



fountain of health



Fountain of Health Initiative for Optimal Aging

SENIOR PEER LEADERS
MODULE SLIDES
(PDF FORMAT)



Stay Healthy for Life!

Healthy Living Sessions for Positive Aging

Introduction

- Handout FoH booklets to each participant. Ask them to bring it with them to each session as they will be using it to fill in their weekly goal, which will be fully explained later on in the session.

Welcome



- Welcome participants.
- Do introductions.

Welcome



- The *Fountain of Health* is your source for reliable information about positive aging, with steps you can take to promote and protect good health.
- Through 5 key evidence-based actions, you will learn how to stay healthy for life.

What is Fountain of Health?

- The FoH is a collaborative effort made by a collection of academic, non-profit and government organizations in Nova Scotia.
 - This initiative brings you evidence-based information on healthy aging, as well as useful tips and strategies for:
 - making positive aging a choice in your life and
 - reducing the risk of illness and disability.
- The goal is to help everyone learn more about aging well so we can help ourselves and each other.
- FoH consists of 5 key messages which will help your health physically, emotionally and mentally.

What are these sessions going to consist of?

- There will be 5 sessions, each focusing on a different key message, providing information about research in regards to the theory that backs up the message as well as tips to help you get started. At the end of each session participants will be asked to “take the plunge” and set a specific goal associated

- If you are interested in learning about each topic more in-depth, you can find a list of references under the “evidence-based” section of www.fountainofhealth.ca
- Ask Participants what they think are important things to age help with healthy aging....lead into the introduction of the five messages.

Share Your Thoughts



- What do you think are the most important things that help with healthy aging?

- Ask Participants what they think are important things to age help with healthy aging....lead into the introduction of the five messages.

Key Messages



Stay Socially Active

Change How You Think About Aging

Stay Physically Active

Take Care of Your Mental Health

Continue to Learn New Things

- Read over each message.

Booklets



- The FOH Booklet is your “passport” for all of our sessions together. Please bring it to every meeting.
- We’ll use the booklets to record our goals or plans each week.

- Pass out booklets and explain its purpose and review the contents.

The Benefits of Goal Setting



- Goal setting helps people make decisions and stay in control.
- Long term goals cannot be reached immediately; they must be broken up into smaller steps.
- Reaching smaller goals improves self-esteem.

- A long term goal is something that cannot be reached immediately by taking just one step. Coming up with these goals is not always difficult, but the path to get there can be overwhelming to think about. By breaking it up into smaller steps, we can look at each step as a goal of its own, which is much less overwhelming to think about
- Reaching these smaller goals creates a sense of satisfaction, motivation, and self-esteem. The motivation encourages us to keep moving toward our long term goals.
- As an older adult, you may believe that goal-setting is no longer important as you may have already accomplished many of your life goals (i.e. marriage, education, career, children, grand-children, travel, relationships/friendships, etc.). Despite the fact, setting goals for yourself still remains highly important and valuable.
- Refraining from goal-setting may “disconnect you from a sense of responsibility and direction, can be hard on your self-esteem, and may leave you feeling less in control of your life and more uncertain”

EXAMPLE:

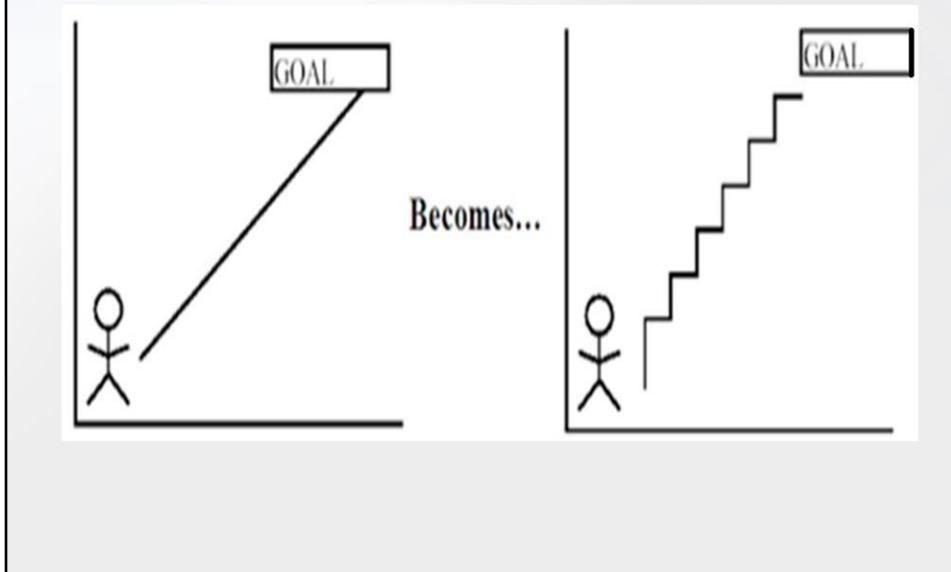
Long term goal: Be more socially active.

Possible steps:

- Find out what is going on in the community
- Go for regular walks outside
- Spend some time with a friend
- Volunteer in the community

First short term goal: I will attend the Seniors Lunch Social at the community center once next week.

With the Help of Goal Setting...



- Explain the steps in the second image are like short term goals to reach the long term goal. The steps make it much easier to make it to the top.

When Setting Goals, Avoid:



- Trying to do too much.
- Feeling discouraged after 1 or 2 steps.
- Considering setbacks as catastrophes.
- Down-playing your success.

1) This reiterates the importance of starting off small with your goals. In reference to the graphic on the previous slide, it is much easier to climb a staircase than it is to climb mountain.

- For example: Imagine you were someone who felt very anxious when leaving the house and being around new people. You could set a long-term goal of being more socially active. That is a broad goal so when you are breaking it down into smaller steps it would not be appropriate to decide on your first step being something along the lines of “signing up for a year of the first yoga class you find in your area.” What if you do not enjoy the classes? Well you have already paid for a years worth so you may suffer through them or feel as if you have wasted your money. Either way you may feel overwhelmed and a little upset.
- A better first step to take would be to break your goal even further by saying for instance “My first step will be to research different available yoga classes, then the following step will be to attend a trial session.” This will help you avoid being overwhelmed and ensure that you have the opportunity to find an activity you enjoy.

2) After 1 or 2 steps you may feel discouraged or that you are not as far as you thought you would be. Be sure to think about the progress you

have made. With every step taken, you are farther away from your starting point.

- Continuing the example from above: You may not be able to find a yoga class in your area or you may try one and not like it. Do not dwell on the negatives in this situation, focus on the progress you made! Not only have you taken the initiative to seek out a class, you have also stepped out of your comfort zone and left the house to try one.

3) Setbacks will happen along the way; however you should not let them discourage you or ruminate about them. Take the chance to reevaluate the situation and keep going!

- Example: You did not like yoga, but that does not mean you will not like kickboxing. By crossing off yoga as a possibility you can make room for new experiences and lead to finding something you really enjoy.

4) This is related to the second point; every step you take should be viewed as a success. You are farther than you were before you took the leap so you should be proud.

- Example: As previously mentioned, you successfully made the steps to look for the classes and you got out the house and attended one despite feeling uncomfortable and that should not be discredited. That is an incredible feat that should be celebrated.

Be Sure to Set SMART Goals!



Specific

Measurable

Action-Oriented

Realistic

Time Limited

Be Sure to Set SMART Goals!



GOALS					
Intention of Goal	Specific	Measurable	Action-Oriented	Realistic	Time-Limited
<p><i>What would you like to accomplish in the next few months?</i> <i>(Try using a more general/broad goal)</i></p>	<p>How specifically can you go about this goal?</p> <p>What concrete steps would you need to take?</p>	<p>How can you measure your progress?</p> <p>(Score out of 10? How often or for how long?)</p> <p>How will you know when the goal is achieved?</p>	<p>Is the goal an action that you can take?</p> <p>What specific actions you will need to take?</p>	<p>Is this goal realistic for you to achieve?</p> <p>Is it doable in the next few weeks or months?</p>	<p>What timeframe does this goal require to achieve?</p> <p>Is it doable in the next few weeks or months?</p>
<p>Attend the Seniors Lunch Social</p>	<p>I can talk to a fellow resident about more information or I could sign up on the sheet for the next Seniors Lunch Social in my building</p>	<p>Seniors Lunch Socials are held once a week in our community room, on Thursdays for two hours (11-1) and are ongoing throughout the year</p>	<p>I need to put it in my calendar to sign up and attend the Seniors Lunch Social</p>	<p>Yes- I'm free on Thursday from 11-1. The Social takes place in our community room, and I can afford the costs associated with it.</p>	<p>I will attend the next four Seniors Lunch Socials over the month of November.</p>

Sources



- Flatt J, et al. Participation in social activities in later life: does enjoyment have important implications for cognitive health? *Aging Health* 2013;9(2):149-158. Online: <http://www.futuremedicine.com/doi/abs/10.2217/ahe.13.11>*
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- Nicholson N. A review of social isolation: an important but under assessed condition in older adults. *J Prim Prev* 2012;33(2-3):137-152. Online: http://www.medscape.com/viewarticle/769914_1



The logo for Fountain of Health features a stylized fountain with blue water spraying upwards. In the center of the fountain are two green human figures. Below the figures are three small green dots. The text "fountain of health" is written in a blue, lowercase, sans-serif font below the graphic.

