MIG-HEALTH APPS
Mobile Health Apps for Migrants

https://apps4health.eu/

Module 9 - Teaching session (9.1)
Health Apps for the Elderly

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Teaching Session: Content

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Objectives

✓ To equip participants with the knowledge needed to identify relevant areas of healthy ageing and to make informed decisions about influencing ageing processes, regaining abilities or self-managing activities of daily living (ADL).

✓ To equip participants with the knowledge required to use apps as valuable tools for healthy and active ageing.

Source: Image by nuraghies on Freepik

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the European Union

Competences

✓ Participants will be equipped with the skills to critically reflect their own lives or lives of loved ones to identify key areas of healthy ageing and to assess the potential of apps to address these.

✓ Participants' skills will be enhanced in order to make informed decisions about app selection, as well as to reflect barriers and facilitators to usage in everyday life, if they wish so.

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General Information about ageing

Objectives

- To acquire general information about ageing processes.

- To introduce factors influencing ageing.

- To inform about the heterogeneity of ageing.

- To understand concepts of (active and) healthy ageing.

Activity 1: Icebreaker

- What is ageing to you?

- Who is an old perspn to you?

- Please share your associations? Who and what do you

- How are older persons seen in your culture?

- What do Apps have to do with it?

Image by vectorjuice on Freepik

Who is an «older person» and what is ageing?

- Who is regarded as an "older person" is in most western countries associated with the chronological age at which one receives pension benefits.

- The United Nations defines an "older person" as being aged 60 – 65 years and older (UN DESA, 2020)

- Who is regarded as an "older person" is also socially-constructed (changing social roles, e. g. becoming grandparents, leaving the workforce or change in physical characteristics, e. g. grey hair)

- However, ageing is a complex process: "Ageing is associated with changes in dynamic biological, physiological, environmental, psychological, behavioral and social processes". (NIA, 2020)

So, what are ageing processes?

- Ageing processes **progress individually** and **are influenced by multiple factors**, e. g. gender, ethnicity, genetic dispositions (e.g. increased likelihood to suffer from certain diseases), socio-economic status (education, e. g. level of health competencies), environments lived in (e. g. exposure to health risks, access to quality health care services, experiencing war, being displaced), life-style choices (e. g. substance usage, dietary habits, physical activity) over life courses.

➢ All of these **factors** can **lead to different processes** and **outcomes**!

Stereotypes about "older persons"? No! Heterogenity of Ageing!

▪ **Ageing** is **often associated with** different **negative aspects**: biologically (e. g. loss of physical and mental capabilities and mulitmorbidity), socially (e.g. loss of social roles, loss of friends, isolation, being dependent or a burden)

▪ Still, **stereotypes** about older people as simply "old, frail and a burden" **are ageist and not appropriate!**

▪ Ageing processes are individual and can be influenced to some degree

Heterogenity of Ageing!

- The heterogeneous ageing processes can lead to different levels of performance and everyday living conditions in old age, so that it may be more or less possible for older people to perform acitivities of daily living (ADL) in different areas of life.

- "Some 80-year-olds have levels of physical and mental capacity that compare favourably with 30-year-olds. Others of the same age may require extensive care and support for basic activities like dressing and eating." (WHO, 2020)

  ➢ **Older persons** are **divers** in **health** and in their levels of **functional ability.**

  ➢ **As shown, some factors of ageing can be influenced over the life course and some can be addressed in old age to keep functional ability.**

Healthy Ageing

Healthy ageing is regarded as:

- "the process of **developing and maintaining the functional ability** that enables wellbeing in older age." (WHO, 2020)

- "a continuous process of **optimizing opportunities to maintain and improve physical and mental health, independence, and quality of life** throughout the life course" (PAHO/WHO, 2024)

Healthy ageing should also empower people and needs reflection by the individual:

- "the core of Active and Healthy Ageing **is the awareness regarding the subjective nature of what is considered healthy and active ageing**, meaning that the **older adult themselves should have both autonomy and independence in defining their interpretation** [7,8]. Thus, the primary goal is to support the **empowerment of older adult persons in independently caring for their health** [9]." (Marcussen/Marinus, 2021)

Functional ability, key areas of healthy ageing, activities of daily living (ADL)

Objectives

- To acquire knowledge on the main concepts of healthy ageing.

- To be empowered and able to reflect what areas could be addressed to maintain and improve health, independence and quality of life in old age.

Functional ability

Functional ability is about having the **capabilities that enable all people to be and do what they have reason to value**. This includes a persons ability to:

- Meet their basic needs

- Learn, grow and make decisions

- Be mobile

- Contribute to society

(WHO, 2020)

Key areas of healthy ageing

Meeting basic needs and making decisions can be of value in several dimensions of daily life. Succesfully doing this, can affect ageing processes in a variety of ways.

