CATCH RURAL Falls

Coordinated Action Toward Community Health: RedUce Risk And Limit Falls

Effective Patient Education Delivery Practices for Older Adults

University of Nebraska Medical Center

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Educational Objectives

Understand how older adults learn and how providers can communicate effectively.

- Identify barriers to effective patient education.
- Apply health literacy principles during fall prevention discussions.
- Use evidence-based communication strategies.
- Tailor education to patient goals, readiness, and preferences.

Common Fall Prevention Messages That Often Fail

Common Advice:

- “Exercise more”
- “Be careful”
- “Use your cane”
- “Remove hazards”

Patient Interpretation:

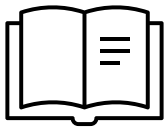
- “I’m not sure what to do”
- “This is vague”
- “Only when I feel unstable”
- “Which hazards??”

Patient leaves remembering only
“I need to exercise more”

Barriers to Effective Patient Education for Older Adults

Sensory & Cognitive Changes

- Hearing & vision impairment
- Memory or cognitive challenges
- Information overload during the visit



Health Literacy Challenges

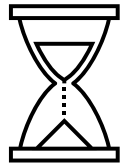
- Medical terminology
- Complex written materials
- Difficulty applying information at home

Motivation & Beliefs

- **"Falls are just part of aging"**
- Fear of losing independence
- Low confidence in ability to change behaviors

Environmental & Social Factors

- Limited caregiver support
- Transportation & financial barriers
- Unsafe home environments



Clinical Communication Barriers

- Limited time for discussion
- Lack of confirmation of understanding
- Recommendations not connected to patient goals

SAFE Approach

- **S**imple
- **A**ctionable
- **F**ocused on patient goals (Relevant)
- **E**valuated through teach-back

Health Literacy & Why it Matters

- Ability to find, understand, and use health information
- Use plain language; avoid medical jargon
- Ask a simple question: “How confident are you in filling out medical forms?” (Wallace et al., 2006)

Less Effective
“Reduce your fall risk”

More Effective
"Remove throw rugs from your hallway and complete your chair-rise exercises three times this week."

Tailoring Fall Prevention Education to Older Adults

Before Teaching

- Assess readiness for learning
- Identify goals (consider experiences & goals)
- Preference for learning

During Teaching

- Focus on 1-3 key messages
- Connect recommendations to goals
- Use plain language and demonstrations
- Include care partners when appropriate

After Teaching

- Reinforce & confirm understanding
- Use teach-back
- Highlight key actions on written materials

Practical Tips for Effective Patient Education

Build Trust
- Reduce anxiety
- Focus on strengths
- Create safe space

Keep it Simple
- 2-3 concepts per session
- Use plain language
- Brief teaching sessions

Make it Meaningful
- Recommendations + patient goals
- Tailor to routines
- Link new behaviors to habits

Teach Actively
- Use teach-back
- Encourage questions & discussion
- Verify understanding

Support Retention
- Chunking
- Repeat key points
- Use multiple formats

Provide Lasting Resources
- Highlight key information
- Send home written materials
- Include care partners

Effective patient education is simple, personalized, interactive, and reinforced over time.

(Bastable et al., 2020)

Summary: Review of Objectives

- Recognized common barriers to effective patient education in older adults.
- Explained a SAFE approach
  - Simple
  - Actionable
  - Focused on patient goals
  - Evaluated through teach-back
- Applied health literacy principles when discussing fall risk.
- Tailored education to patient readiness, motivation, and context.

References and Resources

- Center for Disease Control (CDC) Stopping Elderly Accidents, Deaths, and Injuries (STEADI) Home Page
- CDC STEADI Algorithm for Fall Risk Screening, Assessment, and Intervention
- CDC STEADI Coordinated Care Plan to Prevent Older Adult Falls
- Bastable, S. B., Sopczyk, D., Gramet, P., Jacobs, K., & Braungart, M. M. (2020). *Health professional as educator: Principles of teaching and learning* (2nd ed.). Jones & Bartlett Learning.
- The Patient Education Materials Assessment Tool (PEMAT) and User's Guide. Content last reviewed November 2020. Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality, Rockville, MD. https://www.ahrq.gov/health-literacy/patient-education/pemat.html
- Wallace, L. S., Rogers, E. S., Roskos, S. E., Holiday, D. B., & Weiss, B. D. (2006). Brief report: screening items to identify patients with limited health literacy skills. *Journal of general internal medicine*, *21*(8), 874–877. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1525-1497.2006.00532.x
- Free Web-Based Readability Checker

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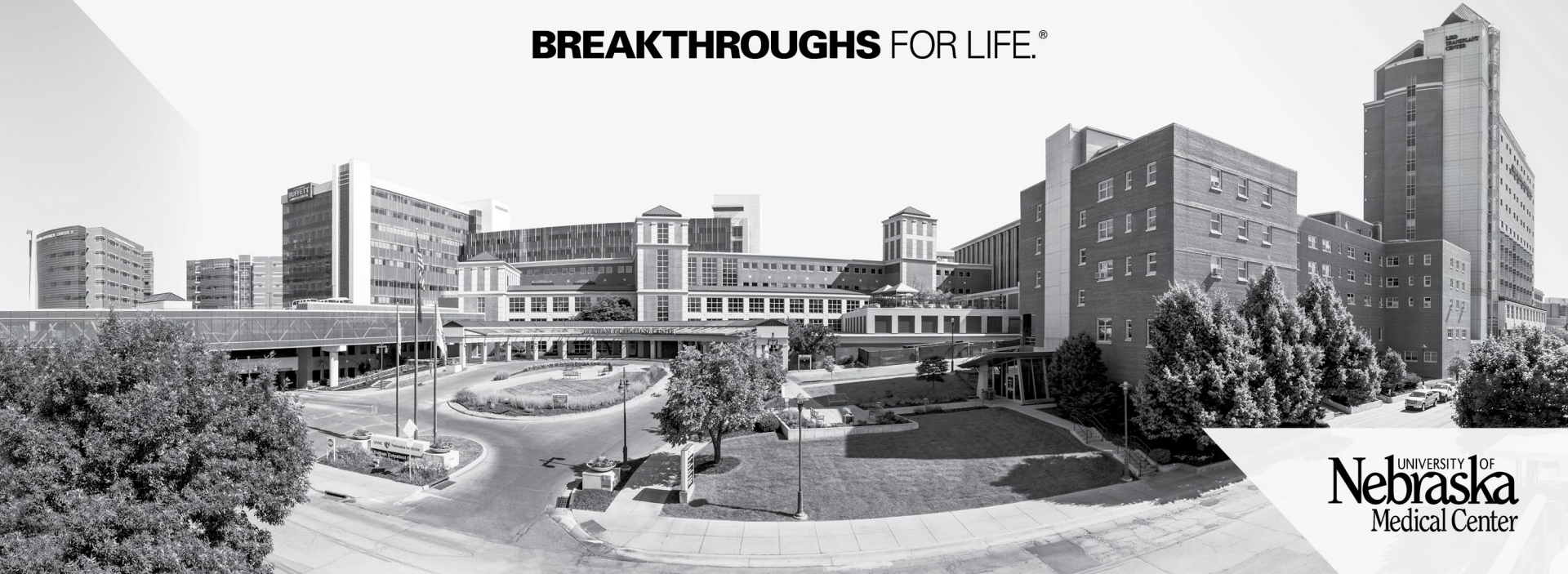

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