



Co-funded by the  
Erasmus+ Programme  
of the European Union



Project-N° 2022-1-BG01-KA220-VET-000085377

## WP 2, ACTIVITY 3

Circulation	All partners
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Date	30-01-2023
Doc.Ref.	WP 2, activity 3



## DEVELOPMENT CONTENT FOR "INTERVIEWS", WITH EDITING/SUBTITLING AND "PODCAST" FOR INTERGENERATION ONLINE COMMUNICATION.

### 1. ONLINE COMMUNICATION WITH ELDERLIES

#### 1.1 General aspects

##### **ICT**

For older adults, regular communication with friends and family is one of the basic pillars of good health.

Information and communication technologies (ICT) have become an important solution to reduce the effects of social isolation and for the maintenance of educational activities, as well as basic services like appointments, shopping, etc. However, the older adult population has low levels of digital skills, which makes it harder to adapt to the new situation. That makes communication essential for a good contact.

##### **The Health Benefits of Communication**

Social isolation and loneliness are serious problems for elderly people. It can have a big effect on their mental health, physical well-being, and quality of life. Staying connected and keeping lines of communication open can have some major health and lifestyle benefits for older adults. In fact, studies have shown that elderlies who regularly communicate with others in their family or in their community are generally healthier and happier – and experience lower rates of chronic illness, less anxiety and depression, better cognitive health, improved mobility, and even increased longevity.

#### 1.2 Types of online communication

##### **Use Technology**

For elderlies, communication is available in many different ways. Ofcourse, there is no substitute for face-to-face time. But ICT can help to connect with elderlies. Depending on their digital skills, there are many ways to keep in touch, from email to video chatting, to instant messaging on social media, to talking on the telephone. A study found that elderly people who spoke to their relatives, using apps like FaceTime and Skype "had almost half the estimated probability of depressive symptoms.

##### **Connect elderlies with the society**

Elderly, living at home don't need to live apart. In fact, aging in place is a great way for elderlies to remain connected to their local community.



There are many groups, specifically designed for older adults, from gardening clubs, to exercise classes, to book clubs, to volunteer opportunities, to religious groups, and everything in between. Similarly, you may wish to help them to go for walks or drives, if possible, in order to help them stay active in their neighbourhood. As a caregiver, your role may be to help connect elderly people with the activity or organization they like.

## **Technology for Elderlies**

### Cell Phones

Cellular technology is important for today's communication also for elderlies. Cell phone manufacturers also phones designed for elderlies, which provide large text, big buttons, simple menus, and instant access to emergency contacts.

### Video Chat

Video chatting is near to real meeting. It allows users to converse with and see each other in real time. Video chatting has become so popular that it's standard for many phones and tablets to include the option when a user makes a call. One of the most popular services available to elderlies is Skype, which allows a wide array of communication options, from text, voice, and of course, video.

### Social Networking

Facebook is the number one social networking site for older adults. It not only allows them to see pictures and videos, but also provides the ability to comment on posts and privately exchange instant messages.

### Confidence Is Key

Connecting with friends and family members requires just a few clicks. However, for elderlies it may be complicated. Be patient and understand what barriers may be in place. Elderly centres offer computer or technology courses that help older adults understand everything from operating a cell phone to interacting on social media.

These courses also focus on Internet safety and privacy best practices, which can help to take away elderly's concerns. In some countries, a special tablet is available, specially designed for elderlies, called GrandPad.



### 1.3 Tips for communication with elderlies

Learning — and using — effective communication techniques may help to build more satisfying relationships with elderly people. The following tips may be useful:

#### **Use proper form of address**

Establish respect right away by using formal language. As one person said, "Don't call me Edna, and I won't call you Sonny." Use Mr., Mrs., Ms., and so on. Or, you might ask about preferred forms of address and how she or he would like to address you. Avoid using familiar terms, which tend to patronizing.

Be sure to talk to your staff and students about the importance of being respectful to all elderly people, especially those who are older and might be used to more formal terms of address.

#### **Take a few moments to introduce yourself**

Introduce yourself clearly and do not speak too quickly. Show from the start that you accept the client and want to hear his or her concerns. With new clients, try a few introduction words: "Are you from this area?" or "Do you have family nearby?" With returning clients, friendly questions about their families or activities can relieve stress.

#### **Try not to rush**

Older people may have trouble following rapid-fire questioning or a lot of information. Speaking more slowly, may led a better understanding. If you tend to speak quickly, or with an accent, it is different for the clients, try to slow down. This gives them time to take in and better understand what you are saying. Avoid hurrying older people. Feeling rushed leads elderlies to believe they are not being heard or understood.

#### **Avoid interrupting**

Some staffs interrupt clients within the first 18 seconds of the interview. Once interrupted, a client is less likely to reveal all of his or her thoughts.

#### **Use active listening skills**

Face the client, maintain eye contact, and when he or she is talking, use frequent, brief responses, such as "okay," "I see," and "uh-huh." Active listening keeps the discussion focused and lets clients know you understand their words.

#### **Demonstrate empathy**

Respond to clients' emotions, using phrases such as "That sounds difficult," or "I'm sorry you're facing this problem; I think we can work on it together."

#### **Be careful about language**

Some words may have different meanings to older patients than to you. Words may also have different connotations based on cultural or ethnic background.



For example, the word "dementia" may connote insanity, and the word "cancer" may be considered a death sentence. Although you cannot anticipate every generational and cultural/ethnic difference in language use, be aware of it.

Use simple, common language, and ask if clarification is needed. Offer to repeat or reword the information.

Low literacy or inability to read also may be a problem. Reading materials written at an easy reading level can help.

### **Write down take-away points**

It can often be difficult for clients to remember everything discussed during a previous meeting. Older adults can benefit from written notes, summarize main points from the meeting. Try to make these notes simple and clear, avoiding complicated language.

### **Compensating for hearing deficits**

Age-related hearing loss is common. One quarter of people between the ages of 65 and 75, and half of those over the age of 75 hear less. Here are a few tips to make it easier to communicate with a person who has lost some hearing:

- Make sure the person can hear you. Ask if he has a working hearing aid.
- Talk slowly and clearly in a normal tone. Shouting or speaking in a raised voice actually distorts language sounds and can give the impression of anger.
- Avoid using a high-pitched voice; it is hard to hear.
- Face the person directly, at eye level, so that he or she can lip-read or pick up visual clues.
- Keep your hands away from your face while talking, as this can hinder lip-reading ability.
- Be aware of background noises.
- If the person has difficulty with letters and numbers, give a context for them. For instance, say, "'m' as in Mary," "'two' as in twins," or "'b' as in boy." Say each number separately. For example, "five, six" instead of "fifty-six". Be especially careful with letters that sound alike. For example, m and n.
- Keep paper ready, so you can write what you are saying.

### **Compensating for visual deficits**

Visual disorders become more common as people age. Here are some things you can do to help manage the difficulties caused by visual problems:

- Make sure there is good lighting, including sufficient light on your face. Try to minimize glare.
  - Check that the elderly has brought and is wearing eyeglasses, if needed.
  - Make sure that handwritten instructions are clear.
  - If the elderly has problems with reading, use alternatives such as recording instructions, large pictures or diagrams.
- When using printed materials, make sure the type is large enough and the typeface is easy to read. Print size (14 pt) works well.



## 1.4 Sources

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