

PHYSIOLOGICAL CHANGES OF OLDER ADULTS

As one ages, many changes can occur. Here are some things you should be aware of when planning a creative activity with an older adult. By ensuring you take into account some of the physiological changes and planning for this, you can ensure better participation:

1 VISION LOSS

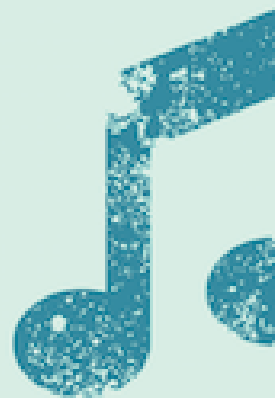
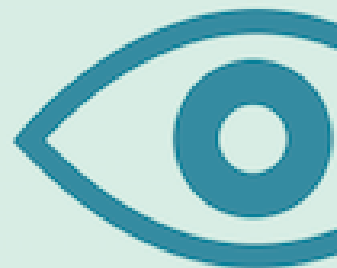
4 percent of older adults above the age of 40 will experience mild to moderate vision loss. Ensure that whatever activity you plan does not require straining the eyes.

2 HEARING LOSS

2/3rds of older adults above the age of 70 will experience deterioration of hearing capabilities as they age. If you decide to do music programs, make sure the volume is adequate and that you speak clearly.

3 DEMINISHED TASTE AND SMELL

Facilitators will often provide cookies, candies, juice, or cakes as the snacks of choice when hosting a creative activity. These options can be high in fat and sugar and negatively impact the health of the seniors who tend to over indulge. Ensure that if you cater snacks to provide healthy options such as fresh fruit and tea instead of juices and pop.



4

CHANGE IN BALANCE AND STRENGTH

Changes in balance and strength means you may have to plan a bit of time to get your seniors to the table and to ensure they have chairs that are easy to get in and out of. For exercise ensure they have railing to hang on to for safety. If you go outdoors, ensure proper footwear and walkers or canes if needed. If being driven somewhere, ensure your senior is provided with adequate support to get in and out of the car.

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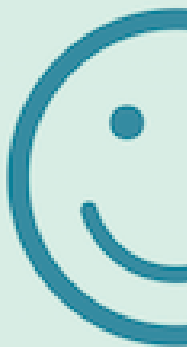
COGNITIVE CHANGES

Although memory loss is common among older adults, only about 14% of Americans suffer from a form of Alzheimers. As people age, the long-term memory strengthens while short-term memory can show a bit of decline. Confusion, memory loss, does not automatically mean someone is suffering from Alzhiemers and rather may have another contributing factor like a Urinary tract Infection, vision or hearing loss.. Do not speak to your older adults in a baby voice - they hate it!

6

EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Seniors are highly intuitive and contrary to the stereotype of the irritable, grumpy, withdrawn senior, most are better adjusted than their teenager counterparts. Changes in hormones and brain development lead to calmer, more positive seniors.



Information from this infographic is adapted from the National Centre for Creative Aging's resource "DESIGNING AND DELIVERING ARTS PROGRAMS FOR OLDER ADULT LEARNERS."

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