



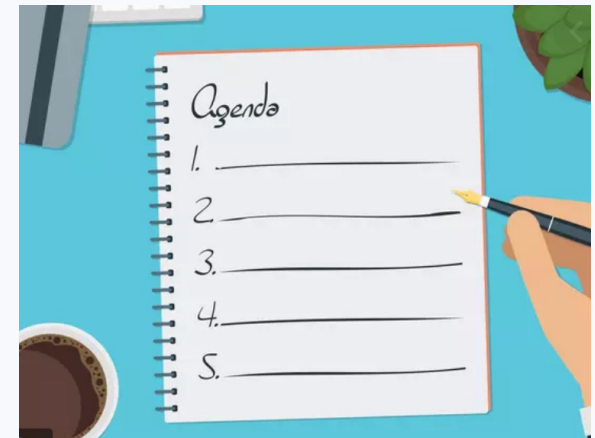
Connections For Older Adults: How to Access Digital Services For Individuals

DAS Training 4, August 19, 2021

**Tools for Life | Center for Inclusive Design and Innovation |
College of Design | Georgia Tech**

Learning Objectives

1. Define isolation and its effects.
2. Learn three new ways to connect.
3. Review existing assistive technology to use with older adults and their caregivers to help them stay more connected.
4. Reminder to refer persons for the DAS/Cares Act programming. No cost assistive technology to those who qualify.



Tools for Life (TFL)



Tools for Life (TFL), Georgia's Assistive Technology Act Program, provides Georgians of all ages and disabilities the opportunity to gain access to and acquisition of assistive technology devices and service so they can live, learn, work, and play independently in the communities of their choice.



Partners with DAS-CARES ACT Funding



- Tools For Life, in partnership with Georgia Department of Human Services (DHS) Division of Aging Services (DAS) funded with COVID-19 Aging and Disability Resource Connection (ADRC) Rapid Response and the ADRC No Wrong Door (NWD) funding
- **Goal** is to address and improve Social Isolation/Connectedness and Activities of Daily Living for older adults and people with disabilities
- **Assist 39 consumers** with assessing need, procuring and providing setup/training/support of AT
 - At least 3 in each of Georgia's 12 Area Agency on Aging (AAA)
- **Provide assessments to 16 consumers** and identify AT solutions
 - Maximum of 1 in Atlanta area
 - At least 1 from each of the 12 AAA

Contract period- April 5, 2021- September 30, 2021



Department of Human Services
Division of Aging Services

TFL Objectives:



- The Pandemic amplified an existing problem of social isolation and loneliness, which has been known to exacerbate health problems and contribute to poor quality of life. With this project, we have the ability to address these concerns and offer options to improve these situation through AT!
- **TFL will:**
 - Provide 4 trainings for DAS Staff/Counselors to best equip everyone with knowledge of AT to make referrals to TFL
 - May 20th
 - June 23rd
 - July 22nd
 - August 19th
 - Work directly with consumer to determine appropriate AT that will assist in connecting with family, friends and/or community
 - Assess AT needs to improve Activities of Daily Living of consumers
 - Provide training, setup, and support of AT with consumer

Social Isolation: What is it?

- Absence of social interactions, contacts and relationships with family and friends leads to an emotional manifestation of loneliness
- Evolutionary. Harkens back to the times when people lived in small groups and if they became isolated survival was more difficult
- 7.7 million people are socially isolated
- Men, persons with depression and dual eligible Medicaid/Medicare most likely
- Equivalent of smoking 15 cigarettes a day
- Directly connected to many health conditions: heart disease, blood pressure, depression, dementia
- Significant cost burden on the Medicare program. As much as \$6.7 billion annually

Causes of Social Isolation

- Living Alone or Remote from Family and friends
- Mobility Issues
- Hearing/Vision Issues
- Lack of Digital Technology
- Transportation



Digital Technology Is No Longer a Luxury

- Social Isolation
- Telehealth/Telemedicine
- Emergency Assistance
- Government Forms
- Financial Management
- Information
- Recreation
- Community Connections



Digital Disconnectedness for Seniors



- 22 million American seniors do not have wireline broadband access at home. Greatly restricts social and other essential connections.
- Technology is exacerbating social divisions and inequalities. Widening the serious divides between privileged and disadvantaged.
- Existing digital inclusion efforts targeting seniors are a hodge-podge. Large sections of the country served by no significant low-cost offerings or age-friendly initiatives.
- Georgia has many areas that are not wired.
- Solutions are within our reach.

Why is home-based broadband so important?



- Accessibility problems on small screens, document saving, limitation to fewer assets of video teleconferencing. Financial management screens are truncated.
- Non-mainstream operating systems limit access to apps.
- Community institution-only access is inconvenient and risky.
- Emerging technologies – wearables, 5G, satellite connections, voice activation need high-speed wireline access.
- Seniors isolated by a lack of access to reliable technology face personal hardships including physical and mental health issues.
- Can't connect with loved ones, healthcare, utilities, financial.

FCC Broadband Benefit



- Discount of up to \$50 a month toward broadband service
- Additional \$100 toward the purchase of a laptop, desktop or tablet from participating providers.
- Eligible households who are struggling to stay connected during pandemic.
- Eligibility – at least one person in hh must qualify for one of a variety of federal programs.
- Hurry! Expires when funds run out or six months after pandemic is declared over.
- To learn more – <https://fcc.gov/broadbandbenefit>

How to help older adults and their caregivers connect with the outside world in meaningful ways?

One-to-one contact

- Phone, Facetime, Zoom
- Scheduled virtual visits
- Postcards, letters, greeting cards
- Telemedicine/telehealth

Big screens

- HDMI Cables
- Tablets
- Personal Digital Assistants

Recreation

- Online Cards, Bingo
- Collector's sites, Special Interest
- Virtual travel
- Photo frames

Click to



FaceTime



Videoconferencing

Zoom Meeting ID: [REDACTED]

Speaker View

1/2

1/2

Josh Witty Elizabeth Swan Lynna Hu John Mensik Jeff Bechtel

Rob Rinsky Mitchel Mayes Angeline Huynh Tamara Pitts Zhenghang Gu

Shari Clare Winston Twu James Desmond - Denve... Rozette Pasahol Huey Le - Zoom CSM

Jenny Eggimann Subriah Esharc Heather Jarrett Justin Henry Matt Caballero

George Bassil Kerushan Bisetty John Poje Brian McIntyre Farah Faraclas

Mute Stop Video Invite Manage Participants 28 Polling Share Screen Chat Record Breakout Rooms More End Meeting

NixPlay Digital Photo Frame



Amazon Show



GrandPad



INTRODUCING
GrandPad | Consumer Cellular

Birdsong



How to introduce technology to older adults?

- Start with something that they love/need.
 - Card game, hobby, music, travel, communicating with loved ones.
- Go slow. Don't introduce too many concepts at once.
 - Let them get comfortable first.
- Limit the number of steps.
- Use regular language.
- Engage younger relatives in the instruction.



TABLET DISTRIBUTION PROGRAM

80 tablets to clients

- Claris app includes messaging, games, photos, website links
- Video conferencing
Exercise Youtube videos
- Customization





PROGRAM RESULTS

Survey of 21 users:

One-third have never used a tablet/computer before

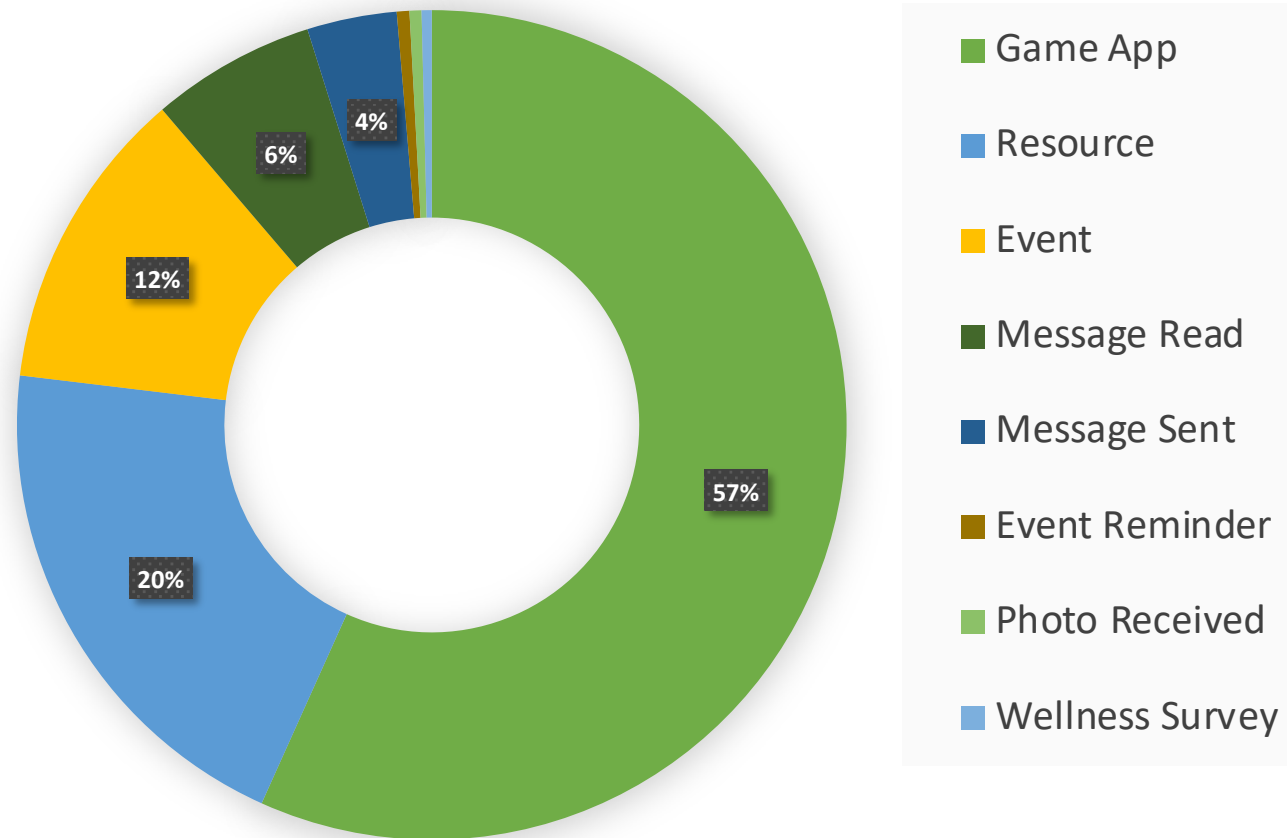
62% report tablet has improved overall health

