

helping seniors with technology

Helping Seniors with Technology: A Guide to Bridging the Digital Divide

helping seniors with technology has become increasingly important in our fast-paced, digital world. As technology continues to evolve, it offers tremendous benefits—from staying connected with loved ones to managing health and accessing essential services. Yet many older adults face unique challenges when it comes to embracing new devices, apps, and online platforms. Understanding these challenges and providing thoughtful, patient support can empower seniors to confidently navigate the digital landscape and enhance their quality of life.

Why Helping Seniors with Technology Matters

In today's society, technology is more than just a convenience—it's a vital tool for communication, healthcare, entertainment, and even financial management. For seniors, mastering basic digital skills can combat loneliness, increase independence, and open doors to lifelong learning. However, the digital divide remains real. Many seniors did not grow up using computers or smartphones, which can make learning intimidating. Additionally, physical challenges such as declining eyesight, reduced dexterity, and cognitive changes can add layers of difficulty.

By actively helping seniors with technology, family members, caregivers, and community organizations can foster inclusion and reduce the sense of isolation that often accompanies aging. It's about creating opportunities for older adults to thrive in a digital world rather than feeling left behind.

Understanding Common Barriers Seniors Face with Technology

Before diving into solutions, it's crucial to recognize the obstacles seniors typically encounter. These

barriers often stem from a mix of psychological, physical, and educational factors:

Technophobia and Lack of Confidence

Many seniors feel intimidated by new gadgets and software. The fear of breaking something or making mistakes can prevent them from even trying. This apprehension is often exacerbated by the feeling that technology is designed for younger generations.

Physical Limitations

Age-related changes such as reduced vision, hearing loss, arthritis, or tremors can make handling small devices or reading tiny text difficult. This can lead to frustration and discouragement.

Complex User Interfaces

Modern devices sometimes feature cluttered screens, hidden menus, and jargon-heavy instructions. Without clear guidance, navigating these interfaces can be overwhelming.

Access and Affordability Issues

Not all seniors have access to reliable internet or the latest devices. Financial constraints may limit their ability to purchase or upgrade technology.

Effective Strategies for Helping Seniors with Technology

Helping seniors with technology is most successful when approached with empathy, patience, and practical steps tailored to their unique needs.

Start with the Basics

Focus on simple, essential skills first. For example, teaching how to turn a device on and off, make phone calls, or send text messages lays a solid foundation. Avoid overwhelming beginners with too many apps or technical jargon.

Choose Senior-Friendly Devices and Apps

Many manufacturers now offer products designed with seniors in mind—larger buttons, simplified interfaces, and voice commands can make a huge difference. Apps that prioritize accessibility and have straightforward layouts can also enhance usability.

Use Clear, Step-by-Step Instructions

Break down tasks into small, manageable steps. Visual aids like screenshots or printed guides can reinforce learning. Repetition helps build muscle memory and confidence.

Encourage Hands-On Practice

Seniors learn best by doing. Encourage regular practice sessions in a low-pressure environment.

Celebrate small victories to boost motivation.

Leverage Voice Assistants and Accessibility Features

Voice-activated tools like Siri, Alexa, or Google Assistant allow seniors to perform tasks without needing to navigate complex menus. Features such as screen readers, magnifiers, and adjustable font sizes can accommodate visual or hearing impairments.

Building a Supportive Learning Environment

The emotional aspect of learning technology is just as important as the technical side. Creating a supportive environment can transform how seniors perceive and engage with technology.

Practice Patience and Empathy

Remember that frustration is normal. Avoid rushing or expressing impatience. Instead, listen carefully to concerns and adapt teaching methods accordingly.

Connect Learning to Personal Interests

Tailor lessons around activities seniors enjoy, such as video chatting with grandchildren, streaming favorite music, or exploring hobbies online. When technology feels relevant and fun, motivation soars.

Encourage Social Learning

Group classes or tech clubs for seniors provide both instruction and social interaction. Sharing experiences with peers fosters camaraderie and reduces feelings of isolation.

Offer Ongoing Support

Technology changes quickly. Regular check-ins and refresher sessions help seniors stay up-to-date and troubleshoot issues before they become discouraging roadblocks.

Practical Tools and Resources for Seniors

There's a growing array of resources designed specifically to assist seniors in mastering technology.

