



The Better Vision, Healthy Ageing Program Toolkit

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GUIDE TO USING PICTURE CARDS FOR HEALTH PROMOTION



**The Fred Hollows
Foundation**
www.hollows.org



Burnet Institute
Medical Research. Practical Action.

This health promotion tool was developed by Dr Wendy Holmes (Better Vision, Healthy Ageing Program) with Ms Jennifer Joseph (previously of PALM Foundation). It was edited by Kelly Durrant (Burnet Institute) and Rachel Coghlan (The Fred Hollows Foundation).

It draws on the experience of implementing the Better Vision, Healthy Ageing Program in Sri Lanka in partnership with PALM Foundation, Berendina Development Services, the Plantation Human Development Trust, Sarvodaya Shramadana Movement, the Ministry of Health national Vision 2020 programme, the Kandy Centre for Sight, and the District Department of Social Services.

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Copyediting, Design and Interior Layout: Jane Hawtin.

Cover photo: Andy Nilson (The Fred Hollows Foundation).

Artist: Mr Ranil Shanaka <http://www.rashaspace.com>

INTRODUCTION

Even in old age, health education and promotion activities can have a measurable impact on healthy behaviours, such as physical exercise, diet, and willingness to seek healthcare services, with improvements in health outcomes.

Elders may have more time for and interest in health education, but they may also have low literacy levels, potential cognitive deficits and poor hearing or low vision. If health promotion efforts are engaging and entertaining the messages are more likely to be remembered. When discussion is stimulated, this is more likely to lead to behaviour change.

This health education tool uses a set of picture cards alongside a series of health messages to stimulate discussion of healthy behaviours. The cards can be used in a variety of flexible and entertaining ways.

Picture cards can be used within a household with a single older person, with their family, or in groups with a facilitator. Two identical sets of picture cards are provided so they can be used in a large group setting or for simple card games.

IDEAS FOR USE OF PICTURE CARDS

Card games such as 'Memory' and 'Snap!' provide entertaining ways to discuss a health behaviour triggered by the picture on the card. Other games and activities can be used with larger groups. The next section, *Questions and key health promotion messages*, provides some ideas for discussion.

MEMORY (TWO PLAYERS OR SMALL GROUP)

Shuffle both sets of cards together and then lay all the cards out face down on a table or on the ground. Each member of the group takes turns to choose two cards and turn them face up. Everyone must be able to see the pictures. If the pictures on the two cards don't match, the person turns them back face down. Everyone tries to remember them. When someone turns over two cards with the same picture they pick up both cards and tell everyone what the picture shows. The facilitator can then ask questions and stimulate discussion. At the end of the discussion, the facilitator can mention any additional key messages which were not covered. The person who found two cards the same keeps them and has another turn. The participants continue to take turns until all the pairs have been found, stopping each time for a discussion of the pictures. The person with the most cards at the end is the winner.

'SNAP!' (TWO TO FOUR PLAYERS)

This is a fast moving game for two to four players. Others in the group can watch. Shuffle the cards first. Divide the cards evenly between each player. The players take it in turns to quickly lay the cards on top of each other in a pile. If two cards the same are laid on top of each other, they shout 'snap' loudly. Then stop the game while the picture is discussed. The person who shouted 'snap' first gets all the cards in the pile. Continue the game using the original cards as well as the ones that have been picked up. The winner is the one who gets all the cards.

STORY TELLING (GROUPS)

The group might tell a story using the picture cards, which the facilitator then discusses with them.

CARD MATCHING (LARGE GROUPS)

Divide the participants into two teams and get them to move to different sides of the room. Divide the cards into the two sets. Give a card from one set to each person in the first group and one from the second set to each person in the second group. Invite one person to show their picture to everyone and describe it. Then they have to go to the other side of the room to join the person who has the same card. The facilitator asks the group the questions and facilitates a discussion about the picture. Repeat this process until all the participants have discussed their card and found their match.

