

## **A Matter of Balance: Managing Concerns About Falls**

### **Ideas for Creative Coaching**

#### **Ice-Breakers**

##### **Examples:**

- Pictures: Cut out pictures from a magazine- place them on the table, one for each participant. Have each person select one and when the group convenes have participants introduce themselves and share "why" they selected their pictures. You can also use postcards.

Ask group members to:

- Share something that you have with you today that's important
- Share your favorite food as a child

You can build question around the season or holiday, e.g. June: What's your favorite flower? Who can share a most memorable Valentine's Day?

##### **Penny Ante:**

Ask a question or have someone pick the question from a "deck of questions". Give a penny or a point for every affirmative answer. The person(s) with the most pennies or points gets to do something "special" that day, e.g. lead/chose the exercises for the day.

##### **Examples:**

###### **Who....**

Was born in another country?

Has a pet?

Knows another language

Has grandchildren? Etc.....

###### **Who loves.....**

to hike, to bike, to walk, to house -clean, to cook, to sew, to knit, to swim, to talk on the phone, etc.?

dogs, cats, birds, fish, etc.?

chocolate, sardines, anchovies etc. ?

##### **Seasonal suggestion: Valentine's Day**

Who "Left their Heart in San Francisco?"

Who married their high school sweetheart?

Who has a real sweet tooth?

## **Ice-Breaker or Energizer**

### **Make A Choice Activity**

Use the attached list of choices. Let participants know what the choice is and what to do. For example, "stand up if you are more a country person than a city person".

"Stand if you are a bridge, sit if you are a dam."

You can also ask people to move to one side of the room or the other. You might want to build on this and use it as part of the exercises for the day.

You can also ask people just to raise their hands (this is more of an ice-breaker).

## **Reinforcement vs. Repetition**

### **Concepts from A Matter of Balance:**

Words/concepts from A Matter of Balance can be placed on the A Matter of Balance logo or on seasonal shapes such as hearts, pumpkins, shamrocks or fish. Each person chooses one and then describes how the word(s) relates to what they have learned at A Matter of Balance. This provides an opportunity to review and reinforce the material. There is a lot of wisdom in the group that can be shared during this discussion.

### **Examples:**

Positive thinking	Balance
Confidence-building thoughts	Regular exercise
Assertiveness	Personal Action Planner
Medications	"Fall-ty Habits"
Vision & Hearing	Home safety
Drinking water	Flexibility
Low blood pressure	What to do after a fall

### **The Puzzle**

Enlarge statements from A Matter of Balance such as "Good News: The more risks you eliminate, the lower your chances are of falling". Cut in puzzle pieces, provide to small groups to put together and then share.

## **Fall Risk Reduction**

This is another review option that can be especially helpful in Session 6 - discussion of risky behaviors. Use index cards to list fall risks such as multiple medications, poor vision or hearing, lower extremity weakness, low blood pressure, problems with gait and balance, etc.. Participants pick an index card(s) and then talk about how they can help to minimize that risk. Participants can then deposit their "risks" in a box or basket, which is symbolic of addressing the issue- plus you are getting your cards back.

## **Teach Back**

This approach can be used to cover the material in a different way.

1. Have participants break into pairs/ 3s.
2. Provide paper and good place for writing.
3. Provide the question for each person in a few words in large font (20) on a piece of paper. Be clear with the activity's directions and check for understanding. Ask for a recorder from each group to write down ideas and report back.
4. Write the question(s) on a flip chart, have the group come back together and record their feedback.

## **Examples:**

Activity 4.6 What difference does it make if you are assertive or not?

Activity 6.3 What would you like to spend more time talking about & practicing?

Activities 7.5 & 7.6 Home Safety

- A. Have each small group discuss what they found within their own homes after doing their home safety checklist homework and then report back.
- B. Divide the Home Safety Checklist into categories (kitchen, bedroom, bath, inside, outside, etc.), have each group discuss important aspects and then share/highlight when large group reconvenes.

## **Additional Ideas for Creative Coaching**

- Participants can lead their favorite exercise
- Show Fear of Falling video at first and last class and discuss different perspectives
- "Show and tell" around safety., i.e. walking sticks, ice walkers (YakTrax), swivel seat for the car, reaching devices, etc..

*Special thanks to Master Trainers Patricia Keogh, Eastern Agency on Aging and Anne Murray, Southern Maine Agency on Aging for sharing their ideas.*