

Active Neighbourhoods for Older Australians Community Connectors Program

Guidelines for Neighbourhood Houses and Centre Staff



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THE UNIVERSITY OF
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1. Why Community Connectors?

a) Introduction

Peer support programs, or Community Connector programs, have been found to be a beneficial strategy in promoting physical activity (PA) among older people.

The Active Neighbourhoods for Older Australians (ANOA) Community Connectors Program aims to increase PA among older adults, particularly those who are harder to reach and socially isolated, through increasing (and maintaining) attendance at PA classes in Neighbourhood Houses (NH).

Older people who are hard to reach and socially isolated may not be aware of the PA classes available at your NH. They may also have lower confidence levels and do not attend classes for this reason.

Receiving the encouragement and support from a Community Connector (who is also an older person) may be the key to making them feel welcomed and comfortable to attend a PA class (and hopefully continue attending).

b) Background

The ANOA project is led by Musculoskeletal Australia in collaboration with the University of Sydney and is funded by the Australian Government via Sport Australia. Further information about Musculoskeletal Australia is available at www.msk.org.au Information about the ANOA project is available at www.msk.org.au/active-neighbourhoods/

The principal aim of the ANOA project is to increase the capacity and capability of NH to provide physical activity opportunities for older people. The Community Connectors program is one of the key initiatives within the ANOA project.

c) Community Connectors Program goals

Your Community Connector volunteers will be trained to connect with older people in the community with two overall Community Connector goals:

1. raise awareness of the benefits of PA and the PA programs available at your NH, and
2. provide personal support and a welcoming environment for those who begin attending PA classes.

To put it simply, a Community Connector will raise awareness and provide information and support to other local older people.

d) Benefits of running the Community Connectors Program at your NH

The potential benefits of having Community Connectors at your NH are:

- possible increased attendance of older people in your PA programs
- more long-term participants potentially involved in your NH
- a greater sense of community promoted via the strong connections made between Community Connectors and new participants
- increased awareness of your NH and its programs in the community
- increased awareness of the benefits of PA among the community
- personal health and social benefits for the older people taking on the Community Connector role (there is substantial evidence supporting the health benefits of volunteering).

e) Evaluation of the Community Connectors program

The Community Connectors Program will be evaluated as one of the key research studies in the broader ANOA project. This will be led by Prof Ben Smith, our ANOA Project Team member from the University of Sydney. The evaluation of the Community Connectors program is important, as it will assist in improving the program and also provide information on its potential value and impact.

Participation by NH staff and Community Connectors in the evaluation of the Community Connectors Program is voluntary. Please note that you can still implement the Community Connectors Program at your NH, even if you don't wish to take part in the evaluation.

Further information about the evaluation is available at Section 4 of this document.

2. Recruiting Community Connectors

a) Where to find potential Community Connectors?

The Community Connector role will be voluntary. Older people who may be suitable as Community Connector volunteers should be identified by the NH manager or designated staff member (working with the NH's Community Connectors), as Community Connectors will be considered volunteers of the NH.

Community Connectors need to be:

- current volunteers at the NH, **or**
- suitable older people who are already regular attendees, ideally involved in the NH PA program/s, who are willing to become volunteers.

It is up to the NH manager or designated staff member to determine if a person is suitable for the Community Connector role.

The volunteer **must** complete the Community Connectors training before beginning their role. See Section 3 and Appendix Three for more information about the Community Connectors training program.

b) Key characteristics of a Community Connector

Ideally, a potential Community Connector should display certain personal qualities and fulfil other criteria to maximise their ability to undertake the role. For this reason, Community Connectors will be:

- friendly and welcoming
- motivated and enthusiastic
- currently involved in PA program/s at the NH (preferably) or actively involved in the NH for a period of time
- at least 55 years of age
- good communicator/listener
- relatable (i.e. gets on easily with a range of different people and is within the same age group)
- aware and empathetic when dealing with other people
- connected in other ways within the community (e.g. attends other local clubs, volunteers at other local organisations/groups)
- willing to undertake Community Connector training (in either a group setting or online)
- willing to adhere to their NH's volunteer policies and procedures
- willing to meet regularly (frequency to be determined) with the NH manager or designated staff member to discuss the progress of the role.

c) Role description

It will be up to each NH manager to determine the specifics of how the Community Connector role will be run at their NH, as it's important that the role be in line with the specific and varying requirements of each NH setting. The responsibility for the Community Connectors as volunteers is with the NH.

We recommend that the NH manager or designated staff member explains the NH policies, procedures and any other requirements regarding volunteers during the Community Connectors training program (if the training is taking place at your NH in a group, face-to-face setting), or at meetings **before and after** an older person completes the online version of the Community Connectors training program. Some notes to assist with these 'before and after' meetings are provided at Appendix One of this document. Further information about the Community Connectors training program is available at Section 3 and Appendix Three of this document.

As volunteers of a NH, Community Connectors would also be covered by the NH insurance arrangements.

Keeping the goals of the Community Connectors program in mind (as outlined in Section 1c), it's anticipated that, as a minimum, Community Connectors will undertake the following tasks:

- proactively inform other local older people (e.g. friends, neighbours) about the importance of PA
- proactively encourage (when appropriate) older people to attend PA programs at the NH or at least to come along and have an initial look at the programs
- assisting people with information about transport options to reach the NH
- being present at the NH the first few times when older people (with whom they have had contact) come to the NH to view or attend the PA programs
- support these older people to meet other people within the NH.