- **Senior-Friendly Tablets and Smartphones:** Devices like the GrandPad or Jitterbug phone are tailored to older users.
- **Online Tutorials and Videos:** Websites like SeniorNet or YouTube channels offer step-by-step guides on popular tech topics.
- **Community Workshops:** Local libraries, senior centers, and nonprofits often host classes focused on digital literacy.
- **Accessibility Features:** Built-in options on devices—such as voice control, screen magnification, and closed captioning—support diverse needs.
- **Tech Support Services:** Some companies provide dedicated help lines or home visits to assist

seniors with technology setup and troubleshooting.

Encouraging Digital Safety and Privacy

Helping seniors with technology also means educating them about internet safety. Older adults can be vulnerable to scams, phishing, and privacy breaches, so it's essential to cover these topics clearly and respectfully.

Teach the Basics of Online Security

Explain why strong, unique passwords matter and how to recognize suspicious emails or messages. Encourage the use of two-factor authentication when available.

Discuss Privacy Settings

Guide seniors in adjusting privacy controls on social media and apps to limit sharing of personal information.

Promote Safe Browsing Habits

Show how to identify secure websites (look for "https" and padlock icons) and avoid clicking on unknown links.

Technology as a Lifeline for Health and Wellness

One of the most powerful reasons for helping seniors with technology is the ability to improve health outcomes and overall wellness.

Telehealth and Remote Monitoring

Many healthcare providers now offer telemedicine appointments, allowing seniors to consult doctors without leaving home. Devices like fitness trackers or blood pressure monitors can sync with smartphones to provide real-time health data.

Medication Management Apps

These apps remind users when to take medications and track adherence, reducing the risk of missed doses.

Access to Mental Health Resources

Online counseling, meditation apps, and virtual support groups offer valuable mental health support, especially for those with limited mobility.

Celebrating the Joy of Digital Connection

At its heart, helping seniors with technology is about connection. Whether it's video chatting with family across the country, sharing photos on social media, or watching favorite movies online, technology

offers endless ways for seniors to engage with the world.

Introducing seniors to online games, virtual tours, or even simple apps like digital photo frames can spark curiosity and joy. These activities not only entertain but also stimulate cognitive function and creativity.

Ultimately, the goal is to help seniors feel empowered and excited about technology, transforming it from a source of frustration into a valuable companion in their daily lives. With the right support, patience, and tools, the digital gap can be bridged, enriching the lives of older adults in meaningful ways.

Frequently Asked Questions

What are the most common technology challenges seniors face?

Seniors often struggle with small text and icons, complex interfaces, remembering passwords, and understanding new technology jargon.

How can I help a senior learn to use a smartphone?

Start with the basics like making calls and sending texts, use simple language, demonstrate each step clearly, and be patient with repetition and questions.

What are some user-friendly devices designed for seniors?

Devices like the GrandPad tablet, Jitterbug phones, and Amazon Echo with Alexa offer simplified interfaces and features tailored for seniors.

How can technology improve seniors' daily lives?

Technology can enhance communication with family, provide access to telehealth, assist with medication reminders, offer entertainment, and improve safety through emergency alert systems.

What are effective ways to teach seniors about internet safety?

Explain the importance of strong passwords, recognizing phishing scams, not sharing personal information, and using secure websites in simple, relatable terms.

Are there specific apps recommended for helping seniors stay connected and engaged?

Yes, apps like FaceTime, WhatsApp, Zoom for video calls, and games like Lumosity or BrainHQ help seniors stay socially connected and mentally active.

Additional Resources

Helping Seniors with Technology: Bridging the Digital Divide in an Aging Society

helping seniors with technology has become an increasingly important focus in today's digital age, as the global population ages and technology continues to evolve at a rapid pace. While advancements in devices, applications, and connectivity offer immense benefits, seniors often face unique challenges that can hinder their ability to engage fully with technology. This gap not only affects their access to information and services but also impacts social inclusion, health management, and overall quality of life. Addressing these issues requires a nuanced understanding of the barriers seniors face and the strategies that can effectively empower them in the digital landscape.

