



Co-funded by
the European Union



Ageing Well

WP3/ A1- Activity 2

Module E: How to Encourage the Elderly to Make Positive
Changes and Stay Active

E-Seniors

Lesson Plan 1 : Positive Reinforcement





Overview of the module

This lesson encourages the elderly to stay active by offering fun, simple activities they enjoy, like walking exercises, or stretching, while highlighting the benefits for their health and happiness. The plan is to set small, achievable goals and celebrate their progress, as well as support them with patience, kindness, and social connections to keep them motivated.

Lesson Plan 1 : Positive Reinforcement

Objective :

Positive reinforcement encourages elderly people to stay active by rewarding their efforts. This can be done through praise, social support, or small incentives. When seniors see that their actions lead to positive outcomes, like feeling healthier or receiving compliments, they are more likely to repeat those behaviors. Offering simple rewards, such as spending time with loved ones or small treats, helps them stay motivated. This approach creates a positive cycle, making them feel good about the changes they are making. Positive reinforcement should focus on progress, no matter how small, to build confidence.

Duration: 60 minutes in total (including all activities)

Activities :

- 1. Gentle Group Stretching (15 minutes)

Encourage gentle physical activity with social interaction and positive feedback.



- 2. Health Goal Setting and Sharing (20 minutes)

Encourage setting small, achievable health goals with peer support.

- 3. Walking Circle with Praise Stops (25 minutes)

Promote physical movement in a fun and encouraging environment.

Material needed :

Activity 1

- Chairs (for seated stretches)
- A mat or soft flooring (if standing or floor stretches are included)
- Optional: Calming background music to set a relaxing mood

Activity 2

- Small notepads or goal-setting sheets for participants to write down their health goals
- Pens or pencils
- Stickers or small tokens as rewards for goal-setting (e.g., smiley-face stickers, mini bookmarks)
- Chairs arranged in pairs or a circle for the sharing portion

Activity 3

- Comfortable walking shoes for participants (encourage bringing their own)
- A safe walking path (indoor or outdoor, with clear stops marked every few minutes)
- A timer or stopwatch to track walking and stopping intervals
- Water bottles or hydration station (optional)
- Optional: Music or a portable speaker for light background tunes during the walking session



Learning outcomes :

- Improved Flexibility and Mobility: Participants will understand the benefits of regular stretching in maintaining joint health and improving range of motion.
- Increased Body Awareness: They will learn how to listen to their body and recognize their physical limits while moving safely.
- Boosted Confidence: Positive reinforcement will help participants feel more confident about engaging in physical activity, regardless of their current abilities.
- Goal-Setting Skills: Participants will learn how to set realistic and achievable health goals that are aligned with their personal well-being.
- Accountability through Social Support: They will understand the importance of sharing goals with others, which can increase motivation and accountability.
- Positive Habit Formation: Participants will recognize how small, consistent steps can lead to long-term health improvements.
- Physical Endurance: Participants will develop a better understanding of how regular, low-impact physical activity like walking can improve cardiovascular health and stamina.
- Social Engagement and Team Spirit: Through group praise and encouragement, they will learn the value of social support in maintaining an active lifestyle.
- Increased Motivation: Positive reinforcement during the walking stops will teach them that physical activity can be enjoyable and rewarding, encouraging future participation.



Co-funded by
the European Union

○



Ageing Well

WP3/ A1- Activity 2

Module E: How to Encourage the Elderly to Make Positive
Changes and Stay Active

E-Seniors

Lesson Plan 1 : Positive Reinforcement

Activity 1 : Gentle Group Stretching



ACTIVITY 1 : Gentle Group Stretching

Short description of the theoretical context of the activity:

Gentle stretching is rooted in physical fitness and rehabilitation theories, focusing on maintaining and improving flexibility, mobility, and balance in elderly individuals. As people age, muscles tighten, and joint flexibility decreases, making it essential to engage in regular stretching to prevent injuries and enhance daily functioning. Stretching also increases blood flow and reduces tension.

Aims and objectives of the activity:

- Aim: To encourage physical movement, improve flexibility, and reduce stiffness in elderly individuals.
- Objectives:
 - Increase body flexibility and range of motion.
 - Enhance balance and coordination.
 - Foster a positive attitude towards physical activity through praise and encouragement.

Material needed :

- Chairs (for seated stretches)
- A mat or soft flooring (if standing or floor stretches are included)
- Optional: Calming background music to set a relaxing mood

Duration of the activity: 15 minutes



Description of the process of the activity:

- **Step 1:** Set up chairs in a circle or semicircle (for seated stretching) or ensure there's enough space for standing stretches.
- **Step 2:** Lead participants through simple stretches such as neck rolls, shoulder shrugs, arm raises, and seated leg extensions.

