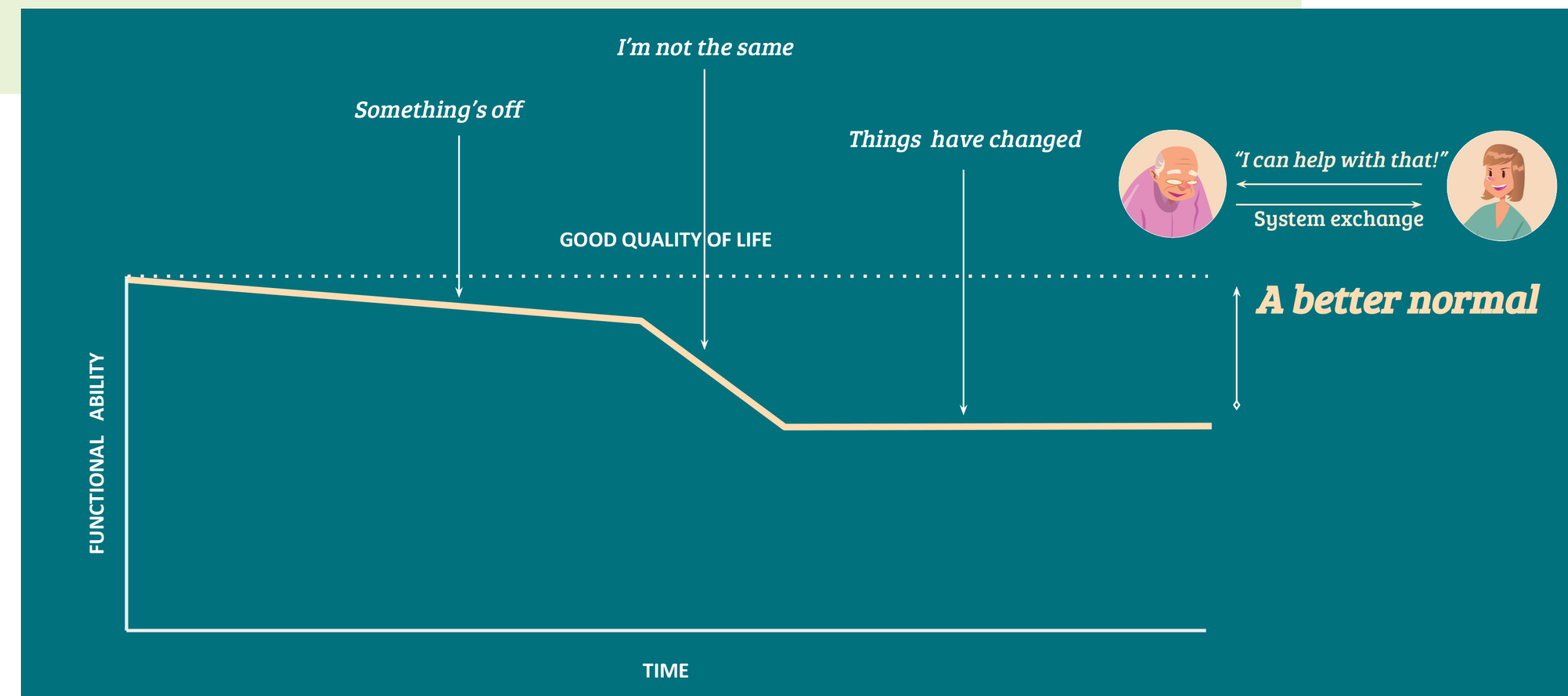
Needs

Superpower gives



Needs

System exchange



INTRODUCING CIRCLES-of-CARE

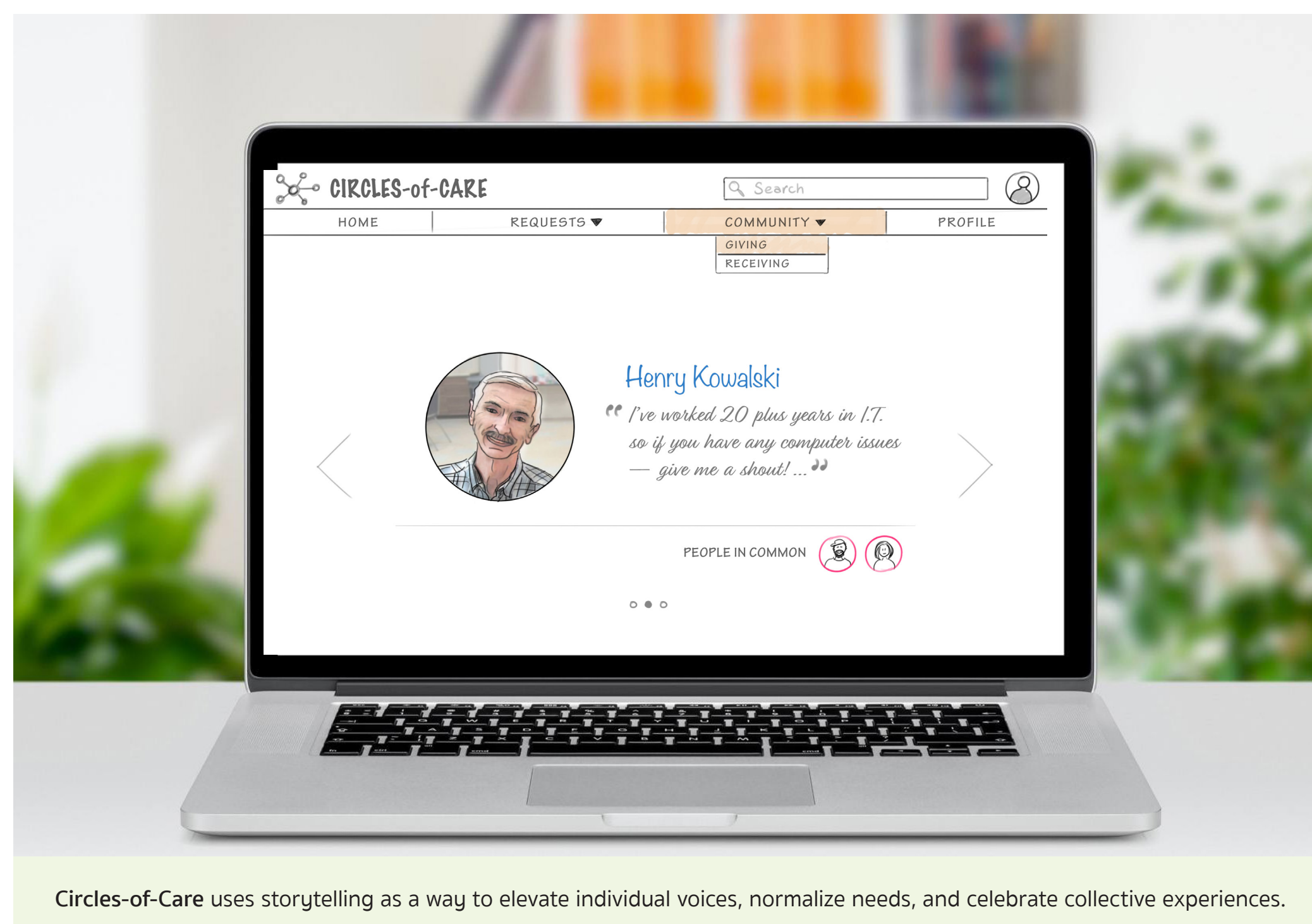
We aimed to use technology in a way that would support people in what they're already working towards: increasing access to resources and services that help maintain a good quality of life as individuals age independently.

Circles of Care focuses on three principles for success: being connected, trusted and localized. It empowers seniors to age **in-community**, rather than just in-place, using a volunteer participation model to adapt to their changing needs over time.

PROFILE PAGE – user view

REQUEST PAGES – create & view

COMMUNITY PAGE



Circles-of-Care uses storytelling as a way to elevate individual voices, normalize needs, and celebrate collective experiences.