GATHERING OR CONVEYING INFORMATION (FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS)

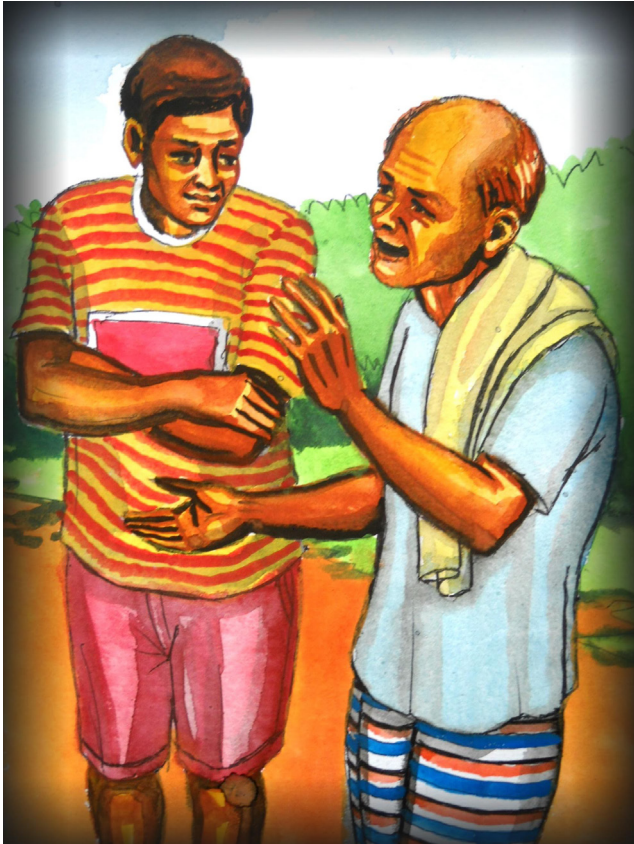
The picture cards can also be used within focus group discussions, for example, to gather information relevant to elders' health or to convey information and stimulate community discussion about elders' health issues.

AT THE END OF THE SESSION

After playing a game or using the cards, the facilitator should summarise the main points from the discussion, check that everyone understands and correct any misconceptions. They should then ask the group to discuss how they can use the information to benefit their own health.

If you have time you might want to have a quick quiz at the end of the session.

QUESTIONS AND KEY HEALTH PROMOTION MESSAGES



AN OLDER MAN TEACHING A YOUNGER MAN

QUESTIONS:

- What is happening in the picture?
- How does the older man feel when he is asked for advice by a younger man?
- How does the younger man feel when he asks the older man for advice?
- How can we encourage more intergenerational contact?

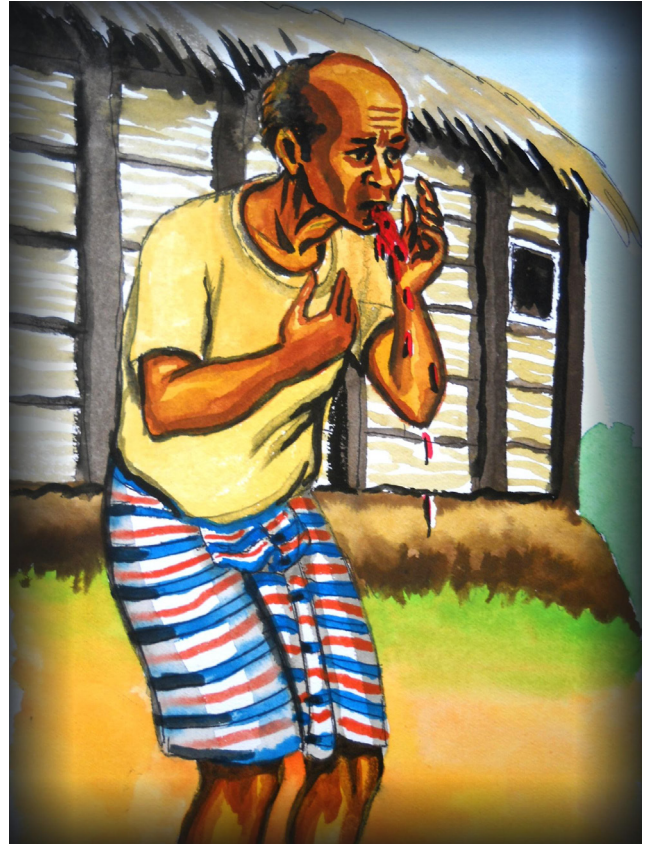
MESSAGES:

