Getting the Elderly Active

A Jose Lebron and Kimberly Escalante Presentation
About Us

• Jose is a senior nursing student at Pace University.
• Kimberly is a sophomore nursing student at Pace University.
• Dr. Coppola is a professor in charge of the intergenerational program at Pace University
• Chris Gaur- Co-founder of Vital Care Services who collaborated with The Kensington Assisted Living Facility for this project.
Objectives

• To study the correlation between activity, blood pressure and weight.

• By encouraging more activity, our objective was to improve the overall health and wellness of the participants.

• Participants’ health would be measured by collection of blood pressure and weight data once a week, as well as a self-report survey at the conclusion of the 8 week program.
Our Interest

• As future nurses, we take pride and care in helping all of our patients, especially the geriatric population.
• Obtain an alternative learning experience, in addition to clinical rotations.
• Opportunity to operate in the cutting edge arena of gerontechnology.
Misconceptions and Myths

• Old age equates to being sick
• You cannot teach an old dog new tricks.
• Health Promotion is wasted on older people.
• Older people prefer to live in isolation and to be alone.
Facts

• Many older adults have chronic diseases, but still function quietly well.
• Older people can learn new things and should be challenged to stay mentally active.
• It is never too late to begin good lifestyle habits, such as eating a healthy diet and engaging in exercise.
• There are many ways to maintain contact with people and healthy older adults have a variety of great options to stay connected with others.
Age Related Changes to Consider

• Musculoskeletal:
  – Decreased joint range of motion
  – Decreased flexibility
  – Decreased mobility
  – Risk of falls
  – Gait changes
Age Related Changes to Consider

• Hearing
  – Hearing loss due to age-related changes in inner ear
  – Difficulty following conversations
  – Tone discrimination loss
  – Social isolation
Age Related Changes to Consider

• Visual
  – Inability to focus properly
  – Distorted depth perception
  – Need for stronger light
  – Increased sensitivity to glare
  – Color discrimination
Age Related Changes to Consider

• Neurological
  – Decreased adaptation
  – Slower response to stimuli
  – Decreased sensation
  – Decreased short-term memory
  – Slower voluntary responses
The Kensington

• Upscale, assisted living facility
• Located at 100 Maple Ave, White Plains, NY
• Elevators
• Cocktail Hour
• Daily activities
• Trips
• Easier access to healthcare
Meet the Residents

• LW – Retired Home Depot worker, interested in stocks
• LN – Retired GWU professor, writes the newsletter
• HD – Austrian immigrant during WWII, disliked technology
• LB – Wife of Harrison judge, enthusiastic about technology
Equipment Used

• Digital scale
• Automated blood pressure cuff
• Laptops/phones
• Fitbit Zip
• Surveys used before and after the program to track beliefs and attitudes.
Fitbit Zip

• Wireless activity tracker
• Tracks number of steps taken, calories burned, distance traveled
• Clipped right onto shirts, Life Alert pendant, purse.

Color is optional, health is not
Why the Fitbit?

• Benefits
  – Portable
  – Easy to use
  – Colorful
  – Use of advanced technology
  – Easy to track progress
Benefits of Implementing the Program

• Activity could be tracked
• Starts conversation of health between resident/provider
• Encourages walking to beat one’s own score
• Simply wear it
• Long battery life
• Numerous ways of syncing data
• Simple gathering of weight and blood pressure
Challenges During the Program

- Tracker is tiny – Easily lost
- Fitbit font was tiny
- Residents’ health
- Residents’ compliance/fear
- Tight clip
- Technology was needed - 2 computers in facility
- Time constraints

*CHALLENGE ACCEPTED*
Session Schedule

- Greet residents
- Obtain vital signs
- Teach the resident about technology
- Close session
Results

- Comfort with technology
  - Fair-Good → Good-Very Good
- Feelings about own health
  - Good-Very Good (No change)
- Helpful to know vital signs regularly?
  - Neutral-Somewhat Helpful (No change)
- Helpful to know steps taken daily?
  - Neutral-Somewhat Helpful (No change)
Results

- Conscious decision for active lifestyle
  - Sometimes-Most of the Time → Most of the Time-Always

- More likely to participate for incentives?
  - Neutral-Somewhat Likely → Somewhat Unlikely-Neutral
How May We Improve?

- Formal orientation session for students
- Clarification session for seniors
- More equipment (computers, scales, cuffs)
- Availability computers and residents
- More participants
Insight into the future

• Hopefully this technology could be used for other demographics and groups such as patients with:
  – Dementia
  – Blindness
  – Deafness
  – Limb amputations
Lessons Learned

• The value of intergenerational connections
• Learned about various
• “Give and take”
• Do not take anything for granted
• Patience is a virtue / Repetition is key
• Different pedagogies
Lessons Learned Continued

• It was a growing and learning process on both sides.
• Residents were able to interact socially with students.
• Students were able to learn about aging through the residents’ abilities.
• We built long-lasting relationships with the residents.
• Communication is important.
Visit Our Website

• For more information or to view photos, please visit:
• http://www.fitgerons.weebly.com