

4Ms Framework of an Age-Friendly Health System



What is an Age-Friendly Health System?

A health system that:

- Reliably implements a set of four evidence-based practices (4Ms) to ensure that high-quality care is delivered to all older adults.
- Provides care in every interaction with every older adult that aligns with what matters to older adults and their family caregivers.
- Causes no harm.

Why is it important?

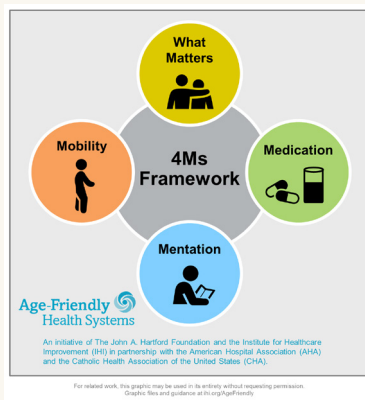
- Over 77% of older adults have at least two chronic conditions making their care more complex.
- Older adults have higher rates of health care use as compared to other age groups and experience higher rates of health-care-related harm, delay, and discoordination.
- Health care systems need to support older adults in maintaining their health and well-being as well as treating their chronic conditions.
- Health care systems are not prepared to handle the complexity of care that older adults may require.

The 4Ms Framework

The purpose of the 4Ms Framework is:

To know and align care with each older adult's specific **health outcome goals** and **care preferences** including, but not limited to, end-of-life care, and across settings of care. It means asking "what matters to you," in addition to "what's the matter?"

- **Health outcome goals:** values and activities that matter most to an individual, help sustain and improve their health, and can be used to guide decision-making.
- **Care preferences:** health activities (e.g., healthy behaviors, medication, self-management, health care visits, testing and procedures) that patients are or are not willing and able to do or receive.



Learn More

Age-Friendly Health Systems: Guide to Using the 4Ms in the Care of Older Adults

“What Matters” to Older Adults? A Toolkit for Health Systems to Design Better Care with Older Adults

z.umn.edu/Geripreceptor

The 4Ms Elements for Age-Friendly Care

What Matters
Know and align care with each older adult's specific health outcome goals and care preferences.

Medication
If medication is necessary, use Age-Friendly medication that doesn't interfere with What Matters to the older adult, Mobility, or Mentation across settings of care.

Mentation
Prevent, identify, treat, and manage dementia, depression, and delirium.

Mobility
Ensure that older adults move safely every day in order to maintain function and do What Matters.

What Matters

- Ask the older adult What Matters most, document it, and share What Matters across the care team.
- Align the care plan with What Matters most.

Medication

- Review for high-risk medication use and document it.
- Deprescribe or avoid high-risk medications, and document and communicate changes.

Mentation

- Screen for dementia/cognitive impairment and document the results.
- Screen for depression and document the results.
- Consider further evaluation and manage manifestations of dementia, educate older adults and their family members, and/or refer out.
- Identify and manage factors contributing to depression and/or refer out.

Mobility

- Screen, document, and manage impairments that reduce mobility and lead to falls.
- Create home environments that are safer for mobility.

Implementing the 4Ms

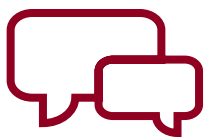
Implementation of the 4Ms is driven by having What Matters conversations with the patient and family members to develop a genuine partnership for co-creating a customized plan of care.

- ✓ Integrate What Matters conversations at multiple points of care, including annual visits, major life events, or changes in health status.
- ✓ Coordinate What Matters care with the entire health team, including the patient and family/caregiver, by documenting the older adult's health outcome goals and care preferences.



Teaching Tips

It is often difficult for health professional students to understand that treatment can mean something other than providing services, procedures, and medications, and that assessment requires more than identifying deficits. Students may also have difficulty accepting that not all conditions or problems need to be aggressively treated to provide the best care. Help students understand that creating a genuine partnership with patients and their family members requires an awareness of the important issues in their patients' lives to co-create a customized plan of care. Recommend asking students/trainees to start What Matters conversations with patients and family members using the two questions below.



- “When we are planning your care/treatment together, what is important to you?”
- “What matters the most to you when making decisions about your health care?”