For more information, please visit:

www.fountainofhealth.ca

- Close by asking participants if they have any questions.
- If you do not feel comfortable answering, you can either tell them you will research it and get back to them in the following week or you can advise them to speak with a professional.
- Remind participants that if they would like to read more about the research that this initiative is based on, they can visit the website and click on the “evidence-based” tab for the full list of articles.



Stay Healthy for Life!

Healthy Living Sessions for Positive Aging

Stay Socially Active

Welcome



- Welcome participants.
- Do introductions.

Key Messages



Stay Socially Active

Change How You Think About Aging

Stay Physically Active

Take Care of Your Mental Health

Continue to Learn New Things

- Last session we reviewed at a high level the five key messages and we talked about setting SMART goals.
- Today we will focus our time on the first one: social activity.

Today's Key Messages



Stay Socially Active

- Explain to participants that today you will be discussing the benefits of being socially active and some ways you can get more socially involved, as well as discussing tips for setting successful goals, which will help them set their goal for this session.

Call A Friend – It's Good For You!



Being socially active has been shown to:

- Lower risk of dementia
- Improve brain performance
- Lower risk of depression
- Increase longevity

LOWER RISK OF DEMENTIA

- Individuals with poor or limited social networking have been found to increase their risk of dementia by 60% (Fratiglioni et al.)
- A simplified explanation of the effect of Social Activity and Dementia:

Dementia occurs when brain cells become injured or die thus creating gaps in the brain. When individuals are socially active they exercise their brain and build strong connections between brain cells. These connections create a reserve of health brain cells, which can help combat dementia.

IMPROVE BRAIN PERFORMANCE

- It also helps improve your memory.
- By stimulating and exercising your brain through socialization, the connections between brain cells can strengthen, which can help make thought retrieval easier.

LOWER RISK OF DEPRESSION

- Socialization allows for mood improvements.
- It's a common misconception that depression is a normal part of aging. Research has shown that there is no significant link between the two. Taking the steps for focus on the messages covered throughout these sessions will help provide tips and insight as to how to prevent this.
- Sometimes when individuals are experiencing depression, they prefer to avoid interacting with others, however this interaction can be used in conjunction with other anti-depressant interventions to reduce symptoms.
- Researchers have found a link between socialization and higher self-perception, which is associated with lower rates of loneliness and higher rates of general life satisfaction. When socializing, a part of your brain becomes stimulated and starts creating Dopamine, which is a neurotransmitter responsible for pleasure. With more dopamine, individuals tend to be happier and more positive thus individuals tend to report higher self-satisfaction.
 - Note that this is also related to positive thinking, which will be covered in the following session.

INCREASE LONGEVITY

- Involvement in social activities has proven to help reduce mortality rates and maintain functionality...
 - Higher functionality results in the ability to complete meaningful daily tasks and maintain a level of independence which in turn results in having a higher quality of life, which results in being happier.
 - These are all interrelated: socialization can lead to better cognition, which can lead to better mood, which can lead to better health, which can lead to even more socialization.
-
- Having good friendships, or strong social ties, is a key ingredient to happiness longevity and successful aging.
 - There is also research that suggests that part of the benefit of social activity is that it usually entails a increase in physical activity as well. For example: if you are normally cooped up at home, and if you went on a lunch date with

a friend you would be receiving exercise from the albeit short walk from your house to the car and from the car to the restaurant.

- It has been found that woman are more likely than men to report feeling lonely.
- One report has stated that nearly a quarter of seniors would like to be more socially active however they cannot, due to various limitations, such as physical limitations as well as caregiving responsibilities. (SOCIAL PARTICIPATION AND THE HEALTH AND WELL-BEING OF CANADIAN SENIORS)
- You have to make sure that the activity you choose is comfortable for you. Don't do anything outside your physical limits.
- Caregivers often report having a difficult time taking time for themselves, however it is important to take time for ones self and practice self-care.

Self-Reflection



- Do you have someone to talk to if you have a problem?
- If so, who? _____
- How socially connected do you feel?



- Invite participants to reflect on these questions; they can fill them out in their handbooks should they wish.
- Put emphasis on the fact that this is self-reflection and therefore encourage participants to keep their responses private.
- This allows individuals to think about their levels of socialization and perhaps consider whether or not they are participating in social activity enough.
- If participants appear to be discouraged, reassure them that it is never too late to start being active.
- This will lead into the “What can you do?” Section.

What Can You Do?



- Over time, we can lose touch with friends and find it harder to make new ones. If you don't socialize much, or feel anxious meeting new people, these strategies can help.

- Remind participants to keep in mind it is not about the amount of socialization you do but rather the quality of it.
- Be sure to let them know that they do not need to do everything on the list to be socially active; however challenge them to try at least one thing.

What Can You Do?



1) Ask a friend to go for coffee or for a walk.

- "Invite someone you haven't seen in a while for a coffee date. Spending time together will help you rekindle the energy in your friendship."
 - It will allow you to catch up on recent affairs and perhaps discover some newfound common interests.
- If you like to walk, invite a friend to join you.
 - Be sure to pick a time and a date that works for both of you and be sure to commit to it.
 - This can also help to improve your physical health.

What Can You Do?



2) Confide in someone.

- Let someone in your life know how you are really feeling and see where the conversation leads
- When you open up, others will too.
- You can support your friends and family by giving them opportunities to share their thoughts and feelings with you.
- You and your confidant will benefit from having the opportunity to express feelings, which could otherwise be kept inside. You might find that you are both having similar issues and then you can work together towards finding a solution.

What Can You Do?



3) Become closer with acquaintances.

- There are likely people you cross paths with regularly but don't know very well, with a few questions it is possible to begin to forge a closer connection.
- Again by chatting with folks and showing them that you are interested in them, they will begin to feel comfortable to open up to you.

What Can You Do?



4) Challenge yourself to say "yes".

- Sometimes, the reason we're not making new friends is that we're staying at home and not meeting new people. Challenge yourself to say yes to every invite for a month and try to meet at least three new people at each gathering.
- This can be challenging or even frightening, however be sure to have confidence in yourself. You never know who you could meet.

What Can You Do?



5) Make the most of your hobbies and join a group.

- If there is something you already enjoy doing, why not try doing it with others?
 - Join a faith community, a book club, a walking club, a sewing club; it can be anything
 - Common interests help people bond and are a great way to start a conversation.
- If you like playing bingo, try going to a new bingo group for a few weeks
- You could even challenge yourself to try something completely new. If you have always wanted to try yoga, for example, take a beginners yoga class.

What Can You Do?



6) Try volunteering.

- Not only is volunteering a wonderful thing for the community but it is also a great way to meet new people.
- Although you will start out feeling like you are just helping others, the experience will also likely end up helping you in many unexpected ways.

Ex: Volunteering at a hospital

- You get to help make hospital stays a little better for families and patients
- You get to learn about the medical system (which you might be interested in)
- Feel good about the work you are doing and the impact you are having
- And on top of that, you get to meet new people!

What Can You Do?



7) Visit your community centre.

- Pick a time and a date to visit your local community centre. While you are there, pick up the program schedule and talk to at least two people to find out more about what's going on in your community.

What Can You Do?



8) Show up alone.

- Going to an event without a friend or partner can a little scary but it can also encourage you to be more outgoing.
- Showing up alone actually makes you look more approachable and less intimidating than if you were with a group.

What Can You Do?



9) Change things up.

- Try changing up your routine!
- If you take a morning class, try taking a lunchtime one instead to see some new faces.
- If you walk the dog to the same park everyday, why not try a new one?
- Expand your group tea dates and invite new people.

What Can You Do?



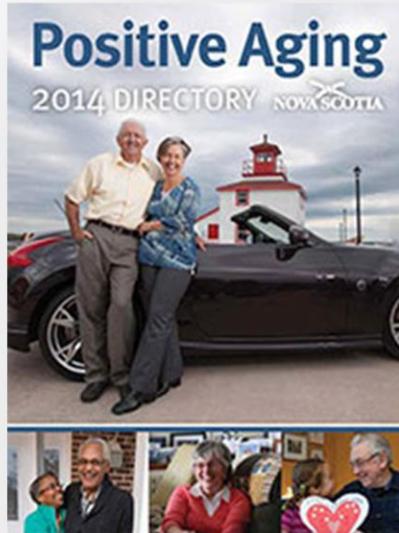
10) Reach out to a senior you know.

- You may know a senior that lives alone. Try reaching out to them!
 - Many seniors feel lonely but find it difficult to ask for company.
 - Take the first step and let them know you'd like to visit or take them for lunch

For More Ideas of Social Activities...



You can refer to the
*Nova Scotia Department of
Seniors Positive Aging
Directory*
for more ideas of social
activities in your area.



- It is also recommended that facilitators create a list of community groups and resources in the community the sessions are being offered in.

Be Sure to Set SMART Goals!



Specific

Measurable

Action-Oriented

Realistic

Time Limited

Be Sure to Set SMART Goals!



GOALS					
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<p><i>What would you like to accomplish in the next few months?</i></p> <p><i>(Try using a more general/broad goal)</i></p>	<p>How specifically can you go about this goal?</p> <p>What concrete steps would you need to take?</p>	<p>How can you measure your progress?</p> <p>(Score out of 10? How often or for how long?)</p> <p>How will you know when the goal is achieved?</p>	<p>Is the goal an action that you can take?</p> <p>What specific actions you will need to take?</p>	<p>Is this goal realistic for you to achieve?</p> <p>Is it doable in the next few weeks or months?</p>	<p>What timeframe does this goal require to achieve?</p> <p>Is it doable in the next few weeks or months?</p>
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EXAMPLE:

Long term goal: Be more socially active.

Possible steps:

- Find out what is going on in the community
- Go for regular walks outside
- Spend some time with a friend
- Volunteer in the community

First short term goal: I will attend the Seniors Lunch Social at the community center once next week.

Time to Take the Plunge and Set Your Goal!



- What steps will you take to increase your social activity?

- Ask participants to use the SMART technique to create their own goal to increase their level of social activity.

Example:

“I will attend the Seniors Lunch Social every Tuesday at 1:00pm at the community centre, and I will make an effort to talk to at least two new people while I am there”

Key Points



- Staying socially active can lower your risk of depression and dementia, improve your brain performance, and increase longevity.
- Challenge yourself to step out of your social comfort zone.
- When setting goals be sure they are small and attainable.

Sources



- Flatt J, et al. Participation in social activities in later life: does enjoyment have important implications for cognitive health? *Aging Health* 2013;9(2):149-158. Online: <http://www.futuremedicine.com/doi/abs/10.2217/ahe.13.11>*
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Stay Healthy for Life!

Healthy Living Sessions for Positive Aging

Change How You Think About Aging

Welcome



Healthy Living...



Positive Aging!

Welcome participants.
Do introductions.

Review of Previous Session



- What is the Fountain of Health?
 - evidence based strategies for healthy aging
 - 5 key messages
- What are the benefits of staying socially active?
 - decreased dementia, depression
 - increased brain performance and longevity
- What are the benefits of goal setting?
 - improved decision-making, sense of control, and self-esteem
- S.M.A.R.T. goals: Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time based – how did you do?
- Questions about last week?

Before going through the review take a few minutes to ask participants if they have any specific questions or comments from the material covered in the previous session. *Remember if you do not feel comfortable answering a particular question let the participant know and you can either indicate another person they could ask (i.e. a clinician) or you could jot down the question and inform them that you will find the answer for them by the next session.*

Review

What is the F.O.H

- This initiative brings you evidence-based information on healthy aging, as well as useful tips and strategies for making positive aging a choice in your life and reduce the risk of illness and disability.
- The goal is to help everyone learn more about aging well so we can help ourselves and each other.
- FoH consists of 5 key messages which will help your health physically, emotionally and mentally. (The five messages are on the next slide so you can choose to go over them as you introduce this week's topic.)

What are the benefits to being socially active?

- Lower risk of dementia
- Improve brain performance
- Lower risk of depression
- Increases longevity

What are the benefits of goal setting?

- Goal setting helps people make decisions and stay in control.
- Long term goals cannot be reached immediately; they must be broken up into smaller steps.
- Reaching smaller goals improves self-esteem.

Key Messages



Stay Socially Active

Change How You Think About Aging

Stay Physically Active

Take Care of Your Mental Health

Continue to Learn New Things

- Simply mention again that these are the five key messages to transition into positive thinking



Change How You Think About Aging

Self-Quiz: Your Views on "Aging"
Page 6



- 1) As I get older, I am less useful.
- 2) Things keep getting worse as I get older.
- 3) I am as happy as I expected to be at this age.
- 4) How well are you aging? (Place an X on the line.)

Not well

Somewhat well

Very well

- Quiz is on page 6 of the FOH booklet.

Did You Know...?



- Up to 75% of our longevity is based on non-genetic factors.
- Let's manage that 75%! - the 5 key actions in these sessions are things you can do to influence healthy aging and longevity
- One of these key actions is addressing how you think about aging itself.

- While approximately a quarter of our longevity can be attributed to hereditary factors, 75% is based on things you can take control of (Levy et al.)
- The Fountain of Health focuses on things that you can do to influence that 75% and age healthier and live longer.
- You are not helpless to the 25% either! Just because you are predisposed to a certain disease does not mean you will necessarily have it and if you do, there are still things you can do to improve your condition. Keeping with the theme of positive thinking. The way you view the illness, for instance, can have an impact on the severity of it.

This will be elaborated on throughout this session but just ensure that participants recognize that the way they live can have a significant impact on their longevity. Many people do not realize just how much their lifestyle choices can influence their life-span.

Stereotypes about Ageing



- What are some stereotypes you think of when you think about ageing?

- Ask participants to name some of the stereotypes associated with aging.

Some examples:

- *As you get older, you are more set in your ways.*
 - *Seniors cannot learn how to use technology.*
 - *Depression is a normal part of aging.*
 - *Mental and physical deterioration are inevitable in old age - the elderly are all senile.*
 - *Elderly people are crabby and hard to get along with.*
 - *The elderly do not desire, and do not participate in, sexual activity.*
 - *The elderly are unproductive and uncreative.*
 - *All seniors are the same.*
- Put emphasis on the negative stereotypes that come up and ask participants to comment on their accuracy.
 - Transition into a conversation about why the majority of stereotypes about aging are negative. Have you ever challenged them?
 - It is an unfortunate fact that the majority of the stereotypes that exist around aging are negative and they are commonly accepted without hesitation. Through

positive thinking you can challenge these generalities and work towards dismissing them.

Stereotypes about Ageing



- How do you feel about these statements?
- Are they accurate?
- Are they positive or negative?
- Are these accepted? - often without hesitation
- Are they “challengeable”? - yes!

- Put emphasis on the negative stereotypes that come up and ask participants to comment on their accuracy.
- Transition into a conversation about why the majority of stereotypes about aging are negative. Have you ever challenged them?
- It is an unfortunate fact that the majority of the stereotypes that exist around aging are negative and they are commonly accepted without hesitation. Through positive thinking you can challenge these generalities and work towards dismissing them.

The Self-Fulfilling Prophecy



- Stereotypes have a negative impact on how we think about ourselves and ageing
- The same idea repeated several times can be accepted as fate, even if it is not true.

Ageism



- “Ageism” is a term that refers to a way of thinking about individuals based on their age and negative stereotypes associated with aging.
- Age discrimination is not usually taken as seriously as some other forms of discrimination.
- However research has shown that it can have the same economic, social and psychological impact as any other form of discrimination.

What is Ageism?



“Ageism allows the younger generations to see older people as different than themselves; thus they subtly cease to identify with their elders as human beings.”

