

Love of Car: \_\_\_\_\_

# Transportation as We Age

Discussion Guide and Resources, 2nd Edition

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Minnesota Gerontological Society

[www.mngero.org](http://www.mngero.org)

### **Acknowledgments**

This is the discussion guide and list of resources to accompany “Love of Car: Transportation as we Age”, a one-hour documentary about safe community mobility for mature drivers and transition to alternative modes of transportation. The production of this documentary was spearheaded by the Minnesota Gerontological Society (MGS) and Twin Cities Public Television (*tpt*).

Thanks to Diane Sprague, for all the help in the development of this project from the ground up. Thanks also to the occupational therapy graduate students at St. Catherine University who helped develop this discussion guide. They are, Jill Cazett, Kendra Darwin, Lyndsey Harteau, Sarah Karmondy, Dora Kealy and Michelle Zurek.

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The program is being broadcast periodically on the ***tpt*** Minnesota Channel (see [www.tpt.org](http://www.tpt.org) for show times). It can also be viewed streaming on line on the mgs website at [www.mngero.org](http://www.mngero.org). The DVD of the documentary is available and can be requested on the mgs website. It contains the full one-hour broadcast in a format that helps select individual chapters if the full one-hour viewing time is not possible.

If you are interested in completing a survey about the effectiveness of the documentary in improving awareness of safe community mobility please contact me at [cnsullivan@stkate.edu](mailto:cnsullivan@stkate.edu) before showing or viewing the documentary.

Catherine Sullivan  
Chair of the MGS-*tpt* Production Partnership

## **Table of Content**

Each section of the guide corresponds to a chapter on the DVD. Since the themes of most chapters are organized in pairs, the resource guide follows the pairs or groups of chapters that have the same overall theme. The organization is generally in the form of a chapter that presents the problem with expert interviews, and the next chapter in the pair will illustrate some aspect of that theme using an actual story. Effort was made to allow each page (or page pairs for resources) to be stand alone if desired.

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## **Chapters 1 and 2: The Problem and Josie's Story**

### **Chapter 1: The Problem Chapter Summary**

Following an introduction about older driver crash risk statistics, interviewees discuss both the assets of mature drivers and the driving challenges commonly experienced with increasing age. One particular age-related functional change emphasized in this section is that of vision.

This chapter also describes ways to determine if one is a safe driver and the professionals involved, including physicians, law enforcement, Driver and Vehicle Service (DVS) and Certified Driver Rehabilitation Specialist (CDRS).

The help available to seniors during the driving cessation process is emphasized. The importance of becoming familiar with public transportation is introduced.

### **Discussion Guide Chapter 1**

1. What is your reaction to the statistics about older drivers' risk of accidents? Do they surprise you? What do you think of the gender difference?
2. One interviewee indicated that it is not about age but about function. Do you agree with her statement? What changes in abilities have you experienced that could impact your comfort level with driving?
3. What modifications, if any, are you are making in your driving habits to improve your driving safety?
4. What warning signs or event would prompt you to change your driving habits or begin thinking about driving cessation?
5. Have you had a discussion about driving with your physician or other health professional? How can your physician play more of a role?
6. Do you think that license renewal should happen more frequently after a certain age? What do you think that age should be? Should the license renewal include other tests besides vision?

## Chapter 2: Josie's Story Chapter Summary

Josie's story is a story of transition with a focus on a rural area. Josie, a 91-year old resident of Atwater MN describes how she limits her driving to match her abilities. The story also shows the other people involved in that transition. They include Josie's friends who share similar experiences and discuss ways to handle those challenges. Mention is also made of the law enforcement officer who makes sure everyone in town stays safe. Josie describes her family as playing an essential role in the transition, with her daughter and grand-daughter providing rides and support. Formal sources of transportation shown in that chapter include the volunteer driver who enjoys hearing about the town's history as he is giving rides to its older residents. Other formal mobility resources shown are the transportation services provided by the Block Nurse program and the county bus.

