



Digital Literacy for Older Adults

What is Digital Literacy? While there is no universally agreed-upon definition, digital literacy is generally understood as an individual's ability to find, understand, communicate, and use information effectively through digital devices and technologies. (i.e., 1-2)

Examples of Digital Literacy

- Using a smartphone to book a medical appointment or sign up for an activity
- Using email and video calling software to connect with family and friends

Why digital literacy matters:



In today's world, digital literacy is increasingly important for older adults; it enhances their quality of life, and helps them remain independent, informed, and connected. However, many older adults face significant barriers to using digital technologies effectively. This resource highlights the evidence-based strategies to increase digital literacy of older adults and enable full and meaningful participation in the digital age.⁽³⁾

Strategies to Mitigate Digital Literacy Barriers



1. Collaborative Learning

- Encourage peer support and intergenerational mentoring programs (i.e., older adults connecting with elementary school students) to build confidence and skills.
- Leverage family members and "warm experts" (e.g., staff in care facilities) to provide personalized assistance.
- Partner with non-peer groups (e.g., local organizations) to offer collaborative learning opportunities.
- Leverage university/student-led programs or care facility programs to improve engagement and outcomes.
- Hold digital literacy sessions in accessible community centers to reach a wider and more diverse audience.

(4 -7)



2. Structured Content for Training Sessions

- Partner with community-based programs and library sessions that provide formal digital literacy training.
- Incorporate gamification (i.e., activities with elements of game playing such as point scoring and competitions) and hands-on learning to improve retention and skill building.
- Implement Digital Health Literacy programs to empower users in navigating health technologies.

(8-10)



3. Technology-Facilitated Self-Learning

- Promote user-friendly designs and step-by-step guides for independent learning.
- Encourage observational learning through competency-based programs tailored to older adults.
- Support self-exploration, with assistance available when needed.

(11 - 12)



4. Tailored Interventions

- Provide personalized, home-based training that caters to individual needs and abilities.
- Adapt programs to accommodate physical limitations and learning paces.
- Use digital literacy workshops with user-driven content to make learning relevant to participants' interests.

(13 - 14)



5. Adaptive Tools

- Use simplified interfaces and devices that are easier for older adults to navigate.
- Provide adaptive equipment like styluses or larger keyboards for those with motor skill challenges.

(8)



6. Continuous Support

- Ensure ongoing engagement through follow-up sessions and refresher courses.
- Establish help desks or online communities to offer continuous support.
- Create a supportive learning environment to reduce anxiety and build confidence.

(15)



Questions about Digital Literacy Programs & Services?



Scan the this **QR Code** to Visit our [Digital Literacy Page](#) where you will find further Information.

You can also reach out to local libraries, community centers, senior centers, organizations, or municipal governments for more information and resources in your area.

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Page 2 of 2