



NEWS RELEASE – Area Agency on Aging District 7, Inc.

Release Date: Tuesday, November 3, 2020

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**AAA7 and Shawnee State University “Fall-Free Fridays” Episode
Features Information About “What’s On Your Mind Matters!”**

According to the National Council on Aging, falls remain a leading cause of injury for people aged 65 and older. Falls threaten older adults’ safety and independence and generate enormous economic and personal costs. The good news is that they are preventable and there are proven steps people can take to reduce their risk.

The Area Agency on Aging District 7 (AAA7) recently began featuring “Fall-Free Fridays”, a live, weekly interview with two Shawnee State University (SSU) Occupational Therapy graduate students who provide community education on a falls-related topic and information about falls, risk factors, and helpful prevention tips. The series takes place every Friday at 10:00 am now through December 11th on the AAA7 Facebook page.

The last episode on October 30th featured the topic “What’s On Your Mind Matters! Thoughts and Beliefs About Falls” presented by SSU Master of Occupational Therapy (OT) students Sam Fender and Kacee Salyers.

The students shared information about what occupational therapists do and what their goal is in helping people engage in their everyday activities. Occupational therapists help people do what they want and need in order to be independent and encourage participation in everyday tasks. They provide this support within the community at places like hospitals, schools, nursing homes, and in-home care for all ages from infants to older adults.

The students talked about how our thinking shapes how we behave and interact with the environment. It is important to engage in positive thinking to reduce the chance of a fall.

A fall is an unexpected change in position that results in a person resting on the ground or floor. It may or may not bring about an injury. A fear of falling can prevent some people from wanting to partake in certain activities such as not exercising regularly, not doing regular household chores, limiting activities throughout the day, and avoiding going out in the community.

If you fall, it is important to inform your healthcare provider in order to help you prevent falls in the future and to keep track of certain patterns that may cause a fall. Occupational therapists can help you evaluate your home for fall risks. Many factors can increase your risk of a fall including medication, biological factors, behaviors, socioeconomic status, and the surrounding environment.

Recognizing how your thoughts influence your behavior is important in how you respond to a fall. Some may not follow through with making recommended changes because they may not want to be labeled as “frail” or not independent. One study found that after a fall, 84 percent did not make changes to their environment. It is very important to make the necessary changes needed in order to reduce the risk for another fall.

Exercising is very important. Many may be fearful to partake in exercise feeling that it may cause a fall the more that they move. Not participating in exercises or everyday tasks can actually increase the risk of falling as it can cause a loss in muscle strength and flexibility the less that you move. Exercise is the most effective way to reduce the risk of falling. Seated exercises are good for those who are unable to do standing exercises because of their health condition.

Behavior is also impacted with a fear of falling out in the community with individuals less likely to go out and be social as they do not want to be seen using an assistive device or other fears about getting in and out of cars or buildings. It is good to make changes to the environment in order to decrease your chances of a fall such as installing grab bars and ramps in the home, using a walker in the community, participating in a group exercise class, and bringing up concerns to your doctor for recommendations. Occupational therapists can also perform home evaluations and a falls efficacy scale to learn more about individual activities and individual fall risks.

In summary, the students stressed how negative thoughts can increase your chances of falling. Changing thoughts to positive can increase your confidence. It is important to ask for help and use recommended aids for walking.

If you missed the episode, the broadcast can be viewed by watching a recorded version that is available on the AAA7’s Facebook page or at the AAA7’s website at www.aaa7.org. At the Home Page, find the “Fall-Free Fridays” promotional ad and then find the “October 30th” episode information.

The AAA7 and SSU OT students are also offering Falls Prevention Coaching for anyone who is interested. To learn more about the coaching, please call Hannah Hollingshead at the AAA7 at 1-800-582-7277, extension 247 or e-mail info@aaa7.org. The coaching can take place over the phone or through a virtual format.

The next Fall-Free Fridays episode on Friday, November 6th at 10:00 am will feature the topic of “Home Safety - Bathrooms”. Two new SSU Master of Occupational Therapy students will present on the topic and be available for questions during the live presentation.

For more information about Fall-Free Fridays, call the AAA7 at 1-800-582-7277 or info@aaa7.org, or Dr. Christine Raber with the Shawnee State University Occupational Therapy Program at (740) 351-3530 or craber@shawnee.edu.

Your local Area Agency on Aging District 7, Inc. provides services on a non-discriminatory basis. These services are available to help older adults and those with disabilities live safely and independently in their own homes through services paid for by Medicare, Medicaid, other federal and state resources, as well as private pay. The AAA7's Resource Center is also available to anyone in the community looking for information or assistance with long-term care options. Available Monday through Friday from 8:00 am until 4:30 pm, the Resource Center is a valuable contact for learning more about options and what programs and services are available for assistance.

Those interested in learning more can call toll-free at 1-800-582-7277 (TTY: 711). Here, individuals can speak directly with a specially-trained Resource Specialist who will assist them with information surrounding the programs and services that are available to best serve their needs. The Agency also offers an in-home assessment at no cost for those who are interested in learning more. Information is also available on www.aaa7.org, or the Agency can be contacted through e-mail at info@aaa7.org. The Agency also has a Facebook page located at www.facebook.com/AreaAgencyOnAgingDistrict7.

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with the Area Agency on Aging District 7 and
Shawnee State University Occupational Therapy Program
Fridays at 10:00 am
Now through
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AAA7 Facebook Page

FALLS
Prevention
Awareness

The graphic is a rectangular box with a red border. The background is a light blue and white pattern. The text is in black and red. On the right side, there is a logo for 'FALLS Prevention Awareness' featuring a stylized figure falling into a sun.