### Discussion Guide Chapter 2

1. Josie limits her driving. How does she limit her driving? In what ways has driving changed for you over the years?
2. "It's not the 10<sup>th</sup> mile but the 1<sup>st</sup> you have to worry about". How did this reflection or other comments by Josie impact your own thinking about risk?
3. How do you feel about others being involved or having concerns about your driving ability? Have you had conversations with anyone about it? How do you believe your family can help?
4. The volunteer in the documentary describes a case in which family members had to take the keys away because the older driver didn't feel like he was a danger. How do you think that situation could be prevented?
5. How are you reacting to the volunteer saying how much he enjoys giving rides? Does it make you more likely to limit your driving and use rides?
6. Connie Feig, the Block Nurse Director, describes how a resident of the town is using the bus on a regular basis to visit his wife in the nursing home. Would you know how to take public transit, or specialized senior transit, to a place of interest?

## Resources related to Chapter 1 and 2

### 1. Older driver facts and statistics websites

- a. AAA seniors website: Know the facts about senior drivers.  
<http://www.aaaseniors.com/know-the-facts>
- b. American Society on Aging: Myths and facts about older drivers  
[https://www.asaging.org/cdc/module4/phase1/phase1\\_1a.cfm](https://www.asaging.org/cdc/module4/phase1/phase1_1a.cfm)
- c. Edmund.com popular press overview of the older driver problem  
<http://www.edmunds.com/ownership/safety/articles/121474/article.html>
- d. National HighwayTraffic Safety Administration: Facts on older drivers  
<http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov/portal/site/nhtsa/menuitem.31176b9b03647a189ca8e410dba046a0/>
- e. AARP: Older drivers and automobile safety  
[http://www.aarp.org/research/ppi/livcom/transport/articles/fs51r\\_drivers.html](http://www.aarp.org/research/ppi/livcom/transport/articles/fs51r_drivers.html)
- f. Insurance Institute for Highway Safety older driver statistics:  
[http://www.iihs.org/research/fatality\\_facts\\_2008/olderpeople.html](http://www.iihs.org/research/fatality_facts_2008/olderpeople.html)

### 2. Age-related changes affecting driving

- a. NHTSA Safe driving for older adults resource  
<http://www.nhtsa.gov/people/injury/olddrive/OlderAdultswebsite/index.html>
- b. NHTSA website with brochures on how various conditions affect driving:  
<http://www.nhtsa.gov/people/injury/olddrive/index.html>

### 3. Warning signs:

- a. Hartford Warning Signs worksheet available at  
<http://www.thehartford.com/alzheimers/warning.html>

### 4. Online screening tools:

- a. AAA – Drivers 55 Plus online screening -  
<http://www.aaafoundation.org/quizzes/index.cfm?button=driver55>
- b. *Driving Decision Workbook* - University of Michigan, available at  
<http://www.um-saferdriving.org/firstPage.php>
- c. Roadwise review screening tool available online at  
<http://www.seniordrivers.org/driving/driving.cfm?button=roadwiseonline>

## 5. Physician's role with older drivers

- a. AMA: Physician's guide to assessing and counseling older drivers. Downloadable pdf's <http://www.ama-assn.org/ama/pub/physician-resources/public-health/promoting-healthy-lifestyles/geriatric-health/older-driver-safety/assessing-counseling-older-drivers.shtml>

## 6. Licensing issues:

- a. License Renewal regulations across the U.S. : <http://www.iihs.org/laws/olderdrivers.aspx>

