



Falls constitute a silent and serious public health hazard. According to data from the National Safety Council, each week more than 30,000 people over the age of 65 are seriously injured in a fall; nearly 25% die from their injuries. One out of every three seniors will fall in the next year. In Nebraska over 13,000 falls required emergency room treatment for our seniors in 2001 alone. Statistical evidence predicts that as many as 24,000 of our elderly in the greater Metro area will fall in the next year. It doesn't have to be that way...

About F1RST

Through awareness, education, training and research proven interventions provided by a collaboration of many organizations in our community, F1RST will seek to engage our older adults, their adult children and caregivers in an effort to reduce the trauma and injuries caused by falling.

F1RST provides help to our community and encourages others to participate in this important initiative. It will take a strong effort across our entire community to be successful in this endeavor.

Watch www.F1RST.org for new and expanded initiatives.



A MATTER OF

BALANCE



For more information:
National Safety Council,
Greater Omaha Chapter
11620 M Circle
Omaha, NE 68137
402-896-0454
www.F1RST.org



What is “A Matter of Balance”?

“A Matter of Balance” is a structured group, which helps participants manage the risks associated with falling. The program was specifically designed to reduce the fear of falling and improve activity levels among community-dwelling older adults. It was developed, implemented, and tested under the auspices of the Boston University (BU) Roybal Center for Research in Applied Gerontology.

“A Matter of Balance” has been shown to be effective through an extensive clinical trial funded by the National Institute of Aging (NIA) and administered by the Boston University Roybal Center for the Enhancement of Late-Life Function (BURCEL). The program has been recognized by the American Public Health Association with the Archstone Foundation Award for Excellence in Program Innovation.

“A Matter of Balance” acknowledges the risk of falling, but emphasizes practical coping strategies to reduce the sequence caused by the fear of falling. It is a structured group intervention consisting of 9 two-hour sessions. A variety of activities address physical, social, and cognitive factors that affect the fear of falling. Early sessions focus on changing attitudes and self-efficacy before attempting changes in actual behavior. The program aims to instill adaptive beliefs such as greater perceived control, greater confidence in one’s abilities, and more realistic assessment of failures.

Program Techniques

Facilitators will use videotape, lecture, group discussion, role-playing, exercise training, assertiveness training, home assignments, and much more. Participants are taught how to identify potential fall risks, given real life suggestions for how to safely continue with active lifestyles, and how to build a greater sense of self-confidence. Implementing these new skills will increase quality of life. Classes are given in a social setting, and are a lot of fun. Participants can expect to make some great friends along the way.

Instructors in Your Area

Facilitators are available throughout the greater metropolitan Omaha area. All F1RST, “A Matter of Balance” facilitators have been trained by Elizabeth Walker Peterson MPH, OTR/L, Clinical Associate Professor, University Of Illinois at Chicago. Peterson served as the Co-Investigator of the BU Roybal Center trial. In her role she lead development (writing) of the intervention and program during the study. She now travels around the world giving “Matter of Balance” training workshops, and continues as a full-time faculty member in the Occupational Therapy Department at UIC, as well. Ms. Peterson is a doctoral student within the Neurotec Division of the Karolinska Institutet (KI), Stolkholm, Sweden. Her doctoral work includes qualitative research exploring dimensions of fear of falling.

Here is what people say:

Mr. C.: “I learned not to be afraid. As seniors, we have such a fear of falling they showed us ways to improve our homes so there were no obstacles.”

“It has been very helpful. I feel like I have a lot more energy to enjoy life, and I’m not just sitting around moping,” said Mrs. W., who is legally blind.

Mr. B., 88, said the program has allowed him to recognize things that can be a hazard.

Find A Class Near You

Individuals can find class locations, schedules, and registration information by calling F1RST at the National Safety Council, Greater Omaha Chapter, 896-0454, or via our website, www.F1RST.org.

Your Organization Can Sponsor Classes
F1RST is seeking senior centers, senior residences, faith communities, health-care centers, and other organizations with senior populations, who are interested in classes in their facility. Please call to make arrangements.

You Will be Part of an Important Community Initiative

Enrolling in a class, or helping to arrange a class will make you a part of a large community effort to reduce falls among our older adults. Our goal is to develop partnerships all across the community, working together to increase quality of life and health for seniors.

Interested in a Presentation?

Facilitators are available to present a short overview of the workshop. Please call with your request.

Resources

F1RST Elderly Fall Prevention Tool Kits will be given to all participants. Other resource information is given throughout the classes for participants. Self-assessments will be used periodically, to show results.

The F1RST Elderly Fall Prevention Tool Kit has helpful information from organizations and resources all across America.

Included are:

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| Balance Self-Test | Medication Tracker |
| Lower Risk of Fall | Adapting to Low Vision |
| Getting up from a Fall | Fall Resources for Loan |
| Home Safety Checklist | Fall Web Resources |
| Health and Exercise | “Stepping out” NHTSA |
| | “Movement Improvement” Tai Chi |
| | “A Matter of Balance” |