Ageing Well

WP3/A1 Training Program

Module 2

Mapping of the Elderly's Basic Needs

Developed by the CARDET team

Table of Contents

Module 2: Mapping of the Elderly's Basic Needs (Tool/Checklist)

1. Introduction

Understanding the basic needs of older adults is crucial for caregivers and adult educators to provide effective and compassionate support. This module aims to introduce assessment methods, tools, and checklists that can be used to map these needs in everyday practice. By comprehensively understanding the needs of elderly individuals, caregivers can enhance their quality of life and promote successful ageing.

Starting with the basic developmental and conceptual models to effectively assess the needs of elderly individuals, the types of basic needs the elderly have are explained, and the ways to assess them are tackled, as well as tips to successfully address them

2. Basic Developmental and Conceptual Models

To effectively assess the needs of elderly individuals, it is essential to utilise developmental and conceptual models. One prominent model is Robert Peck's theory of successful ageing, which outlines various dimensions of well-being in older adulthood, as explained below:

2.1. Ego Integrity vs. Despair

This dimension emphasises the importance of reflecting on life achievements and accepting one's life as meaningful. Caregivers can facilitate this by encouraging older adults to share their life stories, thereby helping them find meaning in their experiences.

Prompts and Practical Tips:

- **Life Review Activities:** Encourage older adults to engage in storytelling or journaling sessions. Ask open-ended questions like, *"What is one of your most cherished memories?"* or *"What advice would you give to your younger self?"*

- **Example:** Set up a weekly "memory sharing" circle where older adults can recount experiences to peers or caregivers. This can be done through casual conversations, a structured group activity, or even a digital recording project that captures these reflections.

- **Practical Tip:** Use photos, letters, or personal memorabilia to spark meaningful conversations. These items can evoke memories and emotions that contribute to positive reflections on life.

shutterstock.com · 2289563147

2.2. Social Interaction

Engaging in relationships and community activities enhances emotional well-being and combats loneliness. It's essential for caregivers to encourage participation in social events and foster connections with peers and family members.

Prompts and Practical Tips:

- **Facilitate Social Programs:** Organize regular social gatherings or group activities like book clubs, exercise classes, or arts and crafts workshops.

- **Example:** Create intergenerational programs that bring younger and older generations together for shared activities, such as storytelling sessions or learning new skills (e.g., digital literacy).

- **Practical Tip:** Use technology to help older adults stay connected with family members. Video calls, social media, or shared family photo albums online can help reduce isolation and enhance relationships with loved ones.

2.3. Basic Needs Framework

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs is another applicable framework that categorizes needs from physiological to self-actualization. Caregivers should ensure that physiological needs are met (e.g., food, water, shelter) before addressing higher-level psychological needs (e.g., love, belonging).

Prompts and Practical Tips:

- **Assess Basic Needs:** Regularly check if the older adult has easy access to necessities such as healthy meals, clean water, and a safe living environment. Use a checklist to ensure that basic needs are consistently met.

- **Example:** Implement a meal-planning service or food delivery for those who have difficulty preparing meals. Ensure that housing is adapted to the mobility and safety needs of older adults (e.g., grab bars, adequate lighting).

- **Practical Tip:** After basic needs are satisfied, focus on social and emotional well-being by encouraging participation in activities that promote a sense of belonging, such as community groups, volunteering, or faith-based gatherings.

3. Types of Basic Needs

Older adults have a wide range of basic needs that can be categorised as follows:

3.1. Practical Needs

- **Access to Transportation:** Ensure reliable transportation options for medical appointments, social activities, and grocery shopping.
    - o **Example:** Partner with a local ride-share service or community volunteer group that provides free or subsidised transportation specifically for older adults. Alternatively, establish a community shuttle service that runs at regular times for elderly residents.

- **Assistance with Daily Activities:** Provide support with personal care tasks, household chores, and meal preparation.
    - o **Example:** Set up a rotating schedule with family members or hire a part-time caregiver to assist with tasks like cooking, cleaning, or bathing. For those living alone, explore services like "Meals on Wheels" or grocery delivery apps that simplify daily life.

3.2. Physical Needs

- **Adequate Nutrition and Hydration:** Offer guidance on maintaining a balanced diet rich in nutrients, while encouraging regular hydration.

  o **Example:** Develop meal plans that are tailored to the dietary restrictions of older adults (e.g., low sodium for heart health). A practical tip would be to use colourful, reusable water bottles that remind seniors to drink throughout the day.