## 7. Resources on transition for older drivers and their families

- a. Dugan, E. (2006) *The driving dilemma: The complete resource guide for older drivers and their families*. New York, NY: Harper Collins
- b. Davidson, S. & Davidson, T. N. (2007). *Keep the keys: A practical handbook for older drivers*. Indianapolis, IN: GeroVibes.
- c. AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety *How to help an older driver* . Brochure: <http://www.aaafoundation.org/pdf/ODlarge.pdf>  
Web site: <http://www.seniordrivers.org>
- d. AARP-The Hartford guide for families: "Let's Talk" on driving transition <http://aarp.thehartford.com/Driving-Safety/Family-Conversations/>
- e. Dementia and driving <http://hartfordauto.thehartford.com/Safe-Driving/Car-Safety/Older-Driver-Safety/Dementia-Activity/>
- f. AOTA website: Tools for Older Drivers and Families <http://www.aota.org/Older-Driver/Consumer.aspx>
- g. National Safety Council Mature Driver Survey results and tips on talking about cessation [http://www.nsc.org/safety\\_road/DriverSafety/Pages/MatureDrivers.aspx](http://www.nsc.org/safety_road/DriverSafety/Pages/MatureDrivers.aspx)
- h. Caring.com resources on discussing driving cessation with aging parent <http://www.caring.com/older-drivers>

## **Chapters 3 and 4: Solutions and Roger's Story**

### **Chapter 3: Solutions to Older Driver Challenges, Chapter Summary**

CarFit: Elin Schold-Davis from the American Occupational Therapy Association (AOTA) describes how the CarFit public education program helps seniors learn to adjust their cars to their bodies to decrease the risk of crashes and injuries. Erica Stern, occupational therapy faculty at the University of Minnesota describes studies showing that many seniors follow recommendations made at CarFit.

Professional Assessment: Connie Shaffer, OTR, describes how identifying driving issues early enough through a comprehensive driving evaluation can potentially lead to recommendations and interventions that can improve driving safety.

Roadwise Review: Gail Weinholzer from AAA describes how Roadwise review, a screening tool available on a CD or online, enables seniors to identify potential driving challenges in the privacy of their own homes. It measures driving-related skills over time so they can be addressed as soon as they occur.

Physical Fitness: Research shows that physical fitness is linked to decrease crash risk. Starting an exercise program reduces the risk of accidents for older drivers.

Safe Road Features: Road design features such as roundabouts and left-turn lane offsets reduce the risk of serious crashes and are being increasingly phased in.

Intelligent Transportation Systems: Mike Manser from the Human First laboratory at the University of Minnesota describes how technology in the cars and in the environment can make driving safer. He also demonstrates how driving simulators can help study factors that impact driving safety in a safe environment.

DriveSharp: Since our visual field of attention narrows with age, mature drivers have a more difficult time seeing cars at intersections and other potential dangers on the road. Gail Weinholzer from AAA describes how computer programs such as DriveSharp can help mature drivers expand their visual attention. Research has shown that such visual attention training can result in lower crash rates.

### Discussion Guide Chapter 3

1. Do you sometimes wish that the car was designed a different way, or that certain features could be modified to make it more comfortable to drive? Has your seatbelt ever felt uncomfortable? What solutions have you come up with on your own to address those comfort issues?
2. Are you using any strategies to identify potential driving risk in yourself or others? What screening tools or professional evaluations mentioned in the documentary would you choose for yourself or mature drivers you know and why?
3. Think of a concrete driving challenge that may be identified through one of those screening tools or evaluations (i.e. decreased strength, range of motion, vision problem). Identify possible ways in which that challenge could be addressed to result in safer driving, if identified early enough.
4. What kind of physical activities would you choose to follow through with recommendations made in this documentary about staying physically fit to increase the driving years?
5. Now that you know about roundabouts' benefits for driving safety, what do you think about their implementation into your community?
6. What do you think about the potential of advanced technology such as navigation aids or night vision aids to make driving safer?
7. The documentary mentions how computer programs can help improve visual attention skills. Are you interested in trying such computer programs? Why or why not? What other ways do you think could be used to expand visual scanning and quick visual attention shifting?

## **Chapter 4: Roger's Story about Solutions Summary**

This chapter illustrates some of the solutions to older driver issues mentioned in chapter 3, by using the story of Roger. Roger had a medical condition that required discontinuation of driving. Following driving rehabilitation at Sister Kenny, he regained his driving ability. Roger describes that using the simulator helped him become aware of some of his limitations that he needed to address.

