

Keys to Embracing Aging (Signature)

Situation

There are many health factors that contribute to both how well and how long we live. The factors can be categorized into four main areas, including accessibility to quality health care, social and economic factors, the physical environment, and the health behaviors we practice across our lifespans (County Health Rankings, 2019). Research suggests that 30% of our health outcomes – how well and how long we live – are due to the health behaviors we practice across our lifespan (County Health Rankings, 2019). As such, it is imperative that Cooperative Extension educators provide comprehensive, research-based information focusing on improving health-related knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors as a part of their service to their local communities. Because health behaviors include a variety of choices (i.e., nutrition, physical activity, social activity, etc.), it is particularly valuable when a curriculum can comprehensively educate and empower individuals to adopt an overall healthy lifestyle.

Public Value

Keys to Embracing Aging introduces and reinforces 12 healthy and safe lifestyle practices that influence optimal aging. This interactive program utilizes findings from centenarian studies to help Kansans grow old gracefully, successfully, and with increased longevity. Optimizing the aging process for Kansans leads to less age-related morbidities, less healthcare costs and a lessened caregiving burden.

Outcomes

Short-Term (Knowledge): Increase understanding of how practicing healthy behaviors across the lifespan can influence future health and well-being.

Indicators: Improved knowledge of basic health and safety topics.

Medium-Term (Behavior): Increase the number and quality of healthy behaviors in which participants engage on a daily basis.

Indicators: Self-reports of healthy eating, physical activity, social activity, and other positive health behaviors.

Long-Term (Change in Condition): Improve overall health and wellness, thereby increasing the number of healthy days and decreasing healthcare costs, for example.

Indicators: Population tracking of age statistics statewide.

Outputs

- Increased numbers of Extension agents who are trained in the KTEA program
- Increased numbers of participants in the KTEA program
- Increased numbers of returned evaluations from agents who deliver the KTEA program