Engaging Older Adults through Faith Based Organizations: Potential Implications for Brain Health

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Today I Will Discuss

- Why faith-based organizations are a promising setting for reaching midlife and older adults

- Highlights of the USC Prevention Research Center’s project with faith-based organizations
Why Work With Faith-Based Organizations?

• Reach!
  • Diversity: geography, race, ethnicity, SES
• Important & trusted
• Service, outreach, volunteer, and health mission
• Holistic approach to health: mind, body, spirit
• Physical resources & communication channels for health promotion
• Ability to deliver messages in a manner consistent with values & culture
  • Potential for greater resonance with message
Why Work With Faith-Based Organizations for Topics Such as Brain Health?

Importance of Religion

Attendance at Religious Services


Why Work With Faith-Based Organizations for Topics Such as Brain Health?

- In addition to having higher levels of attendance at religious services, many midlife and older adults play the role of key volunteers in church ministries.
  - Church Coordinators in our current project:
    - Mean age: 60 (9) years; Range: 35-77
    - 85% are 50+ years

- Many faith-based organizations have senior groups / senior lunches / senior events.
  - Often looking for speakers and programming

- Keeping members active and engaged in religious life viewed as important.
  - Can link to health promotion and brain health

Source: Google Images
USC Prevention Research Center’s Applied Public Health Research Project

• Dissemination & Implementation (D&I) of the Faith, Activity, & Nutrition (FAN) Program

• Phase 1: Study the D&I of FAN in a rural, medically underserved county in SC
  • Fairfield Behavioral Health Services & Fairfield Community Coordinating Council
  • 36 churches trained; 20 more next year

• Phase 2: Study the D&I of FAN in a state roll-out
  • SC Conference of the United Methodist Church (UMC), ~1,008 churches in SC

10/24/15 Training: Churches Take an Active Break
Thank you!

http://prevention.sph.sc.edu/