His occupational therapist, Chris Tripp, explains how driving challenges can be due to a number of issues including cognitive issues. Cognition includes the ability to divide attention, selectively pay attention to important aspects on the road and the ability to multi-task. He describes how the driving simulator provides the opportunity to train those and other skills in a safe environment. The simulator also allows working on safe driving strategies

Chris also emphasizes how keeping physically fit is important for driving safety.

At the conclusion of this chapter, as transition to the next chapter about transportation, Mike Manser makes the point that the decision about cessation depends on the availability of viable alternative community mobility options.

### **Discussion Guide Chapter 4**

1. Do you feel a driving simulator is an accurate test of your driving skills?
2. What is your reaction of the driving simulator as a tool to train safe driving skills?
3. What strategies for safer driving have you used, if any?
4. After seeing this film are you considering using strategies to improve driving related skills such as working on your flexibility, strength or reaction time specifically to improve your driving?

## Resources Related to Chapters 3 and 4

### 1. Adjusting the car for safety:

- a. CarFit Program <http://www.car-fit.org/>
- b. Keep Moving Longer: Features for safe driving DVD:  
<http://www.geront.umb.edu/inst/projects/promoting.jsp>
- c. National Highway Safety Administration: Adapting motor vehicles for older drivers <http://www.nhtsa.gov/Senior-Drivers>
- d. Buss, D. *Designing Better Cars for Senior Drivers*.  
<http://www.edmunds.com/ownership/safety/articles/121492/article.html>

### 2. Roadwise review (other screening tools see resources for chapters 1-2)

- a. Roadwise review screening tool available online at  
<http://www.seniordrivers.org/driving/driving.cfm?button=roadwiseonline>

### 3. Professional assessments and rehabilitation

- a. Hartford guide to comprehensive older driver evaluations  
<http://hartfordauto.thehartford.com/Safe-Driving/Publications-And-Resources/?KEY=AARP&PLCode=030313>
- b. AOTA website: Online search tools to find an occupational therapist driving rehabilitation specialist for evaluation and remediation:  
<http://www.aota.org/Older-Driver/Consumer/Evaluate.aspx>
- c. AMA Physicians' Guide for Older Drivers. Chapter 3: Formally Assess Function, available at <http://www.ama-assn.org/ama/pub/physician-resources/public-health/promoting-healthy-lifestyles/geriatric-health/older-driver-safety/assessing-counseling-older-drivers.shtml>

### 4. Physical fitness and decreased crash risk.

- a. Popular press article about research on how physical activity improves older driver safety: <http://seniorjournal.com/NEWS/Fitness/2007/7-06-05-SenCitImprove.htm>
- b. AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety exercises to foster driving safety  
<http://www.seniordrivers.org/driving/driving.cfm?button=exercises>

## 5. General strategies to improve driving safety:

a. AARP online older driver safety course:

[http://www.aarp.org/family/housing/driver\\_safety\\_program/driver\\_safety\\_program/](http://www.aarp.org/family/housing/driver_safety_program/driver_safety_program/)

b. AAA foundation for Traffic Safety: Recommendations for safer driving.

<http://www.aaafoundation.org/quizzes/index.cfm?button=driver55sugg#q1>

c. American Society on Aging. *DriveWell*:

<http://www.asaging.org/asav2/drivewell/toolkit.cfm>

d. AOTA resources for seniors and their families: Driver safety tips:

<http://www.aota.org/Older-Driver/Consumer/Tips.aspx>

e. NHSTA: Driving Safely While Aging Gracefully Booklet:

<http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov/people/injury/olddrive/Driving%20Safely%20Aging%20Web/>

## 6. Safe streets features.

a. Powerpoint on Road Design for an Aging society from MnDOT on MGS website at [www.mngeo.org](http://www.mngeo.org)

b. Questions and answers about roundabouts:

<http://www.iihs.org/research/qanda/roundabouts.html>

c. AARP. *Planning Complete Streets for an Aging America*.

