

Stepping On with Recovery

Building confidence and falls prevention

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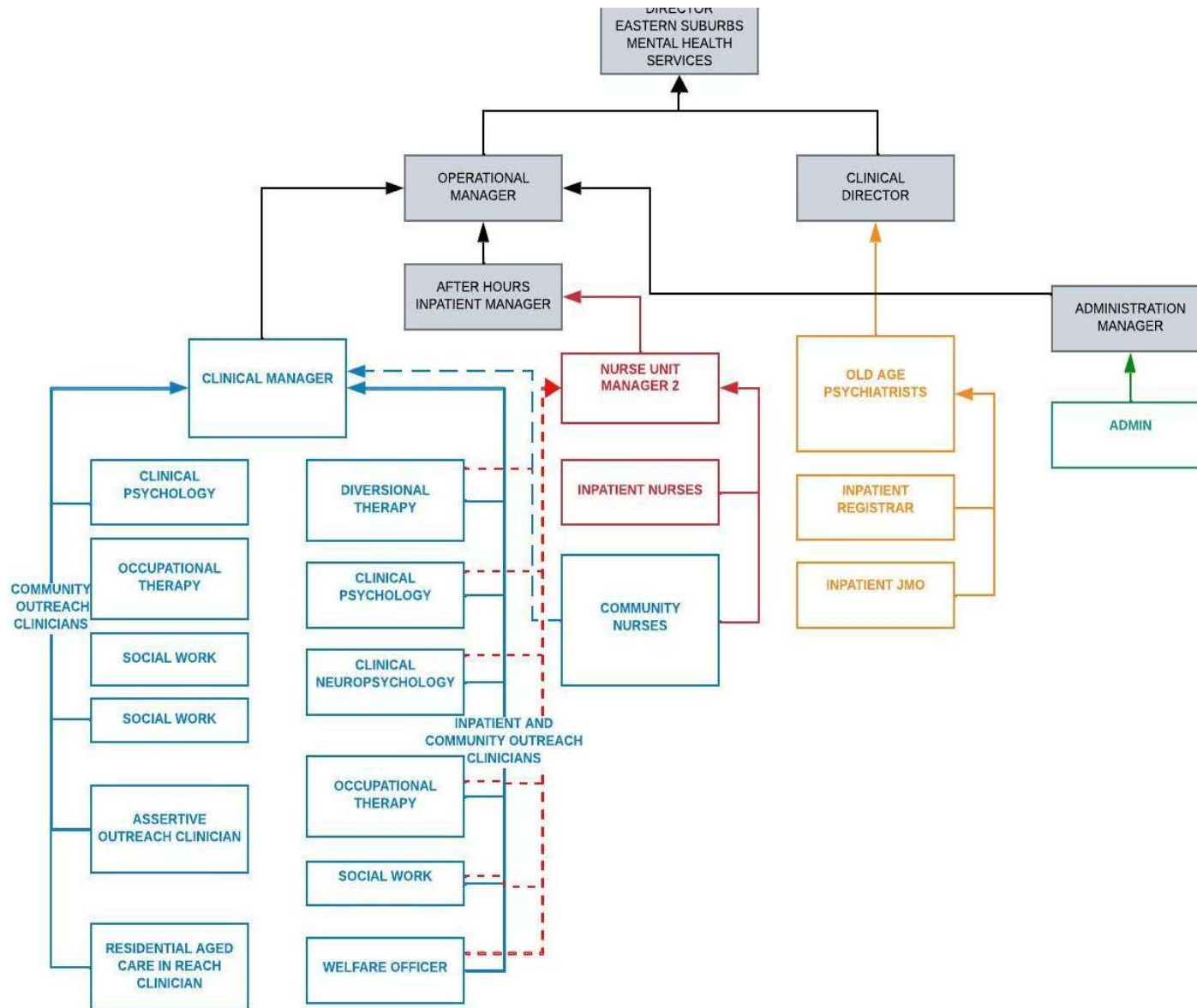
2 May 2025



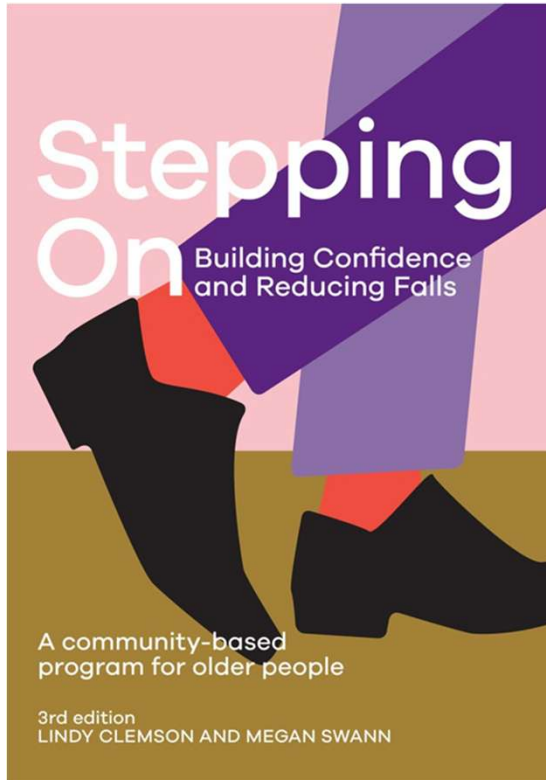
Eastern Sydney Local Health District



Older Persons Mental Health Service ESLHD Organisation Chart



Stepping On – NSW Ministry of Health Initiative (2008 -2022)



