



National Fitness Leadership Alliance

Older Adult Fitness Leadership Performance Standards

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Aging Process (25%)

Performance Standard #1

The Older Adult Leader should be able to demonstrate their knowledge of the physiological, psychological and sociological effects of aging and the relationship of physical activity.

Competencies

- a) Knowledge of the probable age-related changes to the systems that provide and support movement in the body.
- b) Knowledge of the effect of physical activity on these systems.
- c) Knowledge of potential change to emotional well-being related to aging.
- d) Identify the five levels of functional ability.

Performance Standard #2

The Older Adult Leader will have knowledge of diseases associated with the aging process including but not limited to: arthritis, osteoporosis, diabetes, cardiovascular disease, stroke and their relationship to physical activity.

Competencies

- a) Knowledge of the etiology of the diseases related to the aging process: arthritis, osteoporosis, diabetes, cardiovascular disease, stroke and general ailments.
- b) Knowledge of the appropriate exercise interventions.
- c) Knowledge of where and how to access information on diseases and related exercise precautions.
- d) Ability to determine when to recommend an alternative program to participants or to recommend they seek medical advice before continuing in the program.

Leadership/Communication Skills (10%)

Performance Standard

The Older Adult Leaders will conduct a safe and effective fitness class using a variety of leadership styles and communication techniques appropriate for older adults.

Competencies

- a) Demonstrate the ability to create a supportive non-competitive environment
- b) Explain the purpose of a given exercise and offer alternatives appropriate for older adults.
- c) Demonstrate an awareness of participants' feedback during a fitness class by acknowledging individual differences, considering potential diverse cultural and educational backgrounds.
- d) Identify and demonstrate effective leadership qualities.
- e) Identify potential challenges that leaders may experience in an exercise class, and describe strategies for accommodating these situations for older adults - ie: visual and verbal cues, considering older adults with visual, hearing and cognitive impairment.
- f) Knowledge of the psychosocial and physical benefits of physical activity and the ability to explain them to their participants.
- g) Identify behavior changing strategies for motivating older adults.

Exercise Analysis and Risk Management (25%)

Performance Standard

The Older Adult Leader will demonstrate an understanding of methods that ensure safe and effective exercise execution for older adults. The Older Adult Leader will illustrate the appropriate knowledge and ability to conduct a participant safety screen prior to exercise prescription; and then be able to interpret the information collected to determine exercise appropriateness for the participants. The Older Adult Leader will be knowledgeable in facility safety to ensure that the environment is safe and appropriate for exercise.

Competencies

- a) Describe the responsibilities and legal liabilities associated with a participant's medical history, personal injury background, and physical activity/exercise screening in relation to older adults.
- b) For a given exercise, analyze its intended and actual purpose, potential risks to joint structures, and modifications or alternative exercises considering older adult functional ability.
- c) Knowledge of the use of space effectively to account for safety issues and needs of participants with visual, hearing or cognitive impairments.
- d) Knowledge of safety issues related to floor surfaces, proper footwear, lighting, acoustics, telephone, ventilation and accessibility to water and washrooms, facility emergency procedures, exits.

Program Planning (25%)

Performance Standard

The Older Adult Leader will design an effective program using established methods and training principles. The Older Adult Leader will be capable of evaluating programs using measurable outcomes, ensuring effective and appropriate programming.

Competencies

- a) Describe pre-screening strategies for safe program delivery and for older adults and their participation in physical activity (e.g., PAR-Q, informed consent, needs assessment, goals).
- b) Describe methods for continued monitoring of older adult exercise intensity.
- c) Describe reasons and techniques for older adult self-assessment.
- d) Describe ways to assess the effectiveness of an older adult exercise program.
- e) Demonstrate an understanding of effective design and delivery for older adult exercise programming.
- f) Determine which pre-screening tool to use based on the individual being assessed and any physical limitations that may lead to safety issues.
- g) Ability to maintain updated information on participants and recommend that they inform leaders of changes to their condition and medication.
- h) Knowledge of / or access to information on conditions or medications that have precautions or contraindications for exercise.
- i) Understand the value of evaluation to program design and delivery.
- j) Knowledge of which tools are appropriate for measuring functional outcomes related to physical activity programming.
- k) Knowledge of which tools to use for measuring adherence to the exercise program.
- l) Identify and describe the three levels of the health-fitness gradient.
- m) Define biological age.

Class Organization Skills (10%)

Performance Standard

The Older Adult Leader will design and conduct a safe and effective older adult exercise class using a variety of class formats. The Older Adult Leader will have the ability to adapt programming to meet the needs of participants using available resources.

Competencies

- a) Prepare an effective lesson plan for older adults.
- b) Demonstrate the following: continuity of movements, smooth transitions between movements and body positions, progressions, and compatibility with participants' abilities.
- c) Knowledge of appropriate exercises for strength, muscular endurance, balance, flexibility and cardio-respiratory fitness for older adults.
- d) Demonstrate and describe the components of older adult class design, including lengthened warm-up and cool-down, gradual aerobic progression, flexibility, muscle conditioning, and relaxation.
- e) Describe the common methods used to monitor exercise intensity for each fitness component. Discuss the relevance of using these methods with older adults.
- f) Knowledge of principles of exercise prescription (specificity, progressive overload, FITT).
- g) Incorporate the use of appropriate portable equipment based on identified or implied needs of the participant.

Use of Music (2.5%)

Performance Standard

The Older Adult Leader will discuss reasons for using music (or not) in an older adult fitness class.

Competencies

- a) State or list reasons for using music in an older adult class.
- b) Identify the relationship between music and motivation for older adults.

Ongoing Personal Professional Development and Marketing Strategies (2.5%)

Performance Standard

The Older Adult Leader will demonstrate an understanding of how to pursue continuing education related to fitness leadership in the older adult field. The Older Adult Leader will develop strategies for marketing their older adult classes.

Competencies

- a) Identify fitness or related organizations; research what continuing education opportunities they currently offer in the older adult field.
- b) Demonstrate an awareness of a Fitness Leader' code of conduct and the older adult scope of practice.
- c) Focus on where and how to market older adult classes.