

Avoiding the 'F word (FALLS)' when developing falls prevention and physical activity messages: A session of brainstorming and case studies

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Health message framing

- Health messages can be framed to highlight either
 - The benefits of engaging in a particular behavior (a gain-frame) **OR**
 - The consequences or risks of failing to engage in a particular behavior (a loss-frame)



At risk messages in health communication

- “Smoking kills you”
- “Not exercising regularly can make you gain weight”
- “Performing balance exercises will reduce the chance that you will fall again”

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www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/phd-pub-injury-dontfall-cnt.htm

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Listen

Don't fall for it. Falls can be prevented!

This consumer booklet was prepared by the National Ageing Research Institute and Metropolitan Domiciliary Care, an agency of the State Government of South Australia, and was published for the Australian Government Department of Health. The content of the publication was modified and reprinted in July 2005, and reprinted again in 2007 and 2012.

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Please note: This book is currently unavailable to order as a hard copy but may be downloaded in PDF format below.

The booklet is aimed at older people living in the community and their families and carers. It contains information about three aspects of falls prevention:

- **Fall-proofing yourself** - This section describes intrinsic falls risk factors relating to individuals and their health and describes in detail how these risk factors can be reduced.
- **Fall-proofing your surroundings** - This section describes extrinsic falls risk factors relating to an individual's environment and describes

EDUCATION AND PREVENTION

- Alcohol
- Child and Youth Health
- eHealth registration
- Environmental Health
- Flu Hygiene
- Food
- Illicit Drugs
- Immunisation
- Injury Prevention**
- International monitoring
- Maternal and Infant Health

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Falls Prevention – Eyesight

Impaired vision can increase your risk of falling as it is harder for you to see hazards such as obstacles, uneven footpaths, edges of steps or objects, and spills on the floor.

Is your eyesight changing?

- Spots or dark patches in your vision
- Clouding or opaque vision
- Decreased colour vision
- Distorted vision
- Double vision
- Sudden eye pain, discomfort or redness
- Reduced ability to adjust to light changes

If you notice any changes to your eyesight, seek help from a qualified health professional

Gain-framed or benefit-based health messages

- “If you quit smoking using this help line, you can save almost \$2,000 a year”
- “Exercising regularly can help you lose weight”
- “Tailored exercise can keep you strong and independent”

Upright and independent: a guide to preventing falls



Developed by: West Gippsland Healthcare Group
Format: Booklet (A4 sized, 17 pages)
Availability: Download <PDF version> <Word version>



Falls Prevention – Strength and Balance Exercises

Staying physically active is the single most important thing we can do to remain fit and independent.

- As we grow older we lose muscle strength and our sense of balance. This can lead to a fall.
- To reduce the risk of injury from a fall it is important to include activities that improve your balance and increase your strength.
- The more active we remain, the better the chance we have of keeping our muscles strong and our joints mobile.
- Research shows that any exercise, at any age, is worth the effort.



Health message framing effects on attitudes, intentions, and behaviour

- A meta-analysis review of 94 studies
- Gain-framed messages were significantly more likely than loss-framed messages to promote prevention *behavior*

Gallagher 2012

- Participants prefer positive recommendations ie “Prevention is better than a cure” rather than the negative element of fear

Khong et al 2017

Why do you think gain framed messages are more likely to promote exercise engagement when compared to loss framed messages?

BRAINSTORMING POSITIVE HEALTH MESSAGES

Write down positive messages
for physical activity to prevent
falls



FOR THE CASE STUDIES

1. What advice, encouragement would you give this person?
2. How would you tailor promotional materials with this person in mind

