

## Evidence-Based Programs: We're Stronger Together!

*By Sarah Franey, Community Services Officer*

In Massachusetts, evidence-based programming (EBP) refers to programs and practices that have been rigorously tested and proven effective, based on solid research and evaluation, to improve health outcomes for individuals, and communities.

Each year, in partnership with Cape Cod Healthcare's VNA office of Public Health, ESCCI is pleased to provide several Evidence-Based health programs to the community. Offered in a series of weekly workshops, EBP's can include such courses as **A Matter of Balance, Chronic Disease Self-Management, Fit & Strong, Healthy Eating for Successful Living, Nordic Walking, Powerful Tools for Caregivers, The Savvy Caregiver, etc.** Provided free of charge, these fun and gentle programs empower older adults, and caregivers, to actively achieve better health, maintain independence and continue living in the community for as long as possible. In other words, an improved quality of life!

Perhaps the most important benefit of participation in an EBP is the socialization. Most classes are conducted in small to medium sized groups, in community settings like Councils on Aging, and other community centers. The fellowship that takes place during and after class is just as crucial to wellbeing as physical fitness.

Whether you are interested in light exercise to improve balance and flexibility, outdoor walking activities, nutritional education or tips for healthy coping while navigating depression or caregiver stress, Evidence-Based programming has something for everyone. Comments from attendees of The Savvy Caregiver workshop series include "This small program had a big impact on me. I learned better ways to communicate with my loved one. It meant so much to know I am not alone." After completing the course A Matter of Balance, a participant shared that "the fear of falling kept me from leaving the house and doing things I love. This class improved my strength and confidence."

Currently the EBP *Fit & Strong* is being offered at Yarmouth Council on Aging (registration closed). Next up on the calendar is *Nordic Walking*. Located at the Chatham Council on Aging, this walking group sets off May 1<sup>st</sup> through June 19<sup>th</sup> (on Tuesdays and Thursdays). For more information, or to register, please call the VNA Public Health office at (508)957-7423.

And don't forget to check back with ESCCI for updates on other workshops to come like *A Matter of Balance* and *Healthy Eating for Successful Living*.



*A group of A Matter of Balance participants get moving.*