



# DRIVING TRANSITIONS EDUCATION



## TOOLS, SCRIPTS, AND PRACTICE EXERCISES

*to prepare professionals for effective conversations about driver safety and community mobility issues with older adults, their families, and concerned community members*





## **Driving Transitions Education: Tools, Scripts, and Practice Exercises**

**Purpose:** to provide professionals who work directly with older adults, their families, and concerned community members with the tools, scripts, and practice exercises to develop the necessary skills required for effective conversations about driver safety. Examples of these engaged professionals could include social workers, senior center staff members, area agency on aging staff, case managers, and healthcare professionals.

**Objective:** to give these professionals step-by-step procedures for responding to inquiries about older driver safety, preparing the older adult and his or her family for the decisions they need to make, and discussing transitions from driving to alternatives that facilitate continued mobility and community involvement.

**Goal:** to enable these professionals to feel comfortable and competent when talking to older drivers, their partners, and families about issues related to driver safety.



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## Introduction

Welcome to the *Driving Transitions Education* module and scripts. The American Society on Aging (ASA) and the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration developed this module to educate professionals to assist older adults, their families, and concerned community members who are dealing with driver safety and community mobility issues. Examples of these professionals could include social workers, senior center staff members, area agency on aging staff, case managers, and healthcare professionals.

These professionals will become travel counselors — helping people to arrive safely at their destinations — for informal caregivers of older adults. As such, one of their chief roles will be to provide local resources and contacts for transportation options. They will need to research and prepare a list of local driving transition resources to share with their audience.

The module will help professionals gain a better understanding of older driver issues, driver assessment and rehabilitation, vehicle modification, and community mobility alternatives, as well as how to speak confidently about driving safety. It can be used as the basis for a presentation by a professional to an audience of other professionals, community members, or concerned family members and caregivers. It is not designed to be used directly for one-on-one counseling with other adults or their families.

The *Driving Transitions Education* module includes suggested scripts for interacting with family members in an informative and productive way, and offers exercises for further skill-building. It can be used in conjunction with the “DriveWell: Promoting Older Driver Safety and Mobility in Your Community” toolkit (DriveWell), developed by NHTSA and ASA. The DriveWell toolkit is available at no charge to professionals in the aging field. (To download free DriveWell resources, visit: [www.asaging.org/drivewell](http://www.asaging.org/drivewell).) The DriveWell toolkit has additional information for professionals on issues discussed in this brief module. However, this module is a stand-alone publication and can be used to immediately begin discussions with families and concerned caregivers of older adults.

The professional can use this module to make public presentations, to respond to telephone inquiries, or to initiate discussions when driving might be a concern.

## **Section I: Preparation for the Professional: What You Need to Do**

This section will prepare the professional to talk to families of older adults and concerned community members. Before you talk to the public, you will need to:

- Review this training module;
- Research local resources and fill in the “Local Resources List” (p. 5) so you can keep the information at your fingertips to answer queries or make handouts;
- Go through the Practice Exercises section with a coworker;
- Print out the handouts included at the end of the module, or create your own handouts from material contained in this document; and
- Read other resources for professionals (DriveWell and other toolkits; see the “Resources for Professionals” list at the end of this document).

### **How to Use This Module**

This first section of the *Driving Transitions Education* module, “Preparation for the Professional: What You Need to Do,” gives the user an understanding of the issues surrounding older driver safety and the skills to communicate successfully about this highly emotional topic. The section outlines local resources you will need to research, provides tips on how to find them, includes suggestions on how to begin discussions with the public, and presents the key messages you need to cover. Researching local resources is probably the most important task, as this will provide essential information for your audience. The “Local Resources List” worksheet on page 5 provides a place to write down this information.

The second section of the *Driving Transitions Education* module, “Tools and Scripts: What You Need to Say,” provides a user-friendly template for presentations to families of older adults and concerned community members who need information about older driver safety or community mobility. The section includes scripts for the professional to use in talking with families and older adults about driving transitions. Feel free to put the information into your own words, and tailor it to your audience. Some of the scripted information could be printed out as handouts for your audience, or you may use the handouts in the Resources section or create your own handouts.

The third section of the *Driving Transitions Education* module, “Practice Exercises for Conversations About Older Driver Safety,” provides skill-training in a question-and-answer format. You should practice responses with a coworker, and seek his or her feedback on how well you covered the material. This will help hone your responses to typical inquiries and build confidence about interacting with audiences or telephone callers.

A final “Resources for Professionals” section includes publications and Web sites, references, and handouts.

Start by reading through this module, following the tips for researching local resources to share with your audience, and doing the practice exercises. You also could consult standard references on older driver safety and community mobility, such as the DriveWell toolkit.

## **Key Messages**

Below are key messages you will need to emphasize when talking to older adults and caregivers.

- The older adult should be involved in the discussion about his or her driving.
- Focus on the older driver's functional capacity, not age or disease.
- Age does not make someone a bad driver.
- Driving cessation is not necessarily the immediate goal.
- Focus on ways to ensure safety and driver remediation, not on giving up the keys.
- Driving abilities often decline gradually, rather than abruptly, thus providing the opportunity for interventions and modifications to maintain safe driving.
- A car can be adapted to better fit an older driver. (See handout on p. 45.)
- Public safety is paramount.
- Driving is a privilege, not a right.
- Most drivers 70 or older will outlive their ability to drive safely by an estimated 7 to 10 years.
- The earlier the family begins the conversation about how to get around without driving, the better.
- Alternatives to driving are available in many communities, although not all of them are "senior friendly." (Senior-friendly services are those that are available, acceptable, accessible, adaptable, and affordable for older people, according to the Beverly Foundation.)
- There may be local resources and professionals available to assist families and older drivers.

### **Tips for Professionals:**

- When working with older adults and their families, you will need to be knowledgeable and sensitive.
  - Remember to address their concerns, be a good listener, be positive and encouraging, and acknowledge the difficulty of the situation.
  - Use statements that show you recognize their concerns, such as: "*You obviously care a great deal about options for your father to continue to drive safely.*"
- Use large-type fonts in your handouts and presentations.

## **Information You Will Need to Research on Local Resources**

Resources for older driver safety and transportation alternatives vary widely from community to community. In addition, licensing regulations for older drivers and requirements for physicians to identify unsafe drivers to authorities (known as "reporting requirements") are different from State to State. So you will first need to research current information about older drivers that is applicable to your locality.

This information will enable you to better inform families and others concerned about an older driver. This document provides suggestions on where you can look for local information

and includes a table (page 5) for recording the information you find. Fill in the table and keep it handy to answer any queries you may get in the future.

Read through the entire module before you begin your research, so you will better understand the importance of each of these resources. We will explain them in Section II.

**Services.** For driver safety and transportation services for older adults, first consult your local Yellow Pages and 2-1-1 directory/social services directories ([www.211.org/](http://www.211.org/)) in the areas that have them. Also check with the Information & Assistance services provided by your local area agency on aging. (To find an area agency on aging, contact the nationwide Eldercare Locator by calling 800-677-1116, or at [www.eldercare.gov](http://www.eldercare.gov)). Local transit (bus and subway) and special transportation (paratransit) companies can provide information on public transportation services related to older adults.

**Driver Assessment.** For driver assessment and rehabilitation services, check with the Association for Driver Rehabilitation Specialists ([www.driver-ed.org/](http://www.driver-ed.org/)), or American Occupational Therapy Association ([www.aota.org/olderdriver](http://www.aota.org/olderdriver)). (Phones numbers are on p. 5.)

**Driving Regulations.** You need to have some knowledge about local driving regulations, special requirements for older drivers (such as more frequent re-testing), State insurance requirements, and conditions for obtaining restricted licenses. Check with the local motor vehicle department or the American Association of Motor Vehicle Administrators ([www.aamva.org/](http://www.aamva.org/)). Ask if driving record abstracts in your area are public records or can be made available to family members. Find out when a licensing re-examination is necessary, and if an exam can be requested. The AAA and the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety have information on senior licensing laws (visit [www.aaaexchange.com/Main/#](http://www.aaaexchange.com/Main/#) and click on “State Laws,” and “Licensing Renewal Provisions for Older Drivers,” [www.iihs.org/laws/OlderDrivers.aspx](http://www.iihs.org/laws/OlderDrivers.aspx)). NHTSA and the American Medical Association’s Physician’s Guide to Assessing and Counseling Older Drivers has a chapter on “State Licensing Requirements and Reporting Laws” ([www.ama-assn.org/ama1/pub/upload/mm/433/chapter8.pdf](http://www.ama-assn.org/ama1/pub/upload/mm/433/chapter8.pdf)). You could also talk to State or local police, or the sheriff’s department.

**Physician Reporting.** It will be helpful to understand the responsibilities of physicians, medical boards, and others in reporting driving limitations to the motor vehicles department. (See the American Medical Association and NHTSA’s *Physician’s Guide to Assessing and Counseling Older Drivers*, [www.ama-assn.org/ama/pub/category/10791.html](http://www.ama-assn.org/ama/pub/category/10791.html).) Find out if physicians in your area must report a diagnosis of Alzheimer’s disease to the motor vehicle administration. Physician reporting is mandatory in some States and voluntary in others. A local Alzheimer’s Association chapter ([www.alz.org/apps/findus.asp](http://www.alz.org/apps/findus.asp)) may be able to provide local information and resources on drivers in the early stages of dementia.

**Local Resources.** The following Local Resources List will help prepare you to talk to caregivers and families of older adults about driving. There is space to make notations of local contacts that they can call for assistance. You can call the national office and inquire about a local affiliate, or you can check your Yellow Pages or “2-1-1” social services directories ([www.211.org/](http://www.211.org/)) in the areas that have them. Once you fill in the local contact information, you can keep this Local Resources List by your telephone to quickly provide information and assistance. Or you can create a handout from it.

If you do not have access to a computer, your local library may provide computers for public access to the Internet.

## Local Resources List

Find the local affiliate for these entities:	Local Contact
<p><b>Identify driver safety courses and services that they offer:</b>  <i>Resources:</i>                      AARP, 888-687-2277, <a href="http://www.aarp.org">www.aarp.org</a>                      American Automobile Association, 800-222-4357,  <a href="http://www.aaamidatlantic.com/">www.aaamidatlantic.com/</a>                      AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety, 202-638-5944,  <a href="http://www.aaafoundation.org/">www.aaafoundation.org/</a>                      National Safety Council, 630-285-1121, <a href="http://www.nsc.org/">www.nsc.org/</a>                      Local driving schools (Yellow Pages)</p>	
<p><b>Identify local driver assessment programs, driving rehabilitation specialists, and services that they offer:</b>  <i>Resources:</i>                      Certified driving rehabilitation specialists (Association for Driver Rehabilitation Specialists, 877-529-1830, <a href="http://www.driver-ed.org/">www.driver-ed.org/</a>)                      Occupational therapists (American Occupational Therapy Association, 301-652-2682, <a href="http://www.aota.org/olderdriver">www.aota.org/olderdriver</a>)                      Hospital rehabilitation professionals (contact local hospitals)</p>	
<p><b>Research local transportation options:</b>  <i>Resources:</i>                      Bus/subway (Yellow Pages)                      Taxi (Yellow Pages)                      Paratransit (Yellow Pages)                      State transportation department (<a href="http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/webstate.htm">www.fhwa.dot.gov/webstate.htm</a>)</p>	
<p><b>Find community organizations that offer transportation assistance:</b>  <i>Resources:</i>                      Senior centers (Yellow Pages)                      Red Cross (Yellow Pages)                      Volunteer organizations (Yellow Pages)</p>	
<p><b>Review local driving regulations, age-based licensing, reporting laws, special insurance requirements:</b>  <i>Resources:</i>                      Alzheimer’s Association chapters, 312-335-8700,  <a href="http://www.alz.org/apps/findus.asp">www.alz.org/apps/findus.asp</a>                      motor vehicles department (Yellow Pages or contact American Association of Motor Vehicle Administrators, 703-522-4200,  <a href="http://www.aamva.org/">www.aamva.org/</a>; or Yellow Pages                      AAA (auto), 800-222-4357, <a href="http://www.aaaexchange.com/Main/#">www.aaaexchange.com/Main/#</a>                      American Medical Association, 800-621-8335, <a href="http://www.ama-assn.org/ama1/pub/upload/mm/433/chapter8.pdf">www.ama-assn.org/ama1/pub/upload/mm/433/chapter8.pdf</a>                      Insurance Institute for Highway Safety, 703-247-1500,  <a href="http://www.iihs.org/laws/OlderDrivers.aspx">www.iihs.org/laws/OlderDrivers.aspx</a>                      Medical board (Yellow Pages or go to <a href="http://www.ama-assn.org/ama1/pub/upload/mm/40/lic09-app_a-b.pdf">www.ama-assn.org/ama1/pub/upload/mm/40/lic09-app_a-b.pdf</a>)</p>	
<p><b>Identify other resources:</b>                      Alzheimer’s Association chapters, 312-335-8700,  <a href="http://www.alz.org/apps/findus.asp">www.alz.org/apps/findus.asp</a>                      Addiction/mental health services (Yellow Pages)                      Arthritis, diabetes, other organizations (Yellow Pages)</p>	