(as cited in Butler, 1975) <http://www.cnpea.ca/ageism.pdf>

- ‘Ageism’ is a term that refers to a way of thinking about individuals based on their age and negative stereotypes associated with aging. Age discrimination is not usually taken as seriously as some other forms of discrimination, however research has shown that it can have the same economic, social and psychological impact as any other forms of discrimination.
- With all the negativity surrounding aging, it can sometimes be difficult to think positive however it is well worth the extra effort and it will get easier with practice.

Positive Outlook



- With all the negativity surrounding aging, it can sometimes be difficult to think positively.
- However it is well worth the extra effort and it gets easier with practice.
- **Don't give up!** Studies have shown that it is never too late to start improving your thinking and making healthy lifestyle choices.

Benefits of a Positive Outlook



A positive outlook has been linked to:

- Lower risk of chronic disease and dementia
- Less isolation and loneliness
- Better handling of stress*
- Increased likelihood of seeking help, including preventative medical care
- Faster and better recovery from disability
- Increased longevity

Lower risk of chronic disease and dementia

- Levy and her colleagues found that exposure to positive aging stereotypes resulted in higher function as a whole (i.e. memory, balance etc.). The higher your level of function, the less likely you are to develop chronic diseases.

Less isolation and loneliness

- When thinking positively, you will likely find you enjoy socializing more. When you are stuck with negative thoughts, it can be difficult to find motivation to go out and interact with others. You may have to push yourself to start, but you will soon find it much easier to enjoy social interactions and you will find that you are less caught up in the stresses that can sometimes arise from being around other people.

Better handling of stress

- There was a study conducted that tested the impact positive and negative thinking can have on cognitive abilities. Two different groups of seniors were tested; the first group had been exposed to negative stereotype messages prior to the testing, (example: 'it is to be expected that someone of your age will not do as well with cognitive skills'). The other group were told positive messages before being tested.
- The results found that the participants in the negative group had lower test scores and they had **higher blood pressure and perspired** more throughout the testing, in

comparison to the positive group, which had higher scores and remained relaxed while being tested.

- That is to say that the individuals who were holding onto negative thoughts about being older, had physical symptoms of their inability to cope with the stress that comes along with being tested. They also did not do as well on the test as those who were primed with positive thoughts.

Increased likelihood of help-seeking, including preventative medical care

- In terms of preventative medical care, when you begin to have a balanced outlook on aging it is easier to recognize that you have the power to improve your health. Negative stereotypes in relation to aging and being ill can deter some individuals from seeking medical care they need.
- Research has found that older individuals with positive aging stereotypes are more likely to accept life-prolonging medical interventions regardless of the cost.

Faster and better recovery from disability

- Expectations have been proven to have a correlation with recovery. That is to say there is scientific evidence that shows if you think you will recover from an injury or disability, you are actually more likely to!

Increased longevity for life

- As mentioned before, 75% of your longevity is based on non-genetic factors. You have a lot more control over your longevity than many people realize. Levy and her colleagues found that individuals who held a positive perception of aging, lived 7.5 years more in comparison to those with negative views.

What Can You Do?



- When times are challenging, you might view things more negatively or talk to yourself in unhelpful ways. The following are some examples of things you can do to improve your outlook.

- **Don't give up!** Studies have shown that it is never too late to start improving your thinking and making healthy lifestyle choices.

What Can You Do?



- 1) Make a list of things you feel grateful for. Include things you like about yourself. Try to review your list each day.

Things I am grateful for:

- ✓ My family.
- ✓ I was able to decorate my house the way I like.
- ✓ My opportunity to attend school.
- ✓ My sense of humour.
- ✓ My curly hair.
- ✓ Being able to tell stories about the places I have been and the things I have done.

- Recognizing the things in life that make you happy is so important!
- Making a list may be a challenge at first; however reminding yourself of the things you are grateful for can make a big impact on your mood and help you look at situations in a more positive light.
- The list can also come in handy when you have a stressful event happening around you or you are feeling overwhelmed because it can act as a way to step back from whatever is happening and change your focus.
- Tell participants to think outside of the box when creating a list.
- You do not have to be grateful for all serious things - anything that you feel grateful for will do!

Gratitude List



List 3 things you are grateful for.

List 3 things you like about yourself.

- Ask the audience to list these things in the form provided.

What Can You Do?



2) List some of the benefits you can see in your life as you age. How is your life experience helpful?

- One of the most exciting aspects of aging is the opportunities that arise throughout life. Each opportunity builds on the next and you are able to grow and learn at every step of the way.

Benefits of Ageing



List 5 things that you like about ageing.

- One of the most exciting aspects of aging is the opportunities that arise throughout life. Each opportunity builds on the next and you are able to grow and learn at every step of the way.

What Can You Do?



- 3) Spend more time with people who are positive and encouraging, and less time with people who are not.

- Surrounding yourself with negative people can be toxic. the more you hear negative thoughts repeated, the more likely they are to stick with you and eventually drag you down. Luckily though, it works both ways and spending time with positive people can help you become more positive too.

What Can You Do?



4) Challenge unhelpful thoughts. Are they facts?
What would a good friend say to you about this concern?

- Challenging thoughts can be quite difficult because our thoughts often become a habit. That is to say that we do not usually think about or questions what we are thinking about.
- The first step to challenging your thoughts is to catch or become aware of them, and the emotional and physical results that come along with them.
- The easiest time to catch a thought is when it is happening. If you can, keep a notebook handy and when you feel yourself thinking a strong thought write down everything else you are thinking about. (We will have an example in the following slide.)
- As you become aware of your thoughts, emotions and beliefs, you will be able to identify your interpretations of things and compare them to how the situations actually are.
- The aim is to identify unhelpful or inaccurate ways of thinking, which can also be called distortions.
- Inaccurate or unhelpful thinking around aging itself is, as we mentioned earlier, unfortunately common. People often hold incorrect views on aging, which need to be challenged.

Challenging Your Thoughts



Situation	Catch the thoughts	Check the evidence
Driving home from Christmas supper with the family feeling sad and worthless.	My family doesn't need me anymore.	My son-in-law asked for my advice on plans for house renovations. I made my young grandson laugh often throughout the day. My granddaughter told me about her school friends and sports and asked me for help with her homework.

Note:

- Positive thinking does not mean that you will never have a negative thought again. The trick to positive thinking is having the ability to test the accuracy of your thoughts.

Challenging Your Thoughts



Can you think of a negative thought?

Can we reframe it?

What Can You Do?



- 5) If you are aware of your thoughts you can change them for the better.

Make next slide continuing the previous example with corrected thought.

- There may be times when you have more evidence to support your negative way of thinking. It is unrealistic to think that you will be able to completely change it and make it positive, so you should think about making it neutral.

Time to Take the Plunge and Set Your Goal!



- How might you change the way you think about aging?
- Turn to page 15 of Fountain of Health handbook

- Hand out smart goal forms here.

Be Sure to Set SMART Goals!



Specific

Measurable

Action-Oriented

Realistic

Time-Limited

Key Points



- We can control up to 75% of the factors that influence longevity.
- Many people hold discriminatory views on aging.
- It is important to challenge stereotypes and determine whether or not they are accurate. (They are usually not!)
- Positive thinking does not mean you will stop thinking negative thoughts. You will just be better at acknowledging when they are unhelpful.

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The logo for Fountain of Health features a stylized fountain with blue water spraying upwards from a green base. Below the fountain are two green human figures. The text "fountain of health" is written in a blue, lowercase, sans-serif font below the graphic.

For more information, please visit:

www.fountainofhealth.ca

- Close by asking participants if they have any questions.
- If you do not feel comfortable answering, you can either tell them you will research it and get back to them in the following week or you can advise them to speak with a professional.
- Remind participants that if they would like to read more about the research that this initiative is based on, they can visit the website and click on the “evidence-based” tab for the full list of articles.



Stay Healthy for Life!

Healthy Living Sessions for Positive Aging

Stay Physically Active

Welcome



Healthy Living...



Positive Aging!

- You may wish to do an ice breaker activity at this time.
- Explain to participants that they are welcome to share their personal experiences with the group but that they must remain confidential once the session is over.
- It may also be a good idea to advise participants to avoid over-sharing and to keep their discussions relevant.

Review of Previous Session



- We can control up to 75% of the factors that influence longevity.
- Many people hold discriminatory views on aging.
- It is important to challenge stereotypes and determine whether or not they are accurate. (They are usually not!)
- Positive thinking does not mean you will stop thinking negative thoughts. You will just be better at acknowledging when they are unhelpful.
- How did you do on your physical activity goal?

- Ask participants if they have any specific questions or comments about the previous session. Remember if you do not feel comfortable answering a question, do not!

Key Messages



Stay Socially Active

Change How You Think About Aging

Stay Physically Active

Take Care of Your Mental Health

Continue to Learn New Things

Today's Key Messages



Stay Physically Active

- This session is all about the benefits about physical activity.

Self-Reflection



- What do you do for physical activity now?

- There may be participants that find it difficult to participate in physical activity due to changes in mobility or lack of motivation so they may not be too keen on this message. However, try to encourage them to keep an open mind! Individuals with mobility issues can do band exercises and light weights for physical activity that will be beneficial.
- You do not have to engage in vigorous workouts to be physically active, it is important to stay within your capabilities.

Physical Activity Never Get Old!



- Many people think that as they age there is less reason to be physically active. The truth is that it is never too late!
- Being active throughout life has a wide range of benefits which we will be focusing on today.

- Though it can be difficult to start an physical activity program, it is never too late! Research has shown that it does not matter when you start as long as you stick to it. You will see significant improvements within 6 months and even more so after 12.

Benefits of Physical Activity



- Lower risk of dementia
- Lower risk of chronic disease and disability and decreased risk of falls
- Improved function and independence
- Increased quality of sleep
- Improved overall mood
- Increased quality and longevity of life

Benefits of Physical Activity



Lower risk of dementia

Physical activity improves your ability to:

- Pay attention
- Remember details
- Manage time
- Plan and organize

- The main way physical activity lowers your risk of dementia is through its effect on cognition, or the way you think. Scientists are still not quite sure how, in a neurological sense, physical activity improves your cognition but there is plenty of research that proves that it does!
- It has been shown that resistance and aerobic training are helpful to prevent cognitive decline and in seniors with mild cognitive impairments. They improve executive functions, which are used in planning, organizing, strategizing, paying attention to and remembering details, and managing time and space

Resistance training (Examples: Crunches, sit-ups and weightlifting)

- Selective attention
- Conflict resolution
- **Associative Memory**- As the name would suggest is responsible for the mapping of associations in your brain. For example ‘Green means go so red would mean stop’ because we have learned to associate the colours with a meaning. Trouble with associative memory is a key sign of early stages of Alzheimer’s.

Aerobic Exercises (Examples: Yoga, walking and tai chi)

- Improved attention
- Cognitive Speed
- Auditory and visual attention

Benefits of Physical Activity



Lower risk of chronic disease and disability and decreased risk of falls

Physical activity:

- Strengthens posture
- Improves balance

- Through aerobic and resistance training, you will increase your cardiovascular capacity, which will help you prevent heart diseases.
- Physical activity can strengthen your postural control and thus improve your balance (“Balance” is a term that refers to the ability to stay upright and steady when stationary.)
- The loss of the ability for balance can result in higher risk of falling, higher dependency, greater risk of illness and even early death.

Benefits of Physical Activity



Improved function and independence

Physical activity makes it easier to:

- Maintain your ability to get around
- Do daily tasks
- Be more organized about how you do tasks
- Be in a good mood

Higher function

- By becoming more physically active, you have an easier time maintaining your ability to get around to complete your daily tasks. (Ex: meal preparations and house cleaning.) You'll be able to maintain or improve your level of cognition and therefore be able to initiate tasks and be more organized in the way you go about them. With higher function also comes improved mood (which will be expanded on in a couple slides); you will be feeling better so you will be more likely to do more.
- These things will all have a spiral effect on one another. Once you start doing more, you will begin to feel better and as a result you will continually be motivated to do even more. Plus when you are doing these tasks well your mood will further improve. They are all related!

Benefits of Physical Activity



Increased quality of sleep

Physical activity:

- Helps you sleep better
- Reduces the need for medication to help you sleep

- Physical activity is a good alternative to pharmacological approaches to help with sleep troubles and has been proven to be more sustainable in the long run.
- Sometimes when you are lacking motivation to do things, you can start to feel down and then feel tired all the time. In those instances it can be impossible to feel rested regardless of how much you sleep. The good news is that if you are more active, you will feel better and you will have more energy.
- Physical activity will not necessarily help you sleep longer but you should notice a change in the quality of your rest.
- When you are physically active there is increased energy consumption, endorphin secretion, or body temperature in a manner that facilitates sleep for recuperation of the body. Poor sleep quality and total sleep time each predict adverse health outcomes in the elderly.

Benefits of Physical Activity



Improved overall mood

Physical activity:

- Improves symptoms of depression, anxiety, and stress
- Gives you more energy
- Relieves mental stress

Improved mood/ less negative thoughts

- Physical activity programs help improve symptoms of depression, anxiety and stress. These improvement will lead to a general feeling of well-being and as a result can help reduce the frequency of minor medical complaints.
- Increased physical activity will increase neuronal activity, which will provide individuals with more energy and a decrease in depressive symptoms.
- It can also be a great way to relieve mental stress as it increases the oxygen in your brain.
- It also can also be used as a way to take a break from your regular activities and take time for yourself.

Benefits of Physical Activity



Increased quality and longevity of life

Physical activity:

- Increases life satisfaction
- Increases self-esteem
- Increases positive self-image
- Increases stamina and energy

- Physical activity programs can increase life satisfaction through an immediate increase in arousal and a long-term enhancement of self-esteem and body image.
- Adequate self-esteem is important for mental health
- Physical activity may indirectly increase self-esteem by increasing an individual's ability to undertake physical and mental work.
- Seniors in particular, gain a more positive self-image, with associated increases in stamina and energy, feelings of positive health and greater ability to cope with stress.
- Each of the benefits we have mentioned have been proven to increase longevity. They are all connected as well! With improvement in one area, you will see improvement in all other areas and you will overall feel better and ultimately live longer.

What Can You Do?



- Keeping fit is key to maintaining your physical, cognitive, and mental health. So where should you start?

- You have heard the benefits of being active, now it is time for some tips to help you get started!

What Can You Do?



1) Just move! Many health problems are associated with sitting for long periods of time.

- This strategy is pretty self explanatory.
- Try finding ways to move when you notice you are sitting still.
- Look at the activities that you do while you are stationary and see if there is a way you can change them so you are moving. For example: If you watch certain televisions shows everyday, try doing physical activity while you watch. If you have a treadmill or stationary bike, you could place them in front of the television and use them for the duration of the show. You could do some light stretching on the floor, or you could sit on an exercise ball instead of the couch to work on your balance. This way you can still enjoy your routine but you are doing so in a healthier way and not spending too much time sitting.

What Can You Do?



- 2) Do more of what you normally do – increase the time spent on being active.

- Do you normally walk the dog around the block? Why not take a longer route? You do not necessarily need to make a huge change in your life to be more physically active. Much like the S.M.A.R.T. goals we covered in previous sessions, it is easier to start off small so you do not get overwhelmed.

Reminder of SMART GOALS

Specific

Measurable

Action-Orientated

Realistic

Time-Limited

What Can You Do?



- 3) Leave the car at home. Walking helps maintain independence.

- Depending on where you live, it may not be possible to leave the car at home, so try parking it farther away from the door. If you take the bus try getting off a stop early. You will find that the more you do it, the more you will be able to make a habit of it.

What Can You Do?



- 4) Garden? Dance? Choose something you enjoy!
You are much more likely to keep doing it.

- If you enjoy what you are doing, is it really work?

What Can You Do?



5) Join your local fitness or community centre. Talk to a fitness instructor.

- There are usually discounted rates for seniors!
- It is a good idea to talk to the fitness instructor prior to joining. Ask if you can take a tour and try a few things out before you make the commitment. You have to make sure that it will be an activity that you will enjoy doing or else it will be more difficult to find motivation to continue. Speak to your local active living coordinator or recreation director at the facility to get help finding an activity that is of interest to you.
- If funding is a barrier, consider speaking to your recreation department about funding assistance, as this is sometimes an option.

What Can You Do?



- 6) Talk to your doctor for advice on increasing your physical activity.

- It is important to consult with your doctor once you have chosen an activity you would like to pursue, but it can also be helpful when you are stuck in the brainstorming phase. Doctors usually have community resources or tips on how to get involved in various programs around you. They may also be able to point you in the direction of an everyday task that you do that can count towards your physical activity. You do not need to participate in an organized program to be physically active. As long as you are moving you will reap the benefits.

The Current Recommendation



The current Canadian recommendation for physical activity is:

- at least 150 minutes of moderate to vigorous intensity aerobic activity per week, 10 minutes or more at a time.

- There are a lot of ways that someone can achieve this guideline. For example, doing 15 min brisk walks in the morning and evening 5 days per week or going to the gym 2-3 times per week for longer sessions. The discussion then will be that you should try to do physical activities that are of moderate or vigorous intensity but light activities also help.

Time to Take the Plunge and Set Your Goal!



- How will you increase your weekly physical activity?

- Keep S.M.A.R.T. in mind – don't bite off more than you can chew!
- Using the goal setting sheet and your handbook, create a SMART physical activity goal.

Key Points



- Being physically active can improve your quality of life and longevity.
- It can be difficult to find the motivation to start a new activity, but the more you do the easier it gets.
- If you choose activities that you enjoy doing, you will be more likely to stick with them.
- When you are starting a new activity, make sure that it is appropriate for you and your level of capability.

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- Close by asking participants if they have any questions.
- If you do not feel comfortable answering, you can either tell them you will research it and get back to them in the following week or you can advise them to speak with a professional.
- Remind participants that if they would like to read more about the research that this initiative is based on, they can visit the website and click on the “evidence-based” tab for the full list of articles.



Stay Healthy for Life!

Healthy Living Sessions for Positive Aging

Take Care of Your Mental Health

Welcome



Healthy Living...



Positive Aging!

Review of Previous Session



- Being physically active can improve your quality of life and longevity.
- It can be difficult to find the motivation to start a new activity, but the more you do the easier it gets.
- If you choose activities that you enjoy doing, you will be more likely to stick with them.
- When you are starting a new activity, make sure that it is appropriate for you and your level of capability.
- How did you do on your physical activity goal?

Key Messages



Stay Socially Active

Change How You Think About Aging

Stay Physically Active

Take Care of Your Mental Health

Continue to Learn New Things

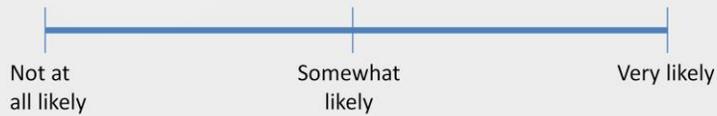


Take Care of Your Mental Health

Self-Reflection



- How likely are you to seek mental health help if you need it?



- It is estimated that 1 in 5 people experience mental illness or addiction every year, however many still do not feel comfortable seeking help.
- Ask participants to turn to page 10 in their handbook and to complete the self-reflection at the bottom of the page.

Mind Your Mental Health!



Growing older can be a time of positive change. Sadness and dementia are NOT a usual part of growing older.

- Do you challenge your own negative thinking? How?
- When might you ask for help?
- Who would you ask?
- Where would you go?

Did You Know?



- Like physical illnesses, mental illnesses are treatable disorders that can improve or be completely resolved. Keep the following in mind:

Did You Know?



- 1) It is possible to have a mental illness and be mentally healthy in your attitude and ability.

- Having a mental illness does not necessarily mean you will not be able to live your life as you had prior to diagnosis.
- There are many interventions that can be implemented to help you live normally, depending on your illness this could include medication or therapeutic exercises.
- The next several slides provide an overview of common mental illnesses experienced by seniors.

Did You Know?



- 2) Anxiety disorders come in many forms. They are the most common overall mental health problem, affecting 1 in 5 people.

- This slide speaks for itself; anxiety is a very common occurrence affecting 20% of the population (i.e. all ages)

The Big "A": Anxiety



Warning signs include:

- Feeling jittery or on edge
- Change in sleep patterns
- Difficulty keeping mind focused
- Physical tension
- Shortness of breath
- Sweating
- Repetitive thoughts or worries that are hard to control

Note:

- Symptoms differ from person to person. It is only when these symptoms become disruptive to everyday life that it is considered a disorder.

20% of the population is affected!

Did You Know?



- 3) Depression is the most common mental illness found among seniors. However, significant or prolonged depression is not a usual part of aging. It is a treatable medical illness.

- Like we discussed in the positive thinking session; many people have this incorrect notion that sadness and depression are a normal part of aging. IT IS NOT.
- However, if you do find yourself depressed there are many well-researched and effective treatments available. (Including medications, CBT, etc..)
- Again it is important to remember that symptoms of depression are different for everyone so it is important to work with your doctor to find the best solution for you.

Depression



Depression is NOT a normal part of aging, but it is common.

Warning signs include:

- Feeling anxious, blue, or tearful
- Losing interest in things you once enjoyed
- Avoiding social activities or going out
- Being mentally confused or indecisive
- Experiencing changes in appetite, energy, or sleep
- Having negative thoughts about yourself, your life, or your future.
- Having unexplained physical problems or pains
- Questioning the point of living or having thoughts about suicide

- 15-20% of older persons, living independently in the community, experience depression.
- Only 1/3 people with serious depression actually seek treatment.
- Generally in order to be diagnosed with a depressive disorder, you have to experience symptoms for more than two weeks.

MOBILE CRISIS:

Phone: (902) 429-8167

1-888-429-8167 (toll free)

Did You Know?



- 4) Dementia results in a loss of memory and function, but if detected early, there are treatments that can help.

- In the next couple of slides we are going to be going over various types of dementia to show how symptoms can differ with each type. With this, you will be given a general idea of some of the warning signs you can look out for.
- If you suspect that you or someone you know has been experiencing changes in their memory and function you are advised to speak with your family doctor (or suggest to the other person that they should speak with their doctor. If you feel comfortable you could offer to accompany them at their appointment to provide support.)

Dementia



“Dementia” is an umbrella term that refers to a group of illnesses with symptoms in two areas:

- Change in thinking
- Change in function (ability to perform common tasks)

- Many people do not realize that there are several different types of dementia.
- No two dementias are the same. Symptoms present differently, not only from type-to-type but also from person to person.
- We are going to spend a little bit of time going over the basics of several types of dementia.

Alzheimer's Disease



- Accounts for 64% of cases of dementia
- Is the most common form of dementia
- Results in gradual decline in memory and comprehension
- Often involves mood swings
- Results in increased difficulty completing daily activities

- Alzheimer's disease is classified as a 'neurodegenerative' disorder, which is a technical term to explain a loss of brain structure and function of neurons. It is associated with the plaques and tangles in the brain, which interfere with the communication between neurons and the rest of the body.
- Many people think Alzheimer's and dementia are completely different illnesses, however that is incorrect.

Remember to remind participants that these are simple overviews of dementias and reinforce that every individual with dementia experiences it differently and presents with various symptoms.

Vascular Dementia



- Accounts for 20% of cases of dementia
- Is the second leading form of dementia, after Alzheimer's disease
- Occurs when cells in the brain are deprived of oxygen due to decreased blood flow
- Usually follows a step wise pattern
- When Alzheimer's and dementia occur at the same time, it is called "Mixed Dementia"

- Vascular dementia also occurs when the cells in the brain are deprived of oxygen. A network of blood vessels called the vascular system supplies the brain with oxygen. If there is a blockage in the vascular system, or if it is diseased, blood is prevented from reaching the brain. As a result, cells in the brain die, leading to the symptoms of dementia
- Step wise pattern - Vascular dementia usually comes on suddenly. Difficulties may happen in steps. Sometimes, the person's abilities may deteriorate for a while and then stand still for a time. Then, they may deteriorate again.

Lewy body Dementia



- It accounts for 5-15% of all dementias.
- Can occur by itself, or together with Alzheimer's disease or Parkinson's
- Usually affects the areas of the brain that involve thinking and movement
- Visual hallucinations (seeing things that are not real) are common

- Lewy body dementia is a form of dementia that occurs because of abnormal deposits of protein inside the brain's nerve cells. The deposits interrupt the brain's messages and usually affects the areas of the brain that involve thinking and movement.
- A person with Lewy body dementia may have symptoms much like those of both Parkinson's disease and Alzheimer's disease. A progressive loss of memory, language, reasoning and other higher mental functions such as calculating numbers is common. He may have difficulty with short-term memory, finding the right word and keeping a train of thought. He may also experience depression and anxiety.
- Some features of Lewy body dementia can resemble those in Parkinson's disease. These include rigidity (stiffness of muscles), tremors (shaking), stooped posture, and slow, shuffling movements

Frontotemporal Dementia (FTD)



- Accounts for nearly 5% of all dementia cases in Canada.
- Tends to occur at a younger age than Alzheimer's disease, with an average onset age of 57
- Primarily affects the frontal and temporal lobes of the brain.
- Rather than memory loss, the early stage of FTD is associated with changes in behaviour and emotions as well as difficulty understanding and expressing oneself

- This type of dementia resembles Alzheimer's disease in that it also involves a progressive degeneration of brain cells that is irreversible.
- As a rarer form of dementia, FTD is still poorly understood by health professionals and the public, presenting many unique challenges for people with the disease and the people who care for them.

