

# Funmilies

**FUNMILIES - Intergenerational Sport Solutions for Healthy Ageing**

**Capacity building program for sports professionals**

**Module 4: Needs of elders in sports**

# Intro

**Involvement in sports activities decreases with age.** The elderly people have particular needs that must be taken into consideration if our society would like to see them participate in sports.

**Major factors** that push the elderly to abstain from sports activities:

- Fear of injury
- Stereotypes regarding aging
- Lack of fun during sports activities
- Lack of knowledge regarding the provision of proper sport activities at local level
- Embarrassment regarding their performance
- Rapport with instructors
- Lack of interest
- Lack of time

**Some of these limitation factors can be overcome** by adjusting the sports programmes and the attitudes of the instructors, and that is the main scope of this training module.

# Overview

## Goal

Acquire the basic knowledge necessary to understand **the major factors that prevent the elderly from participating in sports activities**, and learn implementable solutions

## Format

Beyond **frontal classes**, we will make use of **focus groups** to let you share your experiences, learn from real cases and ensure a concrete and lasting understanding

## Content

The module "Needs of elderly" is composed of three separate units:

1. **Having FUN:** understand the different drivers that make a sports activity with the elderly an engaging one
2. **Ensuring SAFETY:** take into account physical and psychosocial consequences of injuries to older participants, and preventive solutions
3. **Strong BONDS:** the perception elders have towards sport instructors, and communication channels to engage with older audience

# Introductory Evaluation

Please complete the introductory questionnaire.

It will help you be aware of your current degree of understanding and support your learning outcomes by the end of the module.



Intergenerational Sport Solutions for Healthy Ageing (Funmilies)  
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# Having FUN

## Unit 1



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# Engagement

## Motivations

Meeting new people, improving health,  
reducing stress, enjoying small challenges



Activities should be designed with the  
aim of being **playful and accessible**

- Cooperation
- Joy of participating
- Gaming elements

## How?

- **Promote social outcomes**
- Physical activity sessions should be interlinked with social ones
- Refreshments at the end of the activity

## Intergenerational settings

- Tackle loneliness and social isolation
  - Promote the creation of friendships
- Formalised dialogues or buddy systems
- Self-disclosure of past experiences

# Stereotypes

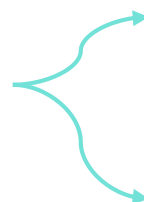
Oversimplified and biased images, perceptions and ideas about a particular category of people

→ Ideas on elders: need of continuous care, subject to weakness, and dependent on others



**Social Anxiety prevents their participation in social activities**

The **environment** in which activities take place has a significant impact, as it affects perceptions



Hospitals, schools, retirement homes, etc.

Parks, community and sport centres, etc.

- The burden of one's own age is emphasised
- Neutral places perceived safe
- Age is not perceived as a crucial element

**Elderly prefer engaging in physical activities outdoor**

# Group activity

## Unit 1: Having FUN



# Ensuring SAFETY

## Unit 2



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# Introduction

The elderly might fear any injury that could endanger their independence and way of life

Higher risk in case health issues and joint pain are already present

Physical constraints can have such **limiting conditions** that they can be compared to forms of disability.

**Over-doing, high-impact exercises or accidents**

**Physical consequences**  
(Breaks, strains, and joint damage)

**Psychosocial concerns**

# Direct communication

## Design a communication framework

- Reassuring participants will engage in ad-hoc activities
- Ensure optimal safety
- Clearly state the degree of effort that every single exercise requires

**Mention your experience** with older people sport activities and/or on treating body accidents

N.B. Some studies demonstrate how women are **more likely to need reassurance** concerning the risk of injuries

# Implementable actions (1/2)

## 1. Equipment

- Reinforce all the safety measures
- Consider the inclusion of specifically designed equipment
- Include an assessment of all **physical barriers**:
  - Stair climbers or wheelchair ramp stairs
  - Parking for blue badge holders

## 2. Medical services

- Place an emergency aid kit in the surroundings
- Agreements with doctors or **health professionals** to provide a monthly free **check-up** at the venue

# Implementable actions (2/2)

## 3. Family engagement

- Fear of travelling to the facilities
- engagement of the entire family (safe trip and emergency contact)

## 4. Flexibility

Be aware that unplanned changes in the activity might take place.

## 5. Activities design

- Graded exposure to the environment to gain confidence
- Divide activities into small chunks

# Group activity

## Unit 2: Ensuring SAFETY

# Strong BONDS

## Unit 3



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# Instructors

- **Adopt an encouraging and kind approach**
- Dialogue over patronization
- Elders prefer structured and institutionalised sporting activities
- Some studies show how age and gender of the instructor should match that of the participants, especially in the case of aged women

→ **Reduce insecurities and embarrassment**, improve trust towards the coach

→ Let participants **feel "understood"** with respect to their specific needs



# Community and Communication

## Communities

*A small urban settlement might be more sensitive and more appropriate and rewarding for launching first activities (Funmilies, 2021)*

1. Focus on individuals and families that can take care of their elders
2. Mapping and understanding of the local needs
3. **Activities designed according to local needs and features**

## Ad Hoc Communication

Informing the elderly through non-digital means:

Promotion through mail, leaflets, local newspapers, and notice boards in **local community centres** (both civil and religious)

# Group activity

## Unit 3: Strong BONDS

# Wrap up

## Our Goal

Acquire the basic knowledge necessary to understand **the major factors that prevent the elderly from participating in sports activities**, and learn implementable solutions

1. **Having FUN:** the different drivers that make a sports activity with the elderly an engaging one
2. **Ensuring SAFETY:** take into account physical and psychosocial consequences of injuries to older participants, and preventive solutions
3. **Strong BOUNDS:** the perception elders have towards sport instructors, and communication channels to engage with older audience

# References

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# Closure and Final Evaluation

Thank you!!!