Note: The Administration on Aging has a useful drop-in-the-facts guide with room for your notations about local resources. (To view “Let’s Go! A Directory of Transportation Options in [your community],” visit: [www.aoa.gov/prof/transportation/media/CommunityTransportationTemplate/Drop-in-the-Facts%20Guide.pdf](http://www.aoa.gov/prof/transportation/media/CommunityTransportationTemplate/Drop-in-the-Facts%20Guide.pdf).)

There also is a place in the script in Section II (see “Module 6—Understanding Licensing in Your State,” p. 17) to write down the information on licensing in your State, so you can present it to your audience when you are discussing that topic.

### **Checklist for Information You Will Need to Research**

- Read “Section I: Preparation for the Professional.”
- Understand and focus on the “Key Messages.”
- Research local older driver information and fill out the local contact information on the “Local Resources List” and keep it for future reference.
- Find out if there are any special requirements for older drivers in your area. Inquire about the conditions for restricted licenses. Research when licensing re-examinations are required or can be requested. Find out if a family can access driving record abstracts of an older driver.
- Research older driver assessment and re-training programs.
- Research community mobility options for older adults.
- Research other local resources to assist older drivers, such as faith-based or hospital-based transportation services.

### **How to Begin Discussions With the Public**

One good way to begin a discussion about older drivers and community mobility options is to talk about the statistics on older drivers. Section II of the document contains data to provide to your audience. Personal stories or experiences also can help communicate your message in your own words. Be sure to respect confidentiality and do not disclose names or personal identifiers of people in the community whom your audience may know directly or indirectly.

When talking about driver safety and driving transitions with the public, you can briefly go over the significance of driving for an older adult; typical concerns raised by caregivers; the aging process and how it affects driving; and how to observe and assess the older driver. You then will describe how family members should talk with the older driver, and how they can locate and utilize other professionals to help with evaluation and re-training where appropriate. You also will indicate where they can find local resources for vehicle modification or driver rehabilitation, and how they can locate alternative transportation.

**Tip:** Acknowledge that family and caregivers are concerned, yet may be reluctant to act.

It is important to understand that many older drivers and their families do not want to talk about driving issues. A family’s fear of the older driver’s response often becomes a major barrier to talking about driving. It may be helpful to acknowledge that the family or caregiver is concerned about the safety of the older driver, yet may be reluctant to act or may be uncertain about what to do. Explain that you will outline concrete steps for talking with an older driver.

## **Checklist for Discussions With the Public**

Be sure you are ready to address this material:

- Typical concerns raised by caregivers (Module 1).
- Statistics on older drivers (Module 2).
- Personal stories or experiences you can share.
- Significance of driving for older adults (Module 3).
- The aging process and how it affects driving (Module 4).
- Observing and assessing older drivers (Module 7).
- How family members should talk to an older driver (Module 9).
- Finding professionals to help with evaluation and re-training (Module 12).
- Local resources on vehicle modification, driver rehabilitation (Yellow Pages).
- Local alternative transportation options (Yellow Pages).

The next section contains scripts for interacting with caregivers and older adults. A later section will provide “Practice Exercises” to help you get ready to interact with older adults, their families, and concerned community members.

Read the rest of this document before completing the checklists or doing your local research.

## Section II: Tools and Scripts: What You Need to Say

### Tips:

- (1) Scripts that you read to your audience appear in *italics* and are preceded by the word **SCRIPT**.
- (2) Present the information in the scripts, or use them as an outline of what you want to say. Feel free to put the information into your own words.
- (3) Tailor the message to your audience, speaking at a level that your listeners can understand.
- (4) Jot down some reminders of personal stories and experiences you've had or heard about that you can use to make your point and help the audience identify with what you are talking about. (Be sure to respect confidentiality by not mentioning specifics that might identify a particular individual or family.)
- (5) Before you do a presentation, be sure you have reviewed the "Practice Exercises" in the third section.
- (6) Consider distributing handouts contained at the end of this module or drawn from the Scripts and Tools throughout this document.
- (7) Leave plenty of time for questions and discussion.

**Introduce yourself:** Explain why you are qualified to talk about this topic. If you have personal experience working with a family member, briefly talk about that. This will help give you more credibility with your audience.

**Introduce the topic:** Tell the audience/caller that you will discuss the significance of driving for older adults and provide tips on how to observe an older driver's abilities, including signs and indicators of driving problems. You also will address how to talk about driving with an older adult and how to find solutions to driving and community mobility problems. Here is what you can say to your audience:

**SCRIPT:** *To help you understand the issues of older drivers and community mobility, I will be talking to you today about the following:*

- *Common concerns about driving and aging, the statistics on older drivers, and why we are concerned about this topic.*
- *The need to involve an older driver in the decision-making process. This is so important that I can't emphasize it enough. Your attitude and the way you approach this topic can make a huge difference in how your message is received by an older adult.*
- *The significance of driving and owning a car to older adults (and everyone).*
- *How to recognize the signs and symptoms of declining driving ability.*
- *The family's role, including assessing the older driver's capabilities, preparing for and having a conversation with an older driver, coping with negative driver reactions to the conversation, and developing a plan for alternative transportation when driving cannot be continued.*
- *When to seek professional evaluation and driver rehabilitation.*
- *Solutions, including vehicle modification, driver rehabilitation, retirement from driving, alternative transportation, and driver restrictions.*

**Module 1: Typical Inquiries About Older Drivers** Presentation time: 2 min.  
**Audience for this module:** professionals, informal caregivers, concerned members of the community.

**Learning Objective:**

Learn the most common areas of concern to families about an older driver.

**Tip:** Think through your responses to the scenarios below as you work through this toolkit. Present the script below to your audience to show them the range of concerns about older drivers. (You can use the handouts on pp. 42-44.)

**SCRIPT:** *The most common areas of concern about an older driver's driving behavior are:*

- *slow reaction time,*
- *driving too slowly,*
- *not paying attention to other drivers and pedestrians,*
- *recent crashes, and/or*
- *forgetting where you are or were going.*

*But older drivers and their families should not wait until these events occur to begin thinking about driving safety.*

*Here are some typical concerns expressed by family members:*

- *"My father drives too slowly and sometimes crosses the yellow line. Then he denies he did anything wrong."*
- *"My mother has had several car accidents and I'm very concerned."*
- *"He is 90. Shouldn't he stop driving?"*
- *"She went to her hairdresser and got lost on the way home."*
- *"My spouse has Alzheimer's. His license is revoked, but he continues to drive. He steals the keys from my purse."*

*Do any of these situations sound familiar to you?*

## **Module 2: Statistics About Older Drivers**      **Presentation time:** 3 min.

**Audience for this module:** professionals, informal caregivers, concerned members of the community.

### **Learning Objectives:**

- (1) Understand the statistics about older drivers.
- (2) Learn about the most common errors made by older drivers.

**Tip:** This discussion will help convince your audience that driver safety is a priority issue.

**SCRIPT:**      *In general, older adults are among the safest drivers on the road. They are involved in fewer crashes, are more likely to wear seatbelts, and have the lowest incidence of alcohol-related crashes. However, older adults are more likely to be injured or die following a crash than younger people.*

*Some older drivers are able to continue driving safely for as long as they live. Decisions about driving should be based on capability, not age. However, statistics show that most drivers will outlive their ability to drive by about 7 to 10 years. That is why it is important to be prepared to talk to older drivers and plan for a time when they can no longer drive. Families need to begin the conversation early, while the older driver still has full capacity to comprehend and make good choices.*

*The most common errors made by older drivers involve failure to yield right of way or to see oncoming traffic; and improper turns or lane changes. Left turns at intersections are the most frequent place where crashes involving older drivers occur.*

*While many drivers moderate their driving on their own — for example by not driving at night or in the rain — that may not be enough to avoid having a crash. In fact, most of the driving fatalities among older adults occur in the daytime, on weekdays, and involve other vehicles. And, because of their increasing frailty, older drivers are more likely to be injured in a crash than younger drivers.*

*Here are some basic facts about older drivers:*

- **Population.** *The number of people 65 and older is estimated to more than double by the middle of the century to 80 million seniors. By 2020, there will be an estimated 40 million licensed drivers 65 and older.*
- **Miles Driven.** *Not only will there be more drivers, but these drivers will travel more miles each year than previous generations, and will continue driving at older ages.*
- **Injuries.** *Nearly 200,000 older people are injured as a result of crashes each year. Older drivers, especially those over 75, are more likely than younger drivers over 20 to suffer injuries or die as a result of vehicle crashes because of their increased susceptibility to injury, particularly chest injuries, and medical complications.*
- **Fatalities.** *In 2007, more than 5,900 adults 65 and older died in motor-vehicle crashes. Older adults comprise 14 percent of all traffic fatalities. The increased likelihood of heart disease or other illnesses, and having more fragile bones, may precipitate injury or death in a crash.*

- **Per-Mile Incidents.** *Older drivers have low rates of police-reported crashes per capita, but they tend to drive fewer miles than younger people. However, they tend to drive in places where more crashes are likely – surface streets as opposed to highways. Per mile driven, the crash rates start to rise at age 75 for drivers and increase sharply after age 80.*

**Module 3: Understanding the Importance of Driving** Presentation time: 3 min.  
**Audience for this module:** professionals, informal caregivers, concerned members of the community.

**Learning Objective:**

Be able to communicate the importance of driving for older adults.

**Tip:** Think about what you would do if you had to stop driving immediately. Ask your audience to take out their keys, set them on the table, and imagine that they would never be able to drive again. Ask how they would feel. Then present the following script to your audience.