Imporant key areas in this regard are:

- **Cognitive activities**

- **Physical activities**

- **Social engagement**

- **Mental Health**

- **Chronic disease and disabilities**

- **Other Acitivities of daily living (ADL)**

Cognitive Activities

Studies have shown **that training brain fitness can greatly improve your memory and reduce the risk of neurological diseases like dementia**.

You can do that by seeking new challenges which excite you and bring joy to your life like for example …

- Learning something new like an instrument, or a language you were always interested in

- Learning a craft you are passionate about you never found the time to like woodwork, painting or pottery

- Training your Computer skills by engaging with software you are interested in for example by learning to use photo editing programs

- Playing challenging cognitive games (e.g. chess or memory games)

Physical Activities

Engaging in physical activities can help to stay mobile and independent

- Engage in general physical activities depending on one's own level (e.g. going for walks, riding your bike, weight lifting, dancing)

- Engage in activities of physical therapy (e.g. stretching, yoga or focused activities for individual problematic areas like knee joints or hip strengthening)

Social Engagement

Social engagement gives meaning to our lives and strengthens our relationship with others.

- Stay in touch and interact regularly with friends and family – even with those who live far away

- Join music clubs and cultural programs

- Join an education centre and enrich others with your knowledge by offering classes in something you are good at for example in the field of your former work or in using smart phones and apps

Mental Health

Emotional wellness plays an important factor throughout the life-course. However, dealing with declines in health, loss of social positions, loved ones or friends can increase with age. Thus, dealing with anxiety, emotional distress, anger or social isolation can become bothersome.

Being empowered to learn, manage and actively influence your mental health can help overcome negative feelings and boost emotional well-being. You can engage in…

▪ Learning about mental health and your own mental health, e. g. keeping diaries to foster reflection, self-esteem and mindfulness

▪ Therapy and self-help-groups

▪ Meditation, breathing techniques, relaxation techniques

Chronic Disease and Disabilities

With increasing age the prevalence of chronic health conditions and reduced mobility is growing.

To stay in good shape, mobile and independent it's all the more important to **keep negative consequences of such conditions in check**, for example by …

- Keeping track of your blood sugar level when facing diabetes

- Regularly measuring your blood pressure level when issues with your cardiovascular system occur

- Finding your way around in the neighborhood in case of dementia

- Keeping track of your own medication intake

Activities of daily living (ADL)

Completing tasks of daily living by your own and being able to following your routines is a good way of staying in touch with your needs and experience self-efficacy. Also it's a strong indicator for good cognitive and physical health.

- Maintain your daily routines of when to get up and when to go to bed to get restful and healthy sleep and being energized in the morning

- Organizing mobility

- Do the shopping for groceries on your own

- Cook and prepare your own healthy meals

- See the doctor regularly

- Keeping track of your appointments and finances

Bathing   Dressing   Grooming   Oral Care   Toileting   Transferring

Moving Around   Eating   Shopping   Cooking   Managing Medication   Using the Phone

Housework   Laundry   Driving   Managing Finance   Leisure and Other Activities

Activity 2: Reflection exercise

Now it's your turn!

- What areas of healthy aging are the most important to you or your elderly loved ones ?

- What are the most common difficulties you/they have faced in that area?

- What are possibilities to mai ability in that area?

- Take a minute to reflect and notes for a later discussion

Health Apps for the Elderly and their benefits

Objectives

- To acquire knowledge on common characteristics of Health Apps

- To be able to develop ideas about how Health Apps could help to maintain and improve health, independence and quality of life in old age.

Health Apps and healthy ageing

There are plenty of health apps available for the elderly. Some are adressing the physical and mental fitness of its users while others have a clear medical implication with the purpose of managing a chronic illness or disability.

Health apps can help maintain or regain functional ability in the aforementioned key areas.

How can Health Apps contribute to Healthy Ageing?

Most of the available apps share the same basic functions to help increase functional ability in the key areas of healthy ageing.

