



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

Institute of Medicine. 2015. Cognitive Aging: Progress in Understanding and Opportunities for Action. Washington, DC: The National Academies Press.

Rabbitt, P. 2020. The Aging Mind: An Owner's Manual. Routledge.



■ 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!