**SCRIPT:** *One needs to look no further than the nearest parking lot to understand the importance of driving in our society. Driving is part of our self-identity, who we are and what we can do. It helps us maintain connections with people, places, communities, and activities. It is essential to understand the importance of driving when you think about older adults and their ability to drive.*

*Many older adults rely on their vehicle for transportation because they have left urban areas or aged in rural areas that lack public transportation. In addition, one's sense of self-identity and independence are closely tied to the freedom to drive. Many older adults simply prefer to use their own cars to get where they want to go.*

*In many areas, there are few alternatives to driving. For example, public transportation may not be available in rural or even outlying suburban areas; paratransit and volunteer rides may have waiting lists or be geographically unavailable; advance registration requirements for these services may discourage their use; and family members may not live nearby to drive the person.*

**Where We Go.** *Driving means mobility, dignity, freedom, independence, and access. It allows us to run errands, shop, go to doctors, visit friends, work, volunteer, and attend religious activities.*

**Why We Drive.** *Driving allows us to feel in control. Other factors tied into driving include the pride of owning a car and the convenience of going where you want to when you want to.*

**Sense of Loss.** *Transitioning from driving is a huge loss to older adults and they will need time to grieve. Consider the emotional and physical needs of an older adult who can no longer drive. Many older adults who stop driving become isolated, lose reliable access to health care, or undergo a decline in their physical and mental status. Many older adults live in rural or suburban areas that are without public transportation.*

**Driving As a Privilege.** *Unfortunately, the importance of driving in our society tends to create an impression that driving is a "right" rather than the privilege that it is. The licensing process is itself an indicator that we are permitted to drive only because we have been judged a safe and knowledgeable driver. This is an important message to gently relay to an older driver who is driving unsafely.*

## **Module 4: Understanding Driving Skills**

**Presentation time:** 3 min.

**Audience for this module:** professionals, informal caregivers, concerned members of the community.

### **Learning Objectives:**

- (1) Understand the physical and mental complexity of driving.
- (2) Learn how the aging process can affect driving skills.
- (3) Identify conditions that require new driving skills or refresher training.

### **Key Points to Communicate**

- Driving is a complicated task.
- There are natural declines as we age in vision, hearing, strength, flexibility, and reflexes that can affect driving. Sometimes there are cognitive changes, too.
- Some medications can affect driving.
- Chronic conditions such as arthritis can affect a person's ability to drive.
- Road conditions have become more challenging.

**Tip:** Because driving is something we learned many years ago, it seems like a simple task. Consider for yourself the complexity of driving and then the various physiological conditions that make it more demanding for an older adult. You can read the following script to your audience. (You can use the handouts on pp. 42-44.)

**SCRIPT:** *Here are some points to consider about the impact of the natural aging process on driving skills, reaction time, and physical and cognitive abilities:*

1. **What It Takes to Drive.** *Driving is a complicated task that involves multiple skills. Safe driving requires good vision, cognition (which includes the ability to recognize, remember, decide, and react), and the physical ability (that is, strength, flexibility, and coordination) to control the vehicle. Problems with daily living activities often affect driving as well. Daily living activities include the ability to move without assistance from a seated to standing position (strength and flexibility), eat and dress (coordination and flexibility), carry groceries (strength), and plan (cognition).*
2. **Impact of the Aging Process.** *The aging process includes natural declines in vision, hearing, strength, flexibility, and reflexes. These changes can affect driving in the area of sensory and motor skills, and cognitive abilities. Taking multiple prescriptions can increase the likelihood of poor driving. Chronic conditions that can affect driving include osteoporosis (sitting upright), arthritis (hand strength), peripheral vascular disease (pedal use), and dementia (judgment, memory, decision making, and many other skills). There are many other conditions that can affect driving. Are any of these factors a concern with an older driver you know?*
3. **Medications.** *Some medications interfere with the ability to drive safely by making the person less alert. Medications that can make driving less safe include those used to treat allergies, asthma, anxiety, depression, high blood pressure, or pain.*

**4. Driving Conditions.** *Road conditions have changed since the older generation began driving. There is more traffic congestion; individuals tend to drive more miles and for longer periods of time than in the past; and people drive faster and more aggressively. Pointing out these changes to the older driver can be an easy way to jump-start a conversation about his or her own driving concerns.*

*The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration has a series of brochures on how medical conditions affect driving among older adults. They are online at [www.nhtsa.dot.gov](http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov); search for “Driving when you have...”.*

## Module 5: Warning Signs and Dangerous Coping Mechanisms

Presentation time: 3 min.

**Audience for this module:** professionals, informal caregivers, concerned members of the community.

### **Learning Objectives:**

- (1) Learn about warning signs of poor driving.
- (2) Understand that copiloting is a dangerous and unacceptable practice.
- (3) Learn questions for the family to ask the older driver about how they feel about the older person's driving.

**Tip:** Judgments about dangerous driving should not be based on a single warning sign, but should consider a pattern of warning signs or the degree of danger that a particular warning sign poses to the community. Read the script below to your audience.

**SCRIPT:** *Now I will highlight just a few of the warning signs and dangerous driver coping mechanisms that signal the need to have the older driver assessed by a professional.*

**1. Warning Signs.** *Some of the warning signs of unsafe driving include:*

- *discomfort or lack of confidence about driving,*
- *signaling incorrectly or not at all,*
- *confusing the brake and gas pedals,*
- *being unable to anticipate hazards,*
- *having "near misses,"*
- *trouble navigating turns,*
- *hitting curbs,*
- *missing stop signs and lights,*
- *failing to notice important activity on the side of the road,*
- *having delayed responses,*
- *traveling in the wrong lane,*
- *being confused at exits,*
- *being easily distracted,*
- *getting lost in familiar places,*
- *returning from a routine drive much later than usual,*
- *being frequently honked at by others,*
- *having dents and scratches on the car, or*
- *having more than two traffic tickets, warnings, crashes, or close calls in the last two years.*

*This is by no means a complete list. If the older driver has any warning signs, it is time to think about intervening, not just for the driver's safety, but also for the safety of others.*

*However, a decision about driving involves looking at multiple behaviors and the degree of danger that a particular warning sign poses to the community.*

*You can also ask the drivers if they occasionally:*

- *Feel uncomfortable or overwhelmed about driving.*
- *Feel that cars come out of nowhere.*
- *Find that other drivers are frequently honking at them.*
- *Feel sleepy or less alert when they drive.*
- *Thinks traffic is unexpectedly speeding by them.*

2. **Dangerous Coping Mechanisms.** *Two dangerous coping mechanisms related to unsafe driving are:*

- *Driving too slowly, or too fast. Driving too slowly may indicate that a person is compensating for their reduced reaction time. Driving too fast may be due to their fear of being perceived as driving too slowly — they may drive faster to avoid being noticed for driving too slowly. Or they may not be aware that they are driving fast.*
- *Using a “copilot.” Some older couples rely on “copiloting” — which occurs when one person steers and the other person instructs the “driver” what to do when the driver is unable to respond in an unexpected situation. This is not a case of “two heads are better than one.” **Anyone who cannot drive without a copilot should not be driving.***

## Module 6: Understanding Licensing In Your State

Presentation time: 1 min.

**Audience for this module:** professionals, informal caregivers, concerned members of the community.

### **Learning Objectives:**

- (1) Explain licensing procedures in your local area.
- (2) Teach your audience about physician reporting laws.

**Tip:** Before you begin, learn about local licensing procedures and fill in the blanks below, so you can present this information to your audience. (For links to State licensing information, see “Senior Licensing Laws” (online at [www.aaaexchange.com/Main/](http://www.aaaexchange.com/Main/)) or chapter 8 of *Physicians Guide to Assessing Counseling and Older Drivers* (online at [www.nhtsa.dot.gov/people/injury/olddrive/OlderDriversBook/pages/Chapter8.html](http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov/people/injury/olddrive/OlderDriversBook/pages/Chapter8.html)). Check for updated information every six months.)

Licensing decisions and policies are made by each state and vary from area to area.

In \_\_\_\_\_ (your locality or State), the licensing and renewal process for older adults requires \_\_\_\_\_ (list any special requirements for older adults, such as more frequent testing, special vision tests, etc.). A licensing re-examination can be requested when \_\_\_\_\_ (list circumstances under which the motor vehicle administration will re-test drivers even when their license is not up for renewal).

The \_\_\_\_\_ (proper name of the motor vehicle department) **will/or will not** provide driving record abstracts to **family members/or the public**.

Physicians **must report/or do not have to report** a diagnosis of Alzheimer’s disease to the motor vehicle administration. According to the American Medical Association, regardless of the legal requirement, physicians have an *ethical* obligation to report individuals who keep driving after being counseled to stop.

For more information, contact \_\_\_\_\_

(insert telephone or web link to local motor vehicle department or other resource).

## Module 7: Collecting Information on the Older Driver

Presentation time: 4 min.

**Audience for this module:** caregivers, informal concerned members of the community, counselors for families.

### **Learning Objectives:**

- (1) Learn what information is relevant when assessing an older driver.
- (2) Be able to teach the family about what to look for when thinking about older driver safety.

### **Checklist of Things to Tell Caregivers**

To assess an older driver, a caregiver will need to:

- Ask the older adult for permission to talk to their physician and others about health and driving issues.
- Collect basic information about the driver's driving record, health conditions, medications, physical strength and agility, cognitive ability, and alcohol or drug abuse.
- Note any attempts by the driver to restrict their own driving or improve skills by taking driver courses.
- Observe the older adult while driving (see item #5 on page 19).
- Talk to others (clergy, neighbors) who may have observed the driver's abilities.
- Write down information to share with the older adult's physician, such as concerns about medication side effects, vision problems, or driving difficulties.

(Tip: You can use the Caregiver Checklist on p. 46.)

**SCRIPT:** *Here are steps you can take to start to assess an older person's driving ability. They should ask the older adult for permission to talk to physicians and others about health and driving issues. Caregivers could take this checklist along when the older adult visits his/her doctor.*

1. **Basic Information.** *Collect information on the age of the driver, times when he or she drives, and information on any crashes or tickets. Write down what the driver has already done to assess and improve driving, including self-limitations on driving, self-screening efforts, driver safety classes, or rehabilitation training.*
2. **Medical Conditions.** *Does the person have arthritis or other conditions that make it difficult to turn his or her head, grip the steering wheel, or apply the brake? Can the older driver see and hear sufficiently? Is the driver cognitively alert and aware of surroundings? Note special situations that will require professional evaluation, such as dementia. Write down your observations.*
3. **Medications.** *Many medications prescribed for older adults can cause cognitive and/or visual impairment, which can affect driving safety. Medicines of special concern for older drivers include antidepressants, antihistamines, benzodiazepines (tranquilizers),*

*hypoglycemic medications, and narcotic pain medicine. Alcohol consumption also can affect the way the body responds to medications and cause adverse reactions that can impair driving safety. Polypharmacy — taking multiple medications — has been linked to an increased risk of motor vehicle crashes for older adults. Write down any over-the-counter and alternative, homeopathic, or natural medicines the person may take that could impair driving.*

- 4. Alcohol or Drug Use.** *Alcohol is a factor in many fatal crashes and alcohol can be more lethal for older adults. As we age, alcohol has a greater physical and functional impact, and the impairing effects of alcohol can be amplified by combining it with other medications. It is often hard to recognize the signs of alcohol abuse, because other diseases and conditions may mask the symptoms in an older adult. It also is difficult for the family to approach an older adult about alcohol because of the stigma associated with abuse and the strong denial on the part of an abuser. It is probably necessary to consult a physician or other professional if abuse is known or suspected.*
- 5. Observation.** *Gather information about the older driver's capabilities through observation and feedback from friends, neighbors, or clergy. Accompany the older driver in the car and observe his or her driving. Identify warning signs that driving may be impaired, such as failure to understand traffic signs and signals. Note specific incidents, such as running a red light. Note strengths as well as deficits. Do not comment on driving behavior during the drive. Afterwards, ask the older driver how he or she felt about the drive.*

## Module 8: Preparing for the Conversation With the Older Adult

Presentation time: 5 min.

**Audience for this module:** professionals, informal caregivers, concerned members of the community

### **Learning Objectives:**

- (1) Learn how to talk to your audience about the important role family members must play.
- (2) Prepare the family for the conversation with the older driver.

### **Checklist for Your Presentation**

- Acknowledge that people are reluctant to talk about this.
  - Encourage families to begin the conversation early.
  - Urge families to understand the driver's transportation needs.
  - Explain that experts are available to help families assess older drivers.
  - Tell families how to find out what transportation options are available.
  - Encourage the family caregiver to prepare a written plan of action for how the older driver will improve driving skills or use alternate transportation.
- (Tip: You can use the handouts on pp. 48-51.)