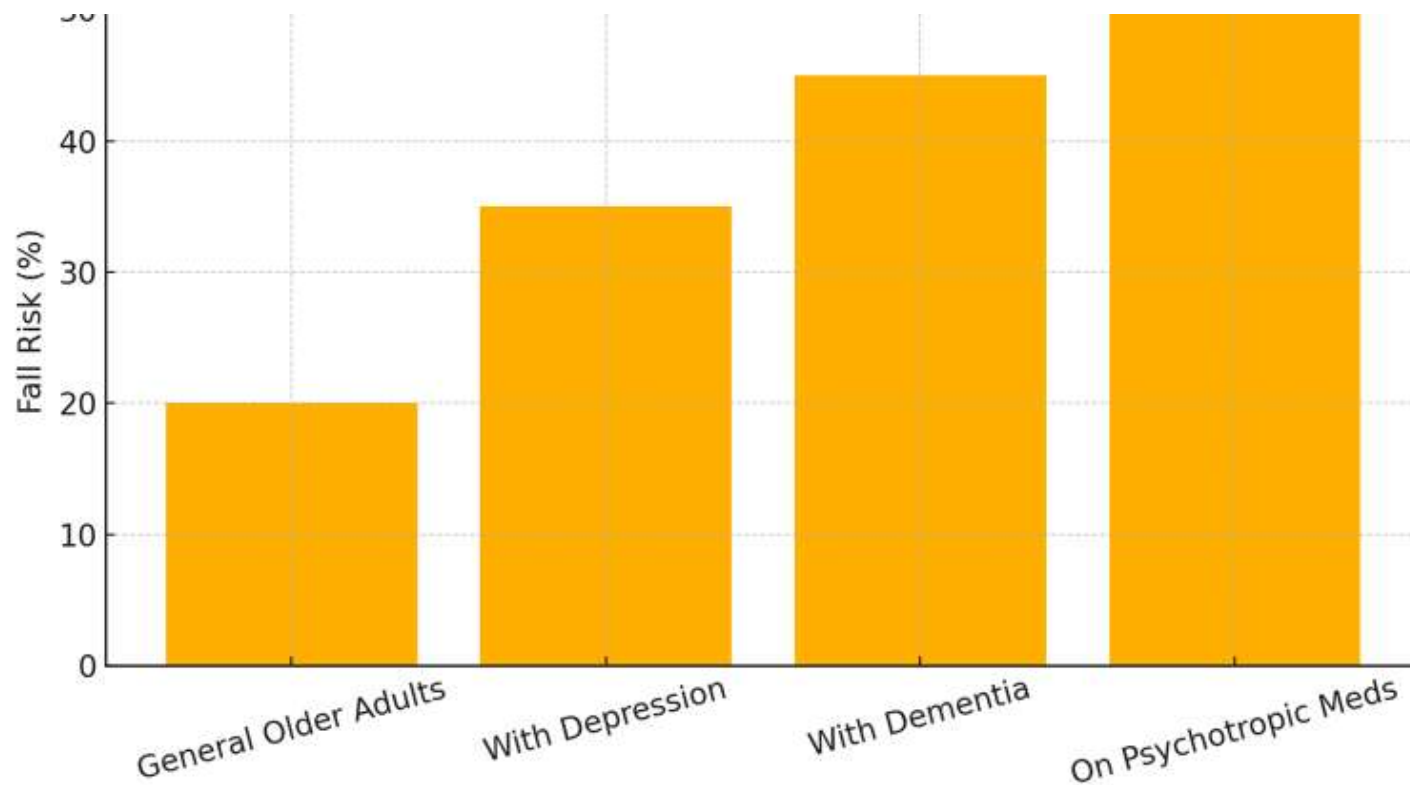
Stepping On was developed in Australia and is now represented in most US States. It is a seven-week program designed for people who are living at home and have experienced a fall or are concerned about falling.

The program is evidence-based, it is effective and proven to reduce falls in older people living in the community. The program incorporates strategies to implement positive lifestyle changes to keep you independent, upright and active.