▪ Self monitoring/tracking

▪ Goal setting

▪ Cues or push notifications

▪ Social support

Self monitoring and tracking

Self monitoring/tracking

- Keep track of your symptoms or vital parameters so you can intervene at an early stage and prevent your condition from worsening

- Improve your awareness what benefits your symptoms and overall well-being by checking with you symptom diary and reflect on what you did differently that day

- Keep track of your progress when for example using an app to track your activities or workouts

Goal setting

- Set goals in your app on what you want to achieve that day – for example on the amount of steps you wanted to take to improve and maintain your physical fitness

- Beat your high score and become more ambitious

- Track your progress over a long period of time

- Stay motivated to engage with the app regularly

Cues or push notifications

▪ Be reminded of what you wanted to achieve the day so you'll be aware of it and integrate it into your daily routine

▪ For example, be notified of when to take your next medication

▪ See when it's time for your next checkup at the doctor's office so you will make your appointement

▪ Be informed when health parameters when tracking a chronic disease change so you can get in touch with your health professional and check whether medications need to be adjusted

Social support

- Stay in touch with friends and family

- Share your progress with others for example when using an activity tracker or an app for work outs, running and other sports

- Share important data and news with your friends and family (e. g. for medication intake or health care appointments)

- Get feedback from others
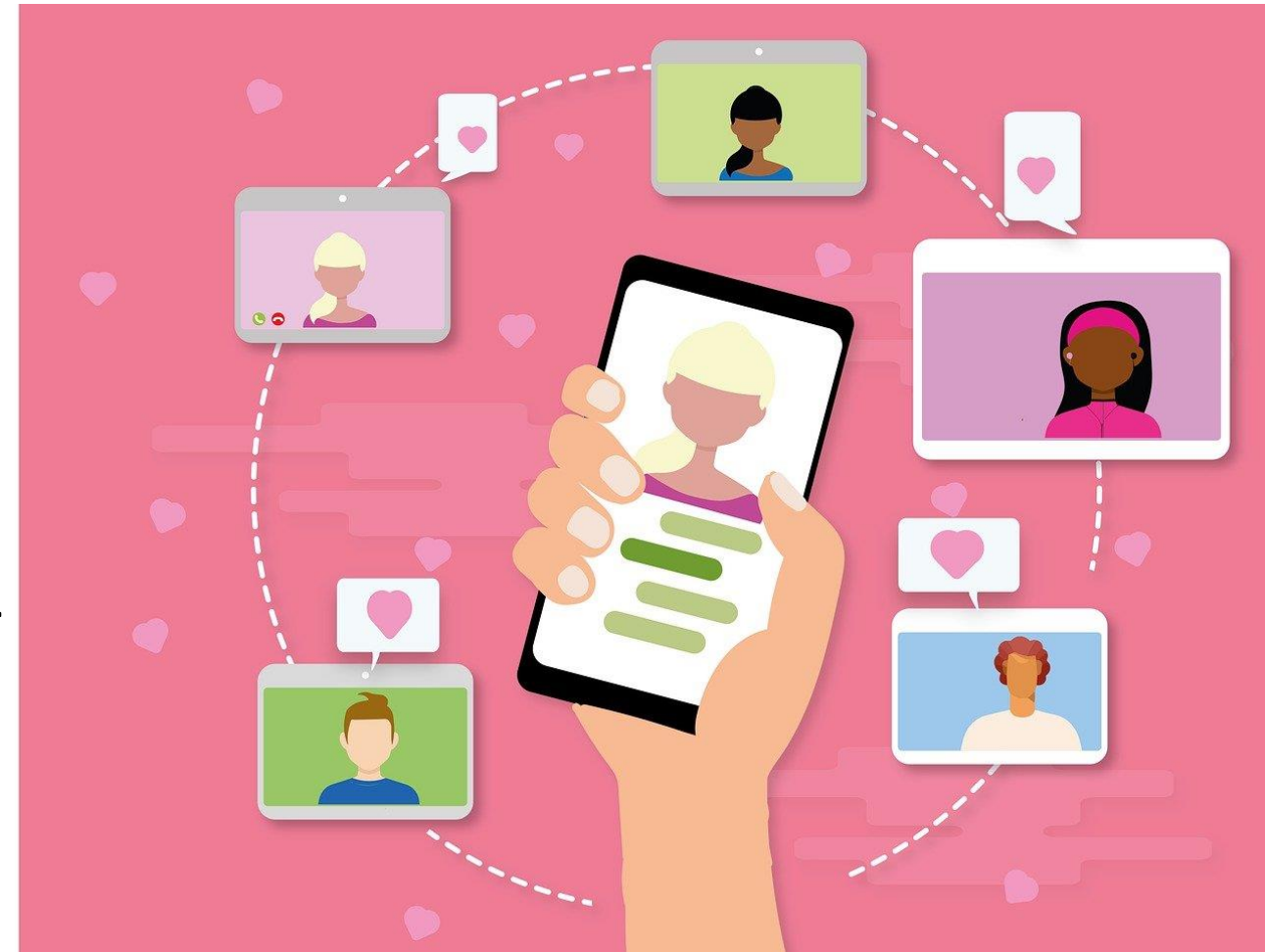
Activity 3: Please share your experiences

Now it's your turn!

