



***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

AFO Priority 7

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)

AFO Priority 7

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

AFO Priority 7

Possible Strategies for Objective 7.2

- * Support initiatives that provide frail seniors with “*health and social system navigators*” supports²⁰
- * 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**

Project Overview

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**

Performance of Project

- * 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