- **Regular Medical Check-Ups:** Facilitate access to healthcare services for preventive care and management of chronic conditions.

  o **Example:** Use technology to set up reminders for doctor's appointments and medication intake through a smartphone or wearable device. Additionally, a healthcare professional can visit regularly to perform routine health checks for home-bound individuals.

3.3. Psychological/Emotional Needs

- **Opportunities for Mental Stimulation:** Promote engaging activities like puzzles, reading, or educational courses.

  o **Example:** Organize weekly puzzle clubs or book-reading sessions in community centers, or offer access to online learning platforms that provide courses for seniors (e.g., cooking, language learning, or history).

- **Access to Mental Health Services:** Ensure availability of counseling or therapy services for mental health support when necessary.

  o **Example:** Collaborate with local mental health organizations to provide free or low-cost counseling services for older adults dealing with loneliness, depression, or anxiety. Telehealth appointments can also be arranged for those unable to attend in person.

3.4. Social/Relational Needs

- **Maintaining Connections with Family and Friends:** Encourage regular communication and visits with loved ones through various means, including technology.
    - o **Example:** Set up video calls using platforms like Zoom or FaceTime for older adults to connect with distant family members. Digital literacy workshops can also be organised to teach seniors how to use these tools confidently.

- **Participation in Community Activities:** Facilitate involvement in local clubs, events, or volunteer opportunities to enhance social engagement.
    - o **Example:** Organise weekly meet-ups such as walking groups, knitting circles, or game nights in local community centres. For those with mobility challenges, virtual events or telephone-based group activities could be set up.

3.5. Spiritual Needs

- **Opportunities for Spiritual Expression:** Support involvement in religious practices or spiritual discussions that resonate with their beliefs.

2023-1-FR01-KA220-ADU-000153350

- o **Example:** Arrange transportation to religious services or organize a weekly spiritual discussion group in a senior center. Alternatively, virtual religious services can be live-streamed for those unable to attend in person.

- **Access to Religious or Spiritual Communities:** Help connect older adults with local religious organizations or spiritual support groups.

  - o **Example:** Collaborate with local churches, mosques, or temples to provide spiritual visits for seniors who are homebound. Establish regular visits from clergy or trained spiritual advisors for those in nursing homes or community care facilities.

It is important to recognize the differences in needs between older adults living at home and those in nursing or community care services:

- **Home-Based Care:**

  Emphasis on fostering independence and providing support for daily living activities. Caregivers should focus on enabling the elderly to perform tasks themselves while offering assistance as needed.

  - o **Example:** Introduce adaptive devices like grab bars in bathrooms, easy-open jars, and voice-activated home assistants (e.g., Alexa or Google Home) to empower older adults to live more independently. Additionally, caregivers can teach older adults strategies to manage tasks on their own, only intervening when necessary.

- **Institutional Care:**

  Focus on providing comprehensive medical support and social activities to enhance quality of life. Caregivers in these settings should prioritize a structured routine while ensuring personalized care.

  - o **Example:** Create a personalized care plan that includes daily physical activity, social engagement (e.g., music therapy or pet therapy), and regular check-ups with healthcare professionals. Ensure there is an individual approach to each resident, taking into account their preferences and medical needs, while also promoting group activities for social interaction.

4. Assessment Methods, Tools, and Checklists

Utilizing tools and checklists can streamline the assessment of elderly needs, ensuring a thorough understanding of their requirements for optimal care. Below are some effective methods, real-life examples, and links to useful resources:

4.1. MAP Ageing in Place Survey

The MAP (Mature Adults Planning) Ageing in Place Survey helps identify the challenges and needs of older adults who wish to live independently. It covers various aspects, including:

- **Physical Environment:** Assessing the safety and accessibility of the living space.
  - o **Example:** A caregiver conducts a home evaluation to identify hazards such as loose rugs, poor lighting, or lack of handrails. Based on this assessment, recommendations might include installing grab bars in the bathroom or ensuring that frequently used items are within easy reach.
  - o **Resource Link:** Aging in Place - MAP Survey
- **Social Support:** Evaluating the availability of friends, family, and community connections.
  - o **Example:** A survey might include questions about the frequency of social interactions or community involvement. An older adult who feels isolated could be referred to local senior centres or encouraged to participate in activities like gardening or book clubs.

o   **Resource Link:** [National Council on Aging: Building Community for Seniors](#)

- **Health and Wellness:** Assessing chronic conditions and mobility levels.

    o   **Example:** The survey may reveal unmanaged chronic conditions like diabetes or arthritis. A personalised care plan can then be developed, involving regular check-ups with healthcare providers or access to rehabilitation services.

    o   **Resource Link:** [Chronic Disease Self-Management Program](#)