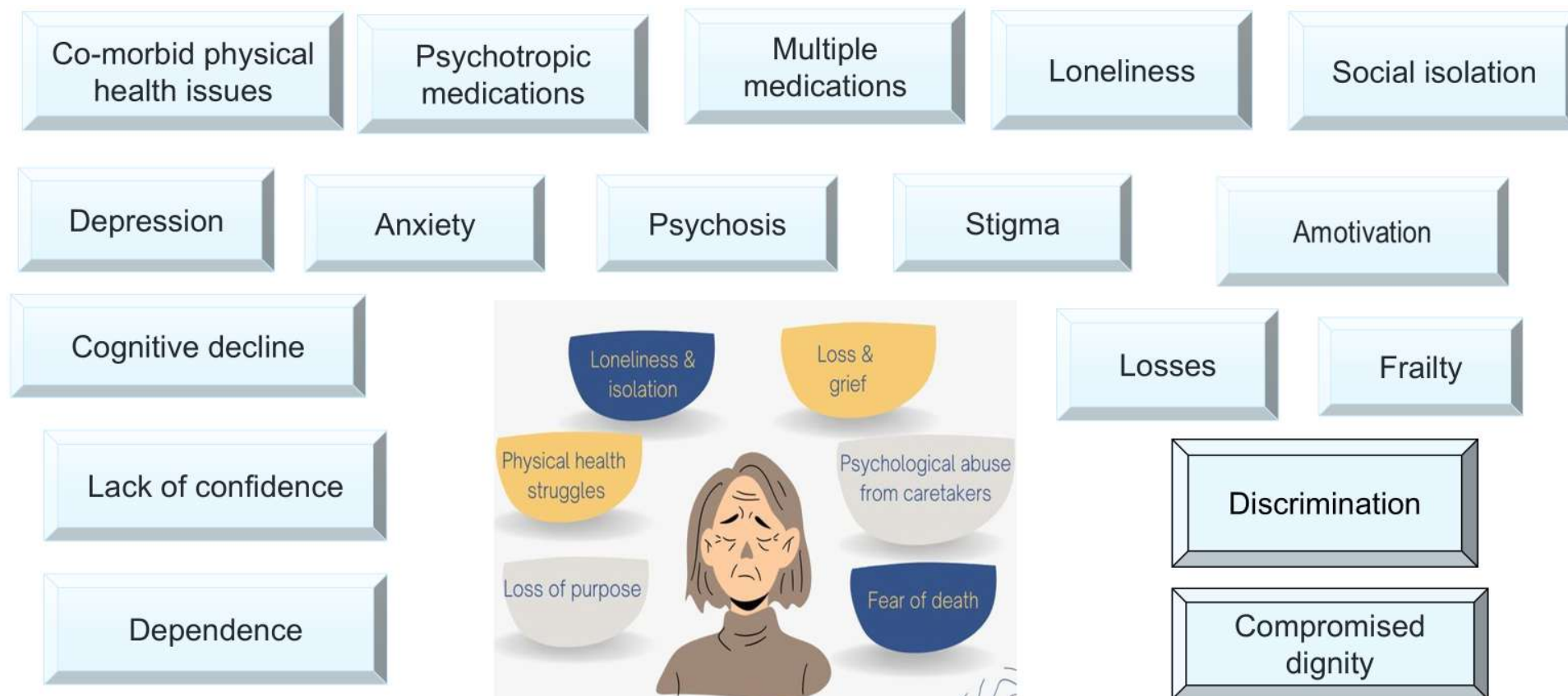
The evidence has proven that Stepping On reduces falls by 31% in the community.

This program is unsuitable for people with memory problems, certain progressive neurological disorders and people who are totally dependent on a walking frame.

Fall Risk by Mental Health Condition in Older Adults



Predictors of Falls in Older People with Mental Health Diagnoses



• **The Challenge:** A Perfect Storm of Risk Factors

- Older adults with mental health conditions are up to 4 x more likely to fall.
- Falls have complex causes: physical, cognitive, emotional, and environmental.
- Mental health conditions amplify risks through reduced activity, isolation, and medication effects.



Current Gaps in Community Engagement

- Most mainstream exercise and social programs exclude people with cognitive or psychiatric symptoms, leading to loneliness and isolation.
- Fear, stigma, fluctuating mental health symptoms, and transportation challenges limit opportunity to participate.



Stepping on with Recovery Brochure



Health
South Eastern Sydney
Local Health District

**Older Persons'
Mental Health Service**

Stepping On with Recovery

A falls prevention program for
consumers of the Older Person's
Mental Health Service.

One in four people age 65
or older has a fall each year.



Don't be one of them!

Attend a fun, **free** 7-week
program that combines
gentle strength and balance
exercises together with
educational sessions aimed
at preventing falls.

**Designed to build
knowledge, strength and
confidence to prevent falls**

Course content...

