

Falls-Prevention Event Instructions

The purpose of falls-risk screening and prevention events is to improve community awareness regarding risk factors leading to increased falls. Screening is also a way to refer participants who may be at risk for falls to their appropriate health care provider.

Preparation Prior to Your Event

The following resources can be used in the screening:

1. [STEADI Toolkit](#) Review

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's [Stopping Elderly Accidents, Deaths & Injuries](#) is an evidence-based older adult falls-prevention strategy. STEADI consists of three core elements: screen patients for falls risk, assess a patient's risk factors, and intervene to reduce risk by giving older adults tailored interventions. The material includes:

- a. Stay Independent brochure: Participants can complete this self-assessment, and you can review the answers with them.
- b. Falls risk checklist: A resource to be completed and sent home with the participants. If falls risk is identified, you can encourage the participants to take this "report" to their health care provider.
- c. Three assessments for strength and balance:
 - i. [Timed Up & Go \(TUG\) Test](#).
 - ii. [30-Second Chair Stand Test](#).
 - iii. [4-Stage Balance Test](#).

2. [MyMobility Plan](#) Review

The CDC's MyMobility Plan is designed to encourage older adults to take action to remain safe, mobile, and independent. The tool consists of three sections to guide and create their own mobility plan: (1) Myself: How to stay independent; (2) MyHome: How to stay safe at home; and (3) MyNeighborhood: How to stay mobile in your community.

3. Cognitive & Depression Screen Review (Optional)

Both cognition and depression are falls-risk factors that we can identify and make referrals to appropriate providers when warranted. Consider using the [Mini Cognitive \(Mini-Cog\) Assessment](#) and/or the [Geriatric Depression Scale \(GDS\)](#) for educational purposes.

4. Handouts

- a. Prepare copies of the handouts you plan to use.
- b. Research and compile resources for evidence-based community falls prevention programming in your area.
 - Examples include handouts of local evidence-based programs for falls prevention or classes such as Tai Chi or Silver Sneakers Programs.
 - If you aren't aware of your locally based evidence-based falls prevention programs, consider reaching out to your [local association of area agencies on aging](#), senior centers, community centers, departments of Health and Human Services, or [state Falls Prevention Coalition](#).

5. Arrival and Logistics

- a. Location: Identify a location easy to access in your community and book weeks prior to the event. Communicate with your host location regarding specifics about the space you will be provided for screening.

- b. Parking: Provide parking instructions relative to your event.
- c. Volunteers: Provide a dress code, equipment and/or nourishment they should bring along with them, and the shift they are expected to volunteer. Make sure restrooms are accessible. You'll want to make sure that you have enough volunteers for this event to ensure that all runs smoothly and that you have enough spotters, etc. An estimate number of PTs and volunteers is 5-10 persons.
- d. Suggested supplies: chairs, clipboards, measuring tape, duct tape, tables, blood pressure kits, pulse oximeters, thermometers, gait belts, STEADI materials, cognitive and depression screens, handouts, signage to identify stations, stopwatches (or cell phones), pens, etc.

Day of the Event

There are two common layouts for screening events. The first one involves one volunteer fully screening each participant. The second one involves a system whereby participants visit multiple stations throughout their screening process, with volunteers working one station throughout the entirety of the event. For example:

1. Intake location: This will be the starting point for all participants. Each participant will have a navigator assigned to them who will stay with them throughout the screening process. Navigators will explain the screening process and then help participants complete the following:
 - a. Signing and dating a consent and photo release form (photo form is only if pictures will be taken).
 - b. The Stay Independent questionnaire.
 - c. Start the CDC's falls risk checklist, which will be updated at each of the stations.
2. The navigators will assist the older adults in accessing each station.
3. At each STEADI assessment station, teams should be prepared to perform the following tasks:
 - a. Vitals assessment, including blood pressure, heart rate, oxygen saturation, respiratory rate, and temperature.
 - b. Review the completed Stay Independent questionnaire, which indicates where the participant may already identify as a falls risk.
 - c. Conduct the three tests and explain the results to participants.
4. After the screening is completed, a screener should explain the results to the participant and provide them with educational handouts that will outline recommendations based on their falls risk. This is detailed more in the outline of the screening.
5. Pay special attention to participants who were found to be at risk of falls. Check for their understanding of the screening results before they depart. If a friend or family member is present with them, try to include them in the discussion. The participant may be unsure of the action they should take following the screening. To increase the chances that a participant will take action, the navigator should follow these steps:
 - a. Assure the participant there are ways to lower his/her chances of falling and/or maintain their independence.
 - b. Make sure to provide them the educational handouts listed on our outline:
 - i. CDC's Check for Safety (available in other languages to improve accessibility).
 - ii. "Screened at Risk of Falls" or "Tips to Maintain Independence."
 - iii. Evidence-based community falls-prevention programming relevant to your area.
 - c. Encourage the participant to talk with their health care provider, including their physical therapist, to find the source of unsteadiness.
6. Final Thoughts

- Avoid “prescribing” specific exercises, instead speaking in generalities about what might be beneficial. Keep in mind that this is a community health screening, not a formal assessment. If you promote exercise to inactive older adults, always advise them that they should consult with a physical therapist or primary care provider before starting any new exercises.
- Focus on a positive message (i.e., “Here are some suggestions to decrease your falls risk and keep your independence.”). Do **not** use a fear-based message such as, “You don’t want to fall and break your hip or end up in a nursing home.”

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