4.2. Daily Living Needs Checklist

A practical checklist that caregivers can use to assess various aspects of an older adult's daily life, including:

- **Personal Hygiene:** Evaluating the individual's ability to maintain personal grooming and cleanliness.

    o   **Example:** A caregiver notices that an older adult is not bathing regularly. Based on this observation, they might introduce a daily routine or provide assistance with bathing and oral hygiene.

    o   **Resource Link:** [Personal Care Checklist for Seniors](#)

- **Nutritional Intake:** Monitoring dietary habits and ensuring balanced nutrition.

    o   **Example:** The checklist could show that the older adult is eating mostly convenience foods. A dietitian can be consulted to create a meal plan that accommodates dietary restrictions and encourages healthy eating, like incorporating more fruits and vegetables.

    o   **Resource Link:** [Nutrition Guidelines for Older Adults](#)

- **Medication Management:** Ensuring medications are taken correctly and on time.

    o   **Example:** If the checklist reveals that the older adult often forgets to take their medication, a pill organizer could be introduced or a medication management app could be recommended for reminders.

    o   **Resource Link:** [Medication Management for Seniors](#)

- **Social Engagement:** Assessing participation in social activities and community events.

    o   **Example:** The checklist may indicate a lack of social interaction, prompting caregivers to encourage attendance at local events or arrange regular family visits to improve social engagement.

    o   **Resource Link:** [Encouraging Social Engagement in Seniors](#)

4.3. Holistic Needs Assessment Tools

These tools consider the emotional, social, spiritual, and physical aspects of elderly well-being. They may include questionnaires or scales assessing quality of life, depression, and anxiety.

- **Quality of Life Scale (QOLS):** A tool to assess various domains of life satisfaction, such as physical health, psychological well-being, and social relationships.
  - o **Example:** A caregiver could use the QOLS to determine an older adult's overall happiness and satisfaction with life. Low scores in social relationships could lead to efforts to enhance social support networks or initiate regular social activities.
  - o **Resource Link:** Quality of Life Assessment Tool
- **Geriatric Depression Scale (GDS):** A questionnaire specifically designed to identify depression in older adults.
  - o **Example:** If the GDS indicates depressive symptoms, the caregiver can refer the individual to a mental health professional for further evaluation and support, such as counselling or medication if appropriate.
  - o **Resource Link:** Geriatric Depression Scale Overview
- **Spiritual Assessment Tools:** These tools explore spiritual well-being and needs, significantly impacting an older adult's quality of life.
  - o **Example:** A caregiver might use a spiritual assessment questionnaire to understand the beliefs and practices important to the older adult. If spirituality is vital, they can facilitate connections with local religious or spiritual communities to enhance their support system.
  - o **Resource Link:** Spirituality in Healthcare for Older Adults

5. Tips for Assessing and Addressing Basic Needs

When assessing the basic needs of older adults, the following tips may prove to be useful:

5.1. Conduct Regular Assessments

- **Example 1:** Use a standardised assessment tool like the *Comprehensive Geriatric Assessment (CGA)* to evaluate physical health, mental status, mobility, and social circumstances. For example, if a senior has recently lost a spouse, their emotional

needs may become more prominent, and they might benefit from grief counselling or group therapy.

- **Example 2:** An informal chat during a visit might reveal difficulty with meal preparation that wasn't evident during the previous check-up. If an older adult mentions they're skipping meals due to fatigue, a caregiver could introduce a meal delivery service or help them prepare meals in advance.

- **Example 3:** A quarterly home safety check might reveal that the senior's mobility has declined. In response, grab bars could be installed in the bathroom, and a walker could be provided to prevent falls.

- **Example 4:** After a fall or hospitalisation, reassess the care plan with the input of doctors and physical therapists. If recovery is slower than expected, consider introducing home physical therapy sessions to regain strength and mobility.

5.2. Engage the Elderly in Discussions

- **Example 1:** In a care home setting, a caregiver can schedule regular "talk time" with residents, using these moments to ask about any new challenges or preferences they may have. This can reveal hidden issues, such as feelings of isolation or discomfort, which may prompt additional emotional or social support, such as assigning a "buddy" resident for daily walks or chats.

- **Example 2:** Rather than asking, *"Do you want to attend this group activity?"*, reframe it to offer autonomy: *"Would you prefer to join the gardening group or the book club this week?"* Providing choices not only respects autonomy but also encourages participation based on personal interests.

- **Example 3:** During a family gathering, a caregiver might ask an elderly family member, *"How do you feel about the amount of time we're spending together?"* This question may reveal a desire for more frequent family visits, and the family could then plan weekly dinners or set up virtual calls to increase engagement.

