



Active Neighbourhoods for Older Australians

Community Connectors Program

Community Connectors Handbook



April 2020



Introduction

Welcome

It's a pleasure to introduce you to the Community Connectors Program. We recognise the role of volunteers, their value and the contribution they make to Neighbourhood Houses or Centres and, more importantly the community.

Musculoskeletal Australia has been supporting people with arthritis and musculoskeletal conditions for 50 years. Musculoskeletal Australia is a service for those living with musculoskeletal conditions to get informed and get supported.

The 'Active Neighbourhoods for Older Australians' project, which is being coordinated by Musculoskeletal Australia in conjunction with the University of Sydney, was funded in 2019 by the Australian Government via Sport Australia.

The Community Connectors program is a key initiative within the Active Neighbourhoods project, which aims to increase the capacity and ability of Neighbourhood Houses to engage older people in physical activity and build social connection.

At Musculoskeletal Australia, we are very supportive of the great work undertaken by Neighbourhood Houses in their local areas. We believe that trained Community Connectors will be a great resource within Neighbourhood Houses to assist in engaging older people in physical activity.

About this Handbook

Becoming a Community Connector opens a world of opportunity to learn new skills, develop self-confidence and enjoy yourself.

We have developed this handbook to guide you in your journey as a Community Connector, as it gives you information that is relevant to the role.

PLEASE NOTE: This handbook is designed for all people doing the Community Connectors Training Program, whether online or in a face-to-face group setting.

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Section 1

What are Community Connectors?



Section 1: What are Community Connectors?

a) What do Community Connectors do

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

1. raise awareness of the benefits of physical activity and the physical activity programs available at your Neighbourhood House or Centre, and;
2. 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.

b) Why Community Connectors are important

The potential benefits of being a Community Connector at your Neighbourhood House or Centre are:

- increased attendance of older people in your Neighbourhood House or Centre physical activity programs;
- more long-term participants potentially involved in your Neighbourhood House or Centre;
- a greater sense of community promoted via the strong connections made between Community Connectors and new participants;
- increased awareness of your Neighbourhood House or Centre and its programs in the community;
- increased awareness of the benefits of physical activity among the community, and;
- personal health and social benefits for you as an older person taking on the Community Connector role (there is substantial evidence supporting the health benefits of volunteering).

c) Role of a Community Connector and how they provide help

A Community Connector is a volunteer who helps older people find out about physical activity programs at their local Neighbourhood House or Centre and supports them to attend. Some of the tasks involved in this role might include:

- sharing information;
- arranging practical assistance to other older people;
- offering support and encouragement;
- attending events to share information with older people in your community;
- participating in classes with older people who are just starting;
- encouraging other older people to become Community Connectors.

d) 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 physical activity programs at the Neighbourhood House or Centre (preferably) or actively involved in the Neighbourhood House or Centre 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 or Centre's volunteer policies and procedures;
- willing to meet regularly (frequency to be determined) with the Neighbourhood House or Centre manager or designated staff member to discuss the progress of the role.



e) Role description

Please see section 5 for the Community Connector role description for your Neighbourhood House or Centre.

f) 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 Neighbourhood House or Centre. It will also depend on the time you will have to give to the Community Connector role.

Older people interested in becoming Community Connectors must complete the Community Connector training program. This can be undertaken in a group setting at the Neighbourhood House or Centre or online and will take approximately 2.5–4 hours (depending on whether you are doing it online or in a group 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 Neighbourhood House or Centre 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.

g) Ongoing support

It is strongly recommended that you have regular supervision or meetings with your Neighbourhood House or Centre manager or designated staff member to track your progress and for them to offer you support in your Community Connector role. The frequency of meetings can be determined with your Neighbourhood House or Centre manager, but at least fortnightly in the early stages of the program would be beneficial.

Section 2

The importance of physical activity for older people



Section 2: The importance of physical activity for older people

a) Benefits to older people of being physical active

Staying active is certainly one of the best things that older people can do to maintain their health and well-being. A selection of the many benefits of physical activity are shown below.

Physical

- Reduce the risk of heart attack
- Lower blood cholesterol
- Lower blood pressure
- Reduce risk of Type 2 Diabetes and some cancers
- Strengthen bones, muscles and joints

Mental

- Improved mood
- Improved sleep
- Higher energy levels
- Increased self confidence
- Improved memory/slows progression of cognitive decline and dementia
- Reduced feelings of sadness, depression and anxiety

Social

- Feeling more connected to the community
- Reduced social isolation
- Forming new friendships and support networks

Key points

- Guidelines recommend at least 30 mins of moderate intensity physical activity (e.g. brisk walking) on most, preferably all, days
- Physical activity can be adjusted for all ages/levels
- It can always offer some benefits regardless of age/health
- There are physical, mental and social benefits
- The physical, mental and social benefits are all connected

Section 3

Barriers and facilitators to older people being physically active



Section 3: Barriers and facilitators to older people being physically active

a) Understanding what helps and hinders physical activity among older people

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.

Research about the thing that helps (the ‘facilitators’) or and what hinders (the ‘barriers’) physical activity by older people has found that these fall under six headings: social influences, personal benefits, motivations and beliefs, physical limitations, access difficulties, and competing priorities.¹

b) 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.

c) 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		

d) Supporting older people to engage with programs at Neighbourhood Houses and Centres

Having considered the major factors that affect physical activity in daily life, it is valuable to consider how Community Connectors can assist older people to overcome the challenges they face in becoming involved with physical activity programs at Neighbourhood Houses and Centres. In this section we focus on:

- Lack of awareness of what is available
- Low motivation
- Personal health concerns
- Feeling uncomfortable or anxious around other people

- Experiencing access difficulties (e.g. transport, cost, acceptance in the group)

e) Improving awareness

Older people's awareness of what physical activity programs are available in their local area and particularly at their Neighbourhood House or Centre is improved by:

- Word- of-mouth information
- Attending community events
- Organisations working together to get information out to older people
- Information being made available in a variety of ways (e.g. newsletters, local papers, general Practice waiting rooms)

f) Boosting motivation

Older people's motivation to participate in physical activity opportunities can be boosted by:

- Community Connectors and other older people acting as role models
- Highlighting enjoyment of participating in physical activities
- Focusing on their own personal goals

g) Overcoming health concerns

Neighbourhood Houses and Centres and other organisations can improve their physical activity programs for older people by:

- Adapting physical activities to better suit older people
- Better understanding older people's health needs
- Support being provided by health professionals

h) Reducing social unease

The social unease or anxiety that some new participants may experience can be overcome by:

- Offering them a warm welcome when they come to your Neighbourhood House or Centre



- Providing them with opportunities to socialise with other older people
- Giving them appropriate attention when they come to your Neighbourhood House or Centre and following up with them, as needed

i) Making it easier for older people to attend

Older people are more likely to attend the physical activity programs at your Neighbourhood House or Centre if:

- They are assisted with transport or provided with advice about public transport options
- The programs are either free or offered at low cost
- Their values and traditions are respected, especially if they are from diverse cultural and language groups

Section 4

Things for Community Connectors to think about when encouraging other people to be physically active



Section 4: Things for Community Connectors to think about when encouraging other older people to be physically active

a) Some tips to help you communicate with older people

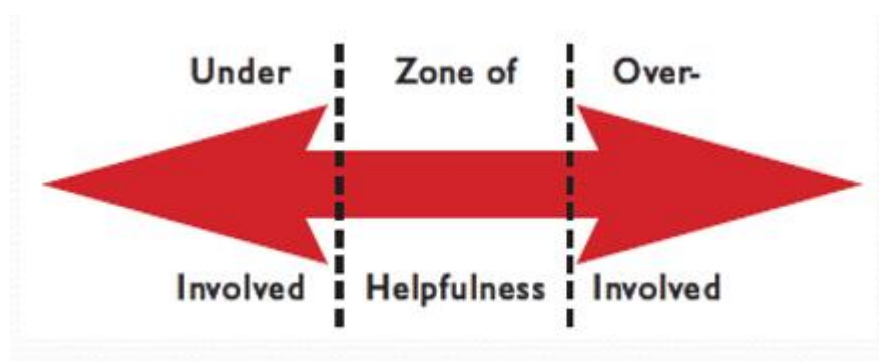
It's important to keep in mind some important communication tips when meeting or approaching older people who you don't know for the first time:

- Make appropriate eye contact, smile, act in a friendly way
- Be aware of your (and the other person's) body language
- Speak in a gentle way
- Find commonalities- start the conversation by talking about simple topics that you have in common
- Show a genuine interest in their situation by listening and asking
- Sharing your personal experiences and stories may be helpful

b) The zone of helpfulness

The 'Zone of Helpfulness' can be useful when thinking about interacting with other people:

- Under-involvement by a Community Connector with someone – may come across as cold, disinterested, distant
- Over-involvement by a Community Connector with someone – may come across as intrusive, over-bearing
- Be aware of boundaries of the Community Connector role



c) Privacy and confidentiality

People you meet in your role as a Community Connector may reveal personal information about themselves. It is important that you respect the privacy of the people you meet and treat matters concerning them as confidential.

d) Older people are a diverse group

As you well know, older people are a very diverse group! It is always important to remember that older people differ in many ways. Some of the differences that are important to keep in mind include the following – some older people ...

- are from different language and cultural groups
- may have memory problems
- are socially isolated and lonely
- are carers for a partner, spouse, friend or family member
- have a disability (or more than one disability)
- lack confidence in their ability to be physically active or to mix with other people
- are of a different sexual orientation

Section 5

The Community Connectors Program at your Neighbourhood House or Centre





Section 5: The Community Connectors Program at your Neighbourhood House or Centre

Any specific information about **your** Neighbourhood House or Centre will be provided to you by your Neighbourhood House or Centre manager or designated staff member.

If they provide you with any printed information, you can insert it in this section of your Community Connector folder. Examples of what you might add include:

- Your Neighbourhood House or Centre Community Connector role description
- Your Neighbourhood House or Centre brochure and/or list of programs and activities

You can also write notes here for you own information, as needed:

How the Community Connectors role will operate at your Neighbourhood House or Centre
How much time you might be able to give to the role
How you will need to work closely with manager and other staff and follow all requirements relevant to be a volunteer
What ongoing support is available to Community Connectors in their role
Any other relevant and helpful information that you may need

Section 6

Moodle instructions



Section 6: Moodle instructions

Doing the Community Connectors Training Online

While most Community Connectors will complete the training in a group environment at a Neighbourhood House or Centre, some will be doing the training online via Moodle, which is an online learning platform. The following instructions only apply to those doing the online course.

Setting up your Moodle account:

Step 1: On your computer/laptop, please visit <https://msk.moodle.school>

Step 2: Towards the bottom of the screen you will see a heading: 'Is this your first time here?'. Click on the 'Create new account' button directly beneath this heading.

Step 3: You will be taken to the Moodle privacy notice, which you should scan over, and then select 'Next' at the bottom of the screen. You will then be taken through another 'Cookies policy', which you will need to scroll through and again, press 'Next' at the bottom of the screen.

Step 4: On this next page, you will just need to select that you agree with the policies you have just read by ticking the boxes next to both statements. Then press 'Next'.

Step 5: Follow the prompts on this next page and fill in your details. For more clarification about each question, you can click on the exclamation mark in the red circle.

NB: Please take note of your username and password, as you will need these to log in to your account each time.

Step 6: Once you have completed your information, press 'Create my new account'.

Step 7: Please validate your Moodle account through your registered email address, as instructed on this next page, then press continue.

Step 8: You will now be able to log in using your username (or email) and password.


To navigate this course online:

Step 1: Once logged in, you will be taken to your 'Dashboard'. In the menu on the left-hand side of your screen, you will see an option called 'My courses'. Underneath this you will see another option called 'Community Connectors'. Click on this to access your training.

