

Making a Difference

2020 Parker County Healthy Aging

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Relevance

Healthy habits, staying active, and taking advantage of preventive services can contribute to a productive and meaningful life for older adults. Factors that affect health include memory loss, balance, and strength, and dealing with chronic diseases and pain.

Research shows that many older adults have problems with memory, but only 15 percent report these problems to their health providers. People of all ages forget, but older adults tend to worry more about forgetting.

There are many causes of memory loss, these can include anxiety and stress that can affect the hippocampus, which is involved in new memories and processes them for storage as long-term memories. No matter the age, memory losses are increased by inattention, anxiety, depression, and socialization.

There are several factors associated with memory that include biological and psychological that can be related to hearing and vision loss. Medical conditions such as hypertension and heart conditions can interfere with memory. Physical activity along with nutrition may also impact the blood and oxygen flow to the brain that can play an integral part to brain function.

While there are changes in memory as people grow older, most people can improve their memory with training and practice.

Response

To address this issue, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Agents in five counties across Texas combined efforts with Aging and Gerontology specialist Andy Crocker to offer a virtual Master of Memory series.

- **Planning**-Organized multi county FCH planning group made up of five agents with specialist support to plan registration, marketing, evaluation, and implementation of Master of Memory: met 8/7; 8/13; 10/9 for general planning and follow up meetings and lesson presenters met weekly 8/31;9/7; 9/14; 9/21; 9/28; and 10/5.
- **Marketing**-The series was marketed through all available means including newspaper, email, fliers, and social media.
- **Implementation**- Conducted virtual “Master of Memory” series in September which is Healthy Aging Month. The program goal was to improve participants’ memory function. The six-lesson series included presentations on memory and learning, memory strategies, nutrition, medications, medical conditions, and exercise for the body and mind.

Results

Virtual participation: week one-107; week two-67, week three-60; week four-57; week five-43; week six-36. Counties represented for at least one session were: Bell, Castro, Colorado, Comal, Coryell, Dallas, Erath, Fayette, Fort Bend, Guadalupe, Harris, Hays, Kaufman, Limestone, Parker, Rusk, Potter, Scurry, Starr, Williamson, and Wise.

Evaluation Results. Thirty-one participants (84% female) responded to the Master of Memory Qualtrics pre and post-survey. 97% of respondents indicated that they learned new information and 97% indicated that they planned to use the information. Responses based on a mean; five-point scale where 1 is worst – 5 is best:

- Value of the material- 4.68
- Overall teaching- 4.40
- Teacher’s knowledge of subject- 4.57

As a result of attending the educational series participants demonstrated

- Higher confidence levels in their ability to take steps to improve their memory functioning.
- Reduction in negative attitudes related to memory and aging.
- Significant increase in their understanding of risk factors that may be controlled to help memory function, including diabetes, depression, hearing loss, and vision loss.

N=31

Pre Yes	Statements	Post Yes	Change
84%	High blood pressure may negatively affect my memory	100%	19%
90%	Depression may negatively affect my memory	100%	12%
84%	Loss of a spouse may negatively affect my memory	100%	19%
65%	I need to talk to my health provider about any herbal supplements I take.	97%	50%
65%	I can name at least two strategies to help me remember.	100%	54%

Other Activities

Matter of Balance is an evidence-based fall risk program that emphasizes the practical strategies to reduce a fear of falling and increase physical activity. Classes began on March 2 and there were four classes conducted that shared ways to help older adults reduce the risks for falling. Due to COVID 19 We were unable to complete the eight-lesson series. And there was not post evaluation conducted. There were 9 who participated in the class and one volunteer assisted.

Taking Control of Your Health - Surviving the Holidays a virtual class has begun meeting each month the 2nd Fridays of each month at 1:30 p.m. This is a collaboration with North Central Texas Area Agency on Aging. I participated in the second class and presented a session on “*Surviving the Holidays*”. Participants were from the Central Texas Area. There were 10 who participated in the December session.

News Articles and Social Media Post there were several news articles prepared and articles posted on social media relevant to health and older adults.

Collaborations

County Extension Agents Tanya Davis, Jackie McLaughlin, Jymann Davis, and Andrea Brooks, and Extension Specialist Andy Crocker. This agent and this agent collaborated with North Central Texas Area Agency on Aging to conduct the Matter of Balance Classes and Taking Control of Your Health program.

Interpretation

Results of efforts to help people in Parker County to eat better and live healthier lifestyles have been shared with stakeholders through monthly reports. Also shared with them the program summaries. This will also be shared with the Community Health Program Area Committee and Leadership Advisory Board.

Future Programming

Due to the success Master of Memory all team members would like to work on future projects together. Two virtual Master of Memory classes are being planned. It is hoped to offer these face to face if appropriate. Also plans are to conduct Matter of Balance, Cooking for 1 or 2 Series and participate regularly in Taking Control of Your Health

Acknowledgements

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