

Hartman's

In-Service Education SourceBook Series



Preventing Falls in the Elderly

Kathlene Benson, BSN, RN, C



Preventing

FALLS

in the Elderly

Contributor

Kathlene Benson, BSN, RN, C
Associate Director
Family & Children's Service, Inc.
Oakhurst, New Jersey

**The publisher gratefully acknowledges the contributions
of the following individuals who reviewed this material:**

Cindy R. Bromke, RN
Westmoreland Regional Hospital - Home Care
Greensburg, Pennsylvania

Martha Russell Caputo, RN
Director of Nursing Services
Staff Educator
Chestertown Nursing and Rehabilitation Center
Chestertown, Maryland

Michelle Torzewski-Baker, RN, MSN
Schofield Residence
Kenmore, New York

Katherine L. Vaughn, RN, BSN
Cookeville, Tennessee

Susan Michele Wheeler, RN, CNAA
Health Supervisor
Greater Lynn Senior Services, Inc.
Lynn, Massachusetts

Julie Conboy Russo, MS, RN, C
Staff Development Manager
Ozanam Hall Queens Nursing Home
Bayside, NY

NOTICE TO THE READER

Though the guidelines contained in this text are based on consultations with healthcare professionals, they should not be considered absolute recommendations. The instructor and readers should follow employer, local, state, and federal guidelines concerning healthcare practices. These guidelines change, and it is the reader's responsibility to be aware of these changes and of the policies and procedures of her or his healthcare facility/agency.

The publisher, author, editors, and reviewers cannot accept any responsibility for errors or omissions or for any consequences from application of the information in this book and make no warranty, express or implied, with respect to the contents of this book.

Publisher does not warrant or guarantee any of the products described herein or perform any analysis in connection with any of the product information contained herein.

CREDITS

Contributor: Kathlene Benson
Development Editors: Celia McIntire and Susan Alvare
Copy Editor: Susan Alvare
Design: John W. Davis
Composition: Celia McIntire
Illustration: Thaddeus Castillo

THANKS

The publisher would like to thank -

Cindy R. Bromke, RN, for permission to use her real-life story as the basis for "The Case of the Fallen Resident"

ISBN 1-888343-28-1

©2000 Hartman Publishing, Inc. All rights reserved.
Limited permission to photocopy the labeled handouts in this text is granted to direct purchasers of this book from the publisher. **Copies can only be made for employees or students at ONE LOCATION of a multi-site employer or school.** No other part of this book may be reproduced, in any form or by any means, without permission in writing from the publisher.

Table of Contents

FYI	7	8: Describe how to assess older persons for the risk of falling	43
Introduction and Assessment	9	Transparency: Assessing the Older Person for the Risk of Falling (45)	
Handouts: Assessment A (10) Assessment A Answer Key (11) Note-Taking Worksheet (12) Key Terms (15)		9: Describe how to assess and improve the home environment to reduce the risk of falling	46
1: List and describe current statistics and facts on falling	16	Transparencies: Safety in Bathrooms (49) Safety in Bedrooms and Living Areas (50) Safety in Kitchens (51) Assessing the Home Environment (52)	
Transparencies: Facts on Falling (18) Causes of Falls Resulting in Hospitalization (19) More Facts on Falling (20)		10: Discuss how ROM exercises and physical activity can help prevent falls	53
2: Identify risk factors for falling	21	Handouts: Physical Activity: Benefits and Barriers (55) Guidelines for Assisting with an Exercise Program (56) Transparency: Physical Activity: Benefits and Barriers (57)	
Transparency: Risk Factors for Falling (22)		11: Discuss ways to assist with nutritional status to help prevent falls	58
3: List four normal changes of aging that may lead to falls	23	Transparency: Changes in Nutrition Due to Aging (59)	
Transparency: Normal Changes of Aging (26)		12: List changes to observe and report that may lead to falls	60
4: Identify four disease processes that may lead to falls	27	Handout: Reducing the Risk of Falls (62) Transparency: Observation and Reporting (63)	
Transparency: Disease Processes That May Cause Falls (29)		13: Demonstrate how to assist the client during and after a fall	64
5: Describe changes in mental status that may lead to falls	30	Handouts: Breaking a Fall (67) The Case of the Fallen Resident (68) Transparency: What to Do if Someone Falls (69)	
Transparency: Changes in Mental Status (32)		14: Describe how to report a fall	70
6: List five environmental situations that may lead to a fall	33	Transparency: Sample Incident Report (71)	
Transparencies: Places Where Falls Occur Most Often (35) Hazards in Bathrooms (36) Hazards in Bedrooms and Living Areas (37) Hazards in Kitchens (38) Other Environmental Hazards (39)		Closing and Assessment	72
7: List four possible consequences of falls	40	Handouts: Assessment B (73) Assessment B Answer Key (75)	
Handout: Consequences of Falls (41) Transparency: Consequences of Falls (42)			