- ◆ Home hazard awareness
- ◆ Moving safely in your own environment
- ◆ Nutrition and bone health
- ◆ Safe footwear
- ◆ Vision
- ◆ Medication management
- ◆ Leg strength and balance exercises
- ◆ How to get up safely off the floor after a fall

Your commitment:

- ◆ Attend for 2 hours each week, for 7 weeks
- ◆ Arrange your own transport to and from the Euroa Centre
- ◆ Attend the reunion session

PROGRAM INFORMATION

27 February – 10 April 2025

Stepping on WITH RECOVERY

Personal Benefits...

- ◆ Reduce your risk of falling, maintain your independence and your ability to do everyday activities without risk
- ◆ Become more aware of falls hazards in your home & when you go out
- ◆ Walk outside your own home with confidence in you step
- ◆ Improve your mobility, balance and strength
- ◆ Receive weekly educational handouts & an exercise manual

**Free morning
tea provided**



FACTS ABOUT FALLS:

- 1 in 4 people aged 65 and over fall each year
- Falls are the leading cause of hospital admissions for older people
- Having a fall can reduce your mobility and independence
- Staying physically active can prevent falls

Participants need to be ...

- ◆ Known to the Older Person's Mental Health Service @ Euroa Centre, Prince of Wales Hospital
- ◆ Able to attend each session of the 7-week course



**Meetings take place in a
small group environment**

- ◆ Community based falls prevention program
- ◆ Educational talks given by experts
- ◆ Gentle exercises to improve balance and strength
- ◆ Learn strategies to reduce your risk of falling

Eastern Sydney Local Health District

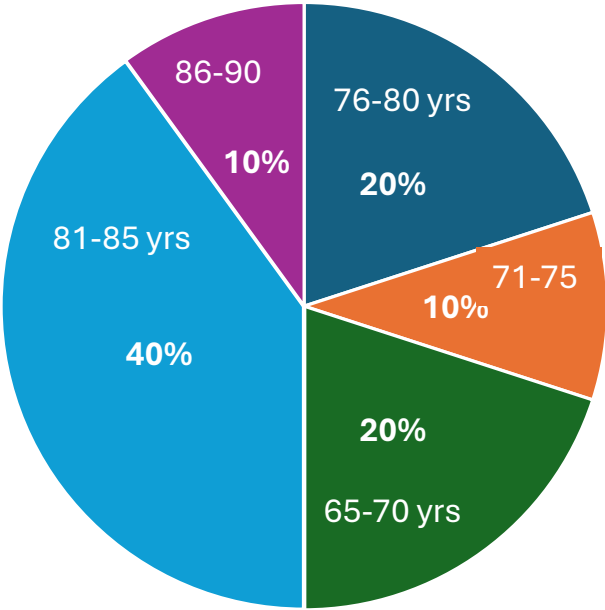


Stepping On Overview & OPMH Recovery Additions

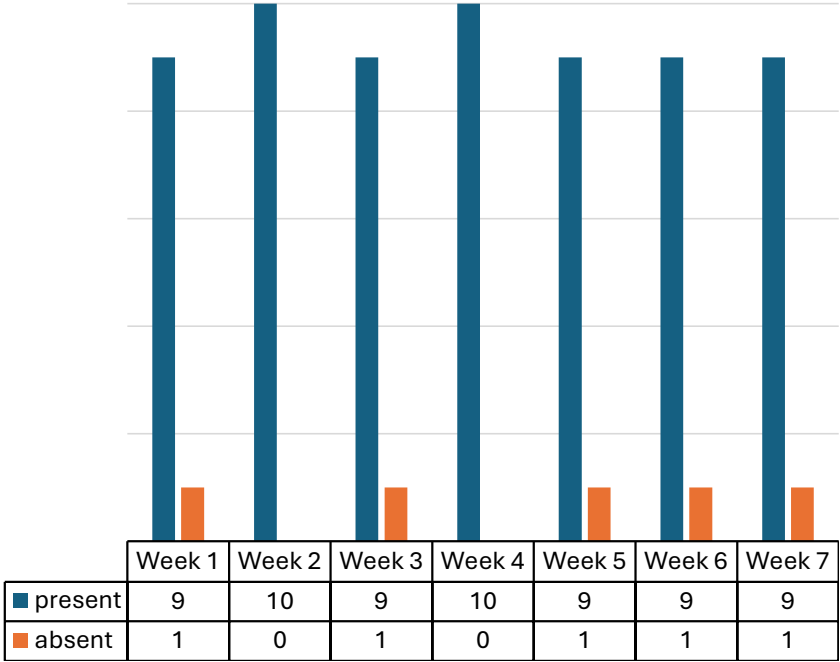
Home hazards & risks	How to get up safely from the floor	Vision
Balance and strength exercises	Personal alarms	Medication awareness
Mobility measures Week 1 & 7	Moving about safely	Pedestrian community safety
Footwear safety	Correct use of walking aids	Diet: Calcium vit D sunshine