**SCRIPT:** *An older adult's family or partner is usually in the best position to observe, discuss, and intervene when an older adult appears to be engaged in poor driving. The family or partner may often know the best way to approach the older adult in a non-threatening manner. Here are some things to consider:*

**Reluctance to Talk.** *Family members, especially adult children, are understandably reluctant or afraid to get involved. They may feel this change in the parent-child role would appear to the older driver as being threatening or disrespectful.*

*Sometimes a family feels reluctant to take on the task of helping an older adult to get around without driving. A spouse or partner may be dependent on the older driver for his or her own transportation needs, and thus be hesitant to raise the issue of driver safety. In some situations, the family may just feel there is no point in trying to talk to the older adult about his or her driving. Or the family may hope that things will continue to be okay. Nonetheless, the family has to focus on the safety of the older adult and the community by discussing driving safety.*

*There may even be liability issues if a family looks the other way when an older driver continues to drive after being told not to drive by a physician, or after losing a driver's license. There is legal precedent that holds the family responsible. That is often what motivates families to finally get involved and talk to an older driver who should not be driving. Contact your local motor vehicles administration for information on liability issues.*

**Start Early.** *Experts recommend talking with an older driver before problems begin, and planning together what will happen when the person can no longer drive. Involving the older driver is essential to a successful discussion and decision-making process. In fact, more than half*

of older adults follow suggestions offered in conversations about driving, according to The Hartford insurance company.

*Here is a checklist of tasks to complete before talking to an older driver:*

**Determine Needs.** *Understand the transportation needs (medical, social, religious, shopping, and community activities) of the older person in advance of the discussion.*

*Think about the older adult's possible responses before beginning the conversation.*

*Watch for "teachable moments" to bring up the topic.*

**Observe the Older Driver's Abilities.** *Ride with the older driver and observe his/her driving abilities. Write down your thoughts and observations so you can remember them when you talk to the older driver.*

**Note the Positives.** *Identify what the older adult is doing right to be a safe driver. Use these "positives" when starting to talk with the older adult to help offset any negativity.*

**Be Knowledgeable About Other Resources.** *Consider talking to the older adult's physician, other healthcare provider (such as a vision specialist), a law enforcement officer, an elder law attorney, or geriatric care manager about any concerns. Consider suggesting a professional driving assessment by a certified driving rehabilitation specialist or occupational therapist. They may suggest driver re-training or vehicle modifications, such as wider mirrors, a steering wheel cover, or a visor extension, which might resolve some safety issues. (See handout on p. 46.) Be prepared to explain to the older driver that the involvement of an objective third party could help assess the situation.*

**Check Local Resources.** *See if local community or religious organizations have programs to help older adults with driver education or transportation alternatives. Check with senior centers, the Red Cross, and other civic organizations.*

**Alternative Transportation.** *Research local transportation alternatives for the older adult. Take a trip yourself so you can help the older adult understand how to use these modes of transportation. Have available a list of community mobility options and family, friends, or neighbors willing to help transport the older adult. Use the "Worksheet on Local Transportation Options" (p. 47) ( See handouts on pp. 49, 50).*

**Draft a plan of action.** *Putting it in writing clarifies points for everyone and gives the older driver assurance that his/her needs have been considered. Use the "Worksheet on Costs of Owning an Automobile" (p. 48) to help the older adult understand that not owning a car will save money that can be used for transportation alternatives.*

## Module 9: Having the Conversation About Driving

Presentation time: 5 min.

**Audience for this module:** professionals, informal caregivers, concerned members of the community.

### **Learning Objectives:**

- (1) Learn how to approach an older adult and have a successful conversation about driving safety and mobility alternatives.
- (2) Prepare the family to act on the plan of action developed in Module 8.

### **Topics to Cover with Family Caregivers**

- Hold a one-on-one conversation with an older adult.
- Be positive, supportive, and affirming when you talk with an older adult.
- Use good listening skills.
- Focus on safe driving, not giving up driving.
- Work with the older adult to find solutions.
- Help the older adult complete the worksheet on “Local Transportation Options” (p. 47) to aid the discussion about how to use transportation resources.
- Avoid confrontation.
- Offer concrete steps the older driver can take: self-screening, driving limitations, driver retraining, vision rehabilitation, vehicle modification, and alternatives to driving.
- Address how the older adult will get where he or she wants to go.

**SCRIPT:** *Here are some tips for having the conversation with an older adult.*

- **One on One.** *Avoid holding a large family meeting and “ganging up” on the older driver. This is not an “intervention.” Instead, select one person in the family who can best talk to the older adult.*
- **Attitude.** *The family’s attitude and approach are important to successfully communicate with the older driver. Use good listening and non-threatening conversation skills. Use “I” messages instead of “you” messages. Say: “I know how important driving is, which is why I’m concerned about your safety.” Be sure that you:*
  - *Explain that driving safely, not driving cessation, is the immediate goal. Modifications may help keep the driver safe.*
  - *Focus on ways to ensure safety — for both the driver and the public — and remediate driving problems.*
  - *Be supportive in your tone: “I understand that driving is important to you.”*
  - *Ask the question “Is it more important **how** you get somewhere, or **what** you do when you get there?”*
- **Be Positive.** *Acknowledge steps the older driver has already taken to ensure safe driving, such as driving only during daylight hours. Stress the benefits of using other forms of*

transportation. These benefits might include riding with friends on the bus, meeting new people, saving energy costs, and helping the environment.

- **Be Respectful of their Privacy.** Ask permission to talk to the older adult's physician or others about driving issues.
- **Work Together.** Involve the older driver in the decisions as much as possible. Admit that there are no easy solutions and that this decision affects everyone involved. Focus on maintaining the older adult's independence, while stating that this may not necessarily be by continuing to drive. Discuss the transportation needs (medical, social, religious, shopping, and community activities) of the older person. Be prepared to answer the older adult's "How will I get there?" concerns. Don't be judgmental about their activities. Pledge to help support the older adult in maintaining independence. For example, you might say: "I'll help you figure out how to get where you want to go if driving is not possible."
- **Avoid Confrontation.** Do not accuse the older driver of being an unsafe driver or start with the assumption that he or she must stop driving now. Focus on the older driver's functional capacity, not on his or her age or disease. Stick to factual rather than emotional issues, for example, by saying: "Mom, I don't want to see you get hurt or hurt anyone else." Use terms like "safe driving," "driving retirement," or "driving cessation." Don't talk about "giving up the keys." Be ready to address anger or denial (on the part of the driver, partner, or children). Stay calm and don't raise your voice. Do not respond to personal attacks or get drawn into unrelated issues.
- **Steps to Suggest.** Here are some things that family members can suggest to the older driver:
  - Encourage the older driver to take self-screening tests. (Web links for these resources are at the end of this document.)
  - Discuss strategies to improve driving, such as limiting driving to certain times, conditions, and places.
  - Encourage driver retraining, vision rehabilitation, vehicle modification, purchasing a car with new safety features, etc.
  - If appropriate, discuss ways to begin the transition away from driving.
- **Problem-Solve.** Problem-solve how to get to specific places in the event that driving becomes restricted (now or later).
  - Discuss how will the person go shopping and get to medical, social, religious, and community activities.
  - Make a list of how he or she can get to each place, who he/she can call to get a ride, with phone numbers and costs (such as taxi or bus fare).
  - Discuss community mobility options. Use the "Worksheet on Local Transportation Options" (p. 47).
  - Use the "Worksheet on Costs of Owning an Automobile" (p. 48) to show the older adult understand that not owning a car will save money that can be used for transportation alternatives.
  - Suggest that you could travel with the older adult on public transit to help them become familiar with it. Or you could attend an educational session with him or her about how to use public transit.

## **Module 10: Dealing With Negative Reactions**

Presentation time: 4 min.

**Audience for this module:** professionals, informal caregivers, concerned members of the community.

### **Learning Objectives:**

- (1) Prepare the family or partner for possible negative reactions to a discussion about driving.
- (2) Learn how to deal with a negative reaction.

### **Topics to Cover with Family Caregivers**

- Allow the older adult to express his or her concerns or vent their anger.
- Acknowledge the older adult's feelings.
- Avoid becoming defensive; stick to the facts.
- Address the older adult's concerns and offer to help find ways for them to get to destinations.
- Explain the consequences of poor driving.
- Seek an independent opinion or consult a physician.
- Consider a restricted license that limits driving.
- Continue to offer love and support.
- Discuss the economic savings from not owning a car.
- Continue the conversation another day if things get too emotional or angry.

**Tip:** Use the handout "What Do I Do With Anger?" on p. 54.

**SCRIPT:** *Let's talk about some ways to deal with negative reactions, such as anger, denial, embarrassment, and/or depression, on the part of the older driver.*

- **Listen.** *Allow the older driver to express their anger and thoughts. Use appropriate responses such as: "I understand that this is upsetting," or "We'll work together to find a solution," or "I'd probably be upset too." Then gently return to your main points.*
- **Acknowledge the Older Driver's Feelings.** *Repeat what he or she has said. "So, let me make sure I understand this, you are saying that ...." Acknowledge that times (cars, drivers, driving conditions, congestion) have changed.*
- **Do Not Become Defensive.** *Repeat that the concern is safe driving.*
- **Address Concerns.** *Be sure to address the older adult's concerns. You might say: "We will find a way to get you to church every Sunday."*
- **Stick to the Facts,** *such as the indicators that the older adult's driving may be unsafe, and the probability that a serious crash could happen.*
- **Consequences.** *Explain that a crash could be more disruptive to a person's life than not driving. The driver could potentially have to live with the burden of having injured or killed someone. The legal ramifications could include losing a license, facing a lawsuit, or having a judgment for damages placed against an estate.*

- **Costs of Owning a Vehicle.** *Point out that the savings from not owning a vehicle will provide money that can be used for alternative transportation. With the older adult, complete the Worksheet on Costs of Owning an Automobile (see p. 48).*
- **Second Opinion.** *Suggest getting an independent opinion or an in-car driving evaluation from an occupational therapist, driving school, or certified driving rehabilitation specialist. There is a cost associated with these services. You can also discuss re-examination by the State's licensing agency, or consider consulting with an elder law attorney. You might say: "Would you agree to stop driving if the experts felt that you were not driving safely?"*
- **Consult the Doctor.** *Ask the older driver's physician to talk to the older adult about driving safety. Older adults will often listen to their own doctor. Having a medical reason for not driving may be "face-saving" for them.*
- **Restricted License.** *Consider getting a restricted license that limits driving to daylight hours and short drives.*
- **Love and Support.** *Point out that receiving rides from family and friends can help a person feel loved and supported and be more connected to others. Remind him or her that you are having this conversation because you care.*
- **Offer to Help.** *Repeat your offer to help with transportation if the person has to stop driving. Remind him or her that alternate transportation is available. Produce your list of community mobility options and family, friends, or neighbors willing to help transport the older adult.*
- **Know When to Stop.** *When getting through to the older adult just seems impossible, stop. Begin the conversation another day after everyone has had a chance to cool off and think about the issue.*

## **Module 11: Self-Assessment Resources**

Presentation time: 2 min.

**Audience for this module:** professionals, informal caregivers, concerned members of the community.

### **Learning Objective:**

Learn about tools available to assist older drivers and their families with driving issues.

