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Ageing Well

WP3/ A1- Activity 2

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

E-Seniors

Lesson Plan 2 : Cultivating positive routines and habits in
everyday life





Overview of the module

This lesson encourages the elderly to make positive changes, starting with small, enjoyable routines. Introducing light exercises, like walking or stretching, and creating a consistent schedule, while supporting healthy habits like balanced meals and staying hydrated is important. Celebrating their progress to build confidence, and foster social connections through group activities is also a part of our content, as well as patience and encouragement which are keys to helping them stay active and develop lasting positive routines.

Lesson Plan 2 : Cultivating positive routines and habits in everyday life

Objective:

The primary objectives of cultivating positive routines and habits for the elderly focus on promoting lasting, sustainable changes that improve overall well-being. First, these routines aim to enhance physical health and mobility by encouraging daily movement, which helps maintain strength, flexibility, and independence. Second, they promote mental and emotional well-being by reducing stress, anxiety, and loneliness through regular physical activity and mindfulness practices. Third, these habits foster independence and self-efficacy, empowering the elderly to take control of their health and feel confident in their ability to manage their daily lives. Lastly, by focusing on consistency and building small, achievable routines, these objectives ensure long-term success and a positive, active lifestyle.

Duration: 60 minutes in total (including all activities)



Activities:

- Mindful Morning Routine Practice : Introduce a simple, mindful morning routine that participants can easily integrate into their daily lives to set a positive tone for the day (15 minutes).
- Goal-Setting for Daily Routines : Help participants develop personal, achievable goals that encourage positive routines and habits in their everyday lives (20 minutes).
- Habit Stacking Walk-and-Talk : Demonstrate how to combine new habits with existing routines (habit stacking) to create positive behavioral changes (25 minutes).

Material needed :

Activity 1

- Yoga or Stretching Mats : If the session includes floor stretches, mats provide comfort and support.
- Chairs : For participants with limited mobility, chairs can be used for seated stretches.
- Calm Background Music : Optional, to create a relaxed atmosphere during the session.
- Timer : To keep track of the session duration and allow for smooth transitions between exercises.
- Gratitude Cards or Journals : Small cards or notebooks where participants can write down something they are grateful for at the end of the session.
- Water Bottles : Ensure hydration is available for participants.

Activity 2

- Goal-Setting Worksheets: Pre-prepared sheets that guide participants in setting their health-related goals, with spaces to write specific actions they will take.
- Pens or Pencils: For participants to write their goals.
- Motivational Stickers or Small Rewards: Simple tokens of encouragement to celebrate goal-setting efforts.



- Flip Chart or Whiteboard: To demonstrate examples of small, achievable goals and provide visual guidance during the activity.
- Name Tags (Optional): For participants to introduce themselves during the goal-sharing part.

Activity 3

- Comfortable Walking Shoes: Encourage participants to wear appropriate footwear for walking.
- Walking Path or Open Space: A safe, accessible walking area (indoors or outdoors) that suits the participants' mobility levels.
- Water Bottles: Ensure hydration during and after the walk.
- Walking Aids: If necessary, provide canes, walkers, or other assistive devices for participants who require support.
- Discussion Prompts or Question Cards: Optional cards with conversation starters related to habit-stacking (e.g., "What is one small habit you could add to your morning routine?").
- Timer or Stopwatch: To manage the duration of the walk and the discussion breaks.

Learning outcomes :

- Understanding the link between routine and well-being: Participants will develop an understanding of how consistent, positive routines can improve their physical, mental, and emotional health.
- Skills in self-motivation and behavior change: They will learn strategies for motivating themselves to make positive changes and stick to new habits.
- Social connection and peer encouragement: Participants will experience the value of social interaction and peer support in maintaining a healthy, active lifestyle.
- Improved awareness of the need for regular, manageable physical activity: They will recognize the importance of staying active daily, regardless of the level of intensity, for long-term health.



These learning outcomes aim to empower elderly individuals with the skills and knowledge to make positive changes that improve their quality of life and encourage them to stay active.

List of sources and references related to the activity:

World Health Organization (WHO). (2020). *Guidelines on Physical Activity and Sedentary Behaviour*. Geneva: World Health Organization.

