

# *The Fountain of Health Initiative for Optimal Aging*



## **CLINICIANS' GUIDE TO HEALTH & WELLNESS IN THE SECOND HALF OF LIFE**

## Dear Clinician,

Thank you for your interest in “*The Fountain of Health Initiative for Optimal Aging.*” Research shows that attitudes heavily influence healthy aging behavior and physical and mental health outcomes. As a clinician, you are ideally positioned to impact healthy attitudes and behavior, and the enclosed guide provides evidence-based tools that we hope will make your work both easier and more productive. The clinician guide helps you to **individualize health needs and set achievable, realistic, and time-limited goals in a 10-minute office visit** with patients or clients age 50+ .

We’d love to hear from you with any feedback, suggestions or questions. Please contact us at [info@fountainofhealth.ca](mailto:info@fountainofhealth.ca).

*-Drs. Kathleen Singh, MD. Beverley Cassidy MD FRCP(C) & Linda Gobessi MD FRCP(C)*

## What is the “Fountain of Health” Initiative?

**The Fountain of Health (FoH) helps to translate in basic terms the current science of healthy and resilience, and debunk negative aging myths.** For example, many people think longevity is “in your family genes” with little you can do about the length of life. Research indicates only 25% of life expectancy is accounted for by family genes, that longevity and health in aging is determined largely by epigenetics<sup>1</sup>: attitudes, stress levels and lifestyle factors are key and it is important to have strong social connections<sup>2</sup>, stay physically active<sup>3</sup>, continue to learn<sup>4</sup>, and have meaning in life. Beliefs on aging are really important to address too since they impact on our health behaviours - evidence shows negative beliefs can serve as a self-fulfilling prophecy<sup>5</sup> and are linked to greatly increased morbidity and mortality<sup>6</sup> while positive views are linked to improved health behaviours,<sup>7</sup> functioning<sup>8</sup> and longevity<sup>9</sup>. **The idea is not to get rid of all negative thoughts, but rather to balance them with other thoughts that are both accurate and helpful to our health.** Balanced thinking helps to increase the chance of success in setting goals and achieving healthier behaviors and attitudes. For more information and literature, visit: [www.fountainofhealth.ca](http://www.fountainofhealth.ca)

**FOUNTAIN of HEALTH EXPRESS:**  
**HEALTHIER AGING IN 10 MINUTE OFFICE VISITS**  
*(Quick summary of protocol for clinicians)*

**VISIT 1:**

- **IDENTIFY THE PATIENT/ CLIENT AS AN IDEAL CANDIDATE FOR A FOH OPTIMAL AGING INTERVENTION.**
- **DO FOH SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONNAIRE TO IDENTIFY BASELINE AREAS OF STRENGTH AND NEED** (*Note: This can be completed with the patient/ client during the appointment or beforehand*)
- **ESTABLISH ONE SMALL, SPECIFIC BEHAVIORAL GOAL IN ONE OF THREE AREAS: 1) INCREASED PHYSICAL ACTIVITY 2) INCREASED SOCIAL CONTACT OR 3) A BRAIN CHALLENGE**
- **RECORD THE GOAL AND DATE OF NEXT VISIT AND REVIEW IT AT NEXT VISIT, IDEALLY IN 4 WEEKS**

**VISIT 2:**

- **CHECK IN ON THE GOAL FROM LAST VISIT**
- **SET NEW OR REVISED GOAL** BASED ON QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS OR PATIENT/ CLIENT PREFERENCE IN ONE OF THE THREE TARGET AREAS: **PHYSICAL ACTIVITY, SOCIAL CONTACT OR BRAIN CHALLENGE**
- **INTRODUCE A FOH TOOL OR WATCH 3 MINUTE HEALTHY AGING VIDEO** FROM FOH WEBSITE: *fountainofhealth.ca* or The FOH Healthy Aging Handbook

**VISIT 3:**

- **CHECK IN ON GOAL FROM LAST VISIT**
- **SET A NEW OR REVISED GOAL IN ONE OF THREE FOH OPTIMAL AGING DOMAINS: PHYSICAL ACTIVITY, SOCIAL CONTACT AND BRAIN CHALLENGE**
- **REPEAT FOH SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONNAIRE TO IDENTIFY ANY DIFFERENCES FROM BASELINE**