- If you have already used health ap
  past, what experience have you m
  how did it help you if at all?

Discuss with the group!

Image by vectorjuice on Freepik

Real-Life integration scenario

Objectives

- To be able to identify problems in ADL

- To learn about benefits of one App for healthy ageing

- To be able to identify support measures for usage of Health Apps to regain functional ability

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Sory-Time: Health Apps in a Real-Life Scenario

- Ms. Schmidt is a 79 year old widdow, who recently decided to move to the country side, where her oldest son Thomas lives with his wife Maria and his 4 year old son Christian

- She moved to be close to her family

- Ms. Schmidt enjoyed exploring the unfamiliar area and going on extensive walks in the beautiful country side of south Germany, especially during the day, when her son and his wife were out the house.

- All went well, until...

Sory-Time: Ms. Schmidt and Health Apps in a Real-Life Scenario

▪ …one day Ms. Schmidt walked into a nearby forest, which she enjoyed a lot when the entire family went for a walk on the past weekend.

▪ While on her walk she totally sunk in her thoughts.

▪ Suddenly she felt struck by a strange feeling of confusion.

▪ She continued walking, but the feeling increased so that she felt unwell and then…

Source | Pixabay license
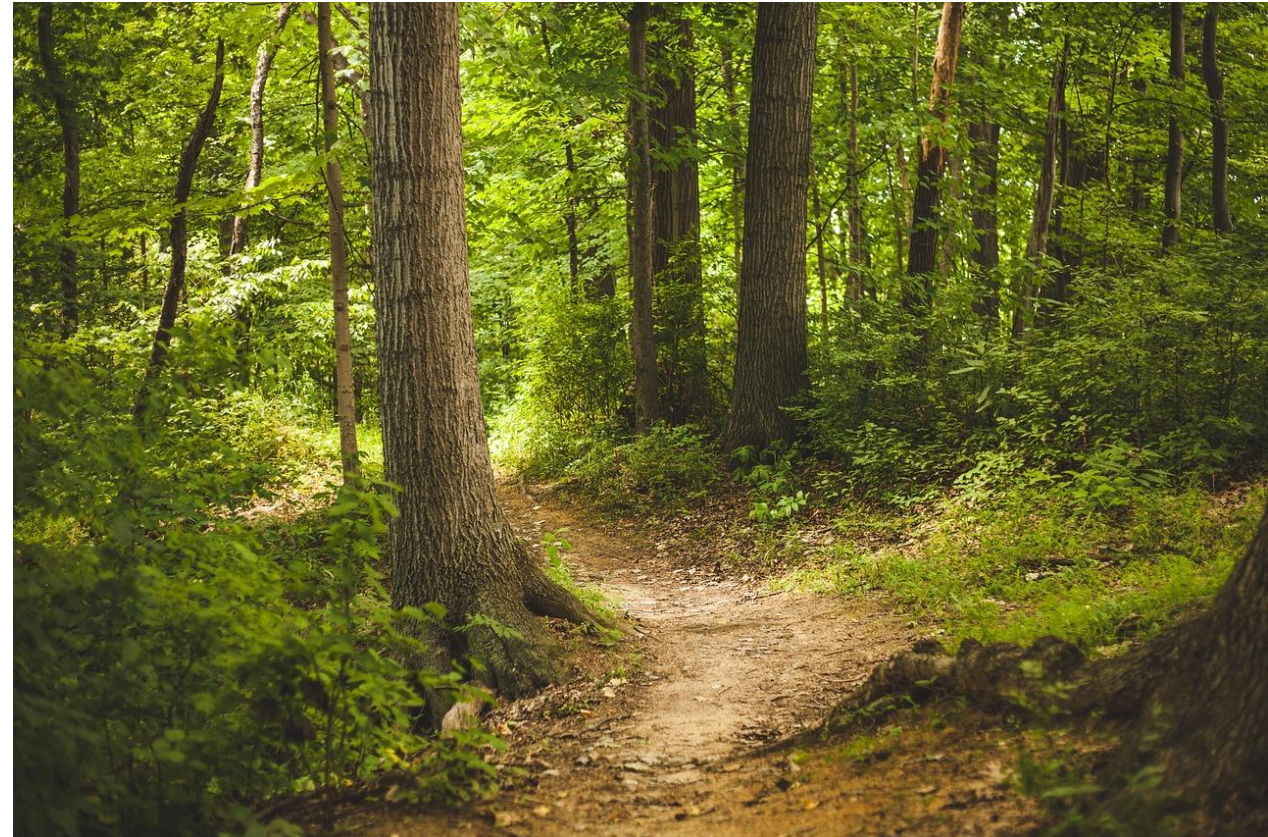
Sory-Time: Ms. Schmidt and Health Apps in a Real-Life Scenario

- … she decided to stop walking.