<http://assets.aarp.org/rgcenter/ppi/liv-com/2009-02-streets.pdf>

## 7. Intelligent vehicle systems and older drivers

a. AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety. (2008, September). *Use of Advanced In-Vehicle Technology by Younger and Older Adopters*. Retrieved December 11, 2009, from <http://www.aaafoundation.org/pdf/In-VehicleTechnologyReport.pdf>

## 8. Improving visual attention (Useful Field of View) for driving

a. Drive Sharp training program based on Useful Field of View research on benefits of visual attention training for improving driving safety

<http://www.positscience.com/our-products/drivesharp>

b. Cognifit Senior Driver computer training program

<http://www.cognifit.com/products/cognifit/cognifit-senior-driver>

## **Chapters 5, 6 and 7: Transportation Options, Juan's Story and Moving Forward**

### **Chapter 5: Transportation Options Summary**

Advanced planning for life without a car is recommended since men live without a car for 7 years and women for 10 years. Being aware of the transportation options and learning to use them can help make the transition a smoother one.

Public transit: The first interview featured is that of Tony Elia who provides community mobility training for the public transit system. He describes how seniors are often not familiar with public transit. He would prefer if seniors became familiar with the bus system before they stop driving to make the transition easier. His role is to teach them where to get the information, including how to access buses and ride safely with wheelchairs and scooters if necessary.

Senior Transportation: Annette Sandler from JCFS describes the social service agency she leads which has received national recognition for providing a range of flexible transportation solutions including curb-to-curb and door-through-door. Carol, who uses the volunteer driver services provided by JCFS, describes how helpful the service is to her. Also, her volunteer driver describes how she enjoys doing it and how she feels a sense of duty for helping older adults get around.

Mark Hoisser leads DARTS, another award-winning transportation provider and describes how paratransit is not just about getting access but is also an opportunity for socialization. He also describes ADA paratransit as a service that is federally required to provide transportation to seniors and disabled individuals wherever and whenever regular transit is available.

Mark Hoisser also leads the Minnesota Partnership for Safe Mobility, a coalition of a number of agencies and organizations, who are working together to improve older driver safety and community mobility, and who partnered with MGS to develop this documentary.

## Discussion Guide Chapter 5

1. Were you surprised to find out that seniors live between 7 to 10 years without a car? Do you think that information should impact our planning for where we choose to live in their retirement years? How does this affect your plans?
2. Tony Elia from the video explained that many seniors are not comfortable riding the public transit system. Do you relate to that statement? What is your comfort level with public transportation?
3. Tony Elia explained that older adults should be using the bus occasionally while they still drive to help become familiar with the system and facilitate the transition. Is that something you would be willing to do? What would make it more likely for you to try that strategy?
4. Tony Elia also explained that he teaches people how to access and safely ride the bus with scooters or wheel-chairs. Would you, or older adults you know, benefit from learning this? What do you see as challenges? Could they be overcome?
5. Have you ever used alternative transportation like the bus, light rail, taxi cab, senior vans, volunteer driver, etc.? What form of alternative transportation sounds most compatible with your needs or desires? Explain.
6. If you qualified for ADA paratransit services (i.e. MetroMobility), would you have any reservations about using the service? What would help you overcome those reservations ?

## **Chapter 6: Juan's Story About Transportation Options Summary**

Juan is a retired Mexican-American gentleman who suffers from glaucoma which he acquired later in life. He was a truck driver and used to love driving. He describes how he decided to stop driving following an accident in which he didn't see another car.

Juan values very much living on his own. He decided that he didn't want to always be dependent on the rides from his daughter. He used the public transit for a while but now uses mainly ADA paratransit (Metro Mobility and DARTS). He goes to places such as his Braille classes, the grocery store and the medical clinic using the ADA van service. He also uses that van service to go to church every Sunday, even though his ride involves a transfer that sometimes requires him to wait.

Juan describes how he likes interacting and socializing with the driver and other passengers in the vans.