**SCRIPT:** *Here are some useful Web sites for finding self-assessment programs. If you don't have a computer, your library can be a great resource for accessing these online programs.*

*“Roadwise Review: A Tool to Help Seniors Drive Safely Longer”*

*([www.seniordrivers.org/home/](http://www.seniordrivers.org/home/) or contact your local AAA club to learn how you can obtain a copy). There is a modest fee for Roadwise Review.*

*“Test Your Driving IQ” ([www.aarp.org/families/driver\\_safety/driver\\_ed/a2004-06-23-drivingiq.html](http://www.aarp.org/families/driver_safety/driver_ed/a2004-06-23-drivingiq.html)).*

*“Drivers 55-Plus Self-Rating Form”*

*([www.aaafoundation.org/quizzes/index.cfm?button=driver55](http://www.aaafoundation.org/quizzes/index.cfm?button=driver55)).*

*“Close Call Quiz” ([www.aarp.org/families/driver\\_safety/driver\\_safetyissues/a2004-06-07-closecall.html](http://www.aarp.org/families/driver_safety/driver_safetyissues/a2004-06-07-closecall.html)).*

*“What Older Drivers Need to Know”*

*([www.aarp.org/families/driver\\_safety/driver\\_ed/a2004-06-15-motorist\\_faq.html](http://www.aarp.org/families/driver_safety/driver_ed/a2004-06-15-motorist_faq.html)).*

*You may also contact the AARP Driver Safety Program by calling 888-AARP-NOW (888-227-7669).*

## Module 12: Types of Assistance

Presentation time: 8 min.

**Audience for this module:** professionals, informal caregivers, concerned members of the community.

### Learning Objectives:

- (1) Gain an overview of the many resources and professionals available nationwide to assist the older driver and family.
- (2) Learn what each of these services or professionals can offer to older drivers and their families.
- (3) Understand where to find local resources, referencing the “Local Resources List” you prepared at the beginning of this document (p. 5).

### Checklist for Presenter

- Research local resources for your audience before beginning this discussion. (Refer to the “Local Resources List” that you prepared in the beginning.)
- Consider preparing handouts on local resources, with phone numbers and addresses.
- Use large print for documents that you will share with older adults.

**SCRIPT:** *Let’s talk about the agencies and entities available to provide assistance, and what can be expected from them. I will provide some local phone numbers. There is a charge for some of these services. Let me summarize the key resources available in many communities and what services they offer:*

Description of Services Available		
Service	Entity	What They Do
Driver safety instruction	AARP Automobile associations (AAA)	Provide classroom training. Provide tips to help an older driver stay safely on the road.
	National Safety Council	Conduct defensive driving courses nationwide. (Go to <a href="http://www.nsc.org/resources/issues/drivsafe.aspx">www.nsc.org/resources/issues/drivsafe.aspx</a> )
	Private driving instructor	Perform in-car assessment and training. Ask if the instructor is experienced with older drivers or people with disabilities, and ask for references. Ask for a written evaluation of the older driver’s abilities.
Driver assessment/rehabilitation	Certified driving rehabilitation specialist (Some States require a prescription from a physician for a driving assessment)	Offer clinical driving assessment (vision, reaction time, strength, decision-making, cognitive ability, and self-awareness); on-road evaluation; safe driving training; driving rehabilitation; adaptive equipment; and driving modifications. Ask for a written report. (Check with the Association for Driver Rehabilitation Specialists, <a href="http://www.driver-ed.org/">www.driver-ed.org/.</a> )
	Occupational therapist	Evaluate a person’s ability to operate a vehicle safely, perform a driving test, provide training to improve driver safety, fit the driver to the vehicle, and recommend adaptive equipment. (Check with the American Occupational Therapy Association, <a href="http://www.aota.org/olderdriver.">www.aota.org/olderdriver.</a> )
	Hospital rehabilitation professional	Perform driving assessment, usually on a doctor’s order.
	State vocational rehabilitation program	Assist people with disabilities to return to or remain in the workplace; some provide resources on vehicle modifications.

<b>Health and prescription medication issues</b>	Physician and other healthcare provider	Assess a person's capabilities, medications, and health conditions. Notify the motor vehicle administration about unsafe drivers.
	Eye care provider	Provide vision rehabilitation.
	Pharmacist	Provide prescription information and medication consultation.
<b>Regulatory and insurance issues</b>	State or local police, or sheriff's department	Offer training, information, assessment, and interventions. (Information on activities in States can be found in "Compendium of Law Enforcement Older Driver Programs," go to <a href="http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov">www.nhtsa.dot.gov</a> and search for "older driver compendium".)
	Department of motor vehicles	Provide information on senior licensing laws, car safety options, driver assessment, driver retraining, and licensing services. Can issue a non-driver photo ID card.
	American Automobile Association	Provide information on senior licensing laws. (Visit: <a href="http://www.aaaexchange.com/Main/#">www.aaaexchange.com/Main/#</a> and click on "State Laws" and choose your State and "Senior Licensing Laws." Or go directly to <a href="http://www.aaaexchange.com/Assets/Files/20089121413140.StateSeniorLicensingLaws8.08.doc">www.aaaexchange.com/Assets/Files/20089121413140.StateSeniorLicensingLaws8.08.doc</a> .)
	Insurance company	Provide record of accidents, tickets, insurance rates.
<b>Community information and services</b>	Senior centers, YMCAs, recreation departments	Offer health promotion tips and exercises to ensure driving wellness, including strength training and increased flexibility.
	Area agency on aging 2-1-1 directories	Provide information, assessment, and referral on driving and community mobility issues.
	Local chapters of Alzheimer's, diabetes or arthritis associations	Provide information and resources on driving with specific conditions.
	Social services department, adult protective services	Provide information, assessment, and referral.
	Community service, volunteer and religious organizations, Red Cross	Offer driver education, transportation alternatives, and volunteer drivers.
	Peer counselors (often available through mental health centers or the AARP)	Offer one-on-one counseling. Can talk about their own experiences in cutting back on their driving or retiring from driving.
<b>Vehicle modifications/ upgrades</b>	CarFit	Offers an educational program for older adults to check how well their personal vehicles "fit" them ( <a href="http://www.car-fit.org/">www.car-fit.org/</a> ). Provides information and materials on community-specific resources. (Visit <a href="http://www.seniordrivers.org/pdf/carfit.pdf">www.seniordrivers.org/pdf/carfit.pdf</a> .)
	NHTSA	Go to <a href="http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov">www.nhtsa.dot.gov</a> and search for "Adapting Motor Vehicles for Older Drivers".
	Mobility equipment dealer	Install adaptive equipment (such as hand brakes or special mirrors), if prescribed by a driving rehabilitation specialist. (Visit National Mobility Equipment Dealers Association, <a href="http://www.nmeda.org/">www.nmeda.org/</a> .)
	Auto dealer	Sell cars with new safety features. Sell wide mirrors, steering wheel grips. Make seat adjustments. Some vehicle manufacturers (such as Ford, Toyota, etc.) offer rebates on new vehicles that will be modified for drivers with disabilities. (Check with local dealers or go to: <a href="http://www.nmeda.org/consumers/rebateprograms.html">www.nmeda.org/consumers/rebateprograms.html</a> .)

*You may also contact the AARP Driver Safety Program by calling 888-AARP-NOW (888-227-7669).*

## **Module 13: Transportation Alternatives**

Presentation time: 10 min.

**Audience for this module:** professionals, informal caregivers, concerned members of the community.

### **Learning Objectives:**

- (1) Understand an older adult's transportation needs and his or her capabilities for using alternative transportation.
- (2) Understand the many transportation alternatives.
- (3) Learn about mobility services.

**SCRIPT:** *Now we will talk about ways to find transportation for the person who has stopped driving. We will look at things to consider about the older adult's ability to use public transportation on his or her own, as well as the range of transportation alternatives available in many communities.*

### **Preparing for Alternative Transportation**

*You will first need to consider whether the older adult has the physical and cognitive ability to take public transportation on his or her own. (There is a handout on "Travel Skills" on p. 50.) When discussing transportation alternatives, such as taking the bus, here are some factors to consider:*

1. **Getting There.** *Is the older adult able to walk to the bus stop or subway, and strong enough to get on and ride the bus? If not, is there a place to sit and rest on the walk to the bus, perhaps at a friend's house? Is there a route they can take that avoids steep hills, traffic, busy intersections, etc.? Would they do better if someone accompanied them on the bus, to show the way and carry packages? Is there someone who could drive them to the bus stop or subway station?*
2. **Safety Issues.** *Is the bus stop in an area that is well-lighted with other pedestrians around? Is there a shelter and place to sit down? Does the older adult have appropriate clothing and equipment (umbrella, sunglasses) for varying weather conditions he or she may encounter?*
3. **Travel Times.** *Can the older adult travel at times of the day when the bus is less crowded? The busiest times tend to be around the morning and evening rush hours, and when schools are dismissed for the day.*
4. **Understanding the System.** *Does he or she have a bus or subway schedule, correct change, any necessary identification (for senior citizen discounts, etc.), and an understanding of any necessary transfers? Are they confident enough to ask the driver for assistance if they are confused, lost, or can't find a seat on the bus?*
5. **Getting Back.** *Will the older adult be too fatigued for the return trip, possibly carrying packages?*

### **Understanding Transportation Alternatives**

*There is a range of transportation services, but you will need to do some research to find out which services are offered in your community. You can check your local telephone directory, call 2-1-1, the local area agency on aging, local transit organization, or the nationwide Eldercare Locator (call 800-677-1116 or on the Internet at [www.eldercare.gov](http://www.eldercare.gov)).*

*A recent survey of transportation services in 26 States found that 70 percent offered services specifically for older adults. The most common services provided by these respondents*

were travel training (43 percent), demand response (40 percent), curb-to-curb transportation service (29 percent,) and door-to-door transportation service (25 percent). Other services offered were flex routes, taxi vouchers, taxis, van pools, volunteer drive programs, escort services, and door-through-door services.

*Here are some mobility services that may be available in your community:*

- **Mobility Manager.** *Some communities offer mobility case managers to assist individuals to learn about local transportation resources and services. A mobility manager promotes alternative transportation and helps educate a traveler about its use. You can check with local aging or public transit organizations to see if these services are available.*
- **Public Transit.** *Public transit agencies provide fixed-route bus and rail services with a standard route, stops and schedule. Reduced fares are generally available for older adults. You can get more information from the American Public Transit Association ([www.apta.com/links/state\\_local/](http://www.apta.com/links/state_local/)).*
- **Travel Training.** *Public transit agencies and local aging organizations may offer assistance to older adults who want to learn how to use public transit. The services are generally offered at no charge.*
- **Senior Centers.** *Senior centers, operated by local governments or nonprofits, may offer transportation to their site for meals or social events.*
- **Supplemental Transportation Programs for Seniors.** *These programs are set up by grassroots, community, or regional-level entities to provide seniors with alternative forms of transportation. AARP has more information online. (See “State-by-State Guide to Transportation Assistance,” [www.aarp.org/makeadifference/gettinghelp/articles/state-by-State\\_guide.html](http://www.aarp.org/makeadifference/gettinghelp/articles/state-by-State_guide.html)). Other resources include the American Automobile Association Foundation for Traffic Safety ([www.aaafoundation.org/pdf/STP2.pdf](http://www.aaafoundation.org/pdf/STP2.pdf) and [www.seniordrivers.org/notdriving/notdriving.cfm?button=profiles](http://www.seniordrivers.org/notdriving/notdriving.cfm?button=profiles)), ITN America, ([www.itnamerica.org/](http://www.itnamerica.org/), and the National Center on Senior Transportation, ([seniortransportation.easterseals.com](http://seniortransportation.easterseals.com)).*
- **Taxis.** *Taxi services offer convenient door-to-door service. Riders call a dispatcher to have a taxi pick them up. Some taxis are wheelchair-accessible. There is a charge for these services, but some offer transportation vouchers and discounts.*
- **Volunteer Drivers.** *Faith-based and nonprofit organizations may have volunteers who provide flexible transportation services for shopping, medical visits, and other activities. These programs are often free or low cost. Check with a local area agency on aging or dial 2-1-1 for more information.*
- **Paratransit.** *Paratransit services use mini-buses or vans that provide curb-to-curb or door-to-door transportation to people with disabilities or older adults who meet eligibility requirements and are unable to use fixed route public transit. These services may be offered by public transit, aging organizations, or private agencies. Door-to-door services include assistance walking to the door and carrying packages. There are also door-through-door services, which provide an escort who remains by the older adult’s side throughout an appointment, and returns the person safely back to the interior of his or her home. Services generally are offered at reduced fares for older adults.*
- **Escort Service.** *Private agencies also may provide escorts who help passengers leave their homes and accompany them where they need to go. The escorts can open doors, provide verbal cues, and physically support the person if needed. Check with local aging organizations or 2-1-1 to see if these services are available.*