Cohen-Mansfield, J., & Perach, R. (2015). *Interventions for Alleviating Loneliness Among Older Persons: A Critical Review*. American Journal of Health Promotion

Holt-Lunstad, J. (2022). *The Social Environment and Its Link to Health*. Annual Review of Psychology

Rowe, J. W., & Kahn, R. L. (2015). *Successful Aging*. The Gerontologist



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Activity 1: Mindful Morning Routine Practice



ACTIVITY 1 : Mindful Morning Routine Practice

Short description of the theoretical context of the activity:

The concept of a mindful morning routine is rooted in both mindfulness theory and habit formation principles. Mindfulness, derived from ancient meditation practices, involves bringing one's attention to the present moment, fostering awareness and reducing stress. In the context of aging, mindfulness helps elderly individuals manage anxiety, reduce cognitive overload, and improve emotional regulation.

Habit formation theory suggests that routines are easier to maintain when integrated into daily life, especially when done at consistent times like the morning. By starting the day with mindful movement (such as stretching or breathing exercises), older adults set a positive, intentional tone for the day. This regular practice builds physical and mental resilience, enhances mood, and supports overall well-being. For elderly individuals, mindful routines can counteract feelings of isolation or lack of purpose, common in later life, and promote active, independent aging.

Incorporating mindfulness into a structured morning routine aligns with research showing that small, consistent behaviors, reinforced daily, lead to long-term physical and mental health improvements. This approach helps elderly participants engage more fully with their body and mind, fostering a sense of control and well-being.

Aims and objectives of the activity:

- Improve Mind-Body Awareness: Participants will learn how to connect their breath with gentle movements, increasing their awareness of their body and enhancing coordination.
- Reduce Stress and Anxiety: Through mindfulness techniques, participants will develop skills to manage stress, anxiety, and negative thoughts, promoting emotional well-being.
- Enhance Physical Mobility: Participants will engage in light stretching or chair exercises that promote flexibility, balance, and range of motion, crucial for maintaining physical health in later years.



- Foster Positive Daily Habits: By establishing a regular morning routine, participants will create a consistent practice that helps set a positive tone for the day, making it easier to build other healthy habits.
- Encourage Emotional Resilience: Through mindfulness and reflection, participants will cultivate a calm, positive mindset, enhancing emotional regulation and promoting a sense of purpose.
- Boost Self-Efficacy: Participants will gain confidence in their ability to independently manage their health and well-being by learning simple practices they can perform at home.

Materials Needed:

- Yoga or Stretching Mats : If the session includes floor stretches, mats provide comfort and support.
- Chairs : For participants with limited mobility, chairs can be used for seated stretches.
- Calm Background Music : Optional, to create a relaxed atmosphere during the session.
- Timer : To keep track of the session duration and allow for smooth transitions between exercises.
- Gratitude Cards or Journals : Small cards or notebooks where participants can write down something they are grateful for at the end of the session.
- Water Bottles : Ensure hydration is available for participants.

Duration of the activity: 15 minutes

Description of the process of the activity:

- Preparation (2 minutes) :

Set Up the Environment:

- Arrange a quiet, comfortable space with mats or chairs.
- Optional: Play soft, calming background music.



- Ensure water is available for participants.

- Step 1: Welcome and Introduction (2 minutes)

Welcome Participants:

- Greet everyone warmly and create a positive atmosphere.
- Briefly explain the purpose of the session, highlighting the benefits of mindfulness and starting the day positively.

- Step 2: Mindful Breathing (3 minutes)

Guided Breathing Exercise:

- Instruct participants to sit comfortably, with their feet flat on the floor.
- Lead them through a simple breathing exercise:
 - Inhale through the nose for a count of 4.
 - Hold the breath for a count of 4.
 - Exhale through the mouth for a count of 6.
 - Repeat this cycle for 2 rounds, encouraging focus on the breath and relaxation.

- Step 3: Gentle Stretching (3 minutes)

Introduce Light Stretching :

- Lead participants through 2-3 gentle stretches:
 - Neck Rolls : Roll the head gently in circles.
 - Shoulder Shrugs : Raise shoulders to the ears, then relax.
 - Seated Forward Bend : While seated, reach towards the toes.
- Remind them to listen to their bodies and only stretch within comfort limits.