Mood measures	Introduce psychologist	Known to OPMH service
Weekly phone calls	4 WW & other aids	Lonely, isolated, deconditioned
Assistance with planning ahead	Assisted living, close to Euroa ward d/c	Cognitive decline
Cognitive activity: wordsearch etc		Feedback to consulting specialist

Age Group

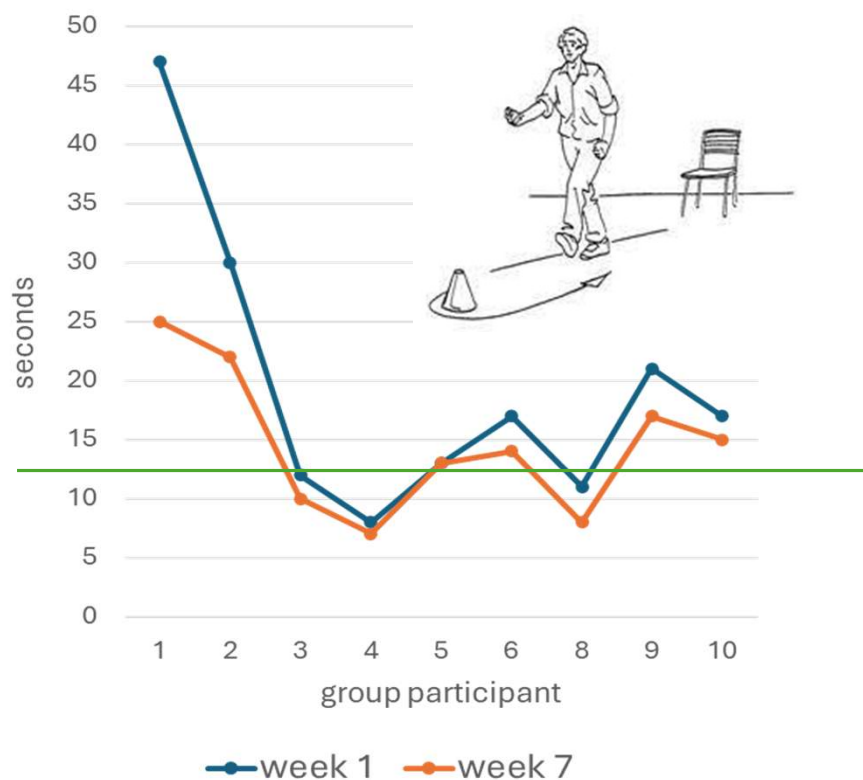


Attendance



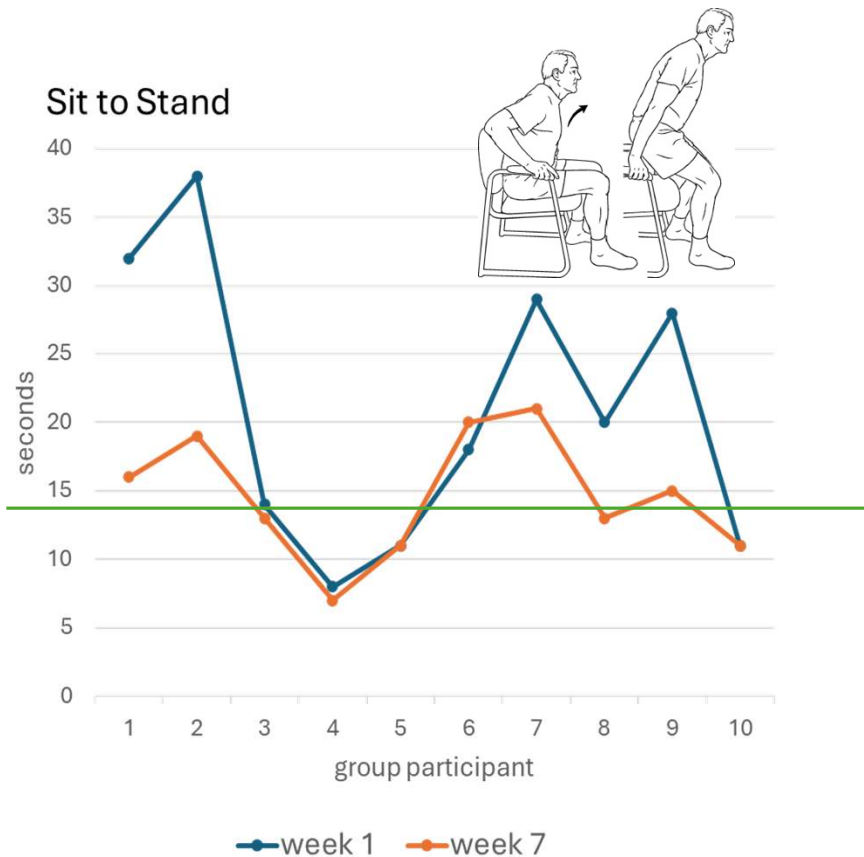
Strength and Balance Measures (TUG)