Again, within the discretion and direction of the NH manager, Community Connectors may also play a more expanded role, which may include:

- attending local events and local organisations/clubs (with the NH manager or other staff member) to talk about importance of PA for older people and the NH PA programs
- assisting new participants with transport to/from NH
- participating in the PA classes with new participants with whom they have connected
- conducting follow-up calls to anyone they've connected with if that person hasn't attended for a first time or attended classes in a while (this would only be with the permission of the new person)
- organising regular catch-ups with new participants at the NH over coffee
- speaking with other older people at the NH, who may be interested in becoming Community Connectors (this would be after a period of time in the role).

A sample role description is provided at Appendix Two of this document. It can be tailored to the specific needs of each NH participating in the Community Connectors program and can be given to older people with whom NH managers or designated staff members discuss the role, as it may be helpful for them to have something in writing while they consider whether they want to be involved in the role.

If NH managers amend the sample role description as provided at Appendix Two, they are asked to send the ANOA Project Team a copy of their amended Community Connectors role description. This will also aid the evaluation of the Community Connectors program by understanding how the role has been adapted to meet the needs of individual settings.

d) Time commitment and role duration

The time involved in the performance of the Community Connectors role will vary depending on the specifics of the role as determined by the manager or designated staff member in each NH. It will also depend on the time each trained volunteer has to give to the Community Connector role.

Older people interested in becoming Community Connectors must undertake the Community Connector training program. This can be undertaken in a group setting at the NH or online and will take approximately 2.5–4 hours of their time. The time taken for the training will depend on whether the training is completed online or in a face-to-face class setting.

The length of time a person might be involved as a Community Connector is a personal choice for the volunteer and will also be determined by the NH manager or designated staff member. People should, however, be willing to take on the role for at least several months if they're going to be trained and settle into the role.

e) Notification re: your Community Connectors

Soon after you notify the ANOA Project Team that your NH would like to implement the Community Connectors Program, you will be asked to provide some details. The details requested will differ depending on whether your NH is willing to be involved in the evaluation of the Community Connectors program or not (remember, you can still implement the Community Connectors Program at your NH, even if you don't wish to take part in the evaluation). For information about the evaluation and the details required within that, please see Section 4 of this document.

For NHs implementing the Community Connectors Program but not participating in the evaluation, you will be required to inform the ANOA Project Team of the following:

- when the Community Connectors training will be undertaken by your potential Community Connectors
- whether the training will be undertaken online, in a group setting or both, and
- some details about the people who are doing the Community Connectors training, such as:
 - their first name
 - their sex
 - their age.

The ANOA Project Team will also confirm with participating NHs that, following the training, the participants were deemed suitable for the Community Connector role and were willing to get started in the role.

3. About the Community Connectors training program

a) What does the Community Connector training involve?

The training program will be available through an online learning platform and can also be delivered in a face-to-face group setting using other training resources (see Section 3d below).

The course content will include:

- filmed presentations by the ANOA Project Team
- videos, and
- discussion questions to cover the course content, as well as some multiple choice and true/false questions.

The training is in modules so it can be undertaken in one session or over several sessions (although it's recommended that the time between sessions is not long). In total, the training will take approximately 2.5–4 hours to complete (depending on whether it's undertaken online or in a face-to-face group setting).

IMPORTANT: Whether the training is being undertaken online or in a group setting, it is important to emphasise that hurrying through the modules to get the training finished as quickly as possible is not the goal! It is important that people undertaking the training have an understanding of the content and the key concepts covered – in the end, this will be more beneficial for them, the older people they are meeting and for the your NH.

b) Overview of course content

The Community Connectors training program will cover the following key topics:

- an overview and understanding of the Community Connector role
- the importance of PA for older people
- factors and issues that can influence an older person's engagement in PA
- interacting with other people
- other details of the Community Connector role (relevant to each NH).

c) Course requirements

The various tasks throughout the training course are designed to reinforce and consolidate participants' learning and understanding. It's also important that people undertaking the training demonstrate an understanding of some of the key elements of being a Community Connector and display an awareness of some of the issues involved in communicating with other older people, who may be a socially isolated or less confident and unsure about undertaking or trying new things.

Participants will be expected to complete the various tasks throughout the training, however, if any participant experiences some difficulty (e.g. in reading or writing English, or if they have a disability that affects their ability to read or write), assistance may be able to be arranged for them (e.g. an interpreter assisting them if the NH has the resources) or the NH manager or staff member delivering the training can also observe responses to discussion questions to decide if a participant has developed an appropriate level of understanding to carry out the role.

d) Delivery of the Community Connectors training program

○ Option 1 – Group setting (Recommended)

- Run a face-to-face group class with the older people interested in becoming Community Connectors.
- The Community Connectors training program for the group setting will be in the form of a Powerpoint presentation and will be progressed through as a group.
- Notes to assist the NH manager or designated staff member in running the training are available at Appendix Three of this document.
- You will need to project the Powerpoint presentation on to a screen for the class to see as a group.
- Each participant will have a Community Connectors Handbook in which they will have a ‘training’ section containing all the relevant training activities and tasks.
- It is strongly recommended that the training be delivered by the NH manager or designated NH staff member.
- All training modules must be completed, however, the training can be delivered in a way that suits the NH. For example, modules may be split up over two sessions/days or completed in one session with a couple of breaks.
- There will be various quizzes and discussion questions. During the discussions, you will be able to observe students’ responses to assess their understanding and decide if they’re suitable for the role. Training participants should also be encouraged to take notes during discussions.
- You may choose to spend additional time after the training having further group discussions if you feel that participants’ understanding in a particular area or on a particular topic needs additional development.

○ Option 2 – Individual online completion

- If it’s not possible to facilitate a group learning environment, or not all interested participants are not available to join the group training, the training course can be completed online by individuals.
- For those people expressing an interest in doing the Community Connector training program online, it is a good idea to ‘assess’ their confidence and experience in using computers and online programs (i.e. if they are not very confident in using computers regularly, this is not a suitable option for them).

