



A Matter of Balance

Managing Concerns About Falls

Volunteer Lay Leader Model



What do we know about falls?

- Leading cause of injury and death for older adults
- Less than 14% of the population is 65+, yet they account for 40% of all injury hospitalization
- Seventy percent of the people who were hospitalized or died from falls were over 65
- Falls injuries are the leading cause of hospitalization and ER visits in the County* *Hamilton County Injury Surveillance System 1999-2003



What do we know about falls?

- Up to 58% of falls occur around the home
- A majority of falls occur during routine activities
- Falls usually aren't caused by just one issue. It's a combination of things coming together.
- A large portion of falls are preventable!



What do we know about falls?

Falls are :

- Common
- Predictable
- Preventable

Falls are not a natural part of aging!



What do we know about fear of falling?

- It is reasonable to be concerned about falls - safety is important
- 1/3 to 1/2 of older adults acknowledge fear of falling
- Fear of falling is associated with:
 - *decreased satisfaction with life*
 - *increased frailty*
 - *depression*
 - *decreased mobility and social activity*
- Fear of falling is a risk factor for falls



What is A Matter of Balance?

A Matter of Balance is a program:

- based upon research conducted by the Roybal Center for Enhancement of Late-Life Function at Boston University
- designed to reduce the fear of falling and increase the activity levels of older adults who have concerns about falls



A Matter of Balance: Managing Concerns About Falls

During 8 two-hour classes, participants learn:

- To view falls and fear of falling as controllable
- To set realistic goals for increasing activity
- To change their environment to reduce fall risk factors
- To promote exercise to increase strength and balance



A Matter of Balance: Managing Concerns About Falls

What Happens During Classes?

- *Group discussion*
- *Problem-solving*
- *Skill building*
- *Assertiveness training*
- *Exercise training*
- *Videotapes*
- *Sharing practical solutions*



Who could benefit from A Matter of Balance?

Anyone who:

- is concerned about falls
- has sustained a fall in the past
- restricts activities because of concerns about falling
- is interested in improving flexibility, balance and strength
- is age 60 or older, ambulatory and able to problem-solve.



Administration on Aging Grant

In 2003, AoA launched a three year public/private partnership to increase older people's access to programs that have proven to be effective in reducing their risk of disease, disability and injury

Grant Partners:

- Southern Maine Agency on Aging
- MaineHealth's Partnership for Healthy Aging
- Maine Medical Center Division of Geriatrics
- University of Southern Maine
School of Social Work



Administration on Aging Grant

Grant Goals:

- Develop a volunteer lay leader model and test whether it is successful when compared with original research
- Share our approach with others in Maine and around the country



A Matter of Balance Outcomes

Participant Outcomes

- 97 % - more comfortable talking about fear of falling
- 97 % - feel comfortable increasing activity
- 99 % - plan to continue exercising
- 98 %- would recommend A Matter of Balance

* % who agree to strongly agree

Comments:

I am more aware of my surroundings. I take time to do things and don't hurry.

I have begun to exercise and am looking forward to a walking program.

I have more pep in not being afraid.



Participants Report:

- Increased confidence in taking a walk, climbing stairs, carry bundles without falling
- More confidence that they can increase their strength, find ways to reduce falls, and protect themselves if they do fall
- An increase in the amount they exercise on a regular basis
- Fewer falls after taking MOB



FIDELITY

So...when is a duck a duck?





FIDELITY

Have we modified to enhance and adapt?



FIDELITY

...or have we modified to the point of creating something entirely different?





A Matter of Balance Coach

- Talks with the MOB Coordinator
- Completes an application
- Attends the eight hour training and earn MOB certification
- Agrees to coach two MOB classes within one year of certification

Recommended:

- Observe one MOB class prior to coaching
- Attend team meetings



Role of the coach

- Review the Matter of Balance session and select the activities for the day
- Arrive early to get organized
- Share the day's goals
- Encourage lots of discussion & problem-solving



Role of the Coach

- Lead the exercises
- Connect with each participant
- Review what has been learned and set the stage for the next session.
- Have fun !



How we will work together...

- Find sites and schedule classes
- Recruit participants
- Provide the supplies and refreshments
- Arrange for a guest healthcare professional
- Offer support and mentoring



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