- Sharing knowledge or offering advice to young people can improve the self-esteem of elders, and make them feel useful. It provides an opportunity for younger people to show respect to elders
- Intergenerational activities have benefits for both older and younger people
- A young man may feel he can talk about his problems more easily with an elder than with his parents
- An elder who has good social contact with younger people can get support or assistance when they need it, for example, if they become ill or need practical help at home
- Social contact helps to reduce the risk of heart attack, stroke, high blood pressure and diabetes

OLDER MAN COUGHING UP BLOOD

QUESTIONS:

- What is happening in this picture?
- What illness might he be suffering from?



MESSAGES:

- Coughing up blood is almost always a sign of serious illness
- The most common cause is tuberculosis (TB). Another cause is lung cancer
- Elders are more likely to suffer from TB than younger people
- TB can be treated successfully
- Children in the home are at risk of catching TB from an elder with TB
- If an elder in the family is diagnosed with TB, other family members should also be examined for TB too
- Any elder with a chronic cough (more than two weeks) should visit the doctor to be examined and, if needed, have a chest x-ray



FRAIL OLDER MAN AND WIFE WITH YOUNGER ADULTS

QUESTIONS:

- What does this picture show?
- Who are the younger adults in the picture?
- How many elders are disabled in your community?
- Do disabled elders have access to aids such as a walking frame, stick, or wheelchair?
- The man with the briefcase might be a social welfare officer – how can elders communicate with social welfare officers?
- How can they learn about their rights and entitlements?
- What is the importance of family for elders?
- How many elders have no family living nearby?

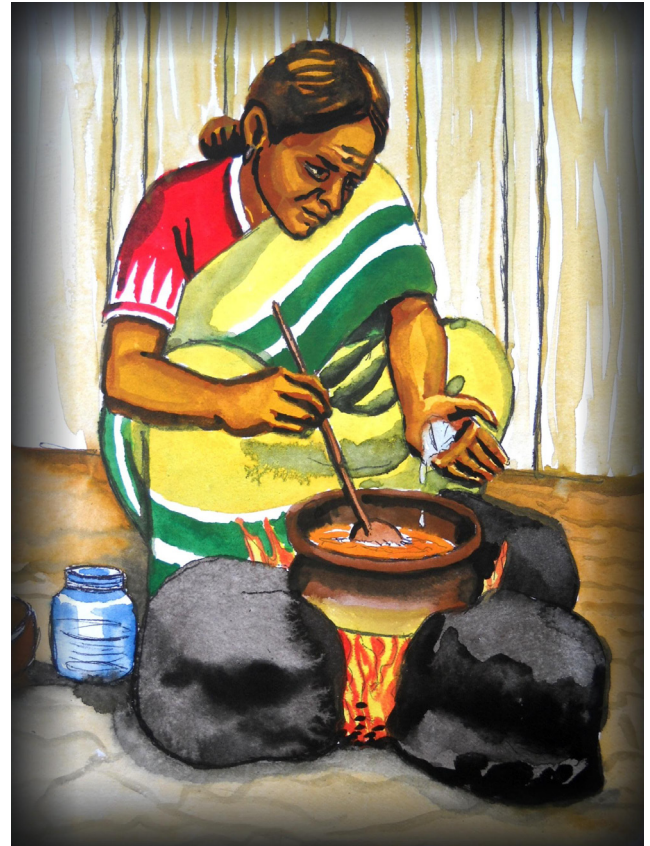
MESSAGES:

- Older couples like this will be healthier if they have support from their family
- Conflict in families can cause stress and misery for elders
- Respect from younger people is important to elders and an important cultural tradition in many countries

AN OLDER WOMAN COOKING AND ADDING SALT TO THE FOOD

QUESTIONS:

- What is happening in this picture?
- Why do cooks add salt to the food?
- Why is a lot of salt harmful?
- What might make it difficult for women to use less salt when they cook?