- Ms. Schmidt slowly came back to her senses and realised that she had no idea where she was, how she got there and what she was even doing.

- She tried to remember, but found it hard to concentrate.

- After feeling completely lost, she decided to continue walking, until she saw a woman in front of her.

- Ms. Schmidt decided to yell out„Hello, please stop! I need help."

- The woman turned around and…

Sory-Time: Ms. Schmidt and Health Apps in a Real-Life Scenario

- ... immediately recognised Ms.Schmidt and said „Hello Ms. Schmidt. How are you? What´s the matter?"

- Ms. Schmidt was confused and did not recognise her. She replied „How do you know my name? Can you help me get back to Blackstreet? That's where I live."

- The woman was Heidi, a friend of Thomas, who met Ms. Schmidt and her family on their walk in the same forest on the past weekend. They even briefly talked

- Heidi realised that something must be off, after Ms. Schmidt could not recognise her. She noticed that Ms. Schmidt seemed to be panicking and offered to help her and walk her home.

- At home she decided to tell Thomas and his wife what happend

Sory-Time: Ms. Schmidt and Health Apps in a Real-Life Scenario

- After thanking Heidi, Thomas talked to Ms. Schmidt about what happened. Both agreed to visit the doctor.

- After several examinations and different doctors the diagnosis followed: Ms. Schmidt experienced her first episode of dementia on the day in the forest. An early form of dementia was diagnosed.

- The doctor recommended light medication, since it was not severe dementia.

- Ms. Schmidt uttered the fear of not being able to go on walks alone anymore and said that she feels much better now.

- The doctor then recommended…

Sory-Time: Ms. Schmidt and Health Apps in a Real-Life Scenario

- ... a smartphone app, that has several tools, which can be helpful to Ms. Schmidt, whenever she feels the risk of another episode rising.

- The app allows Ms. Schmidt to send a message to Thomas and inform him of an emergency, when she clicks a panic button. Thomas can then call his mother.

- The app allows Thomas to track his mother via GPS Data. He knows where she is, in case of emergency.

- The app also recognises if Ms. Schmidt falls to the ground and automically calls emergency services and provides them with her location.

- Her son helped her download the app and trained her in using the functionalities

Sory-Time: Ms. Schmidt and Health Apps in a Real-Life Scenario

- After some time and with these newly implemented safety precautions Ms. Schmidt finally felt safe again to go on a walk in the forest. She finally felt confident to enjoy nature again.

- Thomas felt relieved to know that he can always check where his mother is and feels good about her having the option to also reach emergency services, when he is not available.

- However, the doctor also recommended to train her cognitive abilities. He said „You know, there is an app for that!"
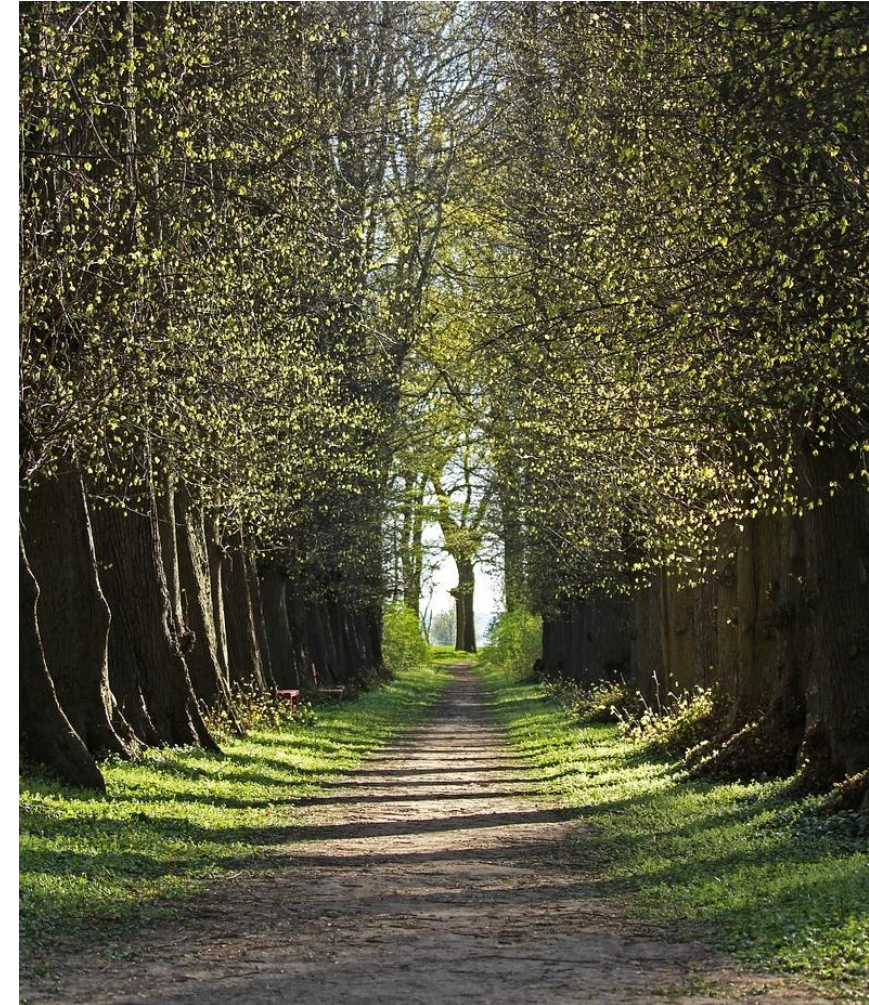
Activity 4: Discuss benefits of Health Apps for key areas of Healthy ageing

