

# **KSU Center on Aging**

## **Aging Simulation**

*Please note that these ideas are intended to enhance your understanding of the field of gerontology and the process of aging. The activities below should not be attempted without appropriate safety precautions.*

### **Vision loss**

Coat a pair of glasses with vaseline to simulate cataracts. Try to read a prescription bottle, thread a needle, or use the stove/oven knobs.

Cover eyeglass lenses with transparent yellow plastic wrap. Try to pick out the blue and green items from a bowl of gum drops or M&M's or from a bowl of various colors of crayons.

Use totally blackened eyeglass lenses to simulate blindness. Walk around in your home or apartment to see if you can remember where the obstacles are in the room (tables, chairs, beds, lamps, etc.) and avoid them.

Have a person who is blindfolded listen to instructions given by someone who is talking fast.

### **Hearing loss**

Use a set of swimmer's ear plugs, ear muffs or a stocking hat to simulate partial hearing loss. Try to carry on a conversation with someone in a normal tone of voice without asking them to repeat themselves. Now try to do the same thing with your eyes closed.

Have 2-3 people give you instructions at the same time and try to repeat all the instructions given.

### **Loss of Mobility**

Wrap both knees with ace bandages. Try to walk up and down a set of stairs or bend over to tie your shoes or pick up a piece of paper off the floor.

Borrow a wheelchair. Go to a public place such as a local grocery or discount store. Find the restroom, enter the door without assistance, and wheel yourself into the handicapped stall. Now reverse the process. Or try to go grocery shopping while in a wheelchair.

Insert several dried split peas or sunflower seeds into each shoe and wear them while doing your daily activities. This simulates the pain and loss of balance associated with bunions or corns.

Take a straw and breath through it while climbing a flight of stairs to simulate respiratory problems.

### **Loss of Dexterity**

Tape several fingers together to simulate an aging joint. Now try to button and unbutton a coat, work a zipper, thread a needle, open a medicine bottle, write a letter, tie your shoes or shuffle a set of cards.

Wear a set of plastic gloves and try to pick up coins or small pieces of paper from a tabletop or sort a group of papers

### **Changes in Taste**

Blindfold yourself and put cotton in your nostrils. Have someone give you two items with similar textures to smell. See if you can smell the difference (such as a potato and an apple or a potato chip versus a corn chip). Try to identify several substances which have been pureed in a blender such as lemons, pudding, mashed potatoes, beef or other items which would be part of a normal diet.

### **Loss of Dignity and/or Independence**

Wear a Depends undergarment for one day to see how it feels under your clothing.

Wear a bib and have a friend feed you pureed baby food.

Have someone else brush your teeth and/or wash your face.

Have someone else pick out your clothing and dress you for the day.

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