

Coffee, Tea, or Better Living? A Café Model for Older Adult Health Promotion

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Background

Connecting and attracting older adults with services that support healthy aging remains a national public health concern. Furthermore, social isolation is associated with a reduced quality of life and health status as well as an increased use of health care resources. The MacArthur Foundation Study of Aging in America (Rowe & Kahn, 1999) identified engagement with life activities as key to preventing illness and maximizing cognitive and physical functioning by:

- Building social connectedness
- Promoting self-efficacy and independence
- Facilitating productivity and continued contributions to one's community

Social and productive activities that involve little or no enhancement of fitness lower the risk of all causes of mortality as much as fitness activities do (Glass et al., 1999). Social activity is associated with a decreased risk of incident disability in activities of daily living, mobility, and instrumental activities of daily living (James et al., 2011).

Mather LifeWays, headquartered in Evanston, IL, is a unique non-for-profit organization that enhances the lives of older adults through lifestyle and residential alternatives that create Ways to Age Well™.

Café Plus Concept

**It starts with a cup of coffee.
From there the possibilities are endless.**

The Café's purpose is to promote quality of life, social engagement, and community engagement. The Café also helps older



adults access resources and nutrition to age well. The reasonably priced food attracts community members of all ages. For those 55 years and older, a variety of health promotional activities are offered. The Café serves as a one-stop-shop where customers can get everything they need to promote wellness and quality of life.

3 Cafes in Chicago neighborhoods with limited older adult services:

- Alternative to large regional senior centers with a neighborhood feel
- Fun and friendly atmosphere
- Purposely decorated to create an ageless environment



The Cafes serve 5,000-8,700 unduplicated customers annually. Primary funding sources are: food sales, fees for classes, dues, grants, and Mather LifeWays' support.

The Café model has received many awards:

- 2009 Jack Ossofsky Award from NCOA
- 2007 Pinnacle Award from NuStep, Inc.
- 2003 Community Service Award from Leading Age
- 2002 Best Practice Award from HPI:NCOA
- 2002 Richard H. Driehaus Foundation Award for Architectural Excellence in Community Design

Health Promotional Programs

Focus on the six dimensions of wellness:



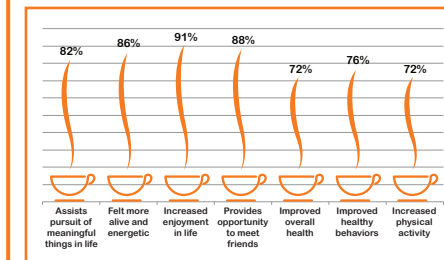
Eat Better & Move More

- Evidence-based intervention tailored to older adults (Wellman et al., 2007)
- 12 week program that combines physical activity and nutrition
- Walking is the primary physical activity and participants track their steps with a pedometer
- Nutritional topics include calcium, fiber, fruits, vegetables, fluid intake, MyPlate, and portion size



Café Effects

Based on 2010 annual, standardized quality of life and satisfaction survey (n=982):



Discussion

The Café model is adaptable to a variety of settings: Senior Centers, Senior Living Communities, and Community Centers. There are approximately 32 examples of Café model replications:

- Chez Nous & Birt's Bistro and Bookstore by Benevilla in Sun City, AZ
- Carrie's Café by LifeCare Alliance in Columbus, OH
- Yu-Yu Chiteki in Nagoya City, Japan



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