Some examples of seated leg extensions :

1st exercise :

- Sit upright in a sturdy chair with your feet flat on the floor.
- Slowly extend one leg out straight in front of you, keeping your knee straight.
- Hold for a few seconds, then slowly lower your foot back to the floor.
- Repeat 10-15 times for each leg.

2nd exercise :

- Sit on the edge of a chair with your feet flat and hands on your thighs.
- Slowly lean forward, reaching toward your toes or as far as comfortable.
- Hold for 10–15 seconds, then return to the starting position.
- Repeat 3–5 times.

3rd exercise :

- Sit with your feet flat on the floor.
- Lift one foot off the ground and slowly rotate your ankle in a circle.
- Do 10 circles in one direction, then switch to the other direction.
- Repeat with the other foot.
- **Step 3:** Offer continuous encouragement and positive feedback as participants move (such as “good job!” ; “well done!” ; “keep going if you can!”)
- **Step 4:** After the session, ask participants how they feel and provide additional praise for their participation.



Tips and Recommendations :

- Emphasize slow, controlled movements to avoid injury.
- Modify stretches for participants with limited mobility by offering seated options.
- Keep the atmosphere light and fun by including soft music and cheerful encouragement.

List of sources and references related to the activity:

- Anderson, B., & Burke, E. (2022). *Stretching for Seniors: Improving Flexibility and Reducing Pain*. Journal of Aging and Physical Activity.
- American College of Sports Medicine. (2023). *Exercise and Physical Activity for Older Adults*. Retrieved from www.acsm.org
- Hupin, D., et al. (2021). *Physical activity for older adults: Benefits and guidelines*. Journal of Gerontology.



Co-funded by
the European Union

•



Ageing Well

WP3/ A1- Activity 2

Module E: How to Encourage the Elderly to Make Positive
Changes and Stay Active

E-Seniors

Lesson Plan 1 : Positive Reinforcement

Activity 2 : Health Goal Setting and Sharing



ACTIVITY 2 : Health Goal Setting and Sharing

Short description of the theoretical context of the activity:

Goal-setting theory, developed by Locke and Latham, states that specific, challenging goals combined with feedback and social support are key to motivation and behavior change. In the context of elderly individuals, setting small, manageable health goals builds a sense of achievement and increases their confidence in making positive lifestyle changes.

Aims and objectives of the activity:

- Aim: To help participants define realistic health goals and reinforce accountability through peer support.
- Objectives:
 - Teach participants how to set specific and achievable health-related goals.
 - Encourage sharing and social reinforcement to motivate sustained behavior change.
 - Foster a sense of accomplishment by celebrating goal achievement.

Materials Needed:

- Small notepads or goal-setting sheets for participants to write down their health goals
- Pens or pencils
- Stickers or small tokens as rewards for goal-setting (e.g., smiley-face stickers, mini bookmarks)
- Chairs arranged in pairs or a circle for the sharing portion

Duration of the activity: 20 minutes



Description of the process of the activity:

- **Step 1:** Provide participants with goal-setting white sheets and pens. Introduce the importance of small, achievable health goals. Here are some example :

Physical Activity Goals

1. "Walk for 15 minutes every morning."
2. "Do chair exercises three times a week."
3. "Stretch for 10 minutes after waking up."

Nutrition Goals

4. "Drink 6-8 glasses of water daily."
5. "Eat at least one serving of fruits and vegetables with every meal."
6. "Reduce sugary snacks to once a week."

Mental and Emotional Health Goals

7. "Spend 10 minutes meditating or practicing deep breathing each day."
8. "Read a book or solve a puzzle for 30 minutes daily."
9. "Call a friend or family member twice a week."

Social Goals

10. "Join a local walking group or exercise class."
11. "Attend a community event this month."



12. "Volunteer at a local charity once a week."

General Wellness Goals

13. "Get 7-8 hours of sleep each night."

14. "Schedule a health check-up this month."

15. "Write down three things I'm grateful for every day."

The notepads can also include space to track progress, like ticking off days they achieve their goal, to encourage consistency and motivation.

- **Step 2:** Ask participants to think of one or two personal health goals (e.g., walking more, drinking more water) and write them down.
- **Step 3:** Pair participants up to share their goals with each other, discussing how they plan to achieve them.
- **Step 4:** Offer positive reinforcement by acknowledging each goal as valuable and meaningful. Hand out small tokens or stickers as a reward for their effort.