- The content of the group training (as described above) and the online training are similar with only minor differences (e.g. the group setting allows for more discussion).
- The online training program has been created in 'Moodle', an online learning platform. Instructions on how to register for Moodle and how to navigate through the online training is included in the Community Connectors Handbook.
- The online training option has the **additional requirement** of two 30-minute formal meetings with the NH manager or designated staff member, one **prior** to training and one **after** the training is completed. The purpose of these meetings is for the NH manager or staff member to initially discuss aspects of how the Community Connector role will operate at their NH and then to assess the training participant's understanding of key components of the training and decide if the person is suitable for the role. Questions to support the 'before' and 'after' meetings are available at Appendix One of this document.

Please note that the training course will cover general information that will apply to the Community Connector role across all NHs. As outlined in Section 2c of this document, however, NH managers or designated staff member will need to decide on the more specific tasks to be undertaken by Community Connectors at their NH. This local information will be incorporated by the NH manager or staff member in the group delivery of training, or be covered in the meetings that NH managers will have with a Community Connector trainee before and after they complete the online training.

e) **Resources needed for the face-to-face, group delivery of the training**

- *Equipment for the NH to provide or arrange prior to the training*
 - screen and data projector (for group setting)
 - laptop to project the training course on to the screen
 - the Powerpoint presentation (or link to it) containing the Community Connectors training program
 - sufficient copies of the Community Connectors Handbook (one per participant)
 - internet access
 - suitable tables and chairs
 - refreshments (if provided by your NH).
- *What participants should be advised to bring*
 - notepad
 - pens/pencil
 - water bottle
 - snacks (if your NH is not providing refreshments).

f) Tips to keep in mind when delivering training programs

A successful learning experience is created when:

- *The facilitator:*
 - is positive and enthusiastic
 - is well organised
 - has good time management skills
 - creates a positive learning environment
 - is honest that they aren't experts on everything
 - models characteristics desired of participants (e.g. respect, good listening skills).
- *Training participants:*
 - feel motivated to act on what they learn in training
 - see the relevance of the training to their role
 - utilise their existing knowledge and experience
 - have time for personal reflection.

4. Evaluation of the Community Connectors Program

Because the Community Connectors initiative is a new and potentially beneficial way of helping older people to engage in programs at NHs, we've decided to invest some time and resources into evaluating how it works, what impacts it has, and how it can be integrated into the future work of NHs.

For NHs, there are some important things to understand about the evaluation, namely:

- Participation in the evaluation is completely voluntary.
- A report detailing the findings of the evaluation of the Community Connector model overall will be developed. The report will include recommendations for improvements to the Community Connectors program. Please note, no NH will be identified in the report.
- This is NOT an evaluation of the work of individual NHs, but of the Community Connector model overall (no Centre will be identified in the report).
- Collection of data will be supported by an evaluation officer, to minimise the demands upon NHs.
- Participating NHs will receive the report and recommendations from the evaluation.

So, what will the evaluation involve? There are three, relatively simple aspects of the evaluation. They are:

- i. Inviting the Community Connectors you recruit to complete short surveys (hard copy or online using Survey Monkey) before they're trained and 6 months later, to find out about their confidence, wellbeing, social networks and physical activity.
- ii. Identifying a NH staff member and Community Connector to each take part in a telephone interview in October/November 2020 to find out about what they've done in this initiative, what has helped or hindered their work, and what they've learnt for the future.
- iii. Keeping attendance records of classes (until the end of 2020, without identifying individuals), to see if the support of Community Connectors offers any benefits in relation to the frequency and duration of attendance of older adults to NH PA programs.

These evaluation steps are in addition to the existing participant surveys that older people who are newly enrolled in groups are being invited to complete.

We would be grateful if you would consider taking part in the evaluation and we would be happy to provide any further information to assist you in your decision.

5. Ongoing support for Community Connectors

It is strongly recommended that regular supervision or meetings be held involving Community Connectors and NH managers or designated staff to track their progress and support them in their role. The frequency of their meetings can be determined at the NH level, but at least fortnightly in the early stages of the program would be beneficial.

As another idea, neighbouring NHs might develop a Community Connectors bulletin or mechanism to share ideas and experiences as a way of supporting trained Community Connectors and enhancing their learning and confidence.

Appendix One

Notes for NH managers (or designated staff member) to guide the 'before' and 'after' meetings with online training participants

1. Introduction

It is recommended that the NH manager or designated staff member working with your NH's Community Connectors meets with any older person who is individually doing the Community Connectors training program online. It is recommended that a meeting be held **before** and **after** they undertake the training.

2. The 'before' online training meeting

This approach is recommended so the NH manager or designated staff member is confident that the older person:

- is aware of what is involved in the Community Connector role
- has read and understood the Community Connector role description
- is aware that they will become a volunteer of the NH and will need to abide by all relevant policies, procedures, etc
- is capable of undertaking the training online by themselves (i.e. they are confident and comfortable in using a computer and have had personal experience regularly using a computer)
- is aware of who to contact should they find the online training too difficult.

It is assumed that the NH manager or designated staff member has previously approached the older person to find out if they are interested in becoming a Community Connector and they have indicated that they would.

In preparation for this 'before training' meeting:

- have your NH Community Connector role description on hand (a sample role description is available at Appendix Two of this document)
- familiarise yourself with any specific policies and procedures relating to your NH's volunteers
- work out who of your NH house staff can provide some assistance if the person has any questions while doing the online training

In the 'before training' meeting, ask the older person the following questions (or a version of them to gain the information you need):

- What do you understand to be involved in the Community Connector role?
- Have you read our Community Connector role description and do you have any questions about it?
- Are you aware that you will become a volunteer of our NH and will need to abide by all relevant policies, procedures, etc? (Mention what some of these are)
- How often do you use a computer and what do you generally use it for?
- Do you have a computer at home? If not, where do you plan to do the online Community Connectors training program?
- Is there someone at home, a friend or family member who could help you if you have any problems doing the online training program at home?
- Do you know who to contact here at the NH if you have any problems with the online training program, or if you decide not to proceed with the online training program?