Now it's your turn!

- Please divide into small groups.

- Think of areas of healthy aging in your own life or in the lives of your relatives that could benefit from health apps. (Use the notes you made in Acitivity 2)

- What could help or hinder experiencing the benefits in real life. Use the story of Ms. Schmidt for inspiration.

- Please take notes for your individual scenario.

Discuss your findings with the group!
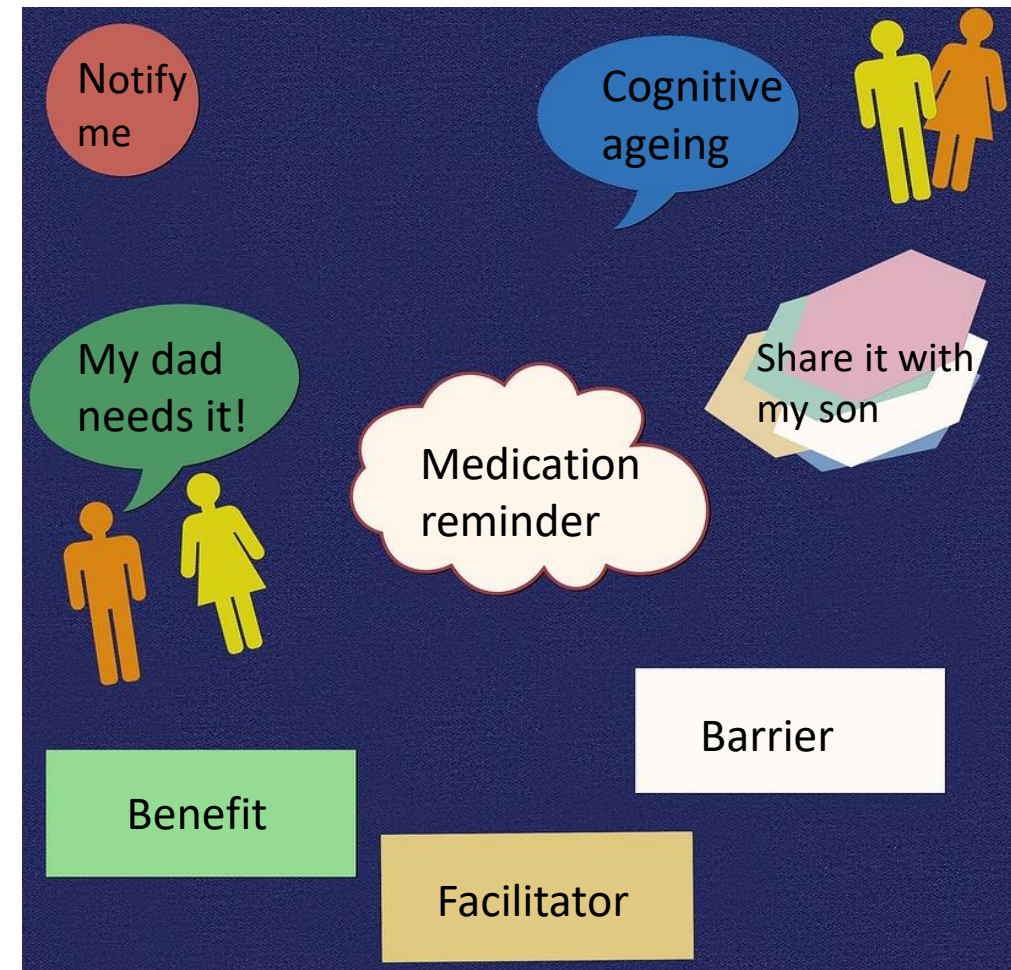
Exploring, navigating Apps and evaluating potential benefits