Clinician Initials \_\_\_\_\_

Start Date \_\_\_\_\_

End Date \_\_\_\_\_

*(Note: If you are participating in our research and returning this guide, please do not identify patient/ client by name. General results will be summarized for quality assurance)*

## VISIT 1: L.I.N.K. INTO THE FOUNTAIN OF HEALTH (10 minutes)

**L: Listen** empathically to presenting office complaint/concern.

**I: Identify the patient/ client as ideal** for FoH education, and introduce Fountain of Health (using the FoH Healthy Living Handbook/website). Identify their baseline using the **FOH Healthy Aging Questionnaire** (see next page); their answers can be used to help them choose an area for behaviour change.

Sample text: “Your problem with (diabetes/heart disease/depression) makes you an ideal candidate for a new health and wellness program. Would you like to learn more about it?” or “Could we take a few minutes today so I can tell you more about the Fountain of Health program, and find out where you are at?”

**N: Navigate one *small* behavioural change** in physical activity, social connection or in learning something new. The goal should seem doable to the patient /client (and to you) within the *next four to eight weeks*.

Sample text: “Is there one small step you could take to increase your physical activity level in the next few weeks?” OR, “Could you call or meet up with a friend in the next month?” OR “Is there one small thing you would like to learn more about in the next month?”

**K: Keep a record of the goal set**, and book a follow-up (within 1- 2 months, if possible). Record goal here:

One small step to **increase physical activity** in the next four weeks is:

\_\_\_\_\_ **OR**

One **small thing to learn more about** in the next four weeks is:

\_\_\_\_\_ **OR**

One **small step to connect with someone** in the next four weeks is:

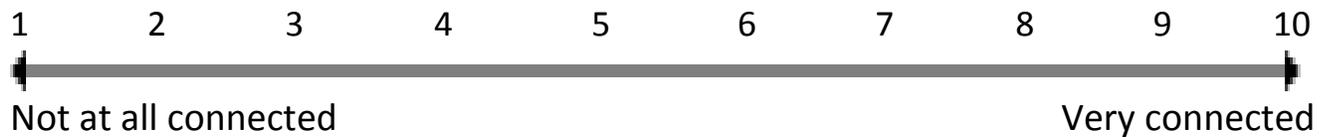
\_\_\_\_\_

**FOLLOW UP DATE (within 1-2 months, if possible):** \_\_\_\_\_

## FOH Healthy Aging Questionnaire

Please circle one number on each scale below to answer the following questions:

1. Where would you rate yourself in terms of being socially connected to others?



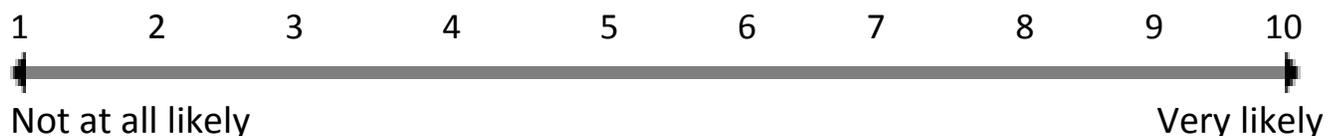
2. Where would you rate yourself in terms of being interested in learning new things?



3. Using your own definition, where would you rate yourself in terms of successful aging?



4. Where would you rate yourself in terms of how likely you are to seek mental health help if you needed it?



5. Where would you rate yourself in terms of being physically active?



**Total FOH Questionnaire Score: \_\_\_\_\_ / 50**

**VISIT 2: 1.CHECK UP ON GOAL ATTAINMENT; 2. REVISE OR SET NEW FOH GOAL; 3. WATCH 3 MINUTE FOH VIDEO, OR EXPLORE ONE FOH TOOL (10 minutes)**

**1. Check in on the goal set in Visit 1 (ask patient/ client to rate the goal outcome)**

<b>Outcome: (Please check one box)</b>	<b>GOAL</b>
at same place/no change	<input type="checkbox"/>
partly reached the goal set	<input type="checkbox"/>
completely reached the goal set	<input type="checkbox"/>
went beyond/did more than the goal set	<input type="checkbox"/>

**2. Revise the previous goal to make it more specific or realistic, or set a new FOH goal based on patient/ client preference or area of weakness (physical, social, cognitive) identified on quiz:**