3. The 'after' online training meeting

This approach is recommended so the NH manager or designated staff member is confident that the older person:

- has completed the online training
- has a reasonable understanding of the issues influencing whether an older person engages in PA or not
- has a reasonable understanding of some of the things that Community Connectors need to keep in mind when approaching and talking with other older people they don't know
- is aware of what is involved in the Community Connector role
- has read and understood the Community Connector role description
- is aware that they will become a volunteer of the NH and will need to abide by all relevant policies, procedures, etc

In preparation for this 'after training' meeting:

- Read through the training program notes that are included in this document at Appendix Three of these Guidelines
- Ask the training participant to bring a copy of the certificate they should have received (or printed out) at the end of the training course to show they have successfully completed it
- Determine how the Community Connector role will operate at your house or centre
- Have a copy of the Community Connectors Handbook to give them at the meeting
- Be clear what policies and procedures the Community Connector (as a volunteer of your NH) will need to abide by
- Be clear about the specific activities you would like the Community Connector to start with

In the 'after training' meeting, ask the older person the following questions (or a version of them to gain the information you need):

- How did you go with the training – how did you find it and did you complete it successfully?
- What were some of the topics covered in the training?
- What are some of the benefits of physical activity for older people?
- What were three things that you learnt about why some older people don't engage in physical activity?
- What are some things to keep in mind when you are talking with older people you are meeting for the first time?
- Are you clear about what you need to do as a Community Connector within our NH?
- How much time do you think you can give to the role and when might you start?

Make sure the Community Connector is clear about the following matters:

- That they are a volunteer of our NH and will need to abide by all relevant policies, procedures, etc
- To whom they should speak if they have any queries or problems
- That they must act within the role of the Community Connector and not go beyond what is required

Appendix Two

Community Connectors- Sample Role Description ONLY

Your Neighbourhood House or Centre may tailor this role description to accommodate their needs and the needs of the community in your area. Therefore, the Neighbourhood House manager might amend it and provide you with an updated role description.

1. Role purpose

The Active Neighbourhoods for Older Australians (ANOA) Community Connectors Program aims to increase physical activity among older adults, particularly those who don't regularly join in activities and are socially isolated, through increasing (and maintaining) attendance at physical activity classes in Neighbourhood Houses.

Older people who are not engaged in activities and are socially isolated may not be aware of the physical activity classes available at your Neighbourhood House. They may also have lower confidence levels and do not attend classes for this reason.

Receiving the encouragement and support from a Community Connector (who is also an older person) may be the key to making them feel welcomed and comfortable to attend a physical activity class (and hopefully continue attending).

As a Community Connector volunteer, you will be trained to connect with older people in the community with two overall Community Connector goals:

- a) raise awareness of the benefits of physical activity and the physical activity programs available at your Neighbourhood House, and
- b) provide personal support and a welcoming environment for those who begin attending physical activity classes.

To put it simply, a Community Connector will raise awareness and provide information and support to other local older people.

2. Key skills and characteristics required

- Completed Community Connectors training (in either a group setting or online)
- Current volunteer at NH or willing to become a volunteer
- Friendly and welcoming
- Motivated and enthusiastic

- Currently involved in physical activity program/s at the Neighbourhood House (preferably), or actively involved in the Neighbourhood House for a period of time
- At least 55 years of age
- Good communicator/listener
- Relatable (i.e. gets on easily with a range of different people and is within the same age group)
- Aware and empathetic when dealing with other people
- Connected in other ways within the community (e.g. attends other local clubs, volunteers at other local organisations/groups)
- Willing to adhere to their Neighbourhood House's volunteer policies and procedures
- Willing to meet regularly (frequency to be determined) with the Neighbourhood House manager or designated staff member to discuss the progress of the role.

3. Tasks

At a minimum, Community Connectors will undertake the following tasks:

- Proactively inform other local older people (e.g. friends, neighbours) about the importance of physical activity
- Proactively encourage (when appropriate) older people to attend physical activity programs at the Neighbourhood House or at least to come along and have an initial look at the programs
- Assist people with information about transport options to reach the Neighbourhood House
- Be present at the Neighbourhood House the first few times when older people (with whom they have had contact) come to the Neighbourhood House to view or attend the physical activity programs
- Support these older people to meet other people within the Neighbourhood House

Optional (only within the discretion and at the direction of the Neighbourhood House manager)

Community Connectors may also play a more expanded role, which may include

- Attend local events and local organisations/clubs (with the Neighbourhood House manager or other staff member) to talk about the importance of physical activity for older people and the Neighbourhood House physical activity programs
- Assist new participants with transport to/from the Neighbourhood House
- Participate in the physical activity classes with new participants with whom they have connected

- Conduct follow-up calls to anyone they've connected with if that person hasn't attended for a first time or attended classes in a while (this would only be with the permission of the new person)
- Organise regular catch-ups with new participants at the Neighbourhood House over tea/coffee
- Speak with other older people at the Neighbourhood House, who may be interested in becoming Community Connectors (this would be after a period in the role)

4. Support and development

- All Community Connectors will need to undertake Community Connectors training
- All Community Connectors will have support from the Neighbourhood House manager or designated staff member to discuss the progress of the role
- All Community Connectors will be covered by the Neighbourhood House insurance arrangements

Appendix Three

Notes to guide the face-to-face, group delivery of the Community Connectors Training Program

Before you run this training program at your NH, we strongly recommended that you:

- Read through Section 3 of this document to provide an overview of the training program
- Read through the course below to find out in detail what is involved
- Determine whether you will run the course as a whole (approximately four hours + breaks) or break it up into parts (e.g. two hours in one session and then two hours in another session). Please see the time involved in each module listed below
- Test your equipment (including access to the internet) before people come together for the training
- Have the Community Connectors training program open and ready up on the screen before people arrive to start the training
- Read through the Community Connectors Handbook and have enough copies so there is one for each participant.