NB: If you do not see the 'Community Connectors' option underneath 'My courses', you may just have to click into 'My courses' in order to display it.

Step 2: Once you click into the 'Community Connectors' course, you will be taken to the course overview. At the top of the course overview, you will see more instructions for you to refer to for this online setting. If you scroll down, you should be able to see a list of all the modules that you will be completing in the course, with short descriptions underneath each one about the purpose of the module.

Step 3: While on your course overview, please read through the 'Instructions for online setting' section first.

Step 4: Once complete, please see the next section just below, with the heading 'Introduction and welcome'. You will see a smaller, clickable link just below this heading, titled 'Introduction and welcome video' next to this symbol: . Click into this.

Step 5: You have now commenced your training! Please watch the video and read through the content on this page. Once complete, you can advance to the next activity by clicking on the option in the bottom right corner, called 'Introduction – Activity 1: About You'.

NB: You can complete your whole training in this way, by working through each page, then clicking on the bottom right hand button to take you to the next page.

Alternatively, you can always go back to your course overview by clicking on 'Community Connectors' in the menu on the left of your screen. From here you can click into any of the modules and continue from where you are up to.

Step 6: Continue working through the whole course. Once complete, please provide your feedback by filling in the short 'Feedback and Evaluation' survey at the end.

Step 7: Once all tasks are complete, you will be able to download your Course Completion Certificate. Please print this and give to your Neighbourhood House or Centre manager in your follow up meeting (or email this to your NH manager), as they will need a copy to confirm that you have completed the training.



Please note:

- If you are completing this online as an individual, you should have already met with your Neighbourhood House or Centre manager or designated staff member to discuss aspects of the Community Connector role before doing this training. If you have not yet done this, please organise with your Neighbourhood House or Centre manager before beginning this training.
- You will also need to have a meeting with your Neighbourhood House or Centre manager **after** the course is completed.
- Your work should be saved automatically as you go along.
- You can stop and exit at any time and come back later to complete.
- This online course should take approximately 2 hours.
- Your results for each multiple choice/true or false quiz will be displayed after you submit each quiz. Your Neighbourhood House or Centre manager will discuss other discussion questions with you in your meeting following your completion of the course.
- **Please email anoa@msk.org.au if you need assistance**

Section 7

Community Connectors Training – Activities when doing the training in a face-to-face group





Section 7: Community Connectors Training – Activities when doing the training in a face-to-face group

The Neighbourhood House or Centre manager or staff member that is leading you through the Community Connectors Training Program will provide you with guidance for each of the activities below.

Module 1: What are Community Connectors, what do they do and why are they important?

The purpose of this module is to provide you with an initial overview and understanding of the Community Connector role.

Activity 1:

Watch video to find out about Community Connectors and why they are valuable

Completed

Activity 2:

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.

Write down your thoughts in the text box below.

Activity 3:

Watch the video to find out about what Community Connectors might do in their role as Community Connectors

Completed

Activity 4:

Answer the following 'yes/no' questions regarding **what you think** might be some important personal qualities of a Community Connector.

Personal qualities of a Community Connector:

Questions	Yes	No
a) Is considerate of other people		
b) Delivers information without worrying about the thoughts or feelings of others		
c) Usually tries to talk over people when they are talking		
d) Likes meeting new people		
e) Is a regular attendee at the neighbourhood house or community centre		
f) Has personal experience of being physically active		
g) Doesn't like to follow instructions or rules		
h) Dislikes talking with people they don't know		
i) Is new to the neighbourhood house or community centre		
j) Knows that people act in different ways when they are anxious, nervous or worried		
k) Knows other older people in the local community		

Module 2: The importance of physical activity for older people

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

Activity 1:

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.

Benefits to older people of being physically active

1)

2)

3)

Benefits you have experienced by being physically active yourself

1)

2)

3)

Activity 2:

Watch the video to find out what the research tells us about the importance of physical activity for older people.

Completed

Activity 3:

Provide at least 2 examples of other benefits for older people of being physically active that you learned from the video presentation.

