



Pilot Evaluation of the Remembering When™ Program in Iowa: Fire and Fall Prevention for Older Adults

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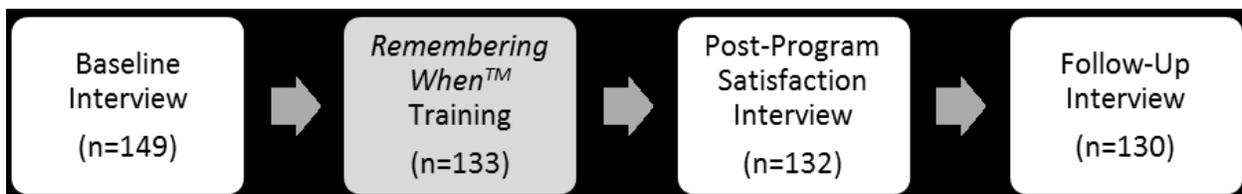
Background

The NFPA Remembering When™ Program was developed to help older adults reduce their risk of injury resulting from a home fire or fall. The program has 16 fire and fall prevention messages, primarily targeting residential hazard and safety behaviors, and can be delivered in both group presentation and home visit formats. In 2015, the University of Iowa partnered with the Fire Protection Research Foundation, NFPA and five fire departments in Iowa to evaluate the effectiveness of the Remembering When™ program in: (1) Improving perceptions associated with falls and house fires, and (2) Changing fall prevention and fire safety behaviors.

Methods

The Remembering When™ Pilot Evaluation Study was conducted in 2015 in five communities across Iowa. Within each community, the research team collaborated with up to two fire department officials comprising an Outreach Team, which was primarily responsible for delivering the Remembering When™ program and providing data on delivery activities. In addition, adults ages 65 and older were recruited in each community to participate in the study by the research staff. Older adults were primarily recruited from senior residential complexes (not including assisted living or nursing home complexes), home visiting and meal delivery organizations, congregate meal sites, and places of worship.

Eligible older adults were randomly assigned to one of two program delivery methods: (1) those receiving Remembering When™ through a home visit, and (2) those receiving Remembering When™ through both a group presentation and home visit. Each participant completed three telephone interviews and participated in the Remembering When™ program training provided by their fire departments. A total of 149 participants enrolled in the study and completed the first interview, of which 133 attended program training conducted in their homes and/or in a group presentation. At the end of the study, 130 of the 133 participants receiving the program completed the final interview to report whether their fire and falls prevention behaviors, and their perceptions associated with fires and falls, changed after participating in the Remembering When™ program.



Sample of Findings

- *Changes in Falls Prevention Behaviors:* Prior to receiving the program, most participants were engaged in program-recommended activities, including exercising regularly (86%), taking their time to get up from sitting or lying down (83%), keeping stairs and walking areas free of clutter (73%), and keeping a well-lit path between the bedroom and bathroom at night (73%). Following the Remembering When™ program, more participants cleared their paths of travel (baseline: n=104, 95%; follow-up: n=80, 73%), used non-slip mats (baseline: n=72, 66%; follow-up: n=86, 78%), turned on lights before using the stairs (baseline: n=54, 49%; follow-up: n=51, 46%), and installed grab bars on the walls next to the bathtub, shower and/or toilet (baseline: n=60, 55%; follow-up: n=78, 71%). No differences in the percentage of participants improving their falls prevention practices between the two study arms were observed.
- *Changes in Fire Prevention Behaviors:* Most of the participants were engaged in fire safety practices prior to receiving the Remembering When™ program, including having a smoke alarm installed outside each sleeping area (91%), staying in the kitchen when frying foods (85%), having a telephone near their beds (79%), having a smoke alarm on every level of their home (78%) and inside each bedroom (76%), and keeping space heaters at least 3 feet away from anything that can burn (75%). Following the Remembering When™ program, more participants understood how to use stop, drop and roll procedures (baseline: n=72, 66%; follow-up: n=93, 85%), and installed smoke alarms on every level of the home (baseline: n=86, 78%; follow-up: n=107, 97%) and inside each bedroom (baseline: n=83, 76%; follow-up: n=95, 86%). No differences in the percentage of participants improving their fire safety practices between the two study arms were observed.
- *Perceptions about Falls and Fire Prevention:* Perceptions about the participants' susceptibility to experience a house fire increased slightly, whereas perceptions about the severity of experiencing a house fire and fear decreased after the program. Participants' perceptions about having control over their fire prevention behaviors improved after program. They generally reported very low levels of perceived susceptibility to experiencing a fall, and felt that the outcome of a fall can be somewhat serious. These perceptions did not change after program participation. However, participants reported improved perceptions about their own ability to prevent falls, to engage in falls prevention behaviors, and felt they had control over their preventive behaviors after the program participation. At the end of the project, participants also reported an increase in the perceived availability of informational support about falls and fire prevention.
- *Discussion about Falls and Fire prevention with Others:* The number of participants who reported discussing falls and fire prevention with their family and friends increased from baseline to follow-up in both study arms. At baseline, 34% had discussed falls prevention with family and friends, whereas 60% reported discussing this at follow-up. Similarly, 21% had discussed fire prevention with family and friends at baseline, while 55% reported discussing this with family and friends at follow-up.

To view the report in its entirety including study methodology, discussion and recommendations, access the "Pilot Evaluation of the Remembering When™ Program" report at nfpa.org/rememberingwhen. For questions about the Remembering When™ program, contact Karen Berard-Reed at kbreed@nfpa.org.