The estimated time for each of the five modules in the training is as follows:

- Module 1 – 25 minutes
- Module 2 – 58 minutes
- Module 3 – 54 minutes
- Module 4 – 55 minutes
- Module 5 – 30 minutes

Please be aware that the below are only notes to guide you and for you to refer to (if necessary) during the training. You and the class need to follow and work through the Powerpoint presentation and the activity pages in the 'Training' section of the Community Connectors Handbook, which each participant should be given for the training.

Instruction and details	Approximate Time Needed
Introduction and welcome	
Introduce yourself and then ask everyone in the group to introduce themselves and tell the others: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - how long they have attended the NH - why they are interested in doing the Community Connectors training program Also make sure everyone knows each other and everyone feels welcome (especially if they don't know other people).	
Progress the Powerpoint past the title slide and watch the short Community Connector training introduction video. Then continue to progress through the Powerpoint slides and work through the various activities.	2 minutes

<p>Module 1: What are Community Connectors, what do they do and why are they important? <i>The purpose of this module is to provide you with an initial overview and understanding of the Community Connector role.</i></p>	
<p>Activity 1: Watch the video to find out about Community Connectors and why they are valuable</p> <p>Activity 2: As a group, spend 5 minutes discussing the ways in which someone of the same age or with a similar experience might be able to assist another person to engage in physical activity.</p> <p>Activity 3: Watch the video to find out what people might do in their role as Community Connectors</p> <p>Activity 4: Do 'Module 1 - Activity 4' in the training section of the Community Connectors Handbook. They are 'yes/no' questions regarding what participants think might be some important personal qualities of a Community Connector.</p> <p>Correct answers together and discuss any incorrect answers if needed. The correct answers are highlighted in yellow below.</p> <p>A Community Connector:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Is considerate of other people <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No b) Delivers information without worrying about the thoughts or feelings of others <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No c) Usually tries to talk over people when they are talking <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No d) Likes meeting new people <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No e) Is a regular attendee at the neighbourhood house or community centre <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No f) Has personal experience of being physically active <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No g) Doesn't like to follow instructions or rules <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No h) Dislikes talking with people they don't know <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No i) Is new to the neighbourhood house or community centre <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No j) Knows that people act in different ways when they are anxious, nervous or worried <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No k) Knows other older people in the local community <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No 	<p>Activity 1: 6 mins</p> <p>Activity 2: 5 mins</p> <p>Activity 3: 5 mins</p> <p>Activity 4: 7 mins</p> <p>MODULE APPROX TIME (including introduction): 25 mins</p>
<p>Module 2: The importance of physical activity for older people <i>The purpose of this module is to provide you with an understanding of how important physical activity is to the physical, cognitive, mental and social health and wellbeing of older people</i></p>	
<p>Activity 1: Do 'Module 2 - Activity 1' in the training section of the Community Connectors Handbook. This requires participants to provide at least 3 examples of the benefits to older people of being physically active and 3 benefits you have experienced by being physically active yourself.</p> <p>When the group has completed the activity spend approximately 5 minutes discussing some of the participant's answers.</p>	<p>Activity 1: 10 mins</p>