1)

2)

Activity 4:

Watch the next video titled 'Active Beyond Running'.

Completed

Activity 5:

Please respond (tick) 'true or false' about the key messages in the video 'Active Beyond Running'.

Key Message	True	False
a) If a person has a disability, they shouldn't be physically active.		
b) Once a person reaches 65 years of age, they should stop all physical activity.		
c) Walking is an effective way to be physically active.		
d) Older people can be active in a range of ways.		
e) When you are older, physical activity does not improve your fitness.		
f) Being physically active does not allow you to do the other things you want to do.		
g) Being physically active increases older people's energy and fitness		
h) Having support from others increases an older person's motivation to be physically active.		
i) There can be negative messages that make older people think that they can't do things or be physically active.		

Activity 6:

Watch the video 'Physical activity for older people'.

Completed

Activity 7:

Discuss the key messages about the importance of physical activity and older people in the video, 'Physical activity for older people'.

Make some notes about the video and discussion here, if you wish:

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.

Module 3: Barriers and facilitators to older people being physically active

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.

Activity 1:

Provide at least 2 reasons why you think some older people aren't physically active or don't join in physical activity programs.

1)

2)

Activity 2:

Read the information in the text and tables below to find out about the factors and issues that influence whether older people are physically active or not. Then answer the true or false questions below.

Understanding what helps and hinders physical activity among seniors

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.² 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.

² 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.

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			

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.

Now answer these true or false questions based on the information you have just read:

Question	True	False
Money is never a reason why older people are not physically active.		
Older people's health can be an issue in their ability to be physically active.		
Positive encouragement from family and friends is a negative influence on older people deciding to participate in physical activity		
Older people are more likely to participate in physical activity if there are appropriate facilities and transport in their local area.		
Health reasons can be both a barrier and a motivating factor to older people engaging in physical activity.		
Feeling uncomfortable in a group is rarely a barrier to their participation in physical activity.		
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.		
If an older person has poor self-confidence, they are likely to join a group physical activity program		

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.

Completed

Activity 4:

Answer the following multiple-choice questions about why older people don't engage in physical activity, and some of the things you have learned that can help people become more active.

a) Which of the below are strategies for improving older people's awareness about local physical activity opportunities?

- Word of mouth
- Pamphlets in the letterbox
- Speaking face-to-face with older people in groups and at community events
- All of the above

b) Which of the below examples are ways of making someone's first time at a physical activity programs easier and welcoming?

- Asking them to stand in front of the group and introduce themselves, when they are already feeling nervous and shy
- Not speaking to them when they arrive at the class
- Encouraging other participants to speak to a new participant
- Asking them to complete a long, confusing feedback form at the end of the class

c) Which of the below are recommended ways of making people from different cultures and language groups feel comfortable in physical activity programs?

- Not acknowledging their cultural preferences or making any effort to accommodate them
- Finding out about their language and cultural preferences so these can be taken into account
- Requiring them to attend classes to improve their English language skills
- Having them give a cultural presentation to the group (e.g., dance, traditional story) even if they are feeling nervous/shy

d) Which of the below can be factors that make older people drop out of physical activity programs?

- Not feeling supported by other people and the leader
- Health issues
- Loss of motivation

- All of the above
- e) Which of the actions below would assist older people who are having difficulty maintaining their involvement in the group?
- Having the leader visit them at home each time they miss a group class
 - Not talking to the person directly and asking their family or caregivers about any problems that may be affecting their group attendance
 - 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
 - Writing to them to let them know that they will lose their place if they do not attend regularly

Activity 5:

Discuss any local groups of older people that may not currently attend your Neighbourhood House or Centre, or the physical activity programs at your house or centre. Also discuss possible ways Community Connectors might be able to assist these people.

Make some notes about the discussion here, if you wish:

Module 4: Things for Community Connectors to think about when encouraging other older people to be physically active

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.

Activity 1:

Watch the video for some tips to keep in mind when communicating with older people you don't know.

Completed

Activity 2:

Answer the 'true or false' (tick) questions about communicating with older people they don't know.