Understanding the Challenges Seniors Face with Technology

The digital divide experienced by older adults is multifaceted, involving physical, cognitive, and socio-economic factors. Age-related changes such as declining vision, reduced motor skills, and slower cognitive processing can make using modern devices like smartphones, tablets, or computers more difficult. Additionally, many seniors did not grow up with digital technology, creating a learning curve

that younger generations may not encounter.

A 2021 Pew Research Center study revealed that while 75% of adults aged 65 and older use the internet, only about 61% own a smartphone, compared to 90% ownership among those aged 18 to 49. This discrepancy is a clear indicator of the ongoing digital gap. Moreover, the COVID-19 pandemic underscored how critical digital literacy is, as many services—from healthcare consultations to grocery shopping—moved online, disproportionately affecting seniors who were less equipped to adapt.

Physical and Cognitive Barriers

Age-related impairments can complicate interactions with technology:

- **Vision impairments:** Small fonts, low contrast screens, and cluttered interfaces can be frustrating or inaccessible.
- **Hearing loss:** Audio cues, notifications, or voice-controlled assistants may be less effective.
- **Motor skills:** Difficulty with fine motor control can make tapping small buttons or swiping gestures challenging.
- **Cognitive load:** Complex navigation, unfamiliar terminology, or multi-step processes may overwhelm.

These challenges necessitate devices and software designed with accessibility in mind, such as adjustable font sizes, voice commands, and simplified user interfaces.

Socio-Economic and Psychological Factors

Beyond physical barriers, socio-economic status plays a significant role. Seniors on fixed incomes may find the cost of modern devices or internet subscriptions prohibitive. Furthermore, skepticism or anxiety about technology can discourage adoption. Fear of making errors, concerns about privacy, or mistrust of online security often lead to resistance.

Research indicates that social support is a critical factor in overcoming these psychological hurdles. Seniors who receive patient guidance from family members, caregivers, or community programs are more likely to develop confidence and competence in using technology.

Strategies for Helping Seniors with Technology

Effective assistance goes beyond merely providing devices. It involves education, tailored resources, and ongoing support that respects seniors' learning pace and preferences.

Designing Senior-Friendly Technology

Tech companies increasingly recognize the importance of accessible design. Features that enhance usability for older adults include:

- **Simplified interfaces:** Clear menus, minimal clutter, and large icons reduce confusion.
- **Customizable settings:** Adjustable text size, contrast, and audio levels accommodate individual needs.
- **Voice-activated controls:** Assistive technologies like Amazon Alexa or Google Assistant can

provide hands-free interaction.

- **Emergency features:** One-touch SOS buttons or fall detection add safety benefits.

Examples like the GrandPad tablet, specifically marketed to seniors, exemplify such design principles by combining intuitive hardware with supportive software.

Educational Initiatives and Training Programs

Structured learning environments are vital. Community centers, libraries, and senior organizations often offer workshops tailored to older adults, covering topics such as basic internet use, email, social media, and online safety. These sessions typically emphasize practical applications, enabling seniors to connect with loved ones, manage finances, or access telehealth services.

One model that has proven effective is peer-led training, where seniors who have mastered technology volunteer to teach their peers. This approach fosters a comfortable, judgment-free atmosphere and promotes sustained engagement.

Role of Caregivers and Family Members

Family members and caregivers are often the first line of support in helping seniors navigate technology. Patience and clear communication are essential, as older adults may require repeated explanations or hands-on demonstrations.

Furthermore, setting up devices with tailored configurations—such as pre-installed favorite apps, simplified home screens, and automatic updates—can reduce frustration. Encouraging regular practice and celebrating small milestones helps build confidence.

Technological Tools and Services Beneficial for Seniors

Certain categories of technology have shown pronounced benefits for seniors, particularly when integrated with thoughtful support.

Communication Tools

Video calling platforms like Zoom, FaceTime, and Skype have become indispensable for maintaining social connections, especially amid physical distancing measures. User-friendly apps that limit complex functionality to essential features help reduce confusion.

Health and Wellness Technologies

Telemedicine platforms allow seniors to consult healthcare providers from home, a critical advantage for those with mobility limitations. Wearable devices that monitor heart rate, sleep patterns, or activity levels also empower seniors to manage their health proactively.

Entertainment and Cognitive Engagement

Digital books, puzzles, and games designed for cognitive stimulation can support mental health. Streaming services with curated, easy-to-navigate interfaces provide access to movies, music, and educational content.