<p>Activity 2: Watch the video to find out what the research tells us about the importance of physical activity for older people.</p>	<p>Activity 2: 7 mins</p>
<p>Activity 3: Do 'Module 2 - Activity 3' in the training section of the Community Connectors Handbook. This requires participants to provide at least 2 examples of other benefits for older people of being physically active that they learned from the video presentation. The group can view the video again, if needed.</p> <p>When the group has completed the activity, spend 5 minutes discussing some of the participants' answers.</p>	<p>Activity 3: 10 mins</p>
<p>Activity 4: Watch the next video titled 'Active Beyond Running'.</p>	<p>Activity 4: 6 mins</p>
<p>Activity 5: Do 'Module 2 - Activity 5' in the training section of the Community Connectors Handbook. This requires participants to respond to 'true or false' questions about the key messages in the video 'Active Beyond Running'. The group can view the video again if needed.</p> <p>When everyone has completed the activity, read out the correct answers and discuss any incorrect answers. The correct answers are highlighted in yellow below.</p> <p>The key messages in the video 'Active beyond running' were:</p>	<p>Activity 5: 10 mins</p>
<p>a) If a person has a disability, they shouldn't be physically active. <input type="checkbox"/> True <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> False</p> <p>b) Once a person reaches 65 years of age, they should stop all physical activity. <input type="checkbox"/> True <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> False</p> <p>c) Walking is an effective way to be physically active. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> True <input type="checkbox"/> False</p> <p>d) Older people can be active in a range of ways. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> True <input type="checkbox"/> False</p> <p>e) When you are older, physical activity does not improve your fitness. <input type="checkbox"/> True <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> False</p> <p>f) Being physically active does not allow you to do the things you want to do. <input type="checkbox"/> True <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> False</p> <p>g) Being physically active increases older people's energy and fitness <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> True <input type="checkbox"/> False</p> <p>h) Having support from others increases an older person's motivation to be physically active. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> True <input type="checkbox"/> False</p> <p>i) There can be negative messages that make older people think that they can't do things or be physically active. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> True <input type="checkbox"/> False</p>	<p>Activity 6: 5 mins</p>
<p>Activity 6: Watch the video 'Physical activity for older people'.</p> <p>Activity 7: With the group, discuss the key messages about the importance of physical activity and older people in the video, 'Physical activity for older people'.</p>	<p>Activity 7: 10 mins</p>
<p>Some points to assist you with the group discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Even if people have chronic health conditions, they can still take part in suitable physical activity • Physical activity (i.e. appropriate activities and at an appropriate level of exertion) is often important in the management of many health conditions 	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Older people shouldn't think that they can't be physically active • Being physically active often helps people sleep better • Strength training is very good for strengthening older people's bones and muscles • Being physically active in a group setting (for example, a gym) is a good way of meeting other people • Some older people like gyms, but others can find them intimidating <p>Please note: There was a comment made towards the end of the video that older people should discuss the benefits and risks of physical activity with their doctor or health professional before they commence physical activity. This is a good idea in some cases (e.g. if the older person has an existing health condition), but it is not necessary for all older people.</p>	<p>MODULE APPROX TIME: 58 mins</p>
<p>Module 3: Barriers and facilitators to older people being physically active</p> <p><i>The purpose of this module is to provide you with an understanding of some of the factors that can make it difficult for some older people to be physically active. This module also covers some of the ideas and actions that can help them to be physically active.</i></p>	
<p>Activity 1: Do 'Module 3 - Activity 1' in the training section of the Community Connectors Handbook. This requires participants to provide at least 2 reasons why you think some older people aren't physically active or don't join in physical activity programs.</p> <p>When the group has completed the activity spend 5 minutes discussing some of the answers.</p> <p>Activity 2: Do 'Module 3 - Activity 2' in the training section of the Community Connectors Handbook. This requires participants to read a short article to find out about the factors and issues that influence whether older people are physically active or not. This article is provided at Appendix Four of this document so you can read it too). They then have to respond to some 'true or false' questions about what they read.</p> <p>When everyone has completed the activity, read out the correct answers and discuss any incorrect answers if needed. The correct answers are highlighted in yellow below.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Money is never a reason why older people are not physically active. <input type="checkbox"/> True <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> False 2) Older people's health can be an issue in their ability to be physically active. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> True <input type="checkbox"/> False 3) Positive encouragement from family and friends is a negative influence on older people deciding to participate in physical activity. <input type="checkbox"/> True <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> False 4) Older people are more likely to participate in physical activity if there are appropriate facilities and transport in their local area. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> True <input type="checkbox"/> False 5) Health reasons can be both a barrier and a motivating factor to older people engaging in physical activity. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> True <input type="checkbox"/> False 6) Feeling uncomfortable in a group is rarely a barrier to their participation in physical activity. <input type="checkbox"/> True <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> False 7) If an older person's health professional (e.g. their GP) recommends that they undertake some form of physical activity, it is likely to have a positive impact on their participation in physical activity. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> True <input type="checkbox"/> False 8) If an older person has poor self-confidence, they are likely to join a group physical activity program <input type="checkbox"/> True <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> False 	<p>Activity 1: 8 mins</p> <p>Activity 2: 20 mins</p>

<p>Activity 3: Watch the video about the reasons why older people don't engage in physical activity. It also provides some ideas and strategies that can help them become more active.</p> <p>Activity 4: Do 'Module 3 - Activity 4' in the training section of the Community Connectors Handbook. This requires participants to answer multiple-choice questions about why older people don't engage in physical activity, and some of the things they have learned that can help people become more active. The group can view the video again if needed.</p> <p>When everyone has completed the activity read out the correct answers (highlighted in yellow) and discuss any incorrect answers if needed.</p> <p>a) Which of the below are strategies for improving older people's awareness about local physical activity opportunities?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Word of mouth <input type="checkbox"/> Pamphlets in the letterbox <input type="checkbox"/> Speaking face-to-face with older people in groups and at community events <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> All of the above <p>b) Which of the below examples are ways of making someone's first time at a physical activity programs easier and welcoming?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Asking them to stand in front of the group and introduce themselves, when they are already feeling nervous and shy <input type="checkbox"/> Not speaking to them when they arrive at the class <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Encouraging other participants to speak to a new participant <input type="checkbox"/> Asking them to complete a long, confusing feedback form at the end of the class <p>c) Which of the below are recommended ways of making people from different cultures and language groups feel comfortable in physical activity programs?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Not acknowledging their cultural preferences or making any effort to accommodate them <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Finding out about their language and cultural preferences so these can be taken into account <input type="checkbox"/> Requiring them to attend classes to improve their English language skills <input type="checkbox"/> Having them give a cultural presentation to the group (e.g., dance, traditional story) even if they are feeling nervous/shy <p>d) Which of the below can be factors that make older people drop out of physical activity programs?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Not feeling supported by other people and the leader <input type="checkbox"/> Health issues <input type="checkbox"/> Loss of motivation <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> All of the above 	<p>Activity 3: 6 mins</p> <p>Activity 4: 10 mins</p>
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<p>e) Which of the actions below would assist older people who are having difficulty maintaining their involvement in the group?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Having the leader visit them at home unannounced each time they miss a group class</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Not talking to the person directly and asking their family or caregivers about any problems that may be affecting their group attendance</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Contacting them by phone or text message to let them know they are missed when they don't attend and they are always welcome to join the class at any time</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Writing to them to let them know that they will lose their place if they do not attend regularly</p> <p>Activity 5: With the group, discuss any local groups of older people that may not currently attend your neighbourhood house or community centre, or the physical activity programs at your house or centre. Also discuss possible ways Community Connectors might be able to assist these people.</p> <p>Some points to assist you with the group discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maybe think about such groups or types of older people such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Older people who live alone ○ Older people with physical, intellectual, or other disabilities ○ Older people from a range of cultural backgrounds (who may speak English or not) ○ Older men and women ○ Older people who live in community housing • Ask the training participants of some ideas of how they might be able to let these groups of people know about the NH and the physical activity programs that are available (they may or may not end up doing any of these things) • Ask the training participants what they and the NH could do to make older people from any of these groups feel welcome if they were to attend the NH 	<p>Activity 5: 10 mins</p> <p>MODULE APPROX TIME: 54 mins</p>
<p>Module 4: Things for Community Connectors to think about when encouraging other older people to be physically active</p> <p><i>The purpose of this module is to provide you with some tips to help you when communicating with older people you don't know. This module will also provide some examples about how you as a Community Connector can promote the importance of physical activity and encourage other older people to join the physical activity programs at your neighbourhood house or community centre.</i></p>	
<p>Activity 1: Watch the video for some tips to keep in mind when communicating with older people you don't know.</p> <p>Activity 2: Do 'Module 4 - Activity 2' in the training section of the Community Connectors Handbook. This requires participants to answer the some 'true or false' questions about communicating with older people they don't know. The group can view the video again, if needed.</p> <p>When everyone has completed the activity, read out the correct answers and discuss any incorrect answers if needed. The correct answers are highlighted in yellow below.</p> <p>a) It is not a good idea to smile when meeting someone for the first time <input type="checkbox"/> True <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> False</p> <p>b) People can be anxious when meeting someone for the first time <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> True <input type="checkbox"/> False</p>	<p>Activity 1: 5 mins</p> <p>Activity 2: 10 mins</p>