Objectives

- To explore different Health Apps and apply

  knowledge and reflection skills on concepts

  of healthy ageing

- To assess potential benefits of Health Apps

  in ones own live and come up with

  strategies to experience these

Designed by Freepik

Examples: Available Apps for Healthy Ageing

Medication Monitoring
and Reminder

Meditation practices
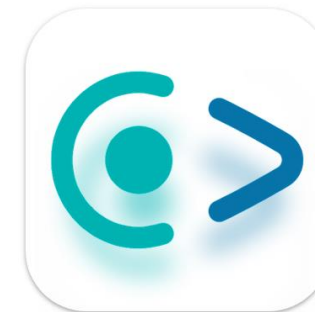and sleeping aid

Physical training for seniors

Cognitive Training via
Games

Video-Call help for people with
limited eye sight

Emergency call for help app

Regional information app
for seniors (Germany)

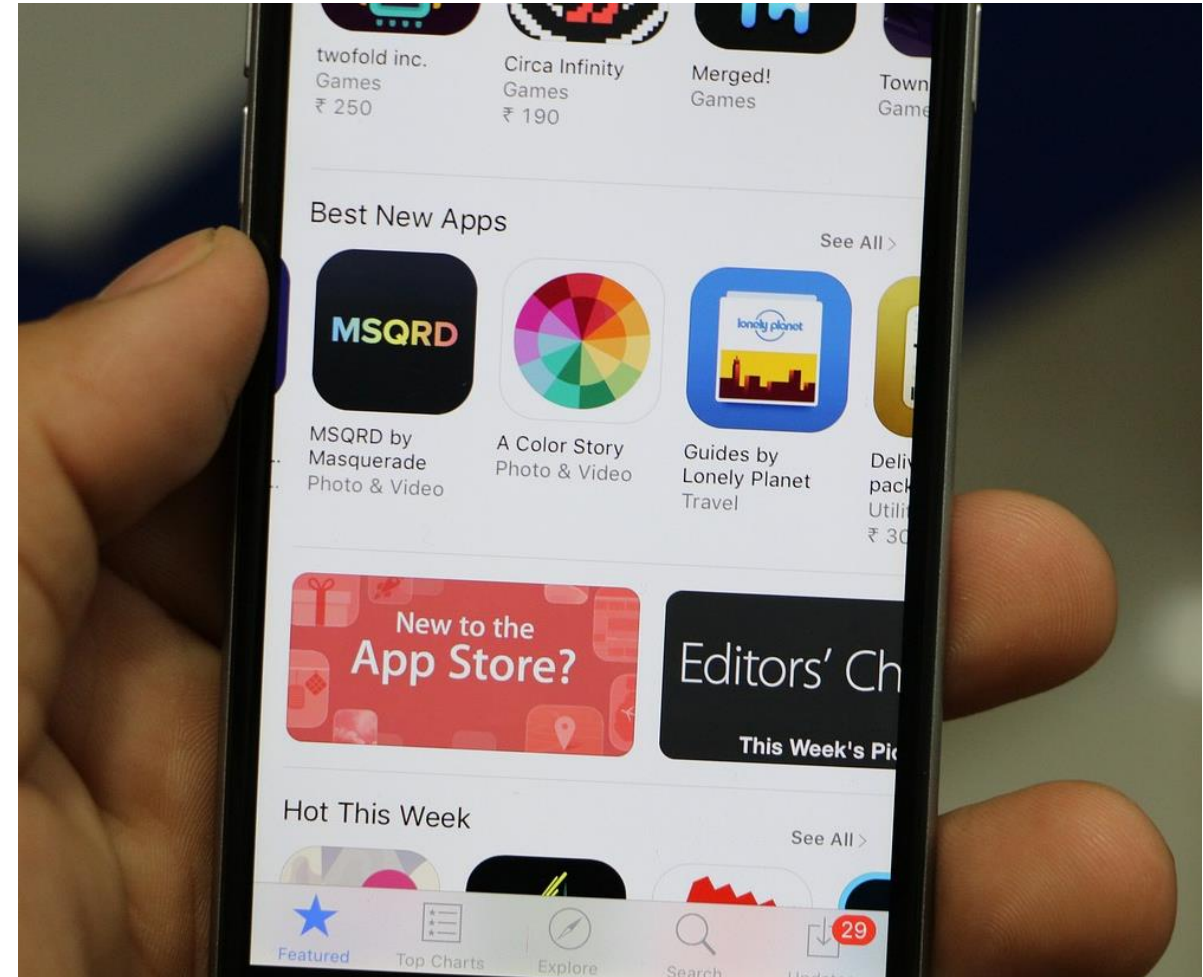Memory training for
people with dementia

Activity 5: Explore Health Apps

Now it's your turn!