Timed Up and Go



- Timed from a seated position, to walk 3 meters, turn around, walk back to the chair and sits down.
- Assesses participants risk of fall, leg strength and balance.
- Measures the progress of balance, sit to stand and walking.
- >13.5 sec (above green line) indicates risk of fall

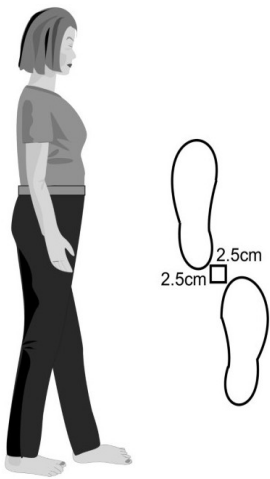
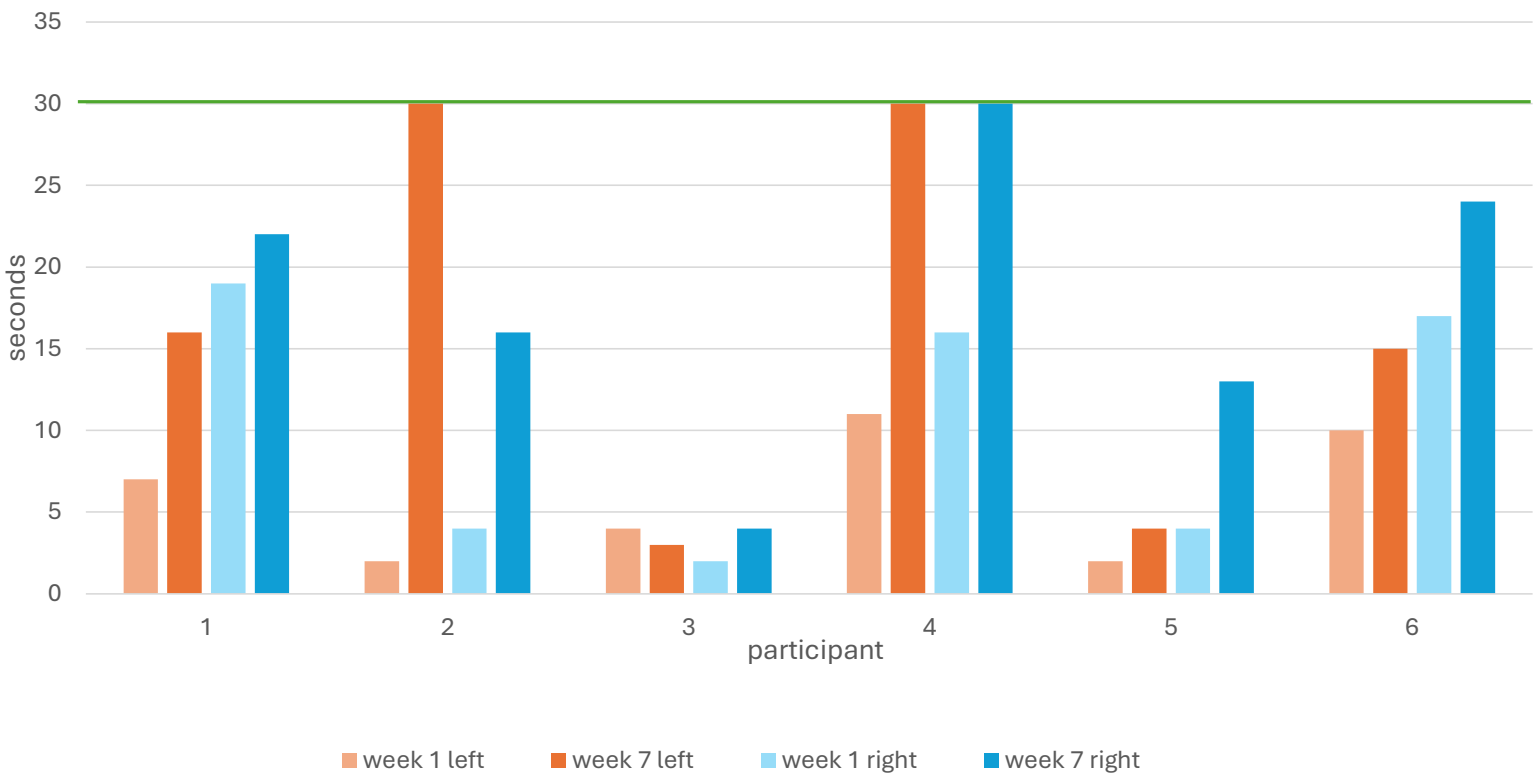
Strength and Balance Measures (5xSST)



