

TAKE ACTION NOW: PROMOTE HEALTHY AGEING



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The World Health Organization has endorsed a proposal for a Decade of Healthy Aging (2020-2030) to foster healthy ageing and reinforce the urgent needs to implement actions to ensure older adults to maintain their functional ability and wellbeing.

What is healthy ageing?

According to WHO, healthy ageing is defined as “the process of developing and maintaining the functional ability that enables wellbeing in older age.” In that sense, older adults should be capable to do what they value. Functional ability is an important issue and comprises the intrinsic capacity and environment. Intrinsic capacity consists of physical and mental capacities that refers to older adults’ locomotor capacity, sensory capacity, vitality, cognition and psychological capacity. The environmental factors consist of policies, systems, services provided, innovative technologies, family support, culture and social attitudes and values (World Health Organization, 2021). Figure 1 illustrates the common foundation of functional ability, intrinsic capacity and environment (World Health Organization, 2019).

WHO emphasized four areas that need to be addressed. First, creating an age-friendly environment without barriers, develop policies and systems that enable older adults to live with dignity and maximize their capacity. Second, combating ageism by developing good policies and positive attitudes towards older adults. Third, providing integrated care which older adults can easily access the services that are related to prevention of illness, treatment of disease, rehabilitative information, palliative and end-of-life care, vaccination program, dental care and assistive technologies. Lastly, long-term care services are essential to maintain older adults’ functional ability, wellbeing, and enjoy life with dignity.

Services can help the older adults and their families to understand the management of chronic geriatric conditions and rehabilitation so as to help older adults ageing in place (World Health Organization, 2022).

What Can We Do?

Nurses play a crucial role as health gatekeepers, and educators in promoting healthy ageing and improving the well-being of older adults and their families. "A toolkit for promoting healthy ageing" by HASIC can be a useful guide for nurses to develop the promotion program and teaching materials. This toolkit covers three areas: 1) physical health such as exercise, prevent home injury, suggestions on healthy food; 2) social health such as prevention of loneliness, avoid depression and create social networks and 3) emotional health such as resilience and autonomy. Through maintaining older adults' functional ability and intrinsic capacity with environment modification, we can support and educate older adults and their families to live healthier and happier (HASIC, 2016).

It is time for us to take action to foster the message of healthy ageing in our daily practice and teaching.

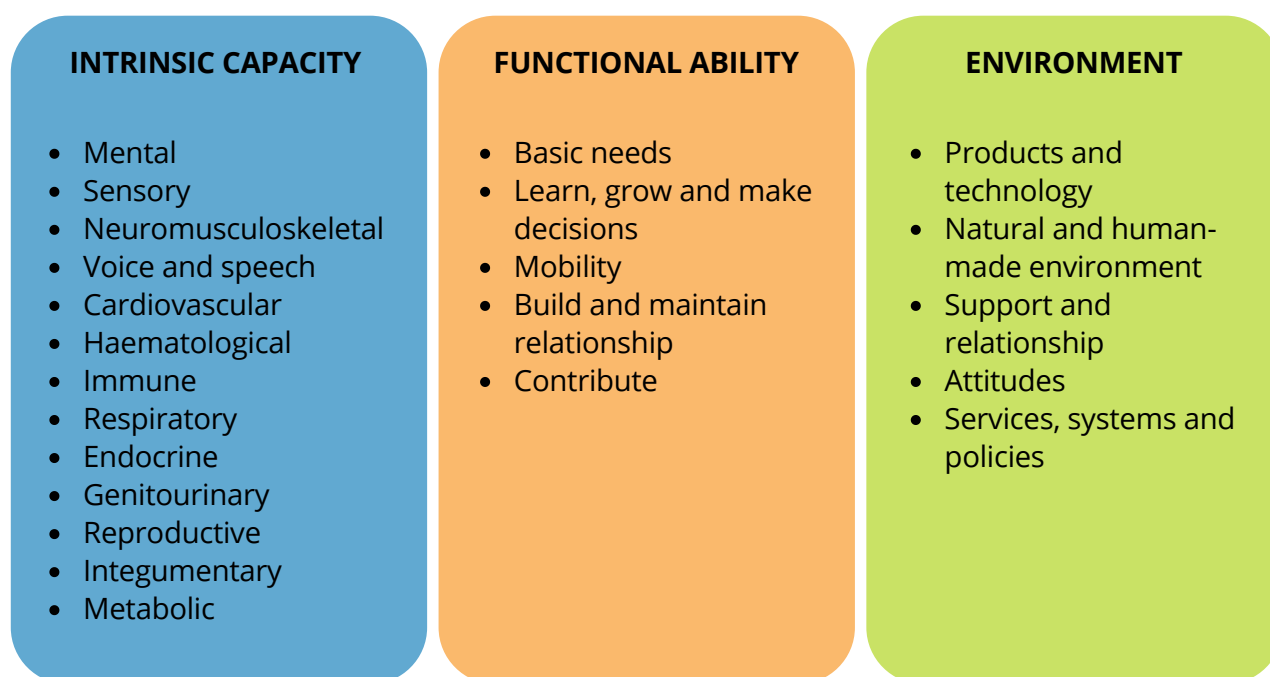


Figure 1: Constructs of Healthy Aging (World Health Organization, 2019)

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