Industry Trends and Future Outlook

The market for senior-oriented technology is growing, driven by demographic shifts and increased awareness of seniors' digital needs. Innovations leveraging artificial intelligence and machine learning promise to further personalize experiences, adapting interfaces dynamically to user preferences and abilities.

Moreover, policymakers and advocacy groups are calling for increased investment in digital literacy programs and infrastructure to ensure equitable access. Public-private partnerships aimed at subsidizing internet access and devices for low-income seniors are gaining momentum.

While challenges remain, the concerted efforts of designers, educators, caregivers, and communities demonstrate a commitment to narrowing the digital divide. Helping seniors with technology is not only about access but about fostering empowerment, independence, and inclusion in a connected world.

Helping Seniors With Technology

helping seniors with technology: Tech-Savvy Seniors: Self-Help for the Digital Age Azura E. Spence, 2025-02-13 Tech-Savvy Seniors: Self-Help for the Digital Age is the essential guide for seniors who want to confidently navigate the digital world. Whether you're new to technology or looking to expand your digital skills, this book breaks everything down into easy-to-follow steps, ensuring that technology becomes an asset rather than a source of frustration. The digital age is not just for younger generations—it's for everyone. From staying in touch with loved ones to managing finances, accessing healthcare, and enjoying entertainment, technology can make life simpler and more enjoyable. This book removes the confusion and empowers seniors with the knowledge they need to embrace modern tools without fear. Technology should work for you, not against you. With clear explanations, practical tips, and real-world examples, Tech-Savvy Seniors covers everything from basic smartphone and computer skills to online security, social media, and smart home devices. You'll learn how to avoid scams, use video calls with confidence, and make technology a valuable part of daily life. What you will find in this book: Simple steps to using smartphones, tablets, and computers How to set up and navigate email, video calls, and messaging apps Social media essentials for staying connected safely Online banking, shopping, and financial security tips Smart home devices that improve safety and convenience How to recognize and avoid common internet scams The best apps for entertainment, learning, and mental stimulation Digital health tools for tracking wellness and scheduling virtual doctor visits How to manage passwords and protect personal information Troubleshooting common tech issues without frustration You don't have to be a tech expert to benefit from digital tools. Tech-Savvy Seniors makes it easy to embrace technology at your own pace and use it to enhance your independence, security, and enjoyment. The digital world

is waiting—this book will help you step into it with confidence.

helping seniors with technology: Technology for Seniors - Bridging the Digital Divide DIZZY DAVIDSON, 2025-03-28 Technology for Seniors - Bridging the Digital Divide Unlock the power of technology and embrace the digital age with Technology for Seniors - Bridging the Digital Divide, a thoughtfully crafted guide designed to empower elderly individuals with confidence, independence, and connection in the modern world. Packed with practical tips, real-life stories, engaging illustrations, and relatable examples, this book transforms technology from a daunting mystery into a tool for enhancing your daily life. Discover how technology can make your golden years even brighter, whether you're keeping in touch with loved ones, managing your finances, or exploring new hobbies from the comfort of your home. What This Book Offers: · Step-by-Step Guidance: Easy-to-follow instructions for smartphones, tablets, and computers tailored for seniors. · Confidence in Online Safety: Tips to navigate the internet securely and avoid common scams. · Stay Connected: Learn to video call, message, and share memories with friends and family anytime, anywhere. · Explore Creativity: Unleash your potential with digital photography, blogging, and crafting. · Independence Through Tech: Manage your healthcare, finances, and errands with user-friendly apps. · Health & Fitness Tools: Track your activity, join virtual classes, and explore smart home devices to stay active. · Real-Life Success Stories: Be inspired by seniors who've embraced technology to lead fuller lives. · Engaging Examples and Illustrations: Visual guides and relatable anecdotes make learning effortless. · Community Connections: Join online hobby groups, forums, and virtual volunteering opportunities. · Lifelong Learning Opportunities: Discover endless possibilities for education, hobbies, and personal growth. · Budget-Friendly Recommendations: Find affordable devices and apps designed with seniors in mind. Why You'll Love This Book · Written in easy-to-understand language that eliminates tech jargon. · Packed with practical advice and solutions to suit every senior's needs. · Inspires confidence and empowers seniors to embrace the digital age. · Encourages readers with heartfelt stories and real-world examples. · Makes technology approachable, enjoyable, and beneficial for daily life. Whether you're a technology beginner or eager to master the digital world, Technology for Seniors - Bridging the Digital Divide is your ultimate guide to harnessing the power of technology to thrive in your golden years. Your journey into the digital era begins here! GET YOUR COPY TODAY!

