

Fall Prevention Event Instructions

This document explains recommended advance preparation and day-of-event logistics so that everyone knows what to expect and to better ensure an organized falls prevention awareness day screening event occurs.

PURPOSE: The purpose of fall risk screening and prevention events is to improve community awareness regarding risk factors leading to increased falls in order to decrease their risk. Screening events are also a way to refer participants who were identified as a fall risk to their appropriate health care provider(s). These events can provide a variety of experiences for participants including interviewing older adults, performing strength and balance assessments, providing fall prevention education, vitals assessments, medication review, and more. Most importantly, the screening event is an opportunity to enhance your communication skills with older adults and learning how to empower them to engage in healthy aging. Furthermore, there should be opportunities for interprofessional collaboration, since students and professionals from various healthcare programs have a role to play in fall prevention: OT, OTA, PT, PTA, pharmacists, doctors, nursing, and podiatry. Students from any healthcare background (including undergraduate students) are encouraged to participate in community wellness events.

Step One: Preparation Prior to Your Event

Prior to the day of the event, please review the following resources to be used in the screening. Further along in this document, there are examples of how to provide education about identified fall risk factors.

1. STEADI Toolkit Review: The CDC's (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention) Stopping Elderly Accidents Deaths and Injuries (STEADI) initiative is an evidence-based older adult fall prevention strategy. STEADI consists of three core elements: screen patients for fall risk, assess a patient's risk factors, and intervene to reduce risk by giving older adults tailored interventions. Download materials [here](#), or order hard copies via CDC-INFO on Demand for publications.[\(link\)](#).
 - a. Stay Independent Brochure: Participants can complete this self-assessment and you can review the answers with them
 - b. Fall Risk Checklist: A resource to be completed and sent home with the participants. If fall risk is identified, you can encourage the participants to discuss further with family/friends and take this "report" to their healthcare provider
 - c. Review the 3 Assessments for Strength and Balance: There are 1 minute video's for each test on the CDC STEADI website, which can be found [here](#).
 - i. Timed Up & Go (TUG) Test
 - ii. 30-Second Chair Stand Test
 - iii. 4-Stage Balance Test

- d. It is recommended that people performing screenings review at least one of the three case studies [here](#) by clicking on “Clinical Tools” tab. The case studies are located near the bottom of the page.
 - e. Did you know that the CDC offers an online CEU course to become STEADI trained? Access the course for pharmacists and other providers [here](#).
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: Myself: How to stay independent; MyHome: How to stay safe at home; and MyNeighborhood: How to stay mobile in your community. Download materials [here](#) or order hard copies from CDC-INFO on Demand ([link](#)).
3. Cognitive & Depression Screen Review: Both cognition and depression are fall risk factors that we can identify and make referrals to appropriate providers when warranted. In this toolkit, we included the the Mini Cognitive (Mini-Cog) Assessment and the Geriatric Depression Scale (GDS) for educational purposes.
4. Handouts:
 - a. Prepare photocopies of the “*Screened at Risk of Falls*” and “*Tips to Maintain Independence*” handouts included in this toolkit.
 - b. Research and compile resources for evidence based community fall prevention programming in your area to hand out during the recommendation portion of your screening
 - i. Examples include handouts of local evidence-based programs for falls prevention, or classes such as Tai Chi or Silver Sneakers Programs. Be sure to include a description of the program location and contact information of the host site. Remember, the easier it is to participate, the more likely it is they will participate.
 - ii. If you aren’t aware of your locally based evidence based fall prevention programs, you may want to consider reaching out to your local Association of Area Agencies on Aging ([link](#)), Senior Centers, Community Centers, Departments of Health or Human Services, or State Falls Prevention Coalition ([link](#)).
5. Arrival and Logistics
 - a. Location: Speak with your host location to find out specifics about the space you will be provided for screening. This will help you overcome environmental barriers, plan the layout, and flow of screening stations, recruit an appropriate

number of volunteers and plan for potential unexpected challenges (such as inclement weather).

- b. **Parking:** Provide parking instructions relative to your event. Include instructions of where the fall prevention screening will be performed on site as well to make it more accessible in advance.
- c. **Volunteers:** Provide a dress code, equipment and/or nourishment they should bring along with them, and the shift they are expected to attend. Include time for set-up, breaks, and break-down as needed. Make sure your volunteers will have nourishment (snacks/meals) and are able to locate the restrooms easily.
- d. **Suggested Supplies:** Chairs, clipboards (for consent forms and for each volunteer performing screens), measuring tape, duct tape, tables (foldable tables are much easy to transport), folders, blood pressure kits, pulse oximeters, gait belts, STEADI materials, cognitive and depression screens, handouts, signage to identify stations, stopwatches (or cell phone), pens, juice and/or other small snacks for diabetics, appropriate weather gear such as sunscreen, water, etc.

