

Ageless Wisdom:

A Sensitivity Program to Understand Aging

**Education and Consultative
Services of UPMC
Senior Services**

3600 Forbes Ave. at Meyran
Pittsburgh, PA 15213

Phone:

1-866-430-8742

Website:

SeniorServices.UPMC.com

Email:

UPMCSeniorServices@UPMC.edu

Education and Consultative Services of UPMC Senior Services offers a sensitivity training program to a wide array of audiences including: health care professionals, health care students, caregivers, employees from a variety of organizations, and other community members. “Ageless Wisdom” is an interactive and experiential geriatric sensitivity training program available in-person or virtually. A “Train the Trainer” option is also available. The objectives of this program are to:

- Identify and experience normal changes as we age.
- Identify and experience changes as a result of disease and disability associated with the aging process.
- Discuss “Golden Rules” that outline strategies to manage these changes.
- View aging as a positive experience.

The program consists of the following segments:

Sensory Changes: Experiential exercises demonstrate the normal and abnormal changes in hearing, vision, touch, taste, and smell as we age.

- By wearing different eyeglasses to simulate yellowing of the eye lenses, glaucoma, diabetic retinopathy, macular degeneration, cataracts, and hemianopia, the audience experiences how vision changes could affect an older person’s ability to perform normal daily activities.
- The participants take a simulated hearing loss “test” to understand how life of an older person can be affected by loss of hearing.
- Changes in smell, taste, and touch are demonstrated through a variety of exercises.

Changes in Cognition: Normal and abnormal changes in memory are discussed and several simulation exercises emphasize how someone with dementia functions in their environment. A short video showcases an example of an older adult with memory loss followed by a discussion on verbal and nonverbal communication techniques.

continued

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Psychological Changes: Risk factors for depression and anxiety are explored along with suggestions on how to prevent and manage these conditions. Throughout the program, the predisposing risk factor of loss is demonstrated with an ongoing exercise that causes the participants to imagine loss at a personal level.

Functional Changes: Using bandages, slings, weights, and other equipment, the audience experiences functional changes due to disability and disease. Participants are assigned one of five designated disabilities and are asked to perform tasks, such as walking, eating, navigating an open corridor, and effectively communicating with others. The importance of balance and gait in maintaining mobility and reducing falls is discussed.

Social Changes: The vulnerability of seniors is examined with emphasis on the signs and symptoms and types of abuse. Prevention, reporting, and management of caregiver stress are discussed. In addition, the importance of driver safety is reviewed.

Diversity and Aging: Current demographics of our diverse population are discussed. Examples of the necessity of adapting care to meet the needs of an older adult with a different cultural background and the importance of supportive services are provided.

For more information, visit **SeniorServices.UPMC.com**
or contact **1-866-430-8742**.