Did You Know?



5) If you need help, see your family doctor, call 211, or call the Mental Health Crisis Line at 1-888-429-8167

- If you are concerned about yourself or someone you know do not hesitate to call mobile crisis! If you are experiencing thoughts of self-harm or if you feel someone you know is in posing a risk to themselves or others CALL the Mental Crisis Line – in HRM it is a MOBILE CRISIS!
- Put as much emphasis on mobile crisis as you possibly can. In the event of a mental health emergency they are the ones to call!
- (If you can have the business cards for mobile crisis so you can pass them out to participants)

Mind Your Mental Health



Minding your mental health has a positive impact on your physical health and helps you cope with life's changes.

When mental illness does occur, it is important to remember that it is treatable. You can help yourself, your friends, and your family by:

- Learning the facts about mental health
- Talking to others
- Asking for, offering, and accepting help

What Can You Do?



- Here are a few tips to improve your mental health:

- You may notice that some of these tips are merely echoing what has already been said, however it is important to reiterate these messages as they can have such a large impact on one's health.

What Can You Do?



- 1) Learn more about common mental health issues and early warning signs.

- Use the resources and links that will be provided at the end of the session.

What Can You Do?



- 2) Challenge the stigma of mental illness by recognizing when people are using stereotypes, trivializing mental illness, using offensive language, and/or patronizing those with mental health issues.

- Challenge the stigma of mental illness by encouraging and supporting open conversations about mental health among your friends and family.

What Can You Do?



3) Ask for help and accept help.

- Setting boundaries and knowing when and how to ask for help are important skills for mental health.

What Can You Do?



4) Do things that give you a sense of purpose.

- Whether it is learning something new, volunteering, or setting a personal goal to take a daily walk, this will help you build confidence and bring balance to your life.

What Can You Do?



5) Practice daily self-care. Make your favourite food, sit outside, or visit the library – every day try to do something just for you.

- Whether it is learning something new, volunteering, or setting a personal goal to take a daily walk, this will help you build confidence and bring balance to your life.

What Can You Do?



6) Mind your thoughts. Negative thoughts and worry can take a toll on your mental health.

- Make an effort to recall positive experiences. You can refer to the Positive Thinking session from the Fountain of Health or for a free online workbook visit www.comh.ca/antidepressant-skills/adult/

What Can You Do?



- 7) If you think you may have a mental health issue, don't suffer in silence. Talk to someone you trust – your doctor, pharmacist, minister, friend, or family.

For urgent mental health issues, call
**MENTAL HEALTH CRISIS LINE/
MOBILE CRISIS (HRM):**
(902-429-8167 or 1-888-429-8167 (toll free)).

In the event of an emergency, please go to your
nearest emergency room.

Be Sure to Set SMART Goals!



Specific

Measurable

Action-Oriented

Realistic

Time Limited

Let's Reflect



- Thinking about our discussion of mental illness, has your answer to the initial reflection question changed at all?

How likely are you to seek mental health help if you need it?



For More Information



For more information you can check out the websites listed below, and as always you can visit www.fountainofhealth.ca for a full list of resources.

- www.anxietycanada.ca/english/index.php
- www.mooodisorderscanada.ca
- www.ccsmh.ca/pdf/ccsmh_depressionBooklet.pdf
- www.novascotia.ca/seniorsmentalhealth
- www.ccsmh.ca/pdf/ccsmg_suicideBooklet.pdf
- www.thisisnotmymom.ca
- www.ccsmh.ca/pdf/ccsmg_deliriumBooklet.pdh
- www.oneinfive.ca

- If possible have a few brochures available or a list of print books for those who do not have access to the internet.

Key Points



- Sadness and dementia are NOT a normal part of aging!
- Mental illnesses are treatable.
- The messages of the Fountain of Health are designed to help you age positively and prevent illness.
- Getting the appropriate mental health care is essential!
Get to know the services available in your area.

- You are probably going to grow tired of hearing this first point but we cannot stress it enough

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The logo for Fountain of Health features a stylized fountain with blue water spraying upwards from a green base. Below the fountain are two green human figures. The text "fountain of health" is written in a blue, lowercase, sans-serif font below the graphic.

For more information, please visit:

www.fountainofhealth.ca

- Close by asking participants if they have any questions.
- If you do not feel comfortable answering, you can either tell them you will research it and get back to them in the following week or you can advise them to speak with a professional.
- Remind participants that if they would like to read more about the research that this initiative is based on, they can visit the website and click on the “evidence-based” tab for the full list of articles.



Stay Healthy for Life!

Healthy Living Sessions for Positive Aging

Continue to Learn New Things

Welcome



Healthy Living...



Positive Aging!

- Welcome participants and ask them introduce themselves to the group.
- You may wish to do an ice breaker activity at this time.

Review of Previous Session



- Sadness and dementia are NOT a normal part of aging!
- Mental illnesses are treatable.
- The messages of the Fountain of Health are designed to help you age positively and prevent illness.
- Getting the appropriate mental health care is essential!
Get to know the services available in your area.
- We will be reviewing all five sessions at the end!

- The previous session was mind your mental health.

Key Messages



Stay Socially Active

Change How You Think About Aging

Stay Physically Active

Take Care of Your Mental Health

Continue to Learn New Things

- Read over each message.

Today's Key Messages



Continue to Learn New Things

Self-Reflection



What would you like to learn more about?

or

What is a skill you would like to acquire?

Lifelong Learning



- You are never too old to learn something new. In fact, challenging your brain with mental exercise as you age is just as important as physical activity!
- Think of your brain as a muscle...
- The more you use your brain, the more it grows strong
- Exercising your brain can help decrease your risk of dementia

- You are never too old to learn something new. In fact, challenging your brain with mental exercise as you age is just as important as physical activity!
- Think of your brain as a muscle...
- Just like your muscles need to be exercised, so does your brain!
- It is not the type of exercise that matters; it is the AMOUNT.
- Studies have found a direct link between the amount of cognitive activities a person does, for example reading the newspaper or playing a game, and that person's cognitive function after a year. That is to say that there is a positive correlation between those who brain stimulating activities and their brain performance or efficacy.
- Decrease your risk of dementia
 - Exercising your brain has been shown to have a direct impact on your COGNITIVE RESERVE.
 - A cognitive reserve is a technical term to explain your mind's resistance to damage. Individuals that have a stronger cognitive reserve will likely be

better protected against brain damage that results in the onset of dementia.

What Can You Do?



- Change your routine
- Read, write, do word or number puzzles
- Visit your local public library
- Learn how to use a computer
- Make the most of your hobbies – join a group
- Challenge yourself
- Register for a course

- The next several slides will be looking at each of these in more detail with specific examples

What Can You Do?



1) Change your routine.

Are you a creature of habit? Try taking a different route home, shop at a different grocery store, or meet up with a friend you have not seen for a while.

- It is that easy! By simply changing your routine or introducing new experiences you activate new brain pathways and add mental exercise to your day.

What Can You Do?



2) Read, write, and do word or number puzzles.

Choose something you enjoy doing!

- If you are not enjoying the activity you are doing then what is the point? By choosing something you actually like doing, you will likely continue to do it. If you are doing something simply to say you are doing it, it can begin to get daunting and you will be more likely to quit.

What Can You Do?



3) Visit your local public library.

Public libraries offer a wide range of activities and information. Many libraries have book and movie clubs, a variety of workshops, and home book delivery services.

- Libraries are not just for books! Stop by your local public library and see what is offered in your area.
- Workshops and clubs are also a great way to meet people who share similar interests to you.

What Can You Do?



4) Learn how to use a computer.