- **Medical Transportation Services.** *Some hospitals and medical practices offer medical transportation services. Home health agencies may offer transportation services for their clients. Medicaid programs provide medical transportation, usually by contracting with taxis and private medical vans.*
- **Friends and Family.** *Friends, family, and neighbors may be willing to provide a ride.*

#### **Writing It All Down**

*Prepare a list of transportation alternatives and post it in the kitchen, near the telephone, or somewhere handy for the older adult.*

*List the transportation service available, contact information, and cost. Your list might include friend/family drivers, bus/subway, paratransit, taxi, van service, volunteer drivers, faith-based driver programs, senior transportation, etc.*

*For a sample format, see “Getting By Without Driving,” [www.ama-assn.org/ama1/pub/upload/mm/433/get\\_by\\_without\\_drive.pdf](http://www.ama-assn.org/ama1/pub/upload/mm/433/get_by_without_drive.pdf). Or use the form in the Handout section of this document. (See “Worksheet on Local Transportation Options,” p. 47.)*

## **Module 14: Retirement from Driving**

**Presentation time:** 4 min.

**Audience for this module:** professionals, informal caregivers, concerned members of the community.

### **Learning Objective:**

Learn how to work with an older adult who is transitioning away from driving or has given up driving.

**Tip:** Use the handouts on pp. 48, 49, and 50.

**SCRIPT:** *Now we will talk about ways to help an older adult retire from driving, and begin using alternative transportation. Once it is clear that it is time to stop driving, the family or partner will need to take several steps:*

- **Involve the Older Adult.** *Encourage the older driver to make the decision, or at least be involved in it. Ask which events and activities are most important to continue.*
- **Gradual Transition.** *When appropriate, suggest gradual transition to other transportation options, as opposed to abruptly giving up driving.*
- **Buddy System.** *Encourage the older adult to travel with a “buddy” to get comfortable with alternative transportation.*
- **Keep the Car.** *Discuss the possibility of keeping the car, but not driving it. Some retired drivers like to be able to offer their car for someone else to drive them.*
- **Calculate Savings.** *Owning a car, even if it is not used very often, consumes resources that could be used for alternative transportation. Many people will find they spend anywhere from \$4,000 to \$10,000 a year to own their cars. Note that the older driver can save money by not owning an automobile — he or she will no longer have to take the car in for maintenance and repairs, purchase auto insurance, or struggle to find a parking space. Calculate the money that the person will save by not owning and operating a vehicle. Include gasoline and oil, maintenance, repairs, tires, insurance premiums, and parking costs. Those savings can be used for alternative mobility, such as a taxi. There is a worksheet on this in the Handouts section. (See “Worksheet on Costs of Owning an Automobile,” p. 48).*
- **Giving Back to the Community.** *Point out that the older adult will be doing his or her part to keep others safe by giving up driving. The driver will not be putting his passengers or other drivers or pedestrians at risk.*
- **Make a Plan.** *Discuss transportation options. Problem-solve with the older adult how he or she will get around. The Hartford Financial Services Group and other resources provide useful worksheets for planning transportation alternatives. (Visit: [www.thehartford.com/talkwitholderdrivers/](http://www.thehartford.com/talkwitholderdrivers/).) Provide a written list of other ways the older adult can get around. Include phone numbers, costs, hours, routes, and pre-registration requirements. Explain how family, friends, neighbors, or others will support the older adult in maintaining his/her independence. If the older adult feels uncomfortable accepting a “free” ride, suggest that he or she could offer to pay for the gasoline.*
- **Community Mobility.** *Help the older adult learn how to take the train or bus, or use taxi services or senior transit. Consider traveling with the older adult as he or she learns to use a bus, taxi, or other alternative transportation method. Or hire a mobility manager to*

*help the older adult learn to use community transportation services. Discuss saving money by sharing a cab with friends. Talk about taking advantage of senior discounts. Remind the older adult that giving up the car will save money that can be used for these services.*

- **Paratransit.** *Look into paratransit services for persons with disabilities. See if there are any volunteer driver services, such as those offered by faith-based organizations or the Red Cross.*
- **Home Delivery.** *Discuss using delivery services offered by grocery stores, pharmacies, and restaurants, to reduce the need to drive as often. Consider mail order prescriptions. Shop from catalogs.*
- **When All Else Fails.** *If the older driver is getting into the car and is clearly impaired, confused, or disoriented, you will have to call the police to report an unsafe driver. This is a difficult choice, but public safety is paramount.*

## **Module 15: Dementia and Driving**

**Presentation time:** 5 min.

**Audience for this module:** professionals, informal caregivers, concerned members of the community.

### **Learning Objectives:**

- (1) Learn about the impact of a diagnosis of dementia on driving.
- (2) Understand that how you talk with a person with dementia will depend on the stage of dementia, determining what is appropriate for each situation.

**Tip:** Use the handouts dementia on pp. 52-53.

**SCRIPT:** *An estimated 4.9 million Americans over age 65 have Alzheimer’s disease or a related form of dementia, according to the Alzheimer’s Association. It reports that by 2010 there will be almost a half million new cases of Alzheimer’s disease each year; and by 2050, there will be almost a million new cases each year.*

*Drivers with Alzheimer’s disease, which involves memory, judgment, and psychomotor abilities, must be part of the mobility conversation early on in the disease process, and treated with sensitivity and respect. Research has shown that drivers with Alzheimer’s are likely to perform more poorly on driving tests than other drivers. Some research has shown that 30 percent of drivers with dementia are predicted to have a crash at some point during the moderate stages of the disease, leading to the conclusion that there is an increased risk to public health. The risk of becoming lost in a familiar place also increases. Failure to recognize a decline in driving abilities can have serious consequences for both the driver and others on the road.*

*Licensing regulations for drivers with Alzheimer’s disease are made individually by each State.*

*While a diagnosis of Alzheimer’s disease or other dementias does not mean that a person should immediately give up driving, the driver’s abilities will require close monitoring. Some people are able to continue to drive safely in the early stages of dementia, especially when driving in a familiar environment under normal conditions. Driving in unfamiliar territory may pose challenges. More research is needed in this area to determine when a person can no longer safely operate a motor vehicle. The Hartford has a guide to help determine when an individual with Alzheimer’s should no longer drive. (See “Family Conversations about Alzheimer’s Disease, Dementia and Driving” in the Resources section.)*

*Clinical and driving evaluations can help assess the person’s capability. Experts recommend a driving re-evaluation every six months for a driver with dementia. Some States offer special driving tests. There are also fee-for-service assessments offered by private companies. The Alzheimer’s Association suggests contacting its local chapters to see if they can provide a list of these programs.*

*The early stage of dementia is a good time to begin a transition away from driving, especially when the older adult can still understand the implications of the risks of continuing to drive. The family must understand the effect of cognitive impairment and realize that at some point older adults with dementia cannot make decisions for themselves.*

*If possible, include the physician in early discussions about driving, and keep the doctor informed about decisions and actions.*

*The Alzheimer's Association recommends several steps to try when someone with dementia insists on driving when they should not. These steps are:*

- **Be Firm:** *Avoid arguments and long explanations. Stick to your basic message about no driving.*
- **Acknowledge:** *Be sensitive and reassuring. Try to involve the person in other aspects of travel. Put the person in charge of the radio and temperature controls. Ask the person to help look for important road markers.*
- **Alternative Transportation:** *Reassure the person that you will work with them to find a ride when needed. The Alzheimer's Association recommends contacting its local chapters to learn what local transportation services are available.*
- **Make the Car Less Accessible:** *Control access to car keys. Have a family member keep the car keys. If the car is not often used, disable it or park it down the street. A mechanic can install a "kill switch" that will prevent the car from starting unless the switch is turned on. Sell the car.*
- **Team Approach:** *Recruit a trusted authority such as a doctor to advise the person with Alzheimer's not to drive. Have the doctor write a "no driving" prescription. Ask a respected relative or attorney to reinforce the message about not driving. Or ask the person's insurance agent to provide documentation that the person with dementia will not be allowed to have insurance coverage.*
- **Re-test:** *Ask the motor vehicle department to re-test the person. However, remember that taking away a driver's license does not mean the person with dementia will stop driving.*
- **Distract the Person:** *Focus on other activities that the person with dementia enjoys.*

*No one solution will fit all cases. The family must recognize that someone with advanced dementia may not remember that he or she should no longer drive.*

**(End of Scripted Section)**

## **Section III: PRACTICE EXERCISES FOR PROFESSIONALS for conversations about older driver safety**

**Practice time:** 20 min.

**Audience for this module:** professionals

### **Learning Objectives:**

- (1) Learn to be comfortable delivering the scripts in this document.
- (2) Role play with a practice partner to polish your responses so you can confidently interact with older adults, their families, and concerned community members.

Using this document as a reference, have a co-worker describe typical scenarios or ask common questions that a family member might ask about an older driver. Practice your responses with the co-worker, and seek his or her feedback. Brief examples follow. Responses should include information covered in this toolkit, as well as resources and contacts for your local area.

**Scenario 1:** My mother has had two minor car crashes. What can I do to stop her from driving?

**Response 1:** Has a professional driving evaluator assessed your mother's ability to drive? It may not be necessary for her to give up driving at this point. Driver retraining or vehicle modification may keep her safely on the road. Try riding with her under various conditions and observe her level of driver safety. Suggest that she do a self-screening exercise and talk to her physician about whether she can drive safely. There are also professional services that can help assess your mother's ability to drive. Would you like to hear about those services?

**Scenario 2:** Dad just turned 80. How do I get him off the road?

**Response 2:** Your father's driving capabilities cannot be measured merely by age. Consider paying for a professional assessment of his abilities. Some people are able to continue driving safely their entire lives. Nonetheless, most drivers over 70 will outlive their ability to drive by an estimated 7 to 10 years. You can focus first on finding out if he is a safe driver, and if there are steps that can be taken to improve his driving abilities. Would you like to hear about some of those steps?

**Scenario 3:** I will not let my children ride with my father anymore because he drives a little erratically. I just hope he doesn't hurt anyone else.

**Response 3:** I would say that if you do not feel safe allowing your children to ride with your father, then it might be time to assess his driving and possibly intervene. Most families are reluctant to do this. However, this difficult task usually falls to family members, because they are the people closest to the driver, they can best observe when driving is impaired, and they know the best ways to approach the person. However, there are also many professional services that can help evaluate an older driver and determine if he should continue to drive.

**Scenario 4:** My mother went to her hairdresser and got lost on the way home. How can I find out if it is safe for her to continue driving?

**Response 4:** I would suggest that you accompany your mother to visit her family physician, or ask the physician if you could meet with him or her. Find out if there are any medical conditions that need attention, or if your mother may be confused due to medication interactions. Ride in the car with your mother driving and observe her driving skills. Watch for warning signs such as running red lights, hitting curbs, failing to yield, confusing the gas and brake pedals, having difficulty seeing or turning her head. Discuss these with the physician. If the physician cannot resolve this issue, ask for a referral to a professional driver evaluator, such as an occupational therapist or driving rehabilitation professional.

