Age-Friendly Ottawa

and the

Take Charge of Your Health

Health Literacy Pilot Project

26 March 2015
Introduction

* Age Friendly Ottawa
* Take Charge of Your Health
  * Overview
  * Evaluation Findings
* Next Steps
What is Age Friendly Ottawa?

- AF concept emerged in June 2005 from the World Health Organization (Aging and Life Course)
- AFO is an initiative of the Council on Aging of Ottawa
- A project funded by Ontario Trillium Foundation
- An ongoing collaboration with the City of Ottawa
- The idea that guides both the City of Ottawa Older Adult Plan and the Age-Friendly Community Action Plan
What are the AFO Priorities?

- Eight (8) AFO priorities:
  - Outdoor spaces and buildings
  - Transportation
  - Housing
  - Communication & Information
  - Social, recreational and cultural participation
  - Civic participation and volunteering
  - Community support and health services
  - Respect and social inclusion
What is the AF Community Action Plan?

* An action plan that specifies 23 specific actions that COA and community partners will undertake across the 8 domains of the Age-Friendly Framework

* AFO Priority 7:
  * Improved access to an integrated system of community support and health services which are inclusive, responsive and tailored to needs
AFO Priority 7

* Common Barriers
  * Difficulties navigating system & accessing support services, especially services for aging at home
  * Lack of coordination in providing continuum of care
  * Cost of private services
  * Long wait times in hospitals for L-T care
  * Natural caregivers are concerned about finding and accessing needed support services
Objectives:

7.1 Expand and improve access to preventative health care and homecare options (** Rated #1 priority by seniors during priority setting exercise)

7.2 Help seniors access complex health and support services (**Rated #2 priority)
Possible Strategies for Objective 7.1

- Support the outreach efforts of Ottawa Public Health to links with non-formal groups such as church groups, clubs, ethno-cultural communities etc.17
- Support the Ottawa Public Health “Community Connect” program18
- Increase supports to formal and informal caregivers by providing more information & resources on age-related illness and care options19
- Expand mental health services and supports
- Continue to work with health care authorities to reduce long waiting list for long-term care and to make residential care more affordable for modest income seniors
- Educate pre-retirement and independent older adults about planning for aging
Possible Strategies for Objective 7.2

* Support initiatives that provide frail seniors with “health and social system navigators” supports

* Increase inter-agency collaboration and coordination of services by building on joint planning exercises and by continuing to standardize forms and processes

* Work with pharmacies (and others) to act as key locations to distribute information on services for older adults
Objective of *Take Charge of Your Health* HL pilot project

- Contribute to **AFO priority 7**: Improve access to community support and health services
- Specifically: to empower seniors to take charge of their health by becoming more health literate & facilitate their access to community support and health services
- Most importantly: to encourage a wider community dialogue on the steps that can be taken by key service providers to become **more age friendly**
Key Project Milestones:

- Initial consultations with seniors (Jul/Aug 2014)
- Development of training material & content for health literacy sessions & evaluation surveys (Aug/Sep 2014)
- Training session for volunteer health ambassadors or peer-learning facilitators (Sep 2014)
- Roll out of series of 6 health literacy sessions (Oct/Nov 2014)
- External Program Evaluation (Jan/Feb 2015)
**What is Health Literacy?**

- **Definition:** HL is the ability to obtain, read, understand and use healthcare information to make appropriate health decisions and follow instructions for treatment

- **Focus of Take Charge of Your Health HL Pilot Project:**
  - How to OBTAIN healthcare information
What is Peer Learning?

* Peer learning is about sharing and learning
* Participants present real issues and practical examples
* Others listen, ask questions and add clarity
* Everyone shares and learns
* Each group has a facilitator
Results Accountability Approach

- Results Accountability = Population Accountability + Performance Accountability

- Our focus: Performance Accountability
  - Three Questions: How much did we do? How well did we do it? Is anyone better off?
Relevance of Project:

- Estimated 60% of Canadians do not have the necessary skills to manage their health adequately
- Three most vulnerable populations are SENIORS, immigrants and the unemployed
- Up to 88% of Canadian seniors are not health literate
Key to Measuring Performance:

- Carefully designed participant feedback surveys were administered for each step of the project
  - Consultations
  - Training session
  - Each of the 6 health literacy sessions
  - Exit survey
How Much Did we Do?

- 3 Consultations held July/August 2014; two in English, one in French
- 40 volunteer seniors either trained as peer-learning facilitators or participated as group participants
- 16 volunteers seniors trained on 23 Sep 2014
- 5 series of 6 health literacy sessions carried out over a six week period Oct/Nov 2014 with 5 facilitators
- 24 group participants participated
How Well Did We Do?

Training:

* 100% of training participants reported very positively on 8 different dimensions of the training
* 93% of training participants reported feeling comfortable with the proposed format of the 6 HL sessions
* 80% of training participants reported feeling sufficiently prepared to deliver the program
How Well Did We DO?

* 100% of group participants completed at least 4 of the six sessions (excellent participant retention)
* 93% of group participants rated the quality of facilitation and group functioning as good (46%) or excellent (47%)
Is Anyone Better Off?

* 94% of group participants reported that they had learned something new
* Based on exit survey 100% of group participants reported feeling better prepared to deal with issues covered in the HL sessions & 93% reported that they were more likely to be proactive in dealing with these issues
* During evaluation focus group discussion many participants reported that they were using their new knowledge and skills eg exercise, grab bars, walking
Unintended Consequences

* Social connections among project participants
* Increased commitment & enthusiasm to support those who might benefit the most from a peer-learning approach to increasing access to healthcare information
Key Challenges

* How to engage seniors in promoting health literacy among their peers?
* How to promote the idea of “health ambassadors” in the community?
* How to tap into the interest in serving as “health ambassadors” eg 75 people to be trained Mar/Apr 2015 compared to 16 last fall
* How to engage such HAs in existing HL programs?
* How to adopt a peer learning model with existing HL programs?
So What? Next Steps?

* Keep in Mind:
  * Our long term goal is to make community support and health services MORE AGE FRIENDLY

* How Can We Do This?
  * Improving access/helping seniors obtain healthcare information – HOW?
  * Making system more inclusive, responsive and tailored to needs – HOW?

* Where are the gaps? How will we measure progress?? How do we assess current level of age friendliness?
OTF Indicators

- OTF Outcome Indicator: # of organizations with a stronger understanding of their community and its needs
- OTF Results Indicator: # of organizations developing programs that mobilize communities to effect positive change
- **Question**: How can we apply some of the lessons from the *Take Charge of Your Health* project to encourage organizations to develop programs that mobilize communities to effect positive change?
THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION