**How to work effectively with older workers:**

1. Do not stereotype the older worker. They possess a tremendous range of abilities...just as there is in any other age group, however, some have, with age, increased in maturity, wisdom and motivation.

2. Take time in explaining anything new. Please do not hurry them. One major difference between younger and older workers is that older workers need a little more time to process new material and may become flustered if hurried.

3. One should speak clearly and slowly. A fast method of speaking may make understanding difficult for some older workers. Speaking louder is not necessarily needed if one has clear diction, and normal volume.

4. Communicate constantly. Some older workers may be too intimidated to ask questions. Be patient and indicate that questions are welcomed and desired.

5. Do not be paternalistic. Value their maturity and the experiences that they have had in life.

6. With older persons do not extend the time of meeting/learning without time for a break for the bathroom, or just to stand and stretch.

7. Try to minimize background noise. Older workers often cannot hear well in a noisy environment, since most have some hearing loss.

8. Some older persons automatically read lips as people talk. Therefore, to the extent one can, face the older worker when communicating.

9. Older persons do lose strength with the aging process. However, most can handle physical labor if not hurried and given time to adjust.

10. Older persons have more experience than younger persons in relating to others. Therefore, they tend to be more mature and calm in relationships hence they make excellent retailer workers, medical assistance workers, receptionists, etc.

**Sources:**


This fact sheet was compiled by Project Mature Worker of the Grand Rapids Community College Older Learner Center. 8/2006