### **Discussion Guide of Chapter 6**

1. Juan initially used public transportation prior to accessing the ADA paratransit (Metro Mobility and DARTS). How do you think he learned how to use the bus system? How could you learn about the bus system? Do you think he had a positive or negative view of using the bus system? Is his view different or similar to yours?
2. Juan very much valued his independence and viewed ADA paratransit as a service that helped him keep it. Do you agree with him? What are your views of using alternative transportation options as a way to stay independent?
3. Juan mentioned having to wait for about 15-20 minutes during his transfer between paratransit vans. Did this wait seem to affect him negatively? Would such a wait affect your likelihood to use paratransit for more distant trips?
4. What barriers, if any, do you think you might experience using alternative transportation? Would you classify your barriers under physical ability, psychological factors, or the physical environment?

## **Chapter 7: Moving Forward Summary**

Elin Schold-Davis from the American Occupational Therapy Association's Older Driver Initiative explains how in the past seniors have been given inaccurate messages about driving cessation. Linking taking away the keys to becoming older is not a healthy message and does not achieve the goal of keeping people safely on the road.

Instead seniors and their families should focus on becoming better educated about what signs to look for that might signal safety issues, and learning about the solutions that are there for them.

Annette Sandler explains how information about sources of transportation in every Minnesota community is available through Senior Linkage Line and MnHelp.info. Seniors can also find those transportation options in their city offices. Other resources are available nationwide. (see resource list)

The documentary then shows seniors dancing to emphasize how remaining physically active is important to allow for continued community mobility.

The documentary ends with a senior driving down the road on a three wheel bicycle.

## **Discussion Guide Chapter 7**

1. What resources do you plan on using to assist with mobility needs?
2. How do you feel about the transition to driving retirement? Does it make you feel better to know there are options out there?
3. In your view, does driving retirement lead to changes in health and well-being? How do you plan on maintaining community mobility and involvement after driving cessation?

## Resources Related to Chapters 5, 6 and 7

### 1. Minnesota resources on transportation

- a. Senior LinkAge line at 1-800-333-2433 or [www.MinnesotaHelp.info](http://www.MinnesotaHelp.info)
- b. See separate Minnesota Public Transit Association Powerpoint on the MGS website at [www.mngero.org](http://www.mngero.org).
- c. Applying for Metro Mobility: Form available online at <http://www.metrocouncil.org/transportation/MetroMobility/Forms/forms.htm> or call 651-602-1111 (TTY 651-221-9886)

### 2. Finding transportation in one's community nationwide

- a. Eldercare Locator at 1-800-677-1116 or <http://www.eldercare.gov/> to identify transportation resources in their area
- b. AARP state by state senior transportation guide [http://bulletin.aarp.org/yourworld/gettingaround/articles/state-by-state\\_guide.html](http://bulletin.aarp.org/yourworld/gettingaround/articles/state-by-state_guide.html)

### 3. National information about senior transportation

- a. National Center for Senior Transportation (NCST) 866-528-NCST (6278) [http://seniortransportation.easterseals.com/site/PageServer?pagename=NCST\\_2\\_older](http://seniortransportation.easterseals.com/site/PageServer?pagename=NCST_2_older) (See also separate handout from NCST on MGS website)
- b. The Community Transportation Association of America aging resources <http://web1.ctaa.org/webmodules/webarticles/anmviewer.asp?a=309&z=5>
- c. The Beverly Foundation senior transportation library at <http://www.beverlyfoundation.org/library/index.html>
- d. ITN America volunteer driver program <http://www.itnamerica.org/>

### 4. Other national resources

- a. Florida Keeping Seniors Safe and Mobile website at <http://www.safeandmobileseniors.org/>
- b. Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) transportation rights [http://www.fta.dot.gov/civilrights/civil\\_rights\\_2360.html](http://www.fta.dot.gov/civilrights/civil_rights_2360.html)
- c. Molnar et al. (2007). Promising approaches for promoting lifelong community mobility. AARP. <http://hdl.handle.net/2027.42/60921>