- Step 4: Mindful Movement (3 minutes)

Incorporate Mindful Movements :



- Guide participants through 2-3 simple movements:
 - Seated Cat-Cow : Alternate arching and rounding the back while seated.
 - Wrist and Ankle Rolls : Rotate wrists and ankles gently.
 - Encourage mindfulness by focusing on breath and bodily sensations during movements.
- Step 5: Reflection and Gratitude (2 minutes)

Introduce Reflection :

- Invite participants to sit quietly for a moment and reflect on how they feel.

Gratitude Exercise :

- Ask participants to think of one thing they are grateful for and share it briefly if they feel comfortable.

- Closing (1 minute)

Conclude the Session :

- Thank participants for their engagement and openness.
- Encourage them to practice mindful breathing and gentle stretches daily.

Tips and Recommendations :

Create a Supportive Environment:

- Choose a quiet, comfortable space.
- Provide various seating options (chairs, mats, cushions).
- Use calming background music or natural sounds.

Facilitate Mindfulness and Movement:

- Encourage a non-judgmental attitude.
- Promote gentle engagement and listening to their bodies.
- Offer variations of movements to accommodate different abilities.



Enhance the Experience:

- Use clear, simple language for instructions.
- Encourage focus on breath throughout the practice.
- Allow time for reflection and silence.

Encourage Consistency:

- Promote daily practice by suggesting a regular morning routine.
- Provide handouts summarizing techniques for home use.
- Foster community support and accountability among participants.

Post-Activity Follow-Up:

- Gather feedback to improve future sessions.
- Encourage continued engagement through partner/group practices outside the session.

List of sources and references related to the activity :

Kabat-Zinn, J. (2013). *Full Catastrophe Living: Using the Wisdom of Your Body and Mind to Face Stress, Pain, and Illness*.

Gatchel, R. J., & Peng, Y. B. (2013). *The biopsychosocial approach to chronic pain: Theory and practice. Psychological Bulletin*

Liberati, A. F., & Cott, C. (2021). *Yoga and Mindfulness-Based Interventions for Aging Populations: A Systematic Review. BMC Geriatrics*





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ACTIVITY 2: Goal-Setting for Daily Routines



ACTIVITY 2 : Goal-Setting for Daily Routines

Short description of the theoretical context of the activity:

Goal-setting is a psychological approach that focuses on creating specific, achievable objectives to motivate behavior and facilitate positive change. For older adults, this practice significantly enhances motivation by fostering a sense of autonomy and control over their routines. Additionally, goals can guide individuals through the stages of behavior modification, helping them adopt healthier habits.

Establishing consistent daily routines through goal-setting contributes to emotional and cognitive stability, while tracking progress reinforces positive behaviors and encourages self-reflection. Techniques from Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) also support this process by helping individuals overcome negative thoughts that may hinder their progress. Overall, effective goal-setting promotes healthier daily routines and improves the quality of life for older adults.

Aims and objectives of the activity:

- Enhancing Motivation: To increase intrinsic motivation by empowering individuals to set personal goals that resonate with their interests and values.
- Encouraging Healthy Habits: To facilitate the establishment of consistent daily routines that incorporate physical activity, social interaction, and mental stimulation.
- Improving Self-Regulation: To develop skills in self-monitoring and self-reflection, enabling individuals to track their progress and adjust their goals as necessary.
- Promoting Autonomy: To support older adults in taking charge of their routines, thereby enhancing their sense of control and independence.
- Reducing Barriers to Change: To identify and address potential obstacles that may hinder the adoption of new habits, using goal-setting as a strategy to navigate these challenges.
- Building Resilience: To foster resilience by encouraging persistence and adaptability in the face of setbacks, ultimately leading to sustained behavior change.



- **Enhancing Quality of Life:** To improve physical, emotional, and cognitive well-being through the integration of meaningful activities into daily life.

Materials Needed:

- **Goal-Setting Worksheets:** Pre-prepared sheets that guide participants in setting their health-related goals, with spaces to write specific actions they will take.
- **Pens or Pencils:** For participants to write their goals.
- **Motivational Stickers or Small Rewards:** Simple tokens of encouragement to celebrate goal-setting efforts.
- **Flip Chart or Whiteboard:** To demonstrate examples of small, achievable goals and provide visual guidance during the activity.
- **Name Tags (Optional):** For participants to introduce themselves during the goal-sharing part.