- Did you know that the average age of Facebook users in Nova Scotia is 55?
- Using the computer, tablet, or smartphone to access the internet is a great way to find interesting information and connect with others.
- If you are new to computers, try to find senior-friendly resources and workshops (these are usually offered through public libraries).

- If you are new to computers they can seem pretty intimidating but rest assured there are many resources available to help you learn how to use them. Once you get a hang of it you will be amazed at how much information you have access to. With the help of the internet, it has never been easier to stay in contact with friends and family.

What Can You Do?



5) Make the most of your hobbies – join a group.

- Look for social opportunities to do what you already love to do
- Join a cooking group or photography group. Not only will you be able to socialize with people who share common interests, you will also be able to share and learn new techniques.

- If you recall the first session on Social Activity, this message should sound familiar.
- By joining a group you can benefit from the social aspect as well as the learning opportunities it can present. Again make sure you choose something you enjoy.

What Can You Do?



6) Challenge yourself.

- Why not learn a new language or pick up a new instrument? Music lessons and language courses are available throughout the province.

- Is there something that you have always wanted to learn how to do? Why not take a lesson or two and try it out?
- It is never too late to try something new.

What Can You Do?



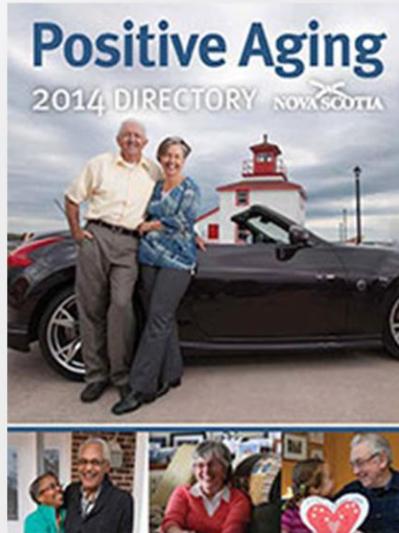
7) Register for a course.

- Nova Scotia has many adult education opportunities
- Some universities have Continuing Education Departments that offer non-credit courses, seminars, or lectures.
- The Seniors College of Nova Scotia is a not-for-profit organization that offers a wide range of academic courses for seniors in several communities throughout the province.

For More Ideas of Activities...



You can refer to the
*Nova Scotia Department of
Seniors Positive Aging
Directory*
for more ideas of
activities in your area.



- The Positive Aging Directory is full of ideas for activities and groups you can join.
- As we have mentioned, you can also visit your local library to see what resources and groups they have to offer.
- Ask the group if they have any ideas of other activities that can be done, or more specific examples of activities than listed in the previous slides.
- Now would be an excellent time to remember S.M.A.R.T goals.

S-Specific
M-measurable
A-Achievable
R-Relevant
T-Time-Based

Be Sure to Set SMART Goals!



Specific

Measurable

Action-Oriented

Realistic

Time Limited

Time to Take the Plunge and Set Your Goal!



- What will you do to keep your brain active?

- Ask participants to turn to page 15 in their booklet and complete a goal for lifelong learning, using the SMART goal guidelines just reviewed.
- Ask if anyone would like to share their goal with the group.



Stay Healthy for Life!

Healthy Living Sessions for Positive Aging

Recap of the Fountain of Health

- Now we are going to briefly recap all 5 Fountain of Health messages.

Key Messages



Stay Socially Active

Change How You Think About Aging

Stay Physically Active

Take Care of Your Mental Health

Continue to Learn New Things

- We are briefly going to go over each of the messages for the final time. You may notice that there is a bit of overlap with some of the messages.

Stay Socially Active



- Being socially active can lower your risk of depression and dementia, improve your brain performance, and increase longevity.
- Challenge yourself to step out of your social comfort zone.
- When setting goals, be sure they are small and attainable.

- Socialization is good, not only for your mood but also for your thinking.
- It is important to step out of your comfort zone by getting out more and meeting new people. It keeps things interesting!

Change How You Think About Aging



- We can control up to 75% of the factors that influence longevity.
 - Many people hold discriminatory views on aging.
 - It is important to challenge stereotypes and determine whether or not they are accurate. (They are usually not!)
 - Positive thinking does not mean you will stop thinking negative thoughts. You will just be better at acknowledging when they are unhelpful.
-
- Do not buy into negative stereotypes. Just because many people say something, does not make it true. Challenge negative thoughts and test them for their accuracy (or inaccuracy in the majority of cases). Remember positive thinking is not about thinking “happy” thoughts all the time; it is about thinking accurately and ignoring unhelpful thoughts.

Stay Physically Active



- Being physically active can improve your quality of life and longevity.
- It can be difficult to find the motivation to start a new activity, but the more you do the easier it gets.
- If you choose activities that you enjoy doing, you will be more likely to stick with them.
- When you are starting a new activity, make sure that it is appropriate for you and your level of capability.

- Physical activity can be difficult for people for a variety of reasons (i.e. fitness level, injury etc...), but you cannot let this stop you. It is important to find an activity that is suitable for you and that you enjoy participating in. Do not push yourself too hard, particularly in the beginning; start off light and slowly increase the intensity should you feel it is appropriate.
- Be sure to consult with your doctor when implementing new physical activities in your routine, to ensure that they are in fact appropriate for you and your physical capabilities.

Take Care of Your Mental Health



- Sadness and dementia are NOT a normal part of aging!
- Mental illnesses are treatable.
- The messages of the Fountain of Health are designed to help you age positively and prevent illness.
- Getting the appropriate mental health care is essential!
Get to know the services available in your area.

- Do not feel intimidated by mental health. If you are experiencing unusual changes in your mood or memory talk to your doctor about it. They will be able to recommend the best solution for you.
- Mental health has often been stigmatized and that is due to a lack of awareness and understanding for the various diseases. By having open discussions with people you trust, you will help break down the barriers of stigma and perhaps help yourself or another person feel better about their situation.

Continue to Learn New Things



- It is never too late to learn something new!
- Keeping your mind active can help prevent memory changes.
- Like your muscles, your brain improves with use.
- Make sure you enjoy it.

- It is absolutely never too late to learn something new! Exercising your brain does not have to be a huge stress, it can be as simple as changing up your routine a little bit to make sure you are not simply relying on your auto-pilot-like habits.
- If you enjoy the activity it will make it much easier for you to stick to it. If you choose something just for the sake of stimulating your brain but you hate it; you likely will not stick to it.
- Shopping at a different grocery store is a simple example!

Take the Pledge!



I now know more about five key actions that can help me to stay healthy for life.

Stay Socially Active

Change How You Think About Aging

Stay Physically Active

Take Care of Your Mental Health

Continue to Learn New Things

I hereby pledge to set some goals and make at least one positive change or action.

- It is time to sign the pledge and reflect on the goals that have been set throughout the sessions.
- Instruct participants to take out their handbooks and turn to page 14. Then ask them to sign and date the pledge.

Self-Reflection



The easiest area for me to improve is:

The most challenging area for me to improve is:

- Part of the pledge is to acknowledge the areas which will be the easiest and most challenging to improve upon.
- Being able to visualize these things will make it easier when setting your SMART goals. Now you will have a bit of direction as to where to start.
- If you start with the easiest area and successfully complete your goal you may want to move on and try a goal in another area or you may want to set another goal in the same area. The choice is completely up to you!
- Remember when we spoke about not taking on too much at once? It is a good idea to keep that in mind as you look at this. You may look at the second line and get anxious thinking about how to get there but just remember to start off small. It would probably be a good idea to start off with areas that are easier for you. This way you will have less difficulty achieving your goals for that area and you will gain a bit more confidence in your ability to achieve the goals you once thought were going to present more of a challenge. If the goal still seems too out of reach you may want to relook at it and see if it can be broken down into smaller goals. Keep in mind that no goal is too small and that you should feel proud after successfully completing one!

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- Hand out post-session survey and ask participants to fill it out and hand it back before they leave the session

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The logo for 'Fountain of Health' features a stylized fountain with blue water spraying upwards from a green base. Below the fountain are two green human figures. The text 'fountain of health' is written in a blue, lowercase, sans-serif font below the graphic.

For more information, please visit:

www.fountainofhealth.ca

- Close by asking participants if they have any questions.
- If you do not feel comfortable answering, you can either tell them you will research it and get back to them in the following week or you can advise them to speak with a professional.
- Remind participants that if they would like to read more about the research that this initiative is based on, they can visit the website and click on the “evidence-based” tab for the full list of articles.