**Scenario 5:** My spouse has Alzheimer's. His license is revoked, but he continues to drive. He steals the keys from my purse. What can I do?

**Response 5:** The Alzheimer's Association has booklets and information on how to cope with an older adult with dementia. Some of the approaches it suggests include: distracting the driver, hiding the car or the keys, having the person's physician write a prescription for "no driving"; and, in extreme cases, disabling the car when you are not using it. Would you like me to help connect you with the local Alzheimer's chapter?

**Scenario 6:** How do I help my parents find alternative transportation now that they no longer drive?

**Response 6:** I have a list of alternative transportation options that are available in your area. Would you like me to read the list to you and give you contact information for them?

## Section IV: RESOURCES

### **Resources for the professional:**

AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety, 202-638-5944, [www.aaafoundation.org](http://www.aaafoundation.org)  
AARP Driver Safety Program, 888-227-7669, [www.aarp.org/families/driver\\_safety/](http://www.aarp.org/families/driver_safety/)  
American Occupational Therapy Association, [www1.aota.org/olderdriver/](http://www1.aota.org/olderdriver/)  
Community Transportation Association of America,  
[web1.ctaa.org/webmodules/webarticles/articlefiles/senior\\_stp.pdf](http://web1.ctaa.org/webmodules/webarticles/articlefiles/senior_stp.pdf)  
DriveWell Toolkit and Training Program, American Society on Aging,  
[www.asaging.org/asav2/drivewell/toolkit.cfm](http://www.asaging.org/asav2/drivewell/toolkit.cfm) and at [www.nhtsa.dot.gov](http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov)  
National Center on Senior Transportation, <http://seniortransportation.easterseals.com/>  
Older Driver Safety Project, [www.n4a.org/pdf/Older\\_Driver-A\\_community\\_Approach.pdf](http://www.n4a.org/pdf/Older_Driver-A_community_Approach.pdf)  
Physician's Guide to Assessing and Counseling Older Drivers, go to [www.nhtsa.dot.gov](http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov) and search for "physician's guide".  
Polypharmacy and Older Drivers, go to [www.nhtsa.dot.gov](http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov) and search for "polypharmacy".  
Promising Approaches for Promoting Lifelong Community Mobility,  
[http://assets.aarp.org/www.aarp.org/articles/families/Promising\\_FINAL.pdf](http://assets.aarp.org/www.aarp.org/articles/families/Promising_FINAL.pdf)  
Public Transit Systems in Your Community, [www.publictransportation.org/systems/](http://www.publictransportation.org/systems/)  
Road Map to Driving Wellness, [www.asaging.org/cdc/module4/home.cfm](http://www.asaging.org/cdc/module4/home.cfm)  
Senior Licensing Laws, [www.aaaexchange.com/Main/](http://www.aaaexchange.com/Main/) (click on "State Laws")  
Seniors Benefit From Transportation Partnerships: Promising Practices From the Aging Network toolbox,  
[www.aoa.gov/prof/transportation/media/TransportationChoicesToolbox/UsageGuide.pdf](http://www.aoa.gov/prof/transportation/media/TransportationChoicesToolbox/UsageGuide.pdf)  
State-by-State Guide to Transportation Assistance,  
[www.aarp.org/makeadifference/gettinghelp/articles/state-by-state\\_guide.html](http://www.aarp.org/makeadifference/gettinghelp/articles/state-by-state_guide.html)  
State Transportation Web Sites, [www.fhwa.dot.gov/webstate.htm](http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/webstate.htm)  
Supplemental Transportation Programs for Seniors: A Report on STPs in America,  
[www.aaafoundation.org/pdf/STP2.pdf](http://www.aaafoundation.org/pdf/STP2.pdf)  
Toolkit for Professionals, [www1.aota.org/olderdriver/toolkit.html](http://www1.aota.org/olderdriver/toolkit.html)  
Transportation Options Booklet, [www.beverlyfoundation.org/](http://www.beverlyfoundation.org/)

### **Resources for the public:**

At the Crossroads: A Guide to AD, Dementia and Driving,  
[www.thehartford.com/alzheimers/brochure.html](http://www.thehartford.com/alzheimers/brochure.html)  
CarFit, [www.asaging.org/carfit](http://www.asaging.org/carfit) or [www.seniordrivers.org/pdf/carfit.pdf](http://www.seniordrivers.org/pdf/carfit.pdf)  
Close Call Quiz, [www.aarp.org/families/driver\\_safety/driver\\_safetyissues/a2004-06-07-closecall.html](http://www.aarp.org/families/driver_safety/driver_safetyissues/a2004-06-07-closecall.html)  
Driver Education, [www.aarp.org/families/driver\\_safety/driver\\_ed/](http://www.aarp.org/families/driver_safety/driver_ed/)  
Drivers 55-Plus Self-Rating Form, [www.aaafoundation.org/quizzes/index.cfm?button=driver55](http://www.aaafoundation.org/quizzes/index.cfm?button=driver55)  
Driving, [www.alz.org/living\\_with\\_alzheimers\\_driving.asp](http://www.alz.org/living_with_alzheimers_driving.asp)  
Family Conversations About Alzheimer's Disease, Dementia and Driving,  
[www.thehartford.com/alzheimers/](http://www.thehartford.com/alzheimers/)  
For Older Adults/Caregivers,  
[http://seniortransportation.easterseals.com/site/PageServer?pagename=NCST2\\_older](http://seniortransportation.easterseals.com/site/PageServer?pagename=NCST2_older)

Getting Around, [www.getting-around.org/home/](http://www.getting-around.org/home/)

Getting by Without Driving, [www.ama-assn.org/ama1/pub/upload/mm/433/get by without drive.pdf](http://www.ama-assn.org/ama1/pub/upload/mm/433/get_by_without_drive.pdf)

Grand Driver, [www.granddriver.info/](http://www.granddriver.info/)

How to Help an Older Driver: A Guide for Planning Safe Transportation, [www.seniordrivers.org/driving/pdf/ODlarge.pdf](http://www.seniordrivers.org/driving/pdf/ODlarge.pdf)

Older Driver Skill Assessment and Resource Guide: Creating Mobility Choices, D14957, AARP Fulfillment EE01668, 601 E St. NW, Washington, DC 20049

Older Drivers, [http://safety.fhwa.dot.gov/older\\_driver/index.htm](http://safety.fhwa.dot.gov/older_driver/index.htm)

Older Drivers, [www.nia.nih.gov/HealthInformation/Publications/drivers.htm](http://www.nia.nih.gov/HealthInformation/Publications/drivers.htm)

Older Road Users, National Highway Transportation Safety Administration, go to [www.nhtsa.dot.gov](http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov) and search for older road users

Road Map to Driving Wellness, [www.asaging.org/cdc/module4/home.cfm](http://www.asaging.org/cdc/module4/home.cfm)

Roadwise Review: A Tool to Help Seniors Drive Safely Longer, [www.seniordrivers.org/home/](http://www.seniordrivers.org/home/)

Safe Driving for Older Adults, go to [www.nhtsa.dot.gov](http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov) and search for “older adults”.

Senior Transportation Toolkit and Best Practices, [www.ctaa.org/webmodules/webarticles/articlefiles/senior\\_toolkit.pdf](http://www.ctaa.org/webmodules/webarticles/articlefiles/senior_toolkit.pdf)

Seniordrivers.org, [www.seniordrivers.org/home/](http://www.seniordrivers.org/home/)

Test Your Driving IQ, [www.aarp.org/families/driver\\_safety/driver\\_ed/a2004-06-23-drivingiq.html](http://www.aarp.org/families/driver_safety/driver_ed/a2004-06-23-drivingiq.html)

Traffic Safety Fact Sheets, go to [www.nhtsa.dot.gov](http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov) and search for “Traffic Safety Facts”.

Transportation Options for Older Adults: Choices for Mobility Independence, [www.eldercare.gov/eldercare/Public/about/Trans%20Options%20Panels.pdf](http://www.eldercare.gov/eldercare/Public/about/Trans%20Options%20Panels.pdf)

Transportation Solutions for Caregivers: A Starting Point, [www.easterseals.com/site/DocServer/Tranportation\\_Solutions.pdf?docID=2081](http://www.easterseals.com/site/DocServer/Tranportation_Solutions.pdf?docID=2081)

We Need to Talk: Family Conversations with Older Drivers, [www.thehartford.com/talkwitholderdrivers/](http://www.thehartford.com/talkwitholderdrivers/)

What Older Drivers Need to Know, [www.aarp.org/families/driver\\_safety/driver\\_ed/a2004-06-15-motorist\\_faq.html](http://www.aarp.org/families/driver_safety/driver_ed/a2004-06-15-motorist_faq.html)

When You Are Concerned: A guide for families, friends and caregivers concerned about the safety of an older driver, [www.aging.ny.gov/Caregiving/OlderDriver/Handbook2007.pdf](http://www.aging.ny.gov/Caregiving/OlderDriver/Handbook2007.pdf)

Why Dementia and Driving Is a Difficult Issue: Alzheimer’s, Dementia & Driving, Group, [www.thehartford.com/alzheimers/why\\_dementia.html](http://www.thehartford.com/alzheimers/why_dementia.html)

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## **Handouts for Your Presentation**

For your convenience, we have included several handouts from the DriveWell toolkit and some worksheets that you may give to your audience.

You will also want to prepare handouts on local resources, such as driving courses and other assistance identified in Module 12 (“Types of Assistance”). Include phone numbers and Web sites. Use larger print type size.

## Changes in Older Adults

Changes in our physical abilities prompt us to change how we drive and to learn about ways aside from driving to stay active and connected to our communities. People age at different rates, in different ways and at different times.

Changes that occur affect:

- Vision,
- Hearing,
- Strength,
- Cognition,
- Flexibility,
- Reflexes.

Diseases that may affect older drivers include:

- Osteoporosis that changes the way we sit in a vehicle;
- Peripheral vascular disease that changes the ability to sense pressure on the feet and therefore affect braking and gas pedal use;
- Alzheimer's that affects judgment, memory, and abilities to understand distance.

**Key message:** Changes in a person's physical and mental abilities can affect driving safety. In many cases older adults adapt their driving behavior to make allowances for these changes.

## Changes That Affect Driving

Aging brings the following changes that affect driving:

<i>Change</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Affect on driving</i>
Vision	Near and far vision, depth perception, visual attention, peripheral vision, light and dark sensitivity, and the affect of glare	Ability to see other vehicles, traffic signals, signs lane makings, road conditions, and pedestrians  Ability to see equipment and controls on own vehicle
Cognition	Memory, attention, recognition, speed of decisions, and judgment	Ability to recognize traffic conditions and locations/destinations, process the information, and make appropriate decisions  Ability to recognize and understand operation of own vehicle
Physical Function	Strength, flexibility, reaction time	Ability to perform physical movement to control own vehicle

Talking about these changes allows older drivers to make accommodations that keep them driving safely on the road longer.

## Adapting to the Changing Driving Environment

The environment in which people drive has greatly changed since many of today's drivers 65 and older first started driving. Today, we find:

- Traffic moves faster;
- Roads are more congested;
- Drivers are more aggressive.

These changes significantly affect people's driving decisions and the consequences of those decisions. In the coming years, older drivers will be on the roads, driving more miles per year, and at older ages than previous generations. For these drivers, maintaining safe driving skills for as long as possible requires them to:

- Learn about new traffic laws and rules of the road;
- Maintain proper following distance;
- Change lanes and make turns safely and smoothly;
- Enter and exit freeways appropriately;
- Pay attention to dangerous "blind spots";
- Exercise to maintain good reaction time and maintain physical flexibility;
- Avoid distractions such as radios, cell phones;
- Exercise caution when taking medications;
- Pay attention to changing seasonal road challenges; and
- Monitor your driving and that of others.

