

## Activity: Aging in Place and “Getting There”

### Goal:

This activity asks participants to think about how “getting there” – to the doctor, grocery store, family, church, family, changes over time if we age in place. What may seem “easy” now may provide challenges in the future. It also challenges participants to think about their community and how accessing resources changes over time.

### Materials:

For each group of 3-5 people

- 1 - Map of community or county
- 1 - Set of adhesive dots labelled: home, church, doctor, groceries, grandchildren, and senior center
- 3x5 situation cards labelled vision loss, wheel chair user, spouse with dementia, limited income, cancer diagnosis, etc. include at least 1 blank card

### Directions:

Break into groups of 3-5 people. Give each group a map and a set of adhesive dots. Ask each group to identify a volunteer in the group that will be their person aging in place. If all of the participants are from the same area, assign each group a different location in the community or county to call “home” for the volunteer/person aging in place.

**Round 1:** Ask the volunteer to locate on the map with the adhesive dots, the location of their home, church, doctor, grocery store, grandchildren’s home and senior center. It’s OK if some of these dots are off the map, e.g. their doctor is in a different community – have that dot at the edge of the map. After the dots are placed on the map, ask the volunteer to describe their home and what it is like to live there at 60 years of age. After describing their home, ask the volunteer to tell their group what it is like to get to each of these locations, focusing on what it is like to do that at 60 years of age.

**Large Group Discussion:** Highlight comments from each group – types of home (single story, two story, apartment, etc.) and how they get to the locations on the map, what it is like at 60. If needed, prompt the group to think about traffic, parking, train crossings, bridges, round-about, etc.

**Round 2:** Now the volunteer is 70 years of age. How easy is it to get around their home and get to the same places? What are some of the things you are thinking about that may be different, in terms of personal mobility, as an older driver, etc.

**Large Group Discussion:** Highlight comments from each group – focus on anything that has changed. Do things seem the same or different?

**Round 3:** Now the volunteer is 80 years of age. The volunteer still lives at home and needs to get to the same locations on the map. How easy is it to get around your home and get to the same places? Are they still driving? If not, how are they getting there? What resources are available to help them? Ask the volunteer to consider: if they are still in their home, is it still working for them?

**Large Group Discussion:** Highlight comments from each group – focus on anything that has changed as they turn 80? Do things seem the same or different? How do they feel about aging in place at 80?

**Round 4:** Have each volunteer draw one of the 3x5 situation cards. The volunteer is now 80 years old and has a “complication” in their life. How easy is it to get around their home? How easy is it to get to the same places? Is their home workable? What adjustments are needed?

**Large Group Discussion:** Highlight comments from each group – focus on the impact of the complications and changes they prompt. Do things seem the same or different? How does this affect the group’s thinking about aging in place?

**Final Thoughts:**

- How does your community look as you think about aging in place?
- Any changes you’d make to “getting there” as you age?
- What supports are needed in your community to help people age in place?
- When is “aging in place” something to re-consider?