



## DCV Case Management Team

# Using a Person-Directed Approach to Prevent Falls

By Meaghan McMahon and Lee Reed (DCV Case Management Team)

**E**ach year, 14 million Americans (1 in 4) age 65+ will fall. Fall injuries can lead to a loss of independence and social isolation (National Council on Aging).

Lee Reed, R.N. our Healthcare Navigator and Meaghan McMahon, LGSW, our Social Worker have created a fictional case study below to demonstrate the issue from a nursing and social services perspective.

*Mrs. X is 83 years old and lives alone. One morning, Mrs. X falls in her apartment. Luckily, she has her cell phone on hand. Mrs. X calls Lee and reports she cannot get up on her own and may have hit her head. Lee asks Mrs. X to remain on the phone and stay on the floor. On a separate line, Lee dials 911 and then calls the building concierge to alert them to the impending arrival of the EMTs. Lee then does a phone assessment with Mrs. X and finds she doesn't have bleeding or an increased headache and remains alert and oriented to her name, date, and surroundings. Mrs. X. is then taken to the hospital and admitted for a fracture of her left hip.*

*Using a person-directed approach, Lee and Meaghan hear from Mrs. X that her preference is to return to her apartment. Meaghan arranges for in-home physical therapy and home health aide services. Lee works closely with Mrs. X to review her medications to address possible side*

*effects that could lead to falls such as dizziness, unsteady gait, and the need for frequent urination because of the diuretic she is taking. Meaghan helps Mrs. X find resources to assess her future fall risk, build strength to improve balance and check her apartment for safety hazards.*

### **When it comes to preventing falls, you can get started today:**

- Take this assessment from the National Council on Aging — <https://www.ncoa.org/tools/falls-free-checkup/>

- Build strength and improve balance with the Fit & Well Seniors Program at the YMCA — <https://www.ymcadc.org/programs/health-fitness/fit-well-seniors/>
- Use this checklist to do a home safety audit: <https://www.aota.org/~media/Corporate/Files/Practice/Aging/rebuilding-together/RT-Aging-in-Place-Safe-at-Home-Checklist.pdf>

If you want to learn more, please contact Eva to be connected to DCV's nursing and social services support.