Question	True	False
It is not a good idea to smile when meeting someone for the first time		
People can be anxious when meeting someone for the first time		
Community Connectors should not pay attention to the body language of the older people they are talking to		
When appropriate, sharing your own personal experiences can really help when you are building trust and rapport with someone		
Older people are a very diverse group		
A Community Connector should talk about things they are interested in, even if the other older person isn't interested		
A Community Connector should persist in giving information to another older person, even if the other person isn't interested		
It is important that Community Connectors are aware of what their role involves		

Activity 3:

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

Completed

Activity 4:

Read the case study here and then the person leading the training will discuss the questions in the boxes below with the group (you might like to make some notes from the discussion in the boxes below):

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 or Centre?

How would you first bring up the suggestion of attending an exercise class at your Neighbourhood House or Centre?

If Jim showed no interest in coming along to an exercise class at the Neighbourhood House or Centre, what would you say to him?

What would you do to follow up with Jim if you don't see him around at the Neighbourhood House or Centre 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 5:

Read the second case study and then the person leading the training will discuss the questions in the boxes below with the group (you might like to make some notes from the discussion in the boxes below):

Pam is 67-year old woman who is shy, lives on her own and is fairly socially isolated. She has recently commenced a weekly sewing class (after her neighbour asked her to join her) at the local Neighbourhood House or Centre, which she enjoys. Other than attending the Neighbourhood House or Centre 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.

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.

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 Neighbourhood House or Centre?

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 Neighbourhood House or Centre?

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?



Module 5: The Community Connector Program at your Neighbourhood House

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.

Activity 1:

Spend 5-10 minutes discussing what you personally hope to get out of being a Community Connector.

Activity 2:

The Neighbourhood House or Centre manager or staff member leading the training will explain, how the Community Connector role will be implemented at your Neighbourhood House or Centre. They should cover the following points:

- What is involved in the Community Connector role at your Neighbourhood House or Centre
- What sort of things you, as a Community Connector, might be expected to do (maybe start small and build up as you become more experienced and confident)
- If relevant, specific groups of older people that would be good to engage in the physical activity programs at your Neighbourhood House or Centre
- As a volunteer of the Neighbourhood House or Centre, what policies and procedures you will need to abide by (and the details around them)
- The details about a regular Community Connectors catch-up or supervision session
- Who you should contact if you have any problems or questions
- Other issues, as needed.



Answers:

Module 1- activity 4: a) yes, b) no c) no d) yes e) yes f) yes g) no h) no i) no j) yes k) yes

Module 2- activity 5: a) False b) False c) True d) True e) False f) False g) True h) True i) True

Module 2- activity 7: a) False b) True c) False d) True e) False f) True g) True h) True

Module 3- activity 2: 1) False 2) False 3) True 4) True 5) False 6) True 7) False

Module 3- activity 4: a) All of the above b) Encouraging other participants to speak to a new participant c) Finding out about their language and cultural preferences so these can be taken into account d) All of the above e) 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

Module 4-activity 2: a) False b) True c) False d) True e) True f) False g) False h) True

Section 8

Community Connectors contact form, notes page and feedback form (print more if needed)





Community Connector Contact Form

Community Member details

Name _____

Age (estimate) _____

Gender _____

Phone number (if permission given)

Physical activity referred to _____

Additional follow up required/offered _____

Additional information /Thoughts

Feedback Form

It would be great if you could complete feedback form and give to staff member running the training. Receiving your feedback about this training course is extremely important as we want to make sure it is meeting your needs.

1) I have a greater understanding of what is involved in the Community Connector role:

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

2) I have a greater understanding of the factors affecting older people's participation in physical activity:

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

3) I have an increased understanding of why physical activity for older people is important:

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

4) I have an increased understanding of things to keep in mind when talking with other older people I don't know:

- Strongly agree
- Agree



- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

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):

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

If you have any question please speak to your Neighbourhood House or Centre Manager or contact ANOA team on anoa@msk.org.au or (03) 85318020