### **Key Messages:**

- Just because things change, older adults don't need to stop an activity, they just need to modify it.
- Older adults can take actions to adapt to the changing driving environment and to changes in their own abilities.

# Fitting the Car to the Driver

## Seat

- Make sure you can reach the center of the brakes and gas pedals with the ball of your foot.
- Your chest should be at least 11 inches from the air bag located in the center of the steering wheel.
- Make sure the seat is high enough for your line of sight to be three inches above the steering wheel.

## Head restraint

- Adjust the head restraint to touch the middle of your head, not your neck.

## Mirrors

- Before you start your vehicle, adjust your rearview mirror so you can see as much of the rear window as possible.
- For the mirror on the driver's side, while in the driver's seat:
  1. Place your head against the driver's side window.
  2. Adjust the side mirror on your left so you just see the side of the car.
- For the mirror on the passenger's side, while in the driver's seat:
  1. Move your head to the center of your car under the rearview mirror.
  2. Adjust the passenger side mirror so you just see the side of your car.

For most people this is a big change. We urge people to make this change gradually over the course of a week or two.

## Seat Belt

- Always wear a seat belt when driving. This can become difficult if:
  1. Flexibility restrictions limit your ability to reach over the shoulder to grab the belt
  2. Reduced strength makes it difficult to pull the belt over the chest to the clasp at the seat
  3. Loss of dexterity from arthritis makes it difficult to fasten the belt buckle into the seat latch.

## Caregiver Checklist

### Things to do

- Ask the older adult for permission to talk to their physician and others about their driving.
- Talk to friends, neighbors, clergy others who may have observed the driver's abilities.

### Information to collect

To assess an older driver, a caregiver will need to collect basic information about the driver's:

- driving record (any crashes or tickets) and habits (weather conditions and times when he or she drives) \_\_\_\_\_
- medical conditions (arthritis, hearing, vision, cognition, etc.) \_\_\_\_\_
- medications (especially antidepressants, antihistamines, benzodiazepines (tranquilizers), hypoglycemic medications, and narcotic pain medicine) \_\_\_\_\_
- over-the-counter and alternative, homeopathic or natural medicines the person may take that could impair driving \_\_\_\_\_
- any decline in physical strength and agility \_\_\_\_\_
- any decline in cognitive ability \_\_\_\_\_
- any alcohol or drug use \_\_\_\_\_

### Make a list of things to talk about

- Note any attempts by the driver to restrict his/her own driving or improve skills by taking driver courses. \_\_\_\_\_
- Write down information to share with the older adult's physician, such as concerns about medication side effects, vision problems, or driving difficulties. \_\_\_\_\_

### Observe the older adult while driving

- Identify warning signs that driving may be impaired, such as failure to understand traffic signs and signals.
- Note specific incidents, such as running a red light.
- Note strengths as well as deficits.
- Do not comment on driving behavior during the drive.
- Afterwards, ask the older driver how he or she felt about the drive.



# Worksheet on Costs of Owning an Automobile

This sheet can be used to calculate the annual costs of owning an automobile. Learning how much you spend a year on your automobile can be an educational experience.

Then consider the cost savings of not owning a car, and how these funds could be used for alternative transportation.

Please note that some expenses are calculated as monthly expenses (to be multiplied by 12 to get an annual cost) and some are yearly costs. You can estimate costs when you do not know the exact dollar amount.

Monthly car payment  $\$ \underline{\hspace{1cm}} \times 12 \text{ months} = \$ \underline{\hspace{1cm}} / \text{year}$

Monthly parking fees/  
traffic tickets  $\$ \underline{\hspace{1cm}} \times 12 \text{ months} = \$ \underline{\hspace{1cm}} / \text{year}$

Monthly gasoline costs  $\$ \underline{\hspace{1cm}} \times 12 \text{ months} = \$ \underline{\hspace{1cm}} / \text{year}$

Annual maintenance costs  
(oil changes, wiper blades)  $\$ \underline{\hspace{1.5cm}} \times 1 = \$ \underline{\hspace{1cm}} / \text{year}$

Annual costs for repairs and  
Replacements (tires, brakes, belts)  $\$ \underline{\hspace{1.5cm}} \times 1 = \$ \underline{\hspace{1cm}} / \text{year}$

Annual cost for car insurance  $\$ \underline{\hspace{1.5cm}} \times 1 = \$ \underline{\hspace{1cm}} / \text{year}$

Car registration/license fee  $\$ \underline{\hspace{1.5cm}} \times 1 = \$ \underline{\hspace{1cm}} / \text{year}$

Cost of a recent accident  $\$ \underline{\hspace{1.5cm}} \times 1 = \$ \underline{\hspace{1cm}} / \text{year}$

Total Cost of Owning a Car (sum of above)  $\$ \underline{\hspace{1.5cm}} / \text{year}$

# Transportation Alternatives

Transportation alternatives help to maintain one's independence, mobility and quality of life. Alternatives enable a person to stay connected to their community.

Although we may plan for retirement from work, we often do not have a transportation plan for our driving retirement. In developing a plan consider

- Housing location—Is it walking distance to restaurants, groceries, or transportation?
- Family and Community assistance—Are family members or neighbors available to provide rides? Is carpooling with friends an option? Are community transportation services available, affordable, and accessible?

## ***Key Messages:***

- Find out about transportation alternatives in your community that can work for you and your loved ones.
- Alternatives to driving may not be as convenient, but they can keep you doing the things that you want to do.

# Travel Skills

*(Use this as a basis for discussion about transportation skills)*

How do you currently get around? Have you taken a ride on a bus or subway before?

Talk about the aspects of riding a bus that can be confusing for first-time—or even regular—riders.

Talk about what you need to know or be able to do in order to use public transportation, including:

**Getting from your origin/home to the bus stop.** Identify in advance any barriers or challenges the older adult may encounter and talk about possible solutions.

Discuss with them:

Are you able to walk to the bus stop or subway, carry any parcels or shopping bags that you will need, and climb up the steps to board the bus or down steps to the subway? If not, can someone accompany you to assist?

Are there places where you can rest along the way such as a friend's house or park bench?

If walking at twilight hours or night, remember to wear bright or reflective clothing to be sure you are visible to drivers. Avoid black or dark colors that make it hard for drivers to see you.

Are you prepared for the weather (umbrella, hat, sunglasses, walking shoes)?

Is there a route to the bus stop that has good sidewalks and fewer steep inclines?

Can you get to the bus stop or subway without encountering busy intersections that are difficult for an older pedestrian to cross safely? Always cross at a crosswalk or traffic light if possible.

Can you travel at a time of day when the transportation system is less busy, avoiding “rush hours” and school dismissal times?

Does the bus stop have a bench or shelter?

Could someone drive you to the bus stop or subway station?

Is the bus stop in a well-traveled area, with lots of pedestrians, good lighting, etc.?

**Identifying and getting on and off the right bus or buses.**

Do you know how to read a bus or subway schedule and identify route names and bus numbers? Do you understand the route and any needed transfers? Do you need exact change, a bus schedule, or special identification (for a senior discount)?

Are you prepared to ask for assistance, if needed, getting on and off the bus, finding a seat, or asking directions?

Take your time when boarding and alighting. Do not let others make you feel rushed. Remember that lots of people need a little extra time or help sometimes, for example parents with strollers or passengers carrying luggage or a bicycle.

Remember to remain seated until the bus comes to a full stop.

**Getting to your destination after you get off the bus.**

When you exit, do not cross the street in front of the bus; let the bus pull away from the curb and leave first.

Do you know exactly where you are going and how to get there?

Do you have the stamina for the return trip, possibly carrying heavy packages?

# Alzheimer's and Driving

## Solicit the support of others

Recruit a trusted authority such as a doctor to advise the person with Alzheimer's not to drive.

Relatives and an insurance agent can reinforce the message. For tips on approaching the topic, contact the Alzheimer's Association to find a local chapter ([www.alz.org](http://www.alz.org)).

## Acknowledge the loss

Be sensitive and reassuring.

Try to involve the person in other aspects of travel. Put the person in charge of the radio and temperature controls. Ask for assistance in looking for important signs.

## Arrange for transportation

Reassure the person that a ride will be available when needed.

Plan ahead.

## Take the test

Follow the motor vehicle department's paperwork guidelines in your State to request a retest or evaluation of the person.

Remember that taking away a driver's license does not mean the person with dementia will stop driving.

## Make the car less accessible

Have the caregiver keep the car keys.

If the car is not often used, have a mechanic disable it or install a hidden start switch, or park it down the street or out of sight. Consider selling the car.

## Be firm

Avoid arguments and long explanations.

Focus on other activities the person with dementia enjoys.

## Driving and Dementia

Once a doctor diagnoses dementia, the question is not “if” a person should stop driving, but rather “when.” Dementia affects cognitive functions critical to driving such as judgment, reaction time, and problem-solving abilities and causes physical and sensory problems that increase driving risk. People suffering from dementia often cannot assess their own driving capabilities and make changes.

For Alzheimer’s disease, early and clear warning signs that indicate the disease is affecting driving can include:

- Needing more help than in the past with directions or learning a new driving route;
- Having trouble remembering the destination of the trip or locating one’s parked car;
- Getting lost in familiar places;
- Having trouble making turns, especially left turns;
- Feeling confused when exiting a highway or by traffic signs such as a four-way stop;
- Receiving citations for moving violations;
- Finding that others frequently honk their horns;
- Stopping at green lights or braking inappropriately;
- Drifting out of road lane;
- Causing damage to one’s car without the ability to explain what happened;
- Finding others are questioning driving safety; and
- Having difficulty controlling anger, sadness or other emotions while driving.

At the point when these signs listed above occur, the driver should see a driver rehabilitation specialist immediately for an evaluation.

The evaluation gives a good starting point for measuring safe driving capabilities. As the disease progresses, driving will become unsafe. A doctor can help decide when driving should stop.

Begin conversations about driving and plan for the future early.

- Involve doctors, family members and loved ones.
- Look for and use community services.
- Develop a plan while the person with Alzheimer’s understands the safety issues and can make decisions.
- Seek testing and a driving evaluation.

A driving evaluation usually

- Tests the driver’s understanding of the “Rules of the Road.”
- Tests the driver’s reaction time.

- Provides a neurological screening.
- Includes an actual drive to observe the driver's abilities in the real world.

***Key Messages:***

- If warning signs for driving impairment appear, driving should stop until a driving specialist can make an evaluation or a doctor is consulted about how the disease is affecting driving capabilities. If the dementia compromises safety, the driver should stop driving.
- Involve family, a partner, and the person's physician in the discussion about strategies to help keep the person active in their community if they must limit or stop driving.
- To maintain the person's mobility, get to know and use community resources.

## What Do I Do With Anger?

- Listen:
- Hear the person out. Allow him or her to express anger and hostility.
  - Affirm the person's feelings of anger and that it is understandable.
- Explain concern:
- If appropriate, go over the reasons and the evidence of why driving in certain situations is now dangerous. Make sure you have your facts.
  - Where appropriate, review the possible results of continuing to drive. Explain why you are concerned that an injury could be much more disruptive to your loved one's life than not driving.
  - Share information about situations where a driver in a similar situation crashed or caused injury and lost the family estate or was disabled. Explain that you don't want your loved one to go through that situation.
- Suggest a second opinion:
- Suggest an assessment from a driving specialist or a health professional.

### **At a later time when emotions calm, you may want to address these issues.**

- Look at advantages:
- When appropriate, point out that the stresses of driving could be eliminated ("Mom, you won't have to service the car, worry about finding a parking space, or worry about how other people drive").
  - Point out that past concerns (perhaps about crashing or getting lost) could also be eliminated.
- Develop alternatives:
- Affirm your desire to help with transportation if the person has to cut back or stop driving.



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