- c) Community Connectors should not pay attention to the body language of the older people they are talking to True False
- d) When appropriate, sharing your own personal experiences can really help when you are building trust and rapport with someone True False
- e) Older people are a very diverse group True False
- f) A Community Connector should talk about things they are interested in, even if the other older person isn't interested True False
- g) A Community Connector should persist in giving information to another older person, even if the other person isn't interested True False
- h) It is important that Community Connectors are aware of what their role involves True False

Activity 3:

Watch the video for more tips to help you communicate with older people you don't know.

Activity 4:

Read Case Study No.1 at 'Module 4 - Activity 4' in the training section of the Community Connectors Handbook.

As a group discuss the case study using the questions listed below (written answers are not required but people can take notes).

Case Study No.1 and the related questions are included here:

Jim is a recently widowed 72-year old man who lives on his own since losing his wife. Jim is in reasonably good health, however experiences hip pain from arthritis and is also quite frail. He has family who come to visit him about once a week, but other than this, he doesn't have many other people in his life who he socialises with. Jim has very low confidence to leave the house and usually prefers to stay at home watching TV with his dog, Oscar. His family are trying to encourage him to join a local exercise group, but the thought of this scares Jim because he believes any exercise groups would be too advanced for him and he would embarrass himself. He is also afraid of injuring himself. You meet Jim at the local shopping centre and he tells you the above information. What would you do in your Community Connector role to assist Jim and encourage him to try a physical activity class at your Neighbourhood House (NH)?

Discussion points:

- How would you first bring up the suggestion of attending an exercise class at your NH?
- If Jim showed no interest in coming along to an exercise class at the NH, what would you say to him?
- What would you do to follow up with Jim if you don't see him around at the NH or hear from him after your chat?
- What would you say to Jim about his concern of the class being too advanced for him?
- What benefits would you tell him he can get from trying out the class?

Activity 3:
5 mins

Activity 4:
20 mins

<p>Activity 5: Read Case Study No.2 at ‘Module 4 - Activity 5’ in the training section of the Community Connectors Handbook.</p> <p>As a group discuss the case study using the questions listed below (written answers are not required but people can take notes).</p> <p>Case Study No.2 and the related questions are included here:</p> <p>Pam is a 67-year old woman who is shy, lives on her own and is fairly social isolated. She has recently commenced a weekly sewing class (after her neighbour asked her to join her) at the local neighbourhood house (NH), which she enjoys. Other than attending the NH once a week, Pam doesn’t have much interaction with people and her family live interstate; she tends to just stay at home with her toy poodle, Sugar.</p> <p>You also participate in the sewing class. During a class, you overhear Pam saying that she is finding it difficult to walk even to the letterbox without pain in her knee. She says her doctor has told her it would be good to do some light exercise a few times a week. Other than this, Pam is in reasonably good health.</p> <p>Pam commented she felt too overwhelmed to attend a gym and was too old to start any physical activity. Pam is a bit apprehensive about starting something new on her own. What would you do in your Community Connector role to assist Pam and encourage her to try a physical activity class at your NH?</p> <p>Discussion points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How would you approach Pam to discuss your role as a Community Connector? • What would you say and what information would you provide to Pam to encourage her to attend a physical activity program at your NH? • How would you support Pam to feel comfortable and supported in attending the physical activity class? • What follow-up would you offer Pam to ensure she is happy and would like to continue to attend the program? 	<p>Activity 5: 15 mins</p> <p>MODULE APPROX TIME: 55 mins</p>
<p>Module 5: The Community Connector Program at your Neighbourhood House <i>The purpose of this module is to think about and discuss how the Community Connector role will be implemented at your neighbourhood house or community centre.</i></p>	
<p>Activity 1: Spend 5-10 minutes discussing with your training participants what each person is personally hoping to get out of being a Community Connector.</p> <p>Activity 2: As the NH manager (or designated staff member working with Community Connectors at your NH) explain to the participants how the Community Connector role will be implemented at your NH and discuss. Some of the things you might cover include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The role description for Community Connector role at your NH • What sort of things the Community Connectors might be expected to do (maybe start small and build up as they become more experienced and confident) 	<p>Activity 1: 10 mins</p> <p>Activity 2: 20 mins</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If relevant, specific groups of older people that would be good to engage in the PA programs at the NH • As a volunteer of the NH, they will need to abide by all relevant policies, procedures (mention what these are) • Details regarding a regular Community Connectors catch-up or supervision session • Who they should contact if they have any problems or questions • Other issues, as needed. <p>If there is not sufficient time to cover everything during this initial talk, arrange another time soon to go into more detail and to allow your Community Connectors plenty of time to ask questions.</p>	<p>MODULE APPROX TIME: 30 mins</p>
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<p>Conclusion</p> <p>View the concluding video</p> <p>Have the participants complete the training feedback form that is also in the training section of the Community Connectors Handbook. It would be great if you could collect the feedback forms and let the ANOA Project Team know the results of the feedback.</p> <p>The feedback questions are as follow:</p> <p>Receiving your feedback about this training course is extremely important as we want to make sure it is meeting people’s needs.</p> <p>1) I have a greater understanding of what is involved in the Community Connector role:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Strongly agree <input type="checkbox"/> Agree <input type="checkbox"/> Neutral <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree <input type="checkbox"/> Strongly disagree <p>2) I have a greater understanding of the factors affecting older people’s participation in physical activity:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Strongly agree <input type="checkbox"/> Agree <input type="checkbox"/> Neutral <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree <input type="checkbox"/> Strongly disagree <p>3) I have an increased understanding of why physical activity for older people is important:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Strongly agree <input type="checkbox"/> Agree <input type="checkbox"/> Neutral <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree <input type="checkbox"/> Strongly disagree 	
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<p>4) I have an increased understanding of things to keep in mind when talking with other older people I don't know:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Strongly agree<input type="checkbox"/> Agree<input type="checkbox"/> Neutral<input type="checkbox"/> Disagree<input type="checkbox"/> Strongly disagree <p>5) After the training, I feel more confident about being a Community Connector (with the ongoing support of my neighbourhood house or community centre manager and staff):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Strongly agree<input type="checkbox"/> Agree<input type="checkbox"/> Neutral<input type="checkbox"/> Disagree<input type="checkbox"/> Strongly disagree	
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Appendix Four