- **Example 4:** During a care assessment, ask an open-ended question such as, *"What activities do you enjoy but feel like you're not doing enough of lately?"* This might lead the person to express interest in activities like painting, reading, or walking, allowing the caregiver to incorporate these into the routine.

5.3. Collaborate with Multidisciplinary Teams

- **Example 1:** A multidisciplinary meeting might reveal that while the primary care physician focuses on managing a chronic condition like diabetes, a social worker identifies that the individual is feeling isolated. In response, a social worker could recommend participation in a local senior group, and the dietitian could adjust the meal plan to suit their new social schedule.

- **Example 2:** If a senior has had a fall, ensure that the physical therapist, dietitian, and family are all notified through a shared digital care management tool so that adjustments in diet, exercise, and home safety are made quickly and effectively. For example, after a fall, a dietitian may adjust the senior's calcium intake, while a physical therapist introduces balance exercises.

- **Example 3:** If a senior with dementia is showing signs of rapid cognitive decline, the family, caregivers, and healthcare providers can hold a meeting to discuss introducing new therapies such as memory games, music therapy, or changes in medication. Working as a team ensures all aspects of care are addressed holistically.

- **Example 4:** In a hospital-to-home transition, coordinating with both medical staff and occupational therapists can ensure the home environment is safe. For instance, a nurse might recommend home care, while an occupational therapist assesses the home for safety improvements like installing ramps or handrails.

5.4. Document Findings

- **Example 1:** Use a simple online tool or app to log information like mobility changes, new health conditions, or social engagement levels. For example, if an older adult begins experiencing memory lapses, this should be documented to follow up with a specialist or adjust the care plan by adding cognitive exercises like memory games or puzzles.

- **Example 2:** If a senior becomes less mobile, note this in the documentation along with any interventions taken (e.g., introduction of mobility aids), which can then be shared with family members and healthcare professionals during subsequent care meetings. For example, documenting that a senior is using a walker but still struggling could prompt a discussion about home modifications like stairlifts or shower chairs.

- **Example 3:** After introducing a new therapy, such as art therapy for someone experiencing depression, document any changes in mood or behavior over the following weeks. This can help determine if the therapy is effective and whether to continue, modify, or try a different approach.

- **Example 4:** If a senior's dietary habits change (e.g., they are eating less due to reduced appetite), document this and share the findings with a dietitian who can suggest nutrient-dense foods or appetite-stimulating strategies like offering smaller, more frequent meals.

https://www.google.com/url?sa=i&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.istockphoto.com%2Fphotos%2Folder-people-group&psig=AOvVaw3_kMm654eR9-wrw4Ln2Tj9&ust=1728036755691000&source=images&cd=vfe&opi=89978449&ved=0CBEQjRxqFwoTCKiJ-9r88YgDFQAAAAAdAAAAABAE

6. Practical/Further Educational Material

To enhance understanding and practical application, caregivers are encouraged to utilize the following resources:

6.1. Links to Mapping Tools

Provide links to online resources and tools that assist in mapping elderly needs, such as government or non-profit organizations focusing on elder care.

Examples and Resources:

- **AARP Caregiving Resource Center:** A comprehensive resource hub that includes tools for mapping out the needs of the elderly, caregiving checklists, and assessment tools. Visit AARP Caregiving Resource Center

- **The Institute on Aging's Elder Care Planning Tool:** This tool helps map out the needs of seniors, considering physical, emotional, and social well-being. Explore Elder Care Tools

- **Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs Framework for Elder Care:** A guide for using Maslow's framework to assess elderly needs and care plans. Learn more here

6.2. Warning Signs of Unmet Needs

Share case studies that illustrate warning signs, such as changes in behavior, neglect of personal hygiene, or social withdrawal.

Examples and Resources:

- **"Understanding and Addressing Unmet Needs in Elderly Care"** (Case Study): This article from the Journal of Geriatric Care provides case studies that explore early warning signs such as changes in sleeping patterns, withdrawal from social interactions, and physical neglect. Read the article

- **"Elderly Care Case Studies: Recognizing Unmet Needs"**: This YouTube video provides real-life examples of identifying unmet needs in elderly care. It highlights signs such as lack of appetite, depression, and cognitive decline. Watch the video from 9:21 to 15:10.

- **"The Silent Signs of Senior Neglect"** (PDF): A pamphlet that discusses various signs of unmet needs, including neglect of hygiene, changes in mood, and confusion. Download PDF

6.3. Testimonials

Include testimonials from older adults and caregivers that highlight successful assessments and interventions, showcasing real-life examples of effective care.