helping seniors with technology: The Senior Sleuth's Guide to Technology for Seniors David Peterka, 2009-12 The Senior Sleuth's Guide to Technology for Seniors provides an overview of products that help make senior citizens' lives more graceful, independent, invigorating and fun. In this book, the Senior Sleuth will investigate computers, the Internet, and modern technologies related to health and medication management, independent living, communication, travel and transportation, and home entertainment. This lighthearted reference book provides both seniors and their caregivers with a comprehensive look at the types of technologies being produced for their specific needs.

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The easiest way to ensure your personal data remains private and secure How AI can assist with memory exercises and cognitive training The secrets to troubleshooting AI devices without needing professional help Beginner-friendly resources to deepen your understanding of AI How AI is transforming communication and bringing people together Ways to use AI for effective daily schedule management and reminders How to discuss AI with family and explore its uses together Some engaging activities that combine AI learning with fun and creativity ...and much, much more! You might be thinking, Am I too old to learn about AI? The truth is, it's never too late to embrace new technology. Our book breaks down complex ideas into easy-to-understand language, ensuring that anyone, regardless of their tech background, can grasp the concepts of AI. I don't trust these devices with my personal information. We understand your concerns. That's why we've included straightforward guides to help you manage privacy and security effectively, so you can enjoy AI without worry. Whether you've tried to learn technology before and found it overwhelming, or you're skeptical about its relevance to your life, this book offers a fresh perspective that will change how you view AI forever. If you're ready to empower yourself and unlock the potential of AI in your daily life, scroll up and click Add to Cart now!

helping seniors with technology: *Tech Savvy Seniors: A Comprehensive Guide To Navigating Technology* Patrick Parker, In today's fast-paced and ever-evolving world, technology plays a crucial role in our daily lives. From staying connected with loved ones to accessing important information, technology has become an integral part of our society. For retirees, seniors, and aging adults, understanding the importance of technology is essential in order to stay relevant and engaged in today's world. I have aging parents and I wrote this with them in mind.

helping seniors with technology: *Smart Technology for Aging, Disability, and Independence* William C. Mann, 2005-07-08 Independent living with smart technologies Smart Technology for Aging, Disability, and Independence: The State of the Science brings together current research and technological developments from engineering, computer science, and the rehabilitation sciences, detailing how its applications can promote continuing independence for older persons and those with disabilities. Leading experts from multiple disciplines worldwide have contributed to this volume, making it the definitive resource. The text begins with a thorough introduction that presents important concepts, defines key terms, and identifies demographic trends at work. Using detailed product descriptions, photographs and illustrations, and case studies, subsequent chapters discuss cutting-edge technologies, including: * Wearable systems * Human-computer interactions * Assisted vision and hearing * Smart wheelchairs * Handheld devices and smart phones * Visual sensors * Home automation * Assistive robotics * In-room monitoring systems * Telehealth After considering specific high-technology solutions, the text examines recent trends in other critical areas, such as basic assistive technologies, driving, transportation and community mobility, home modifications and design, and changing standards of elder care. Students and professionals in the rehabilitation sciences, health care providers, researchers in computer science and engineering, and non-expert readers will all appreciate this text's thorough coverage and clear presentation of the state of the science.