Duration of the activity: 20 minutes

Description of the process of the activity:

Step 1: Introduction (3 minutes)

- **Briefly Explain the Activity:**
 - Welcome participants and introduce the concept of goal-setting. Emphasize the importance of setting small, achievable goals that can positively impact their daily routines.
- **Discuss Benefits:**
 - Explain how establishing positive habits can enhance their well-being, motivate them, and improve their overall quality of life.

Step 2: Goal Setting (7 minutes)

- **Distribute Worksheets/Notebooks**
 - Hand out white worksheets or notebooks to each participant.
- **Guide Participants:**



- Instruct them to think about three small, positive habits they would like to incorporate into their daily routines. Provide examples such as:
 - "Drink a glass of water before every meal."
 - "Take a 5-minute walk after lunch."
 - "Stretch for 5 minutes in the morning."
- Encourage Reflection:
 - Give participants a few moments to reflect on their habits and write down their goals on the worksheet. Encourage them to think about specific, achievable goals tailored to their daily lives.

Step 3: Pair Sharing (7 minutes)

- Form Pairs:
 - After participants have written down their goals, ask them to find a partner to share their goals with.
- Sharing Process:
 - Each person takes turns sharing their three goals and discussing how they plan to incorporate these habits into their daily lives. Encourage them to think about:
 - What times of day they will practice these habits.
 - Any challenges they might face and how they plan to overcome them.
- Supportive Feedback:
 - Encourage partners to provide positive feedback and suggestions to each other (such as "well done, please let me know more about it!"). This collaborative discussion fosters a supportive environment and enhances motivation.

Step 4: Positive Reinforcement (3 minutes)

- Acknowledge Achievements:
 - Bring the group back together and acknowledge each person's commitment to their goals. Celebrate their efforts, reinforcing the importance of setting and working towards personal goals.
- Distribute Rewards:



- Offer small rewards like stickers or motivational quotes (such as “you did it!”; “well done!”) as a form of recognition. This reinforces their achievements and encourages continued effort toward their goals.

Step 5: Conclusion (2 minutes)

- Wrap-Up Discussion:
 - Invite participants to share any insights from their discussions or any challenges they anticipate in achieving their goals. Reiterate the importance of consistency and patience in forming new habits.
- Encourage Follow-Up:
 - Suggest that participants keep their goal worksheets handy and revisit them regularly. Encourage them to share their progress with the group in future sessions, fostering accountability.

Tips and recommendations:

- Be Supportive: Maintain a positive and encouraging tone throughout the activity to foster a sense of community.
- Stay Engaged: Circulate during the sharing phase to listen and provide feedback, enhancing participants' confidence.
- Be Flexible: Allow participants to adjust their goals if needed, focusing on personal relevance and achievability.

List of sources and references related to the activity :

Chung, M. L., & Pruitt, L. (2021). *Goal-Setting and the Older Adult: Practical Implications for Health Promotion. American Journal of Lifestyle Medicine*

Schmid, A., & Rieger, H. (2021). *The Influence of Goal Setting on Exercise Behavior in Older Adults: A Systematic Review*

Groot, M. & Van der Molen, H. (2022). *Setting Goals for the Elderly: Improving Motivation and Quality of Life through Personal Objectives*



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ACTIVITY 3: Habit Stacking Walk-and-Talk



ACTIVITY 3 : Habit Stacking Walk-and-Talk

Short description of the theoretical context of the activity:

Habit stacking is a behavior modification technique that links a new habit to an existing one, making it easier to incorporate into daily routines. Based on Charles Duhigg's Habit Loop, which includes cue, routine, and reward, this approach helps reinforce behavior through repetition.

In the Walk-and-Talk activity, participants combine walking with social interaction, such as discussing goals or sharing experiences. This not only promotes physical activity but also enhances motivation and enjoyment. Research shows that social engagement can improve adherence to exercise, especially among older adults. By stacking the habit of walking with conversation, participants are more likely to create a consistent routine that benefits both their physical health and social well-being.

