



FALLS BOOT CAMP

PREVENTING FALLS THROUGH TEAM-STYLE ACTIVITY SESSIONS

Challenge

Over 800,000 patients a year are hospitalized because of a fall injury¹. Although some falls don't result in serious injury, they can still have a detrimental effect on a person's daily life, making it difficult for them to get around, do everyday activities, or live independently. A fall injury not only affects the individual who falls, but it also negatively affects the lives of their caregivers and family members.

Individuals who suffer a fall may also be saddled with costly hospital bills. On average, the hospitalization cost for a fall injury is \$34,294². Falls affect all parties involved, so we must help our Veterans prevent them.

Innovation

Falls Boot Camp is an activity program designed to reduce the risk of falls among susceptible Veterans. It is an interdisciplinary approach, involving occupational, physical, and music therapy. The program consists of several consecutive training sessions designed to improve Veterans power, gait, balance, and cognition. Veterans also receive an at-home program so they can continue to work towards personal goals on their own time.



After researching various methods to reduce the risk of falls in patient with Parkinson's Disease, therapists at **VA Central Iowa Health Care System** implemented Falls Boot Camp in February of 2017. Although this program was originally designed for patients suffering from Parkinson's, it has since expanded its scope, **targeting any Veterans who are at risk of falling.**

The goals of this program are to **increase participant's awareness of current fall risk**, increase strength, increase balance, and **decrease risk of falls.**



How it Works

Falls Boot Camp is an 8-week activity program that can be implemented within an inpatient or outpatient setting. The program consists of 8, hour-long group training sessions held once or twice a week. During each session, a small group of Veterans works one-on-one with staff as they move through a variety of stations. Fall risk is assessed during the first and last training sessions using outcomes from a series of tests. A 3-month follow-up assessment is also conducted to determine whether improvements in participant scores are maintained.

The Four Stations

Each facility can determine what equipment to use at their stations, but they all target 4 key subjects:

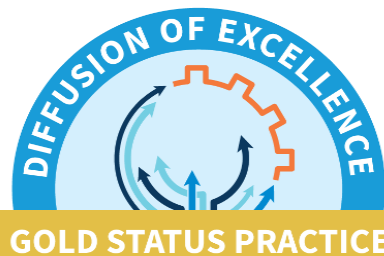
- Rhythmic Auditory Stimulation (Walking to the beat of the music)
- Balance (Tai Chi, Obstacle Courses, Wii)
- Multi-tasking during Ambulation (Cognition)
- Power/Amplitude (Boxing)

“I have not had any falls since attending Falls Boot Camp. I’ve learned so much more here than anywhere else about how to manage my Parkinson’s.”

Veteran testimony from the VA Central Iowa Health Care System

Veteran Value

Falls Boot Camp directly benefits Veterans and their caregivers by reducing the risk of falls. Assessments conducted prior to Falls Boot at VA Central Iowa Health Care System indicated that participants were at increased risk of falls and needed assistance with activities of daily living. However, assessments conducted during the final session of Falls Boot Camp demonstrated a significant reduction in fall risk, as well as an increased ability to engage in activities of daily living without assistance. Participants were able to maintain these improved scores 3-months after completing the program. **No participants suffered a fall at home during this time period.**



Falls Boot Camp is 1 of 12 practices selected from a pool of 591 submissions in the fifth national VHA Shark Tank Competition.

WANT TO KNOW MORE?

To learn more about Falls Boot Camp contact Rebecca Hayden at the email address Rebecca.hayden@va.gov or visit us on the Diffusion Marketplace at Marketplace.va.gov

¹ "Important Facts about Falls." *Centers for Disease Control and Prevention*, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 10 Feb. 2017, www.cdc.gov/homeandrecreational/safety/falls/adultfalls.html

² "ARTICLE: Falls Cost U.S. Hospitals \$34 Billion in Direct Medical Costs." *Johns Hopkins HealthCare Solutions*, 22 Apr. 2015, www.johnshopkinsolutions.com/newsletters/falls-cost-u-s-hospitals-30-billion-in-direct-medical-costs/