Step Two: Day of the Event

The following steps will help ensure that your event runs smoothly. There are two common layouts for screening events. The first layout involves one volunteer fully screening each participant. After signing in (consent forms), the participant is with their assigned volunteer therapist(s) for the remainder of the screening and education process. The second common layout involves a passport system; whereby participants visit multiple stations throughout their screening process with volunteers working one station throughout the entirety of the event or possible switching out occasionally. This format will be described in greater detail below.

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. The Navigator(s) will first explain the screening process, then help participants complete the following:
 - a. Signing and dating the consent and photo release forms
 - b. The *Stay Independent* questionnaire
 - c. Beginning the *Fall Risk Checklist*, which will be updated at each of the stations
Note: Alternatively the Navigator(s) can consist of a PT/student team that stays with the older adult throughout all stations and performs each of the testing stations.
2. The Navigator(s) will assist the older adult in accessing each station, staying with them until they have completed as many stations as they want to complete. If there is a waiting line, Navigators can assist finding a station with a shorter line or talking to participants while they wait. Participants enjoy the social part of the screening. Sometimes the

highlight of the screening is talking to interested people. The STEADI screening, Home Safety and Medication Review (among other as you see fit) stations can be performed by dedicated volunteers or can be performed by each Navigator group.

3. At each STEADI 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 fall risk. The Navigator can assist the STEADI screeners in the results of the Stay Independent questionnaire
 - c. Conduct the 3 tests and explain the results to participants
 - d. Spotters should guard participants by standing near them during testing and be ready to assist, if they appear to be losing their balance. Spotters may also help participants get into the starting position before testing begins. Spotters need to be alert and physically strong enough to support participants if needed. A gait belt should be available if needed. If you are concerned about the participants balance and your ability to keep them safe, it is fine to stop and say this test will not be done today, and try one of the other tests. It is also ok to ask for help from one of the organizers.
 - e. Ask as many questions on the *Fall Risk Checklist* as time allows and document the answers. The participant will take this checklist home with their results.

4. After the screening is completed, a screener should explain the results to the participant and provide them with educational handout(s) which will outline recommendations based on their fall risk. Included in this toolkit are resources for those “*Screened at Risk of Falls*” and “*Tips to Maintain Independence*”.
 - a. Review their *Stay Independent* questionnaire and *Fall Risk Checklist*
 - e. Enter screening data on the tabulation sheet with each person’s age, gender, ethnicity, questionnaire score and whether any risk factor was present. Each team will have a tabulation sheet for data collection, which can be used to report back to your APTA chapter, Section and State Falls Prevention Coalition ([link](#)).
 - b. Navigator will then assist participants to other stations or provide referrals: pharmacy medication review, home safety, evidence-based exercise demos, or back to the Intake table for additional fall prevention resources.
 - c. Vitals assessment can be performed as its own station if not performed with STEADI screening.

5. Pay special attention to participants that were found to be at risk of falls. Check for his/her 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. You may also want to

provide them with the *Family Caregivers: Protect your Loved Ones from Falling* brochure. 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. Thank the participant for coming to the screening
 - b. Assure the participant there are ways to lower his/her chances of falling and/or maintain their independence
 - c. Make sure to provide these educational handouts:
 - i. CDC's *Check for Safety* (helpful if available in other languages to improve accessibility)
 - ii. "*Screened at Risk of Falls*" or "*Tips to Maintain Independence*"
 - iii. Falls Coalition website flyer (if available in your area)
 - iv. Evidence based community fall prevention programming relevant to your area
 - d. Encourage the participant to take charge of their health. This can include:
 - i. The participant asking his/her healthcare provider including their physical therapist to find the source of unsteadiness, which may be followed by a specialized plan of care.
 - ii. Becoming more physically active, such as joining an exercise class, a specific falls prevention community program. Examples Include but are not limited to:
 1. Tai Ji Quan
 2. Moving for Better Balance
 3. A Matter of Balance
 4. Otago Exercise Program
 5. EnhanceFitness
6. Some Final (and Important!) Thoughts
- a. Avoid "prescribing" specific exercises, instead speaking in generalities about what might be beneficial. Keep in mind 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.
 - b. Focus on a positive message i.e. "Here are some suggestions to decrease your fall 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"
 - c. Your event could include prizes for participation. If the participant completes all of the stations, then their name will be entered in a drawing. The participant will have a half page "passport" with the names of the stations. When a station is completed, someone from that station will initial the "passport".

7. Most participants who attend the screening event will appreciate when someone reaches out to them in a FRIENDLY, caring way. After being screened, some people may feel unsure and afraid of their risks for falling. All volunteers need to be aware of this and attempt to calm and reassure participants and encourage them to take measures to decrease their risk of falling.