One small step **to increase physical activity** in the month is:

\_\_\_\_\_ OR

**One small thing to learn more about** in the month is:

\_\_\_\_\_ OR

**One small step to connect with someone** in the month is:

\_\_\_\_\_

**3. Explore** another FOH tool (ie. the FoH Healthy Living Handbook, the FoH 3 minute video or other tool on the FOH website (see tools list on page )

**FOLLOW UP DATE (within 1 month, if possible):** \_\_\_\_\_

**VISIT 3: 1. CHECK UP ON GOAL ATTAINMENT; 2. REVISE OR SET NEW FOH GOAL; 3. COMPLETE FOH HEALTHY AGING QUESTIONNAIRE (10 minutes)**

**1. Review Goal set in Visit 2 (ask patient/ client to rate the goal outcome)**

Outcome: (Please check one box)	GOAL
at same place/no change	<input type="checkbox"/>
partly reached the goal set	<input type="checkbox"/>
completely reached the goal set	<input type="checkbox"/>
went beyond/did more than the goal set	<input type="checkbox"/>

**2. Revise previous goal to make it more specific and/or achievable, or set a new healthy aging goal (physical, social, or brain challenge):**

One small step to **increase physical activity** in the next month is:

\_\_\_\_\_ **OR**

One small thing to **learn more about** in the next month is:

\_\_\_\_\_ **OR**

One small step to **connect with someone** in the next month is:

\_\_\_\_\_

Follow up date/ time (within 1-2 months, if possible): \_\_\_\_\_

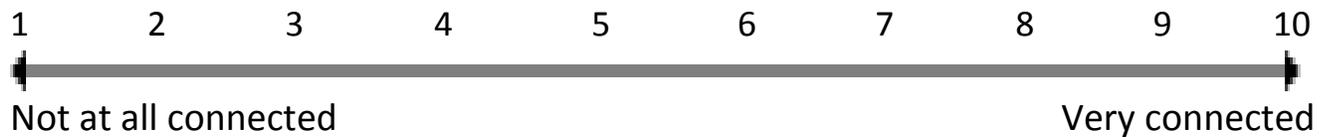
**3. Complete the FoH Healthy Aging Questionnaire on Page 8.**

**Optional step: Use Attitudes to Aging Questionnaire to explore client outlook in more detail (p 10).**

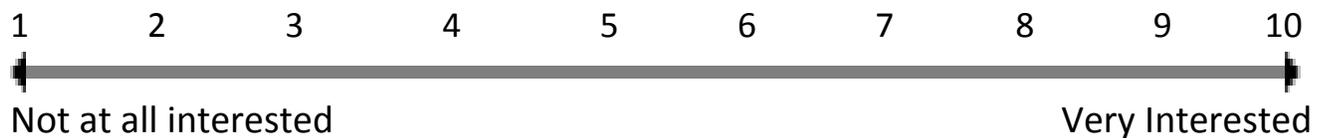
## FOH Healthy Aging Questionnaire

Please circle one number on each scale below to answer the following questions:

1. Where would you rate yourself in terms of being socially connected to others?



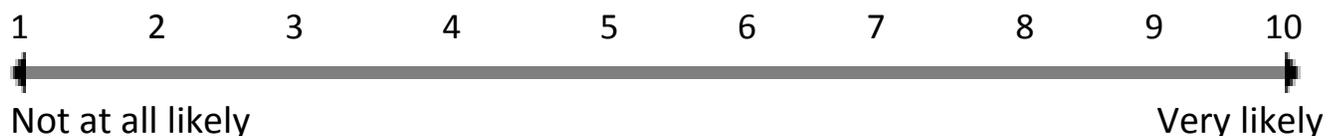
2. Where would you rate yourself in terms of being interested in learning new things?



3. Using your own definition, where would you rate yourself in terms of successful aging?



4. Where would you rate yourself in terms of how likely you are to seek mental health help if you needed it?



5. Where would you rate yourself in terms of being physically active?



**Total FOH Questionnaire Score: \_\_\_\_\_ / 50**

## Dealing with Emotional Barriers in Goal-setting: Ambivalence, Shame & Guilt

Changing anything is hard. It is vital to reassure anyone working on a goal that it is perfectly normal not to achieve it in any short order, and to struggle to keep new behaviors. Needing to rework a goal or change it up entirely is absolutely normal and expectable. When anyone struggles to achieve a goal they have set, it is important to acknowledge their feelings, and ask if they would like to make it smaller or set a goal in a different area. Above all, it is important to provide reassurance that goal setting is challenging work and no goal is ever too small.

### Appendix: Fountain of Health Tools List SMART Goal Setting Form & Attitudes to Aging Questionnaire

- FoH Healthy Living Handbook**- Contact us to order copies for your office or download at [http://fountainofhealth.ca/sites/default/files/resources/fountainofhealth\\_positiveaging\\_healthylivinghandbook.pdf](http://fountainofhealth.ca/sites/default/files/resources/fountainofhealth_positiveaging_healthylivinghandbook.pdf) )
- FoH Educational Video** (3 min) at [www.fountainofhealth.ca/video](http://www.fountainofhealth.ca/video)
- FoH Positive Thinking Exercise** at <http://fountainofhealth.ca/a-positive-thinking-exercise>
- FoH Mental Health Myths and Facts Booklet** (anti-stigma/educational brochure) - Contact us to order copies for your office or download at [http://fountainofhealth.ca/sites/default/files/resources/mentalhealthsupportforseniorsmythsandfacts\\_0.pdf](http://fountainofhealth.ca/sites/default/files/resources/mentalhealthsupportforseniorsmythsandfacts_0.pdf)
- FoH Depression Educational Video** “*Why Isn’t Dad Fishing Anymore?*” – A story of a senior with depression (6 min) at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DdhPfAnm4xo>
- FoH Mindfulness Introduction** (MP3) (14 min) at [http://fountainofhealth.ca/sites/default/files/resources/mentalhealthsupportforseniorsmythsandfacts\\_0.pdf](http://fountainofhealth.ca/sites/default/files/resources/mentalhealthsupportforseniorsmythsandfacts_0.pdf)

## ATTITUDES TO AGING QUESTIONNAIRE:

Please share your opinion on the following statements:

(Place an X in box below for each statement)

	YES	NO
Things keep getting worse as I get older.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I have as much pep as I did last year.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
As I get older, I'm less useful.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I am as happy now as I was when I was younger.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Please place an "X" in one box below:		
As I get older, things are better, worse, or the same as I thought they would be.	Better	Worse
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
		<input type="checkbox"/>

### Scoring Key:

**Total Score: \_\_\_\_\_ / 5**

- Q. 1      Yes = 0, No = 1
- Q. 2      Yes = 1, No = 0
- Q. 3      Yes = 0, No = 1
- Q. 4      Yes = 1, No = 0
- Q. 5      Better & Same = 1, Worse = 0

**Note:** Higher scores indicate a more positive self-perception of aging, which has been linked with increased longevity<sup>9</sup>.

**SETTING “SMART” GOALS :** Use the following FoH “S.M.A.R.T.” Goal Setting Form to help patients/ clients set a Specific, Measurable, Action-oriented, Realistic goal in one of three FoH target areas: physical activity, social activity or brain challenge:

S.M.A.R.T. Goal Setting:	Questions to explore to help develop goal	S.M.A.R.T. Goal Details:
GOAL/ INTENTION:	What health goal would you like to meet in the next few weeks or months?	
SPECIFIC	How specifically can you go about achieving this goal?  What concrete steps would you need to take?	
MEASURABLE	How can you measure your progress? How will you know when your goal is met?  (Can you rate your progress out of 10? How often or for how long will you do the activity?)	
ACTION-ORIENTED	Does your goal rely on an action that you can take?  What specific actions will you need to take?	
REALISTIC	Is this goal realistic for you to achieve? Is it doable in the next few weeks/ months?	
TIME-LIMITED	What timeframe does this goal require to achieve?  (When will you start/finish? What is the best time in the week	

## References

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8. Sargent-Cox KA, Anstey KJ, Luszcz MA. The relationship between change in self-perceptions of aging and physical functioning in older adults. Psychol Aging. 2012, 27(3):750-60. Online: <http://psycnet.apa.org/journals/pag/27/3/750/>
9. Levy B, et al. Longevity increased by positive self-perceptions of aging. J Pers Soc Psychol 2002; 83(2):261-270. Online: <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/12150226>