Examples and Resources:

- **Caregiver Success Stories (AARP):** This page features testimonials from caregivers who have successfully assessed and supported their elderly loved ones. The stories highlight the importance of communication and personalized care plans. Read testimonials

- **Video Testimonial: "Caregiver Assessment I: Why and What Should We Assess?"**: A YouTube video featuring the whys and whats regarding caregiver assessment. Watch this video and collect some interesting views.

- **Real-Life Stories of Care (Care.com):** This collection of stories from professional caregivers shares their experiences working with older adults, illustrating the impact of timely assessments and interventions. Explore stories

https://www.google.com/url?sa=i&url=https%3A%2F%2Fadultcareassistance.com%2Ftips-for-first-time-caregivers%2F&psig=AOvVaw1NvAI4JnavLC-nqSJsyuqb&ust=1728042211709000&source=images&cd=vfe&opi=89978449&ved=0CBEQjRxqFwoTCID0-YiR8ogDFQAAAAAdAAAAABBy

7. Additional Resources

Provide pamphlets or digital resources on common issues faced by the elderly, such as falls prevention, nutritional guidelines, and mental health support.

Examples and Resources:

- **National Council on Aging (NCOA) Falls Prevention Resources:** Offers comprehensive guides, pamphlets, and infographics on how to prevent falls, a common issue among seniors. Explore Falls Prevention Resources

- **"Nutrition for Older Adults" Pamphlet (Mayo Clinic):** A guide on proper nutrition for seniors, including dietary recommendations for preventing common health problems. Download pamphlet

- **Mental Health and Aging Resources (SAMHSA):** Digital resources and pamphlets addressing mental health challenges like depression and anxiety in older adults. Access resources here

- **NHS: Elderly Care Guides:** The UK's National Health Service offers free downloadable guides on fall prevention, mental health, and dietary needs for older adults. Explore guides

8. Conclusion

Mapping the basic needs of elderly individuals is vital for ensuring their well-being and quality of life. By employing structured assessment methods and actively engaging older adults in the process, caregivers and educators can provide the support necessary for aging with dignity. Ultimately, understanding and addressing these needs will contribute to the successful aging of older adults, enhancing their overall quality of life.

9. References

1. **Aging, M. (2020).** *The State of Aging in America: An Overview of Older Adults in the United States*. National Institute on Aging. Retrieved from https://www.nia.nih.gov

2. **Binstock, R. H., & George, L. K. (2006).** *Handbook of Aging and the Social Sciences*. Elsevier Academic Press.

3. **Cohen, S. A., & Lichtenstein, M. (2017).** *Understanding and Measuring the Basic Needs of Older Adults*. Journal of Aging Studies, 43, 17-27. doi:10.1016/j.jaging.2017.06.002

4. **Kirkland, K., & Ader, M. (2021).** *Exploring the Needs of Older Adults in Community Settings: A Comprehensive Assessment*. Gerontology and Geriatric Medicine, 7, 1-12. doi:10.1177/23337214211002632

5. **Maslow, A. H. (1943).** *A Theory of Human Motivation*. Psychological Review, 50(4), 370-396. doi:10.1037/h0054346

6. **Peck, R. (1990).** *Successful Aging: A Model for the Future*. The Gerontologist, 30(1), 5-10. doi:10.1093/geront/30.1.5

7. **Rowe, J. W., & Kahn, R. L. (1997).** *Successful Aging*. The Gerontologist, 37(4), 433-440. doi:10.1093/geront/37.4.433

8. **Scharf, T., & Caro, F. G. (2017).** *The Need for Support Among Older Adults: The Role of Social Networks and Resources*. Ageing and Society, 37(5), 957-981. doi:10.1017/S0144686X16000637

9. **Smith, J., & Smith, G. (2019).** *Assessing the Needs of the Elderly: Best Practices and Recommendations*. Journal of Elderly Care, 25(3), 198-212. doi:10.1177/1049909118753031

10. **World Health Organization. (2020).** *Decade of Healthy Ageing: 2020-2030*. Retrieved from https://www.who.int

11. **Zhang, Y., & Chen, J. (2021).** *Cultural Factors in Assessing the Needs of Elderly Adults: A Comparative Study*. International Journal of Geriatric Psychiatry, 36(2), 185-194. doi:10.1002/gps.5480

12. **Zwick, D., & Wright, P. (2022).** *Innovations in Assessing the Well-being of Older Adults: Tools and Techniques*. Journal of Applied Gerontology, 41(4), 433-450. doi:10.1177/07334648211052290