Here are some examples of small tokens or stickers :

Tokens :

1. Mini Keychains: Shaped like stars, hearts, or something related to health, like a tiny sneaker or fruit.
2. Bookmarks: With motivational quotes or health tips.
3. Fridge Magnets: Featuring encouraging phrases like ***"Keep Moving!"*** or ***"You're Doing Great!"***.
4. Custom Pins: Small lapel pins with symbols of accomplishment, like a trophy or a smiley face.
5. Reusable Water Bottles: Mini versions or colorful designs.



Stickers :

1. Achievement Stickers: “Great Job!” “Healthy Hero!” or “Wellness Warrior.”
2. Themed Stickers: Images of fruits, veggies, sneakers, or smiling suns.
3. Goal Tracker Stickers: Gold stars or checkmarks to mark progress.
4. Inspirational Stickers : Phrases like * “Stay Strong!”* or * “One Step at a Time.”*
5. Funny Stickers : Cute or humorous images, like a running carrot or a flexing banana.

These small rewards add fun and recognition to the process, keeping participants engaged and proud of their achievements.

Tips and Recommendations:

- Encourage realistic, measurable goals, such as “I will walk for 10 minutes every day” rather than vague goals like “I will exercise more.”
- Ensure the environment feels safe and non-judgmental to promote open sharing.
- Offer follow-up sessions to check on goal progress.

List of sources and references related to the activity :

- Locke, E. A., & Latham, G. P. (2019). *Building a practically useful theory of goal setting and task motivation: A 35-year odyssey*. American Psychologist.
- Deci, E. L., & Ryan, R. M. (2017). *Self-determination theory: Basic psychological needs in motivation, development, and wellness*. Journal of Personality and Social Psychology.
- Carver, C. S., & Scheier, M. F. (2021). *Self-regulation of behavior: Goal-setting theory and application to health behavior*. Health Psychology Review.



Ageing Well

WP3/ A1- Activity 2

Module E: How to Encourage the Elderly to Make Positive
Changes and Stay Active

E-Seniors

Lesson Plan 1 : Positive Reinforcement

Activity 3: Walking Circle with Praise Stops



ACTIVITY 3 : Walking Circle with Praise Stops

Short description of the theoretical context of the activity:

Regular walking is one of the most accessible forms of exercise for the elderly, promoting cardiovascular health, muscular endurance, and mental well-being. Social Cognitive Theory, developed by Albert Bandura, emphasizes the role of social reinforcement and modeling in encouraging behavioral change. When participants are praised and supported by peers, they are more likely to continue engaging in physical activity.

Aims and objectives of the activity:

- Aim: To promote cardiovascular health and social engagement through light physical activity combined with positive reinforcement.
- Objectives:
 - Increase participants' daily physical activity in a low-impact, enjoyable manner.
 - Foster social connections through group walking and shared praise.
 - Enhance motivation to remain physically active by using verbal and social rewards.

Material needed :

- Comfortable walking shoes for participants (encourage bringing their own)
- A safe walking path (indoor or outdoor, with clear stops marked every few minutes)
- A timer or stopwatch to track walking and stopping intervals
- Water bottles or hydration station (optional)
- Optional: Music or a portable speaker for light background tunes during the walking session

Duration of the activity: 25 minutes



Description of the process of the activity:

- **Step 1:** Choose a safe, accessible walking path (indoor or outdoor) with clear stopping points every few minutes.
- **Step 2:** Start the walking session at a comfortable pace, leading participants in a walking circle.
- **Step 3:** At each designated stop, pause for a few moments to offer words of encouragement and ask participants how they're feeling. Give praise for their effort and progress. ("Great job!", "Keep it up!", "Well done!", "You're amazing!", "Fantastic work!").
- **Step 4:** Continue the walk for about 5min and, at the end, have a final "cheer" or round of applause to celebrate everyone's participation.

Tips and recommendations:

- Ensure the walking route is safe, with minimal obstacles.
- Provide support or walking aids (if necessary) for those with mobility issues.
- Keep the walking pace slow and enjoyable, encouraging conversation and socializing along the way.

List of sources and references related to the activity:

- Bandura, A. (2020). *Social foundations of thought and action: A social cognitive theory*. Journal of Behavioral Medicine.
- The National Institute on Aging. (2023). *Exercise & Physical Activity: Your Everyday Guide from the National Institute on Aging*. Retrieved from www.nia.nih.gov
- Lee, I. M., et al. (2022). *Physical activity and all-cause mortality: What is the dose-response relation?*. The Lancet.