Aims and objectives of the activity:

- Promoting Physical Activity: To encourage participants to incorporate walking into their daily routines, fostering a habit that supports overall health and fitness.
- Enhancing Social Interaction: To create an environment that facilitates meaningful conversations and social engagement, which can improve emotional well-being and reduce feelings of isolation.
- Building Routine Consistency: To help participants develop a consistent habit by linking walking with social interactions, making it more enjoyable and sustainable.
- Setting Personal Goals: To provide participants an opportunity to discuss their personal goals and share strategies for achieving them, reinforcing a supportive community.
- Improving Mental Well-Being: To reduce stress and promote mental clarity through physical activity and social interaction, leveraging the benefits of being outdoors and engaging with others.
- Encouraging Accountability: To foster a sense of accountability among participants, as walking together can motivate them to stay committed to their health and wellness goals.



Materials Needed:

- Comfortable Walking Shoes: Encourage participants to wear appropriate footwear for walking.
- Walking Path or Open Space: A safe, accessible walking area (indoors or outdoors) that suits the participants' mobility levels.
- Water Bottles: Ensure hydration during and after the walk.
- Walking Aids: If necessary, provide canes, walkers, or other assistive devices for participants who require support.
- Discussion Prompts or Question Cards: Optional cards with conversation starters related to habit-stacking (e.g., "What is one small habit you could add to your morning routine?").
- Timer or Stopwatch: To manage the duration of the walk and the discussion breaks.

Duration of the activity: 25 minutes

Description of the process of the activity:

Step 1: Introduction (5 minutes)

- Explain the Activity:
 - Gather participants and introduce the concept of habit stacking. Explain that this activity combines walking with discussing how to integrate new habits into their daily routines.
- Discuss Benefits:
 - Highlight the benefits of physical activity and social interaction for mental and physical health, emphasizing that combining these can make both activities more enjoyable.



Step 2: Pair Up Participants (5 minutes)

- Form Pairs or Small Groups:
 - Organize participants into pairs or small groups. Ensure that everyone is comfortable and has a partner to walk with.
- Set Expectations:
 - Explain that during the walk, they will discuss their existing routines and brainstorm ways to add new positive habits through habit stacking.

Step 3: Walk-and-Talk Session (10 minutes)

- Start Walking:
 - Begin the walk at a comfortable pace, encouraging participants to engage in conversation.
- Discussion Prompts:
 - Provide prompts to guide the conversation, such as:
 - “What daily routines do you have?”
 - “What new habits would you like to add?”
 - “How can you stack these habits onto your current routines?”
 - Examples might include “I can stretch while waiting for my tea to brew” or “I’ll do a breathing exercise after brushing my teeth.”



- Encouragement:
 - As participants walk and talk, circulate among them to offer encouragement and support. Reinforce the idea that trying to add new habits is a positive step.

Step 4: Group Reflection (5 minutes)

- Regroup and Share:
 - After the walk, gather everyone back in a comfortable space. Invite each participant to share one positive habit they plan to stack onto an existing routine.
- Celebrate Successes:
 - Acknowledge each person's commitment, offering words of encouragement and recognizing their efforts.
- Distribute Rewards:
 - If using rewards, hand out stickers or motivational quotes to participants as recognition for their participation and goal-setting.

Step 5: Conclusion (Optional)

- Wrap-Up Discussion:
 - Encourage participants to reflect on how the walk felt and the new habits they discussed. Ask questions like:
 - “How do you feel about your new habit?”
 - “What challenges do you anticipate, and how might you overcome them?”
- Encourage Follow-Up:
 - Suggest participants keep their new habit goals in mind and share their progress with one another in future meetings or sessions.

Tips and recommendations:

- Be Supportive: Maintain a positive tone and foster a sense of community throughout the activity : The key is to always acknowledge effort, celebrate progress, and remind everyone of their value.



- Be Flexible: Allow for open discussion and make adjustments based on the needs of the participants.
- Encourage Social Interaction: Remind participants of the benefits of socializing while being active, reinforcing that it's okay to share personal experiences and challenges.

List of sources and references related to the activity:

Clear, J. (2018). *Atomic Habits: An Easy & Proven Way to Build Good Habits & Break Bad Ones*.

Miller, W. R., & Rollnick, S. (2012). *Motivational Interviewing: Helping People Change*.

Mäkelä, P. (2020). *Creating Lasting Habits: The Power of Stacking in Everyday Life*