

Evaluating Tech for Older Adults – A Fit Based Approach

Overview

This handout offers a clear, shared framework for older adults, caregivers, and healthcare professionals to use when selecting technology tools that align with personal goals, comfort levels, and lifestyle needs. The content is primarily based on the person-centered technology evaluation framework outlined in Public Health Reviews [1].

1. Clarify the Individual's Goals

Ask:

- ▶ What do they want this technology to help with? (e.g., staying connected, managing medications, staying active)
- ▶ Will it be used for short-term support or long-term integration?
- ▶ Is the goal independence, entertainment, safety, or health support?

Knowing these goals helps everyone focus on meaningful, purpose-driven tools [1, 2].

2. Gauge Comfort with Technology

Evaluate:

- ▶ Is the individual confident with smartphones, tablets, or computers?
- ▶ Preferred learning style — step-by-step instructions, videos, or hands-on support?
- ▶ Prior experiences with tech — positive or frustrating?

Choose tools that match current skill levels to reduce stress and increase success [3, 4, 5].

3. Understand Lifestyle and Daily Routine

Discuss:

- ▶ Living situation (alone/with family/caregiver), internet access, home setup
- ▶ Daily routines for reminders, charging devices, or using apps
- ▶ Sensory, mobility, or cognitive considerations

Choose tools that integrate smoothly into existing routines and abilities [2, 6, 7].

4. Use a Senior-Focused Evaluation Checklist to Access the Following Areas:

- ▶ Accessibility
- ▶ Simplicity
- ▶ Relevance
- ▶ Support
- ▶ Cost/Value

Resource: Evaluation Checklist Handout

5. Involve the Older Adult in the Decision

The older adult's voice matters most. Let them try the tool, ask for input, and respect preferences. Technology should be empowering — not overwhelming [10, 1, 3].

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2. National Institute on Aging (NIA) – Aging in Place: Growing Older at Home.
<https://www.nia.nih.gov/health/aging-place/aging-place-growing-older-home>

3. AARP – Technology Trends for Older Adults.
<https://www.aarp.org/pri/topics/technology/internet-media-devices/2023-technology-trends-older-adults/>

4. Pew Research – Tech Use Among Adults 65+.
<https://www.pewresearch.org/short-reads/2022/01/13/share-of-those-65-and-older-who-are-tech-users-has-grown-in-the-past-decade/>

5. National Institute on Aging (NIA) – How to Find Reliable Health Information Online.
<https://www.nia.nih.gov/health/healthy-aging/how-find-reliable-health-information-online>

6. National Institute on Aging (NIA) – Services for Older Adults Living at Home.
<https://www.nia.nih.gov/health/caregiving/services-older-adults-living-home>

7. World Health Organization (WHO) – Ageing and Health.
<https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/ageing-and-health>

8. World Health Organization (WHO) – Global Strategy on Digital Health.
<https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789240020924>

9. Center for Technology and Aging. Archived at:
<https://web.archive.org/web/20190418010338/http://www.techandaging.org/>

10. World Health Organization (WHO) – Decade of Healthy Ageing: Plan of Action.
<https://www.who.int/publications/m/item/decade-of-healthy-ageing-plan-of-action>