

Victorian Active Ageing Partnership Seniors Physical Activity PEP (Program Engagement and Planning) Guide

This Guide has been developed to enable providers of physical activity programs for older people to better understand the interests, capacities and needs of new participants. Listening to the preferences and concerns of older people, and taking these into account in program delivery, has been found to assist their ongoing involvement in organised physical activity.

The Guide includes four modules, exploring 'Your goals', 'Your background in physical activity', 'Your program interests', and 'Your support needs'. Providers can choose any of these modules, and any of the questions within them, to provide information **that you can use** to adapt program delivery and provide support for new participants. Only those questions which gather information that can be acted upon should be asked.

The questions in the Guide may be self-completed by older participants or incorporated into an interview at the time they are joining the program. The answers given may be used as discussion starters, and an opportunity to provide information to the participant about the physical activities offered, benefits that may be gained, and arrangements (e.g. transport) that could support their attendance. Questions about levels of physical activity, motivation and confidence, may be asked at regular intervals (e.g. 6 months), to assess impacts that the program may be having.

It is important that the information collected through the Guide be **treated as confidential**. This should only be shared with another party (e.g. physical activity program leader) if permission is first obtained from the participant.

Your program interests		
Which of the following types of physical activity are of most interest to you?:	Walking/mobility Balance Flexibility Others:	Muscle strength Cardiac fitness/endurance Grip strength
		This question explores particular forms of physical activity that participants consider worthwhile, that may be incorporated into the program to increase the value that they gain from it. The options listed should be adjusted according to the opportunities provided by the organization. The answers may also reflect a lack of awareness of various types of exercise, that they could be introduced to in the program.
Are there particular types of physical activity or movement that present concerns or difficulties for you?		An ability to perform particular forms of physical activity, or the experience of pain or fear when doing so, can be a discouragement to program participation. The answer here will suggest whether certain exercises should be modified or excluded for participants.
What time(s) of the week would you prefer to attend this program? Day(s)_____ Time(s)_____		This question can be asked if it is possible for the participant to attend at different times of the week, and/or on multiple occasions in the week. More frequent participation in physical activity programs will increase the benefits that are gained, help in the establishment of a routine, and contribute to ongoing adherence.
How frequently would you like to attend this program? ___ times per week		
How do you feel about doing physical activity with others in a group environment?	0 ___ 1 ___ 2 ___ 3 ___ 4 ___ 5 ___ 6 ___ 7 ___ 8 ___ 9 ___ 10 Not at all comfortable	Extremely comfortable
		The level of social comfort in the group environment is a major influence upon the willingness of participants to attend, particularly for those who have experienced isolation or disadvantage. This question will suggest the need to take additional steps to make the participant feel welcomed and accepted (e.g. arranging a 'buddy'), and to help them to build relationships with others in the group.
Your support needs		
In order to find out the kinds of support that might be helpful for you, we would like to first ask what your living arrangement is?	Alone at home Supported aged care facility	At home with family/other
		An understanding of participant's living circumstances may provide insight into the support that is available to them, and whether they are at risk of social isolation. However, this question may be perceived to be intrusive, and is most suitable for organisations (e.g. community health services) that can offer social and/or psychological support to the participant.
Do you have transport to attend the program?	Yes	No (I would like to discuss)
		Transport difficulties can be a barrier to program participation, and this question will indicate whether transport advice and/or assistance may be needed.

<p>Are the program fees affordable for you?</p> <p>Yes No (I would like to discuss)</p>	<p>While discussions of program affordability may cause embarrassment for some older people, this issue may be an impediment to participation. This question could be asked when a provider is able to offer modified fees for those experiencing financial difficulties.</p>
<p>Are you able to communicate easily in English? Yes No</p> <p>What language do you usually speak at home? _____</p>	<p>Older people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds may feel more welcomed and comfortable when information is provided in a language that they prefer, and their customs and religious practices are respected in the way that the group is conducted.</p>
<p>Do you have any dietary needs? Yes (write below) No</p> <p>Allergies (specify)</p> <p>Cultural/religious (specify)</p> <p>Other (specify)</p>	<p>When programs offer food and/or drink for participants, which can be occasions to build social relationships within the group, it is valuable take account of various dietary needs.</p>
<p>Do any of these health issues affect your participation in physical activity?:</p> <p>Reduced mobility Balance problems</p> <p>Breathing difficulties Heart problems</p> <p>Bodily pain Bowel/bladder issues</p>	<p>These questions will highlight physical limitations to take into account in program design and supports that could be provided to improve participant comfort and safety. Programs which have a standard health assessment and/or medical clearance process for new participants will not need to ask these questions.</p>
<p>Do you have any other health or personal factors that may affect your involvement in this program?</p>	<p>This is a broad question to identify other physical, mental, social and/or practical factors that could be addressed to assist program participation.</p>