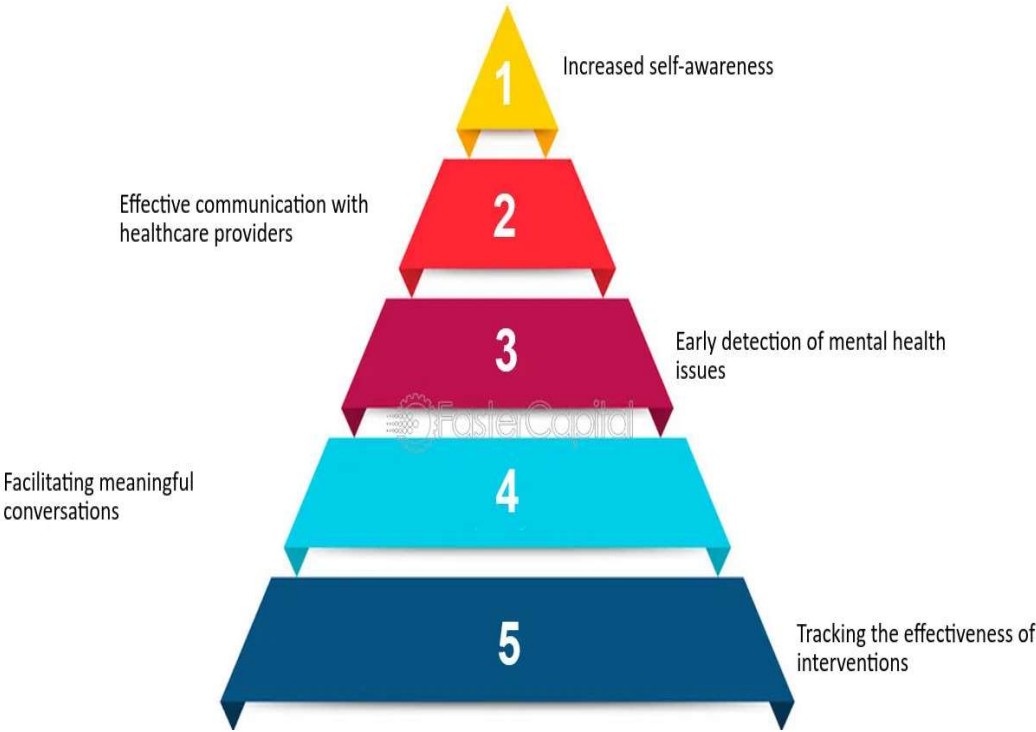
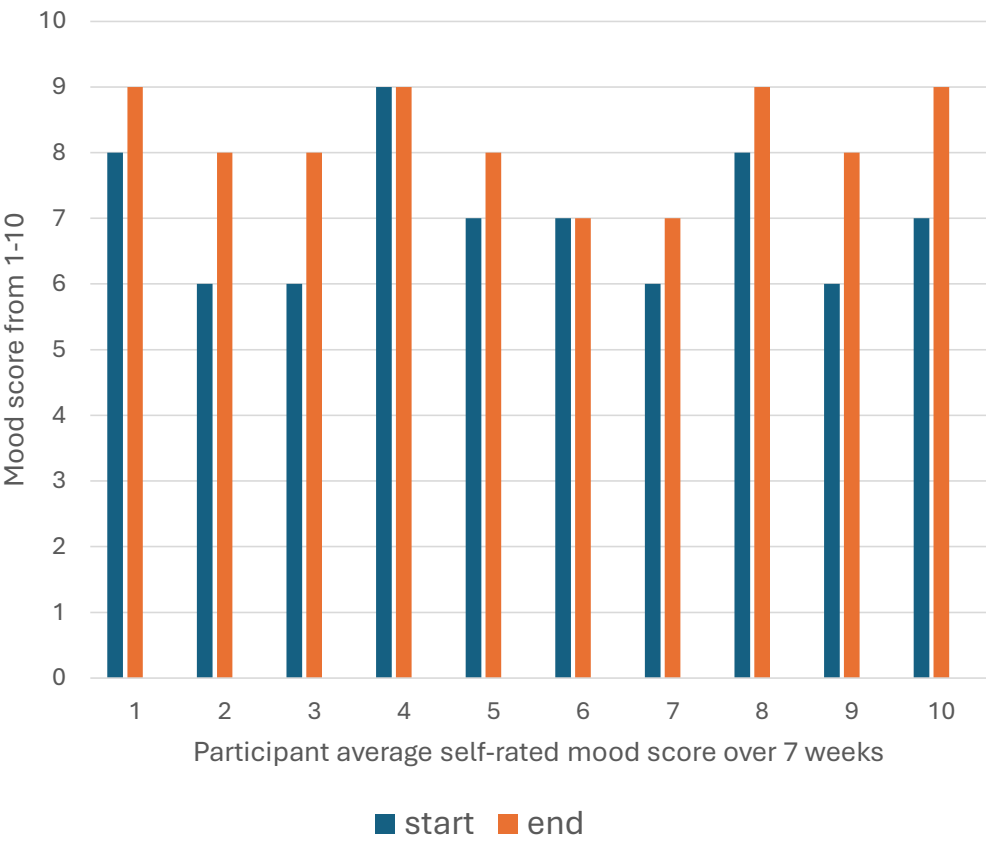
- The 5x Sit-To-Stand Test (5XSST) is used to assess functional lower limbs strength, transitional movements, balance, and fall risk in older adults.
- > 12 -14 seconds (above green line) is associated with a greater risk of recurrent falls than those who took less time