- Please choose one app.

- Take out your device, go to the app store and download the app to your device.

- Explore the app on your own for some minutes. Take a look at features and settings.

- Rethink your assessment of potential real-life benefits.

9.1.6
Discussion and open questions

Objectives

- To discuss chosen apps and awaited benefits.

- To resolve and clarify misunderstandings that emerged from all previous theoretical information.

- To ensure in depth comprehension of the module's contents.

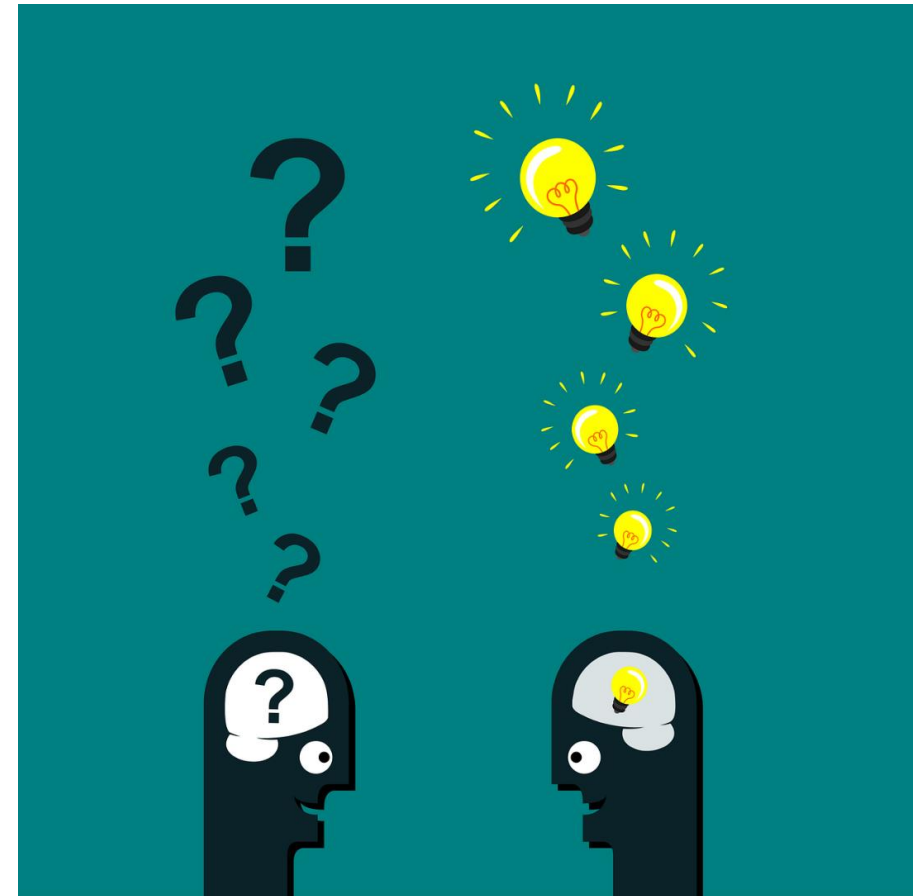## Activity 6: Please share with the group

Now it's your turn!

- Why did you choose this particular app?

- What area of Healthy ageing are you adressing and why?

- What benefits to you await?

- What could hinder your consistent use of the app?

- What could facilitate your consistent use of the app?

Discussion

Do you have…

- Questions?

- Clarifications?

- Comments?

Next steps, evaluation and closure

Objectives

- To learn about the next steps in the module.

- To evaluate the module.

- To learn where to find used references and
  further readings.

Next steps

- The next session is the Experential Training Activity session.

- Here you will learn about one app example for one key area of healthy ageing.

- You will learn how to set goals for real-life integration.

- You will be invited to complete a real-life – integration challenge and to share your experiences on the e-Training Platform.

Evaluation Questionnaire

The content of the module was stimulating and interesting *(1 minimum, 5 maximum)*				
1	2	3	4	5

The content of the module was clear, understandable and easy to follow *(1 minimum, 5 maximum)*				
1	2	3	4	5

The trainer was well prepared *(1 minimum, 5 maximum)*				
1	2	3	4	5

Evaluation Questionnaire

The module enhanced my knowledge of the subject matter *(1 minimum, 5 maximum)*				
1	2	3	4	5

I would recommend this module to others *(1 minimum, 5 maximum)*				
1	2	3	4	5

I am satisfied with the module overall *(1 minimum, 5 maximum)*				
1	2	3	4	5

References and further readings

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Congratulations!
You have completed the teaching session of this module!