References	76
In-Service Evaluation Form	77
Certificate of Completion	78
Record Keeping Form	79
For More Information	80

FYI

One of every three persons over age 65 falls each year. The consequences can be anything from minor bruises to fractures and life-threatening injuries. In addition to physical injuries, people who suffer from falls can easily lose confidence in their own abilities, leading to an increased loss of independence. Injuries and hospitalization from serious falls cost an average of \$1,400 per person per year. That makes the total cost of fall injuries over 20 billion dollars a year!

Caregivers who work with the elderly and “at risk” must be able to recognize the risk factors for falling and find ways to help reduce those risks and prevent falls before they ever happen.

This in-service SourceBook is designed to teach participants about the dangers of falling among the elderly, as well as preventative measures that participants can take to reduce the chances of falling.

Please note that limited permission is granted to photocopy the handouts for use at the site originally purchasing this in-service.

Photocopying other parts of this in-service, including the lesson plan, is expressly prohibited.

To use the handouts, photocopy the number needed for your group. Consider using different colors of paper to organize the different handouts or to make some stand out.

Convert transparency masters to acetates for use with an overhead projector. You can do this by purchasing transparency film at an office supply store and photocopying the transparency masters onto the acetates, or you can have a copy company do it for you. If overhead projection is not convenient for your presentation area, you may wish to copy the information from the transparency masters onto a chalkboard or flip chart.

We hope you find this in-service helpful. And, as always, we welcome your comments and suggestions.

Happy Teaching!

Introduction and Assessment

Estimated Time: 10-15 minutes

Tools: Handout Intro-1 Assessment A
Handout Intro-2 Assessment A Answer Key
Handout Intro-3 Note-Taking Worksheet
Handout Intro-4 Key Terms

**Distribute
Handout Intro-1
Assessment A**

Allow participants enough time to finish the assessment. Go over the answers and discuss.

**Distribute
Handout Intro-3
Note-Taking
Worksheet**

Tell participants to take notes on the worksheet during all the lectures and discussion. This will help them learn and retain the information and provide them with a review of the in-service later on.

**Distribute
Handout Intro-4
Key Terms**

Tell participants to keep this handout and read over it.

Assessment A

Name: _____ Date: _____

True or False. For each of the following statements, write “T” for true or “F” for false.

1. ____ The number of falls per year has decreased as the elderly population increases.
2. ____ Women are at an increased risk for fractures from falling, because they are more likely to have osteoporosis than men.
3. ____ Little or no exercise is not a risk factor for falling.
4. ____ Certain medications could cause someone to fall.
5. ____ Physical changes due to the normal aging process do not increase someone’s risk for falling.
6. ____ Cardiovascular diseases, Parkinson’s disease, and stroke can all present symptoms that increase the risk factors for falling.
7. ____ Refusing to ask for help can increase an older person’s risk for falling.
8. ____ The bathroom is one of the most likely places for a fall to occur.
9. ____ Having pets around can keep the older person more alert, and therefore reduce the risk of falling.
10. ____ In addition to fractures and other injuries, falls may cause a person to lose confidence, making it more difficult to be independent.

Assessment A Answer Key

1. False. The number of falls per year has actually increased as the elderly population increases.

2. True.

3. False. Little or no exercise can be a risk factor for falling.

4. True.

5. False. Physical changes due to the normal aging process, such as vision and hearing loss, can increase someone's risk for falling.

6. True.

7. True.

8. True.

9. False. Having pets around can increase the risk of falling, because they often get underfoot.

10. True.

Note-Taking Worksheet

Name: _____ Date: _____

1-1 List four important facts or statistics about falls:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

2-1 List three physical problems that could be risk factors for falling:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

2-2 List two mental or social problems that could be risk factors for falling:

1. _____
2. _____

2-3 List one environmental problem that could be a risk factor for falling:

1. _____

3-1 List five normal changes of aging that may lead to falls:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

3-2 How would you feel if you had limited mobility, vision, hearing, or suffered from arthritis? _____

4-1 List five disease processes that could lead to falls. Briefly describe why.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

5-1 List five changes in mental status that could lead to falls:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____