Strength and Balance Measures (NTS)

Near Tandem Stand (left and right) eyes open



Benefits of Mood Tracking from 1-10



Morning Tea



- Offers a valuable secondary therapeutic benefit.
- Feedback gathered showed that informal morning teatime was greatly valued
- Many have not eaten breakfast as getting ready and leaving their homes to be in time to the group can be a challenge and is all time consuming.
- Facilitating a recent group, three of the ten participants had not left their home for many months.
- Many have lost the ability to socialise during a meal. We offer the opportunity to develop roles that they do not experience living alone with minimal external contact. Social graces begin to develop.

• Next Steps

After completing the Stepping On with Recovery Falls Prevention Program, group participants were encouraged to continue their recovery journey in the community

- Stride Exercise programs
- Living Longer- Living Stronger (SHARE)
- Move and Stay Well
- Lite & Easy Exercises
- Dance Moves for Seniors
- Mind and Body Classes
- Randwick, Waverley Councils, Holdsworth Centre
- Tai Chi - various locations
- Neighbourhood Centres
- Recovery and Wellbeing College
- Volunteer opportunities
- Referral to OPMH Social Connections Group (new)



Strategic Benefits to the Health Service

- Fewer emergency presentations and hospital readmissions
- Supports stepped-care and discharge pathways
- Aligns with preventative, person centred, and recovery-oriented care
- Enhances OPMH service's reputation as a leader in aged mental health innovation

Falls in older people are increasing
due to an ageing population and increasing frequency



In 2021, there were **1.4 million** people aged over 65 years or over living in NSW.

By 2041 there will be **over 2 million older people in NSW.**

Fall injuries among older people are a large and growing problem in NSW.



Every day, there are **114** new hospital admissions of people aged 65+ in NSW because of a fall.

Older people in NSW **HOSPITALISED** yearly because of a fall:



41,600

IN 2021

60,300

BY 2041

Yearly **DEATHS** of older people in NSW because of a fall:



1,200

IN 2021

1,800

BY 2041

Injuries from falls are a huge burden on health services.

In 2021, treatment of injuries from falls in older people come to a price tag of **over \$750 million**. There were multiple flow-on effects for ambulance services, loss of independence by older people, and family impact.



Each year over **26,000 cases** of falls are attended by **NSW Ambulance**.



Each year over **395,000** fall-related **PATIENT-CARE DAYS** are needed by people over 65 years.



ADMISSION TO AGED CARE is **twice as likely** for those hospitalised for a fall than for other reasons.



Currently NSW has no falls prevention strategy.

Coordinated action on fall prevention will have quick returns.

Strong evidence suggests that falls can be reduced by 34% in 12 months.

[CEC: Fall Prevention in NSW White Paper 2023](#)

What they say...

"I've really enjoyed doing the exercises. I feel a lot stronger and more confident".



"I don't leave my house, other than coming to this group once a week. It means the world to me; everyone is so kind and accepting of my difficulties".



"I didn't know that some medications have side effects that affect your balance"

"The sessions were very informative. It made me think about things I should be doing more, like having more calcium in my diet."



"I couldn't have attended without the kindness and care from the nurses who brought me here, and the other participant's checking in on me".



"what am I going to do now that I am no longer coming here every week!?"

What they value...



"Thank you for providing me with the special treats to accommodate my gluten free diet during teatime".



"When I first joined the group, I didn't think I would enjoy it. But now I am quite sad it has come to an end."



"I particularly enjoyed the presentations on healthy eating and looking after yourself. My confidence in getting out of home is greater".



"Attending these sessions has opened my eyes to services and support that can help me with my balance and what to do if I were to fall again".



"Although I haven't done as much exercise as I should. I have loved seeing everybody each week, especially chatting over the scrumptious morning tea"



In conclusion

Your mental and physical health
is a gift; cherish it

• References

Gender Differences in Older Adults' Perceptions of Falls and Fall Prevention

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“Effects of early mental state changes on physical functions in elderly individuals: A cross-sectional study”

- Published: 2022

“Falls increase the risk for incident anxiety and depressive symptoms: Longitudinal analysis from the Irish Longitudinal Study on Ageing (TILDA)”

- Published: 2023

- **Effects of early mental state changes on physical functions in elderly patients with a history of falls** Yao Cui, Bo Liu, Ming-Zhao Qin, Qian Liu, Hui Ye & Jian Zhou Published: 15 September 2023 BMC Geriatrics volume **23**, Article number: 564 (2023)