MESSAGES:

- Salt in the diet increases the risk of high blood pressure, stroke and heart disease
- People may prefer salty food because they think it tastes better
- We need to give this information to men as well as women because men may complain if their meals are less tasty
- People can get used to having less salt in their diet. If they are patient, over time, food with less salt will seem just as tasty and enjoyable
- Spices, herbs and lemon juice can make low salt foods taste better
- Use iodised salt to prevent goitre
- The woman is cooking over an open fire, exposing her smoke. Years of smoke exposure can lead to chronic cough and lung disease



YOUNGER MAN HELPING OLDER MAN WITH A BUCKET OF WATER

QUESTIONS:

- What is happening in the picture?
- How does the older man feel when he is helped by a younger man?
- How does the younger man feel when he helps the older man?
- How can we encourage more intergenerational contact?
- What might the older man be using the water for?
- Where did the water come from?
- Does he have a tap?
- How can we improve access to clean water for elders?

MESSAGES:

- Practical help by young people can make elders feel respected and supported
- It provides an opportunity for younger people to show respect and support for elders
- Intergenerational activities have benefits for both elders and younger people
- Social contact helps to reduce the risk of heart attack, stroke, high blood pressure and diabetes
- Elders play important roles in the family and community, for example, in looking after the vegetable garden

AN OLDER WOMAN WITH MEDICINES

QUESTIONS:

- What is happening in this picture?
- What problems might this woman have in taking her medicines correctly?
- What can we do to help elders take their medicines correctly?



MESSAGES:

- Many elders have to take more than one medicine and they may have problems with remembering when and how to take their medicines
- Other family members may need to remind elders to take their medicines. A dosette box may be helpful
- Taking medicines at the same time as meals, or when the children come home from school, can be helpful reminders (depending on the type of medicine)
- If medicines are not stored correctly in an airtight container, the tablets can become damp, different tablets might get mixed up together, or medicines might be taken by children
- Elders may have problems in getting an uninterrupted supply of their medicines
- They may have transport difficulties in reaching health care services
- They may not be able to afford the medicines they need



AN OLDER WOMAN BRUSHING HER TEETH

QUESTIONS:

- What is happening in this picture?
- Why is it important to clean teeth often?
- What might make it difficult for elders to clean their teeth?

MESSAGES:

- When elders lose their teeth it makes it difficult to chew and they may avoid healthy foods such as raw fruit as a result
- The most common reason for losing teeth is gum disease. It is important that elders brush their gums as well as their teeth. A soft toothbrush is best, but a chewed twig can also be used
- Infected gums or teeth can cause health problems elsewhere in the body, such as heart disease
- Sometimes elders cannot easily clean their teeth because they have no brush, toothpaste or water
- Elders may have arthritis in their hands or wrists, or they may be paralysed from a stroke. In these situations they will need help to clean their teeth
- It is also important for elders to visit the dentist once a year for a check-up and any dental treatment they may need

VEGETABLE GARDEN AND HEALTHY MEAL

QUESTIONS:

- What does this picture show?
- What do we need for a healthy diet?
- What can make it difficult for elders to eat well?



