

Healthy Aging

Adapted from WHO Resources on Healthy Aging for Geriatrics Hub

Dr. Thiru Yogaparan MD,FRCP

Associate Professor

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What is Healthy Aging?

The World Health Organization (WHO) definition

It is the **process of developing and maintaining the functional ability** that enables wellbeing in older age

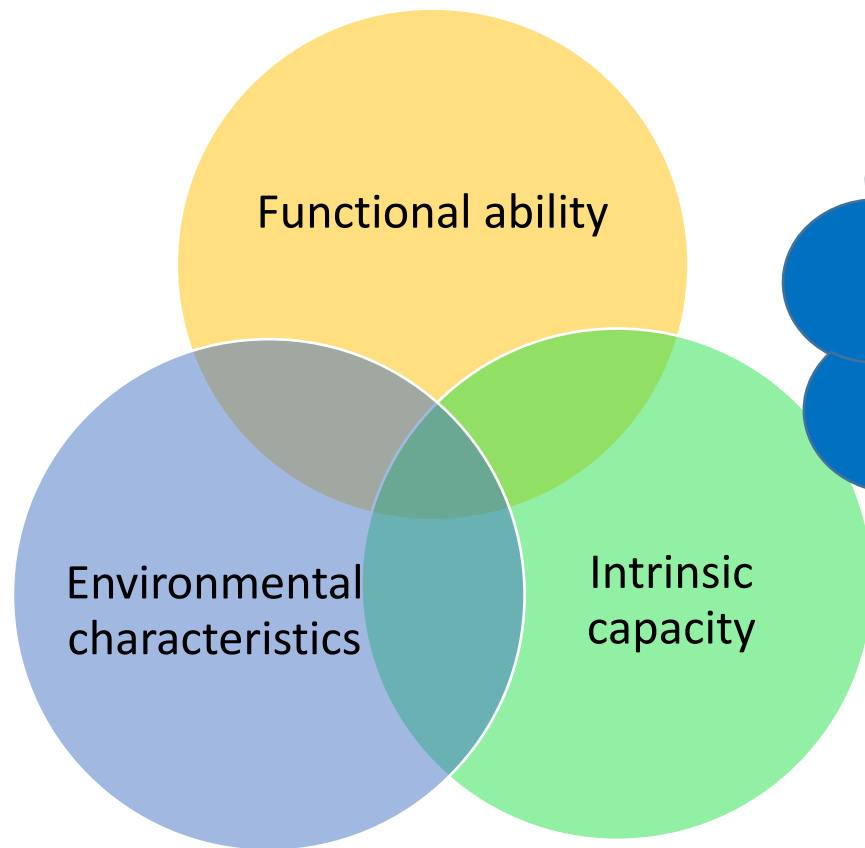
Functional Ability

Functional ability is having the capabilities to enable people to be and do what they value.

It is referred to as the ability to:

- Meet their basic needs
- Learn, grow and make decisions
- Be mobile
- Build and maintain relationships, and
- Contribute to society

Functional Ability



WHO describes, functional ability as being formed by interactions between intrinsic capacity and environmental characteristics

Healthy Aging

Intrinsic capacity

- Mental and physical capacities that a person can draw on includes their ability to walk, think, see, hear and remember.
- The level of intrinsic capacity is influenced by several factors such as the
 - Presence of diseases
 - Age-related changes
 - Injuries

Environmental Characteristics

- Home
 - Community
 - Broader society.
- all the factors within home, community and society such as the
- Built environment
 - People and their relationships
 - Attitudes and values
 - Health and social policies
 - Systems that support them
 - Services that they implement

Being able to live in environments that support and maintain one's intrinsic capacity and functional ability is key to healthy aging.

WHO- Key Considerations : Diversity & Inequity

Diversity

- Heterogeneity :As people get older heterogeneity is the rule
- There is **no typical older person**
- Hence cookie cutter policies will not work
- Policy should be framed to improve the functional ability **of all older people**, whether they are robust, care dependent or in between

Inequity

- Cumulative impact of advantages and disadvantages across people's lives have significant contributions to the diversity in capacity and circumstance observed in older age
- The relationships we have with our environments are shaped by factors such as the
 - Family we were born into
 - Gender
 - Ethnicity
 - Level of education
 - Financial resources



Road to healthy aging

- Process of healthy aging starts from childhood
- Healthy life style influences
 - The development of chronic medical conditions
 - Some age associated physiological changes can be attenuated
- Health in old age is shaped by non-communicable, chronic diseases
- Early life circumstances and social determinants of health impact onset of diseases and development of most geriatric syndromes in late life
 - Socio-economic status
 - Education
 - Environment
 - Culture
 - Lifestyle
- It is never too late to

WHO : Decade of Healthy Aging

What is the UN Decade of Healthy Ageing?

