Falls Prevention Training for Health Home Coordinators

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Today’s Presenter

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Presentation Overview

• Importance of Falls Prevention
• Fall Risk Factors
• How to Modify Risk Factors
• Short- and Long-Term Action Steps
• Tools and Resources

What does preventing falls mean for Health Home clients?
Fall-related injuries can cause an individual to limit their activities, and lose their independence

FALLS ARE PREVENTABLE

Preventing falls decreases risk of injury and improves quality of life
Falls Are A Serious Problem

- Nationally:
  - Every 20 minutes an older adult dies from a fall
  - Every second of every day an older adult is transported to via ambulance for a fall

- In Washington:
  - One in three adults over 55 falls every year
  - Falls are the leading cause of fatal and non-fatal injuries for older adults
Injuries Cost the U.S. $671 Billion in 2013

Falls and transportation-related injuries account for the majority of nonfatal injury costs

Medical and work loss costs of injury by mechanism (cause), United States, 2013

*Fatal poisoning includes deaths from drug poisoning.


Total Number of Fall-Related Hospitalizations in WA for Adults 65+, 1990-2015
Total Number of Fall-Related Deaths in WA for Adults 65+, 1990-2015

Figure 4. Percentage of ED visits admitted to the hospital and discharged to long-term care among elderly patients treated for injurious falls, by nature of injury, 2006*

*Any ED visit for injurious falls is categorized as a specific nature of injury if the injury is present in any diagnostic field.
**Includes unspecified injuries, systemic wide and late effects, nerve injuries, burns, injuries to the blood vessels, crushing injuries, and amputations.

Leading Risk Factors for Falls:

- Previous falls, especially with injury*
- Decreased leg strength
- Decreased balance
- Taking more than four medications
- Unsafe home environment
- Vision problems
- Chronic Conditions* (arthritis, stroke, incontinence, diabetes, Parkinson’s, dementia)
- Fear of falling
- Decreased sensation in feet
- Advanced age*

*Non-modifiable

Stay Independent Self Assessment
# My Falls-Free Plan: a Health Home Resource

## Falls Are Preventable

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Risk Factor</th>
<th>Intervention</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Decreased leg strength and balance</td>
<td>Physical Therapy or Exercise Program</td>
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<tr>
<td>Medications</td>
<td>Have doctor and pharmacist review meds with client and assess meds for falls risk</td>
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<tr>
<td>Unsafe Home Environment</td>
<td>Remove throw rugs, install grab bars and clear clutter from walkways</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fear of falling</td>
<td>Discuss ways to modify risks and focus on empowerment to make a change</td>
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<tr>
<td>Vision problems</td>
<td>Yearly eye exam with optometrist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decreased sensation in feet</td>
<td>Appointment with podiatrist</td>
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Decreased Leg Strength and Balance

• Make appointment with Primary Care Provider

• Referral to Physical Therapy:
  – Home Health
  – Outpatient
  – Home Exercise Program

Evidence Based Community Falls Prevention Programs

• Available in the community at low or no cost
• Requires physician approval to participate
• Educational Programs and Exercise Classes
• Listed at: Evidence-Based Falls Prevention for Older Adults (ncoa.org)
Medication Review

- Primary Care Provider
- Pharmacist
- Home Health Nurses
  - Client must be homebound to qualify

Unsafe Home Environment

- Stair handrails
- Grab bars
- Lighting
- Tripping hazards
- Uneven surfaces
Vision Problems

• Yearly vision screening is a best practice to prevent falls

Decreased Sensation in Feet

• Client should make appointment with Podiatrist
• Decreased sensation
Chronic Conditions

- Better management of chronic conditions can decrease falls risk.
  - Chronic Disease Self Management Programs
  - Diabetes Prevention and Management | Washington State Department of Health

My Falls-Free Plan Screening

- Give the client a copy of the screening tool
  - It offers ideas for clients
  - It may be shared with family members and caregivers
- Interpreting the score:
  - 0 to 2 indicates a low risk for falls
  - 2 to 4 indicates a moderate risk for falls
  - 4 or more indicates a high risk for falls
My Falls-Free Plan Recommendations

• Encourage clients to talk to their doctor if:
  – they take more than 4 medications (including over-the-counter medications)
  – they are experiencing dizziness or light headedness
    • This may be a sign of a blood pressure problem
  – they report a loss of strength or balance
    • a referral to PT and/or OT may help them restore function
    • a prescription for durable medical equipment, such as a cane or walker, may increase safety and confidence

My Falls-Free Screening Recommendations (cont.)

• Ask the client if it has been over two years since their last eye exam, it may be time to schedule an appointment

• Ask the client if they have glasses, are they broken, do they need a replacement pair, do they wear them
  • Suggest ideas on how to keep them handy, for example, on the nightstand by their bed

• Ask the client if they are having trouble hearing
  – A referral for a hearing test may be of benefit
My Falls-Free Screening Recommendations (cont.)

- Ask the client if they exercise two or more times per week
  - Brainstorm ideas to get your client moving more
- Ask the client if they consume alcohol on a daily basis
  - Consider sharing the AUDIT (Alcohol Use Disorders Identification Test)
  - Educate the client about safe levels of alcohol consumption

Resources – Screening

- Stay Independent Brochure
  - Client can take with them to Primary Care Provider
  - Algorithm for Recommendations
    https://www.cdc.gov/steadi/pdf/STEADI-Algorithm-print.pdfEvidence based
Resources – Materials

• SAIL Information Guide
  – Provides information on home safety, medications, exercise and health issues
  – Free to download online
  – Printed books available for free from DOH

Resources – Materials (cont.)

  – “Check for Safety” and “What YOU Can Do To Prevent Falls” From the CDC
  – Newer brochures are free to download online
  – Older printed brochures available for free from DOH
Resources – Materials (cont.)

– AARP HomeFit Guide
  • Room by room guide to modifying homes for safety
  • Available free online, or order it free from AARP

Resources - Screening

Another optional assessment:

http://projects.hsl.wisc.edu/SERVICE/modul.es/6/M6_CT_Environmental_Cleanliness_Clutter_Scale.pdf
Reducing Falls

- Regular Exercise
- Vision Exam
- Podiatry Appt.

Falls → PCP Appointment → Fear of Falling → Community Program

Loss of Independence
Home Safety
Decreased Functional Ability
Physical Therapy
Limiting Activity

Health Action Planning

• Develop a **Short-Term Goal** to reduce fall risk
  – Identify factors that put patients at risk
• Create **action steps**
  – Make appointment with Primary Care
  – Sign up for strength & balance fitness class
  – Have medications reviewed for falls risk
  – Appointment with Podiatrist
  – Vision exam with Optometrist
  – Learn how to better manage Chronic Conditions
Reducing Falls
Community Wide Efforts

- Health Systems
- Health Insurance Plans
- Community programs
- Clinician education and referrals (STEADI)
- Aging Partners -- services, community health workers, volunteers, professional organizations, first responders
- Public awareness

Post Webinar Discussion

1. What information shared today surprised you about falls?
2. How might you apply what you learned to your current practices as a care coordinator or allied staff?
3. Do you work with clients with an increased risk for falls?
4. How have you assisted these clients? Did you complete a falls risk assessment? Did you provide educational materials about fall prevention strategies? Did you work with the client’s family and caregivers to reduce the risk for falls?