Older Adults & Technology
Best Practices and Innovative Solutions
Overview

• The OATS Approach: Mission & Program Design
• Older Adult Learners and Tech
• Resources
The OATS Approach
Mission and Philosophy

Harnessing the power of technology to change the way we age

• Technology as a conduit to empowerment
• No one-size-fits-all approach to successful technology training
• Inclusive, participant-driven, active learning
• Metrics matter
• 5 Impact Areas
OATS Approach to Program Design

- Be an aging optimist
- Focus on special qualities of older adults
- Person-centered
- Trauma informed
- Role of creativity
- Application of skills
- Active engagement
Older Adult Learners and Tech
Myths about Older Adults and Tech

• Seniors can’t learn new technology
• Seniors don’t want to learn new technology
• Seniors need senior-specific devices
Overcoming Barriers

Common Barriers

• Digital fluency
• Accessibility
• Security
• Privacy

Best Practices

• Respect & patience
• Explain jargon
• Draw on participants’ experience
• Give relevant examples
• Present pros and cons
Unique Qualities of Older Adult Learners

- Intrinsic motivation to learn
- Lifetime of experience
- Learn best through:
  - Exposure and hands-on practice
  - Repetition
  - Moderate pacing
  - The use of supporting materials (demonstrations as well as written materials when possible)
Supported Learning

Some cognitive & learning abilities slow with age

• Speed of processing
  • Moderate pace
  • Patience is key!
• Selective attention
  • Reduce distractions
• Language
  • Clearly explain jargon and new concepts
• Working memory
  • Build-in repetition and review
  • Offer supporting materials
Supported Learning

Some cognitive abilities work better with cuing:

- Episodic memory
  - Encourage learner to connect new material to personal experiences
- Semantic memory
  - Relevant analogies
- Executive function
  - Supporting materials with images for tech skills
  - Hands-on practice with an instructor who offers reminders rather than completing the task for the learner


Assessing Tech Skills

• Understanding exposure
• Measuring interest
• Finding relevance
Resources
Resources: Tech Help

- Meet Us Online: SeniorPlanet.org
- Online resources:
  - Online Classes
  - Zoom Resources
  - Tech Tip Videos
- Newsletters
- Senior Planet National Hotline
  - 888-713-3495
Thank you!