- The United Nations Decade of Healthy Ageing (2021-2030) is a **global collaboration**, aligned with the last ten years of the Sustainable Development Goals, that brings together governments, civil society, international agencies, professionals, academia, the media, and the private sector to improve the lives of older people, their families, and the communities in which they live.

WHO : Decade of Healthy Aging

- Populations around the world are ageing at a faster pace than in the past and this demographic transition will have an impact on almost all aspects of society.
- Already, there are more than 1 billion people aged 60 years or older, with most living in low- and middle-income countries.
- Many do not have access to even the basic resources necessary for a life of meaning and of dignity.
- Many others confront multiple barriers that prevent their full participation in society.
- The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the seriousness of existing gaps in policies, systems and services.
- A decade of concerted global action on Healthy Ageing is urgently needed to ensure that older people can fulfil their potential in dignity and equality and in a healthy environment.

WHO : Decade of Healthy Aging

Areas of Action

Age friendly environments

Combating ageism

Integrated care

Long term care

Decade Enablers

Voice and
engagement

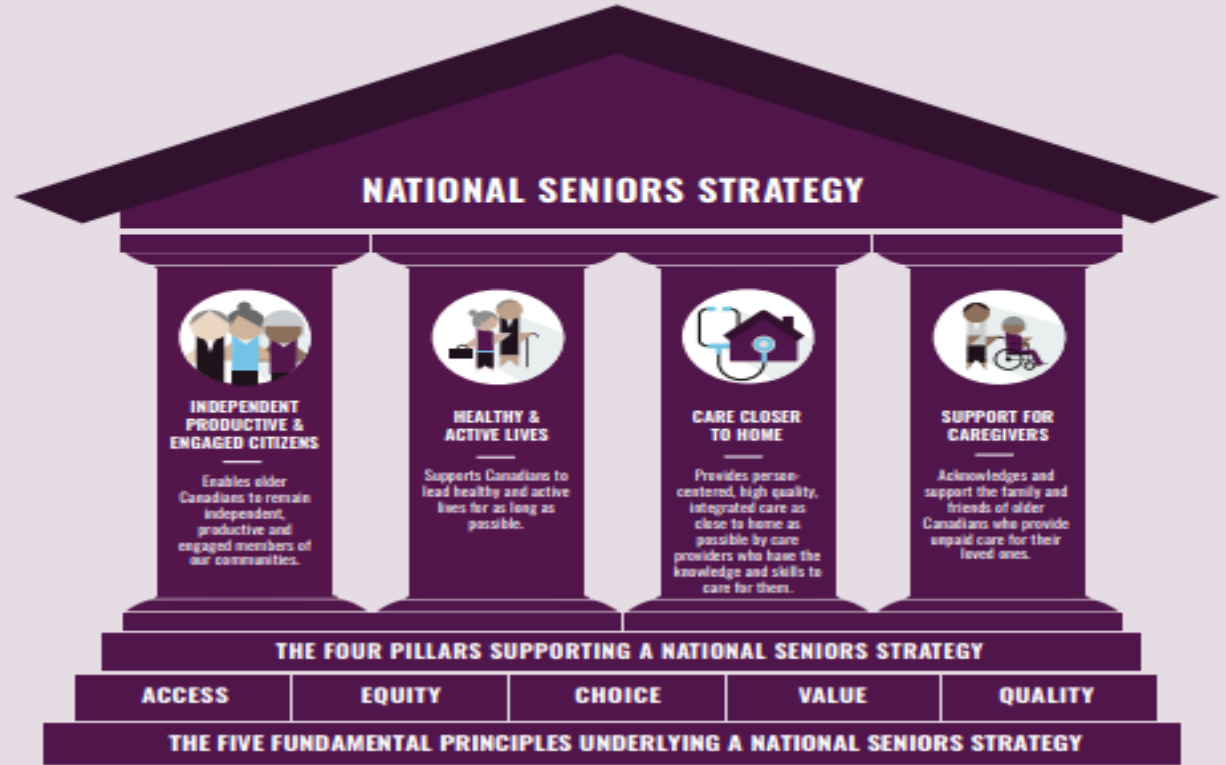
Connecting
stakeholders

Leadership
and capacity
building

Strengthening
research, data
and innovation

Canadian Seniors Strategy

Introducing the Four Pillars of a National Seniors Strategy



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