MESSAGES:

- A vegetable garden can help the health of the family, especially elders. Fresh vegetables are inexpensive and provide important vitamins and minerals, as well as fibre, which is important for the gut
- Eating rice or roti and vegetables is healthy
- Lentils, beans or cowpeas provide protein and iron and should be eaten every day, if possible
- Green leafy vegetables and fresh fruit provide iron, vitamin A and vitamin C
- An egg, fish, cheese or meat provide good quality protein and iron. Elders should eat these foods at least twice a week, if possible
- Tea and milk are healthy but elders should not drink them at mealtimes because they can interfere with the absorption of some nutrients
- It is not healthy to eat a lot of fatty or oily foods. Families should avoid a lot of fried food or 'takeaways' such as pizza or burgers. Too much fat in the diet increases the risk of heart disease, stroke and diabetes
- Elders can easily become malnourished. Reasons for this can include:
 - They are too poor to buy enough food
 - Their teeth prevent them from chewing well and enjoying eating
 - They have only a small appetite
 - They are unable to feed themselves
 - They give their share of the food to other family members such as working men or small children
- It is also important for elders to avoid becoming overweight. Being overweight increases the risk of diabetes, heart disease, high blood pressure, cancer, arthritis and stroke



OLDER MAN SMOKING AND COUGHING

QUESTIONS:

- What is happening in this picture?
- How common is smoking tobacco in your community?
- Do both men and women smoke tobacco?
- What are the harmful effects of smoking tobacco?
- Why do people smoke tobacco?
- Do people use tobacco in other ways?
- How can we help people to stop using tobacco?

MESSAGES:

- Smoking tobacco greatly increases the risk of lung cancer and many other cancers* as well as chronic lung disease, heart disease, stroke, high blood pressure and diabetes
- Smoking tobacco can make people look older than they are
- Money spent on tobacco could be used for other things. It is a good idea to keep a record of the number of cigarettes not smoked and how much money has been saved
- Giving up smoking is difficult because nicotine, one chemical in the tobacco, is highly addictive
- Sometimes smokers give up smoking then start again. They need to be encouraged to try to give up again. This may happen several times before they are able to maintain not smoking
- Smokers need support from family or friends to stop smoking
- Some smokers find it better to stop all smoking on a single day, others find it better to cut down their smoking gradually until they stop altogether
- Young people need to be taught about the dangers of smoking and how difficult it is to stop once you start to smoke
- Smoking is not the only method of tobacco use. Sometimes tobacco is chewed or placed inside the gums. All forms of tobacco use have risks

*Besides lung cancer, tobacco use also increases the risk for cancers of the mouth, lips, nose and sinuses, larynx (voice box), pharynx (throat), oesophagus (swallowing tube), stomach, pancreas, kidney, bladder, uterus, cervix, colon/rectum, ovary (mucinous), and acute myeloid leukemia.

TWO OLDER MEN OUTSIDE A BAR BUYING ALCOHOL

QUESTIONS:

- What is happening in this picture?
- Why do people drink alcohol?
- How common is it for older men and older women to drink alcohol in your community?
- What problems can alcohol cause?
- Why could it be difficult to give up drinking alcohol?
- What do you think can help people to give up alcohol?



MESSAGES:

- Some people like to drink alcohol because it helps them to feel relaxed and forget their problems
- Drinking small amounts of alcohol causes little harm for most people. But for some people alcohol can be addictive and their level of use can become harmful
- Harmful alcohol use can potentially cause many physical health problems, including liver disease and cancer
- Alcohol can cause social and mental health problems including family violence, arguments, dementia and financial problems
- Alcohol can cause injuries, especially when driving or operating heavy machinery after drinking
- We can reduce the risks associated with alcohol use with the following advice:
 - If you drink alcohol, try to drink less overall
 - Drink less volume of alcohol or less regularly
 - Try to have a few alcohol free days per week
 - Switch from high alcohol percentage/volume drinks like whisky to lower alcohol percentage/volume drinks, for example, beer or light beer
 - Never drive or operate heavy machinery after drinking alcohol
- People with alcohol addiction benefit from help and support to give up or reduce their drinking. Alcoholics Anonymous is an organisation that can help people by providing long-term group support and motivation. Elders who have a problem with alcohol could form a group and meet together regularly to encourage each other not to drink or to drink in moderation. Doctors can also be helpful
- Elders can play a useful role in helping young people understand the dangers of alcohol use



**OLDER WOMAN COLD AND WET
ON A SLIPPERY SLOPE**

QUESTIONS:

- What does this picture show?
- What dangers does this woman face?
- Are falls among elders a problem in your community?
- How can we help elders to have warm or waterproof clothing?

