

When we test, Let's NOT STRESS

ITEMS CAUSING STRESS TO OLDER ADULTS WITHIN MEDICAL ENVIRONMENT

N = Novelty
U = Unpredictability
T = Threat to Ego
S = Sense of low control



PRE-APPOINTMENT PERIOD	SOLUTIONS
Finding the location of the medical appointment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> When calling to confirm the appointment, provide clear and specific route directions
Finding parking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide parking information
Difficulty in scheduling appointment at a convenient time of day	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide choice regarding time of appointment Tailor testing time according to older adults' convenience
Mode of transportation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adapted transportation: Contact older adults prior to the appointment to make arrangements regarding vehicles/ equipment if required Ensure older adults know who to contact for transport arrangements. Provide directions for public transport
Long wait time for doctors, results, scheduling an appointment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inform older adults where they are on the waiting list, and give an approximate wait time for their appointment
Wait time between the day the appointment is booked to the day of the medical appointment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Try to decrease the delay between the date when the appointment is scheduled and the appointment itself Provide a contact number where further information can be obtained during this wait time
Lack of family doctors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide a list of resources / guidance regarding different options to find a family doctor

PRE-APPOINTMENT PERIOD: Highest source of stress - SENSE OF LOW CONTROL

MEDICAL ENVIRONMENT	SOLUTIONS
Seeing other sick people in the waiting room	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create a relaxing and welcoming atmosphere in the waiting room
Discomfort of medical rooms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ask older adults if they are comfortable (e.g. room temperature). If not, provide options in order to ensure that they are not uncomfortable and distressed while performing exams / tests
Cleanliness of the waiting room	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure that waiting room and examination rooms are kept clean Provide antibacterial and sanitizing products, due to the fear of catching germs
Reception from the medical secretary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide receptionists & medical secretaries with psycho-education, providing strategies to help decrease older adults stress Have someone meet and familiarize older adults with the environment
Locating the washroom	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Upon arrival, show older adults where the washroom is located should they they need to use it
Long waits until the appointment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inform older adults of approximate waiting time until they see the doctor Encourage older adults to use magazines, reading materials etc.

MEDICAL ENVIRONMENT: Highest source of stress - SENSE OF LOW CONTROL

HEALTH PROFESSIONALS	SOLUTIONS
Receiving inadequate information about illness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide feedback to older adults regarding performance on medical and cognitive exams. Provide suggestions to improve their condition After appointment, conduct a follow-up to address concerns and questions
Difficulty understanding medical terms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Be transparent and make efforts in vulgarizing and explaining clearly
Insufficient time with health professional	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Take the time to get to know the older adults prior to the medical examination
Insufficient time to perform tests. Older adults feel rushed during exams	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If health professional has no choice but to be rushed, he/she can ask the older adult to slow them down if needed
Lack of consideration from medical profession	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Health professional should be: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Aware of their stress levels to avoid the effects of stress spillover Sensitive to the needs of older adults concerns, the extra time they may need and their sources of discomfort
Difficulty hearing what is said (hearing impaired)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Articulate and speak at a reasonable pace. Validate whether older adults are able to hear clearly and understand what is said

HEALTH PROFESSIONALS: Highest source of stress - SENSE OF LOW CONTROL

MEDICAL EXAM & DIAGNOSIS	SOLUTIONS
Conflicting opinions across doctors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assess the older adult's current status of knowledge about the condition, treatment options or recommendations If older adults express confusion regarding different opinions, provide sufficient objective information for each opinion If possible, contact other doctors to discuss best treatment option for the patient
Receiving a diagnosis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advisable to be accompanied during an announcement of results/diagnosis, as the stress may impair older adults' capacities to encode during the appointment Advise older adults to bring tape recorder so he/she can later allow family members to listen to what the doctor has said Encourage families to get involved and to use suggested resources Recommend support groups (particularly helpful for caregivers)
Lack of explanation why they need to see a specialist	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide a clear explanation regarding why the older adult needs to see a specialist Describe what to expect during the appointment with the specialist (e.g. tests, procedures)
Undergoing a memory test	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide older adults with manuals on upcoming examinations/procedures and what they entail Assure older adults that adequate feedback and recommendations will be provided To increase motivation, use simpler tasks first
Waiting for test results	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> During the medical exams, inform older adults of when results should be expected If the results are delayed, provide an updated estimate

MEDICAL EXAM & DIAGNOSIS: Highest source of stress - UNPREDICTABILITY