helping seniors with technology: *Artificial Intelligence in Healthcare for the Elderly* Sandeep Sharma, Preeti Nagrath, Bhawna Singla, Joel J. P. C. Rodrigues, 2025-08-26 Artificial Intelligence in Healthcare for the Elderly provides valuable insights into how artificial intelligence can transform healthcare through personalized monitoring, ethical considerations, and real-world applications. Artificial intelligence has the potential to revolutionize healthcare for the elderly by providing efficient and personalized monitoring and care. Though this technology has the potential to revolutionize care, there is currently little information on the potential of this technology in elderly healthcare. Artificial Intelligence in Healthcare for the Elderly explores AI algorithms that can transform health monitoring for older adults by analyzing data from wearable devices, electronic health records, and other sources that provide real-time data analysis, detect early warning signs of diseases, and offer personalized treatment. This book addresses the critical ethical, societal, and practical aspects of elderly care that are often overlooked with insights from various disciplines,

including healthcare, technology, ethics, and sociology, to offer a holistic perspective on AI's impact on aging. *Artificial Intelligence in Healthcare for the Elderly* offers an all-encompassing perspective on AI technologies employed in elderly healthcare by examining the specific types of technology used and delineating its role in elderly healthcare, drawing insights from existing research and case studies.

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helping seniors with technology: Senior Services Today Ashley Brooks, 2021-05-06 Senior citizens (frequently referred to by the more inclusive term "older adults") are one of the largest and fastest growing demographics in the world. Public libraries have a duty to serve these individuals with the same level of care and opportunity for participation that is afforded to younger generations. This book explores older adults' values and needs and describes the many ways libraries can serve them in effective ways. *Senior Services Today: A Practical Guide for Librarians* is a comprehensive guide to library services for this important community. Chapters cover these critical areas: Engaging Older Adults in Library Programs and Services Understanding Demographic Differences Marketing to Older Adults: Strategies Programming Ideas for Older Adults in the Modern Age Enhancing Technology Accessibility for Older Adults Community Outreach: Serving Outside the Library Specialty Collections Items Continuing the Library's Relationship with an Aging Population While many times libraries tend to allocate budget and funding to flashier, brighter programs aimed at a more youthful audiences, this book shows how and why that same enthusiasm should be applied to crafting an engaging senior services plan. Gone are the conventional days of bingo and knitting circles; while those programs certainly have their place, this book aims to show that seniors also crave fun experiences alongside opportunities to make their own lives easier and more stress free-- and to illuminate how libraries can strike this balance by offering an enriching senior services roster.

helping seniors with technology: *Aging in the Twenty-First Century* Dr. William Weddington, 2024-09-28 Are you a senior, 65 years or older? Are you a family member of a senior? Do you provide care for a senior? Is your healthcare plan meeting your needs? The needs of the senior in your family? Is your senior family member unhoused? Are you without a life plan? A medical directive? Is your retirement plan failing you? If you answered "Yes" to any of these questions, this book is for you. Every day in our nation 12,000 people become 65 years old. Ten thousand seniors per day retire. Only one third of our senior population have a life plan or medical directive. Half of the homeless people in the United States are over 50 years old. Every night in this country significant numbers of seniors go to sleep food deprived. Elder abuse has been identified as the crime of the

twenty-first century. This book addresses these issues and more. It offers the reader information and challenges each of us to actively seek solutions for our aged population. Today it is about the senior – tomorrow it may be about you. The problems that seniors face affect us all.

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helping seniors with technology: Education and quality of life of senior citizens Cabedo Manuel, Salvador, Escuder Mollón, Pilar, 2014-10-20 En la presente guía se ofrece, en primer lugar, los fundamentos sobre los que debe construirse cualquier acción educativa dirigida a estudiantes mayores, así como los conceptos básicos sobre calidad de vida relacionada con las personas mayores y las necesidades y riesgos específicos de las personas mayores, así como las oportunidades y

potencialidades existentes. El incremento de la esperanza de vida y de la salud logra que los mayores sean un grupo cada vez más significativo en nuestra sociedad europea; actualmente no solo viven más años y son más activos sino también poseen mayor nivel de formación e inquietudes.

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- Succeed at eating right and staying fit with help from new technologies that are fun and easy
- Sleep better and manage stress more effectively
- Manage chronic conditions and save money on medications and costly medical procedures
- Transform your smartphone into a powerful glucose monitor, blood pressure monitor, and medication usage tracker for asthma and COPD management
- Track, protect, and improve your heart health
- Use in-home technology to stay safer and prepare for emergencies
- Get valuable advice and support from online communities
- Choose online health resources you can trust
- And much more

This book is the recipient of a 2017 National Mature Media Award. These awards recognize the nation's finest marketing, communications, educational materials, and programs designed and produced for older adults.

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