MESSAGES:

- In some areas where elders live, it can be cold and wet. Elders get chilled quickly when they are wet
- When they become chilled their susceptibility to colds, flu and pneumonia increases
- Walking up and down slippery slopes can result in falls for frail elders
- Elders often cannot afford warm or waterproof clothing. Families need to ensure that older family members have appropriate clothes
- Community groups or Elders' Clubs could collect money to buy warm clothing for elders who have no family
- When elders get wet they need to know that it is important to change their clothes as soon as possible

BETEL CHEWING

QUESTIONS:

- What does this picture show?
- How many people chew betel in your community?
- Why and when do people chew betel?
- What are the dangers of chewing betel?



MESSAGES:

- Chewing betel can be a pleasurable social activity. Some people like to share betel with their friends
- Chewing betel causes little harm for most people. But in a few people, especially those who also smoke and drink alcohol, it can result in mouth cancer. We can reduce this risk with the following advice:
 - If you like to chew betel, try to chew for a shorter time and less often
 - Never sleep with betel in your mouth
 - Do not add tobacco to the mix when you chew betel
 - Use less lime in the mix
 - Clean your teeth every day with a brush or stick
 - When you visit the doctor or dentist ask them to check your mouth for white patches
 - If you have diabetes do not chew betel, it may make the diabetes worse



AN OLDER WOMAN HAVING HER BLOOD PRESSURE CHECKED BY THE DOCTOR

QUESTIONS:

- What is happening in this picture?
- Why is it a good idea to go for a check-up once a year to the doctor even if you feel well?
- What is high blood pressure?
- What are the dangers of having high blood pressure?
- What can be done to lower blood pressure?

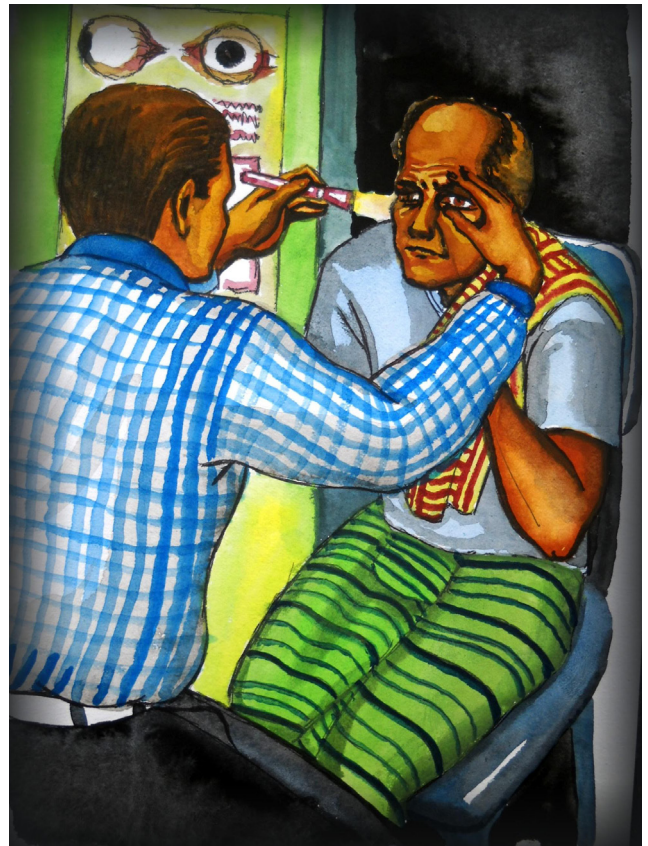
MESSAGES:

- The heart pumps the blood around the body through pipes. The pipes that take the blood away from the heart to the body are called arteries; the pipes that bring the blood back to the heart are called veins
- The doctor or nurse measures the pressure in an artery in the arm. If the pressure is high this can damage the eyes, the brain and the kidneys. It can also make the heart work harder and cause it to become weak
- You cannot tell if you have high blood pressure, so it is important to have your blood pressure checked when you visit the doctor or nurse for any reason, or at least once a year
- High blood pressure is associated with other illnesses, including heart disease, stroke and diabetes
- High blood pressure can be treated successfully with medicines. It is important to take the medicines every day and to try not to run out of the medicine. There are different types of medicine to reduce blood pressure. If the first medicine does not work well, the doctor can prescribe another type
- Medicines for blood pressure can have side effects. Always ask the doctor about possible side effects of medicines that he or she prescribes. If you have side effects tell the doctor, who can prescribe a different medicine
- Some medicines for blood pressure can interfere with other medicines that you might be taking. Always tell the doctor about all the medicines you are taking so that they can choose the correct medicines for you
- Meditation is also good to prevent and to reduce high blood pressure
- You can help to prevent high blood pressure by not smoking, reducing salt in your meals and exercising regularly

OLDER MAN HAVING HIS EYES CHECKED

QUESTIONS:

- What is happening in this picture?
- What are the reasons an elder might not go to have their eyes and eyesight checked?
- Does everyone with low vision in your community have glasses to help them to see well?
- What can make it difficult for elders to get a pair of glasses?
- What are the reasons many elders with an eye problem, such as cataract, do not go for treatment?
- What can a family and community do to help those who cannot see well?



MESSAGES:

- Problems with vision are more common as people get older. It is important for elders to get their eyes checked every two years, or every year if the person has any existing disease such as diabetes, high blood pressure, history of cataract or family history of glaucoma
- Refractive error and cataract are the most common causes of low vision and vision loss in elders
Refractive error
 - Refractive error means a person cannot clearly focus on objects. Elders may experience:
 - Blurry vision when looking at objects that are close; for example, not being able to read the newspaper or sew
 - Blurry vision when looking at objects in the distance; for example, not being able to recognise a family member or friend across a room
 - Distorted vision
 - Wearing glasses can help address these issues in many cases. After an eye examination glasses may be prescribed to help the person see clearly again
- Cataract*
 - Cataract is the leading cause of blindness. Cataract can make your vision blurred or cloudy
 - If a person is blind or has vision loss due to cataract, an operation can enable the person to see again. In most countries the operation is performed by an ophthalmologist
 - Risk factors for cataract include ageing, exposure to a lot of sunshine, injury, diabetes and smoking
- Diabetic retinopathy is a potentially blinding eye disease that occurs in people with diabetes. All people with diabetes are at risk of diabetic retinopathy, but the risk is less if the diabetes is well managed
- Regular eye examinations can help to reduce the risk of blindness by identifying early if there are any changes to the eye. Having a check for diabetes and learning how to manage the diabetes are very important to prevent vision loss and blindness



OLDER COUPLE INSIDE WITH SON, DAUGHTER-IN-LAW AND GRANDSON

QUESTIONS:

- What does this picture show?
- What are some of the problems of poor living conditions for elders?