This is the article to be read during the Community Connectors training program in Module 3 - Activity 2:



Active Neighbourhoods
for Older Australians



Understanding what helps and hinders physical activity among older people

Many older people appreciate that physical activity has enormous benefits for health and wellbeing. But, as we all know, understanding that something is good for us is not always enough for us to put that into action. In your work as Community Connectors, it will be vital for you to understand the range of things that can help and hinder older people to take part in physical activity. This will mean you are able to show understanding and provide the kinds of support that will make it easier for older people to join the physical activity programs offered at your Neighbourhood House or Centre.

Marcia Franco and her colleagues from the University of Sydney have summarized the research that has been carried out about what helps (the 'facilitators') and what hinders (the 'barriers') physical activity participation by older people.¹ They found that the things which help and hinder physical activity fall into six groups: social influences, personal benefits, motivations and beliefs, physical limitations, access difficulties, and competing priorities.

Working with what encourages and helps physical activity

The main things that have been found to encourage participation in physical activity by older people are positive social experiences, gaining personal benefits, and internal motivation and beliefs. The table below shows examples of each of these.

Helpful influences	Examples			
Positive social experiences	Making friendships and enjoying the group	Getting encouragement and help from others	Advice and support from a doctor or health worker	Guidance from a physical activity instructor
Gaining personal benefits	Physical strength, balance and flexibility	Self-confidence	Independence in daily life	Mental health and wellbeing
Internal motivation	Wanting to keep up a habit from earlier in life			

¹ Franco MR, Tong A, Howard K, Sherrington C, Ferreira PH, Pinto RZ, Ferreira ML. Older people's perspectives on participation in physical activity: a systematic review and thematic synthesis of qualitative literature. British Journal of Sports Medicine. 2015; 49(19):1268-76.

Using these insights, actions that Community Connectors might take to help older people to participate in physical activity programs at their Neighbourhood House or Centre are:

- introducing them to others at their House or Centre;
- providing encouragement to attend the program;
- finding out what personal benefits are important and help them to see how these can be gained.

Recognising what will discourage and hinder physical activity

Some of the things that can help and encourage physical activity participation, can also be barriers for older people, particularly social influences and motivation. Other things that can hinder participation are physical limitations, access difficulties, and competing demands in life. Common examples of these barriers are shown in the table below.

Barriers	Examples		
Negative social experiences	Feeling uncomfortable in a group	Not feeling that their culture is respected	
Not having motivation	Lack of interest	Don't think physical activity is necessary	Believe physical activity is a risk to health
Physical limitations	Pain and discomfort	Fear of falling	Chronic health problems (e.g. arthritis, incontinence)
Access difficulties	Lack of transport	Unsafe to walk in local area	Cannot afford to join
Competing demands	Caring responsibilities		

As a Community Connector it won't be possible for you to solve many of the issues that can hinder older people from taking part in the physical activity program at your Neighbourhood House or Centre, but you may be able to provide support in some very helpful ways. These include:

- being a friendly person that makes the new participant feel welcome;
- sharing your own experiences about the different ways that the group has benefited you, and why you enjoy attending;
- highlighting that physical activity doesn't have to be intense to be good for you, and that older people of all abilities can take part;
- providing information, or practical help, in regard to transport to the group.

The research has found that one of the great things about joining physical activity groups is the friendships that are formed, and the encouragement that participants receive from others to keep

attending. But there are challenges that some older people face to getting there in the first place and feeling comfortable when they first arrive.

With the information that we have given here about what can help and hinder participation, we hope that you can support new participants form a connection with the physical activity program offered at your Neighbourhood House or Centre, and start to enjoy the benefits that it offers.