67% feel more confident using the tablet

76% more connected to CSS

Half more connected with family & friends

TOP ACTIVITIES





CASE STUDIES

A few were hesitant at first...

- 84 year-old woman received over 100 photos from her family (graduation, beach vacations and more)
- 92 year-old woman now has played over 300 games (1,000+ min) – 2nd highest user

“I’m all alone...I’m all by myself, but I’m alert. I can learn things. Technology is a little complicated to me. (the tablet) keeps my mind alive – I learn!”

- 89 year-old woman

CONTACT INFO



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Reading

- Large print books
- Magnifying sheets
- Georgia Radio Reading Services
 - <https://garrs.org/>
 - Phone and Radio Receiver
- GLS- Georgia Library Service for the Blind and Print Disabled
 - <https://gls.georgialibraries.org/>
 - BARD- Braille and Auto Reading Download

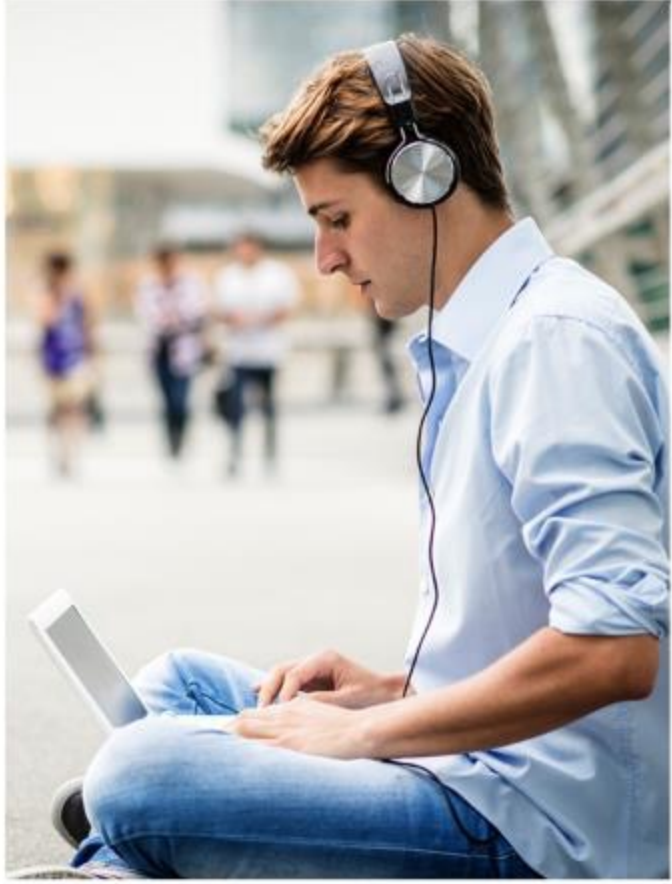


Communication

Hearing

- Hearing aids can be difficult for some to use. The increase of background noise can cause many to abandon.
- Cost can be a barrier.
- Hearing amplification devices.
- Captioned phones.





Mobility/Transportation

Mobility

- Many persons have walkers, wheelchairs and rollators
- Are they still appropriate?
- Do they still fit?
- Are they working properly?
- Adapt to need – larger keyboards, special holders



Variety of Hearing Amplification Devices



Eating Together

- Meals on Wheels Deliveries - Often the only visitor the older adult has in a day
- Congregate meals – Senior centers. Afford quality time to share nutrition and connect with others.
- Family meals – Create the right environment for the older adult to take part in the meal. Address issues of hearing
- Food Preparation - How can the older adult contribute?

Questions?



The Tools for Life Team



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Disclaimer: Produced by Tools for Life (TFL), which is a result of the Assistive Technology Act of 1998, as amended in 2004. TFL is a program of the Georgia Institute of Technology, College of Design, Center for Inclusive Design and Innovation (formerly AMAC Accessibility) and was made possible by Grant Number H224C030009 from the Administration for Community Living. Its contents are solely the responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official views of HHS.