MESSAGES:

- Elders living in some communities may have several problems as a result of poor and overcrowded living conditions
- Where extended families live in one room both older and younger generations lack privacy
- It is important not to think that elders cannot enjoy a happy sex life, but this may not be possible if they have no privacy
- If the elders are not feeling very well they may find noisy small children annoying. Overcrowding can also result in arguments and fights
- When people are stressed they sometimes blame the elder, saying hurtful things, or there may even be violence against the elder
- The mental health and wellbeing of elders can be affected by the stress of overcrowding
- It is important that elders have somewhere safe and warm to visit during the day to have a break from their family
- Good communication between family members is important. Counselling can help to sort out family problems
- Rooms that are cold and damp can cause pain from arthritis for elders
- If possible, elders should sleep on a raised bed with a firm mattress, not on the floor. They need warm and dry sheets and blankets. Cloth rugs and cushions can also help to make elders more comfortable
- Elders may suffer from leaking urine, making it difficult to keep clothes clean and causing a bad smell. This may make them feel ashamed. This is a difficult thing to talk about, but it is important to tell the doctor if you have this problem. Sometimes it can be treated; if not, you may need special pants to help you to stay dry

ONE WOMAN COMFORTING ANOTHER

QUESTIONS:

- What does this picture show?
- Why might the woman be looking sad?
- What sort of support is there for people in your community when they are bereaved and grieving?



MESSAGES:

- Women tend to live longer than men, so there are many widowed women
- When someone loses their husband or wife they usually feel very sad and lonely. They may also feel frightened, angry or worried about money
- They need emotional and practical support from family and friends. Counselling can be helpful to talk about it and understand feelings



TWO OLDER MEN WALKING TOGETHER

QUESTIONS:

- What does this picture show?
- What are the men wearing?
- One man is wearing glasses. What are the difficulties for elders in getting glasses to help them to see?
- What activities do older men do together?
- Why is exercise important for our health?

MESSAGES:

- Exercise is very important to maintain health. When people sit all day they have a higher risk of developing high blood pressure, heart disease, stroke and diabetes. Exercise also helps to reduce pain and disability from arthritis
- Walking with a friend is both exercise and an enjoyable activity
- These men are wearing a hat and a jumper or shawl to help to keep out the cold. But socks and shoes are warmer than sandals when the weather is cold and damp

FOUR OLDER WOMEN DANCING

QUESTIONS:

- What does the picture show?
- Do you think that these women are enjoying themselves?
- How does the dancing make them feel?
- How can people arrange music and a space for dancing?
- Why is dancing good for health?



MESSAGES:

- Social activities such as dancing can make people feel happy and help to prevent feelings of loneliness or depression
- Dancing is also excellent physical activity reducing the risk of high blood pressure, heart disease, stroke and diabetes. It also helps to prevent arthritis
- Dancing helps to prevent becoming overweight



OLD COUPLE WITH TWO SMALL CHILDREN

QUESTIONS:

- What is happening in the picture?
- Why is it important for elders to spend time with their grandchildren, or great-grandchildren?
- What are some other ways that elders can help in the family?
- Why is this woman washing her hands?
- When are the most important times to wash hands?

MESSAGES:

- Elders often care for small grandchildren or great-grandchildren
- This means that it is important that we share health messages for small children with elders, not just parents
- Looking after small children is very helpful to the family. It helps elders to feel useful and to know that they are contributing to the family, even if they can no longer earn money
- Looking after small children also benefits the children. Elders may have more time than parents and can teach them different things
- The grandmother is using soap to wash her hands. Washing hands with soap kills more germs than washing just with water
- Washing hands before preparing and eating food, after using the toilet, after cleaning a child's bottom, after disposing of children's stools, and before feeding a child is important to prevent diarrhoea. This is an important message for elders because they often care for small children
- The grandmother is using a bucket of water to wash her hands; if possible, it is better to pour water over the hands from a jug or tap

FOUR OLDER MEN TELLING STORIES TOGETHER

QUESTIONS:

- What does the picture show?
- Are the men enjoying themselves?
- Are there places for older men and women to meet socially in your community? If not, what can be done about this?
- Do men or women tend to talk together more?
- What can we do to prevent older men feeling lonely?



MESSAGES:

- Older men and women get pleasure from talking about their lives, memories and troubles with each other
- Having social contact with friends reduces the risk of heart disease, stroke, high blood pressure and diabetes

