

Purpose

This protocol provides guidance and instructions for utilizing the Virtual Senior Center (VSC) Assessment and Reassessment Tool. The purpose of this protocol is to try to ensure a standardized application and completion of the tool by assessors. The tool will help to identify eligible individuals so that they can participate in VSC services and thereafter measure improvement in social connectedness on an annual basis.

What Is the Virtual Senior Center (VSC)

The VSC, developed and designed by Selfhelp Community Services, is a community engagement platform that allows socially isolated elderly, disabled and medically vulnerable persons to engage with others through synchronous online classes, events and activities. The purpose of VSC is to decrease loneliness and social isolation of people without requiring them to leave the comfort of their own homes.

A New York State Health Foundation grant was awarded to the HCA Education and Research Inc., Home Care Association of New York State (HCA), in partnership with Selfhelp Community Services to develop this VSC Assessment/Reassessment Tool and therefore expand VSC utilization state-wide by identifying eligible individuals throughout New York.

Instructions

The VSC assessment/reassessment tool assesses an individual's eligibility for VSC services at a specific point in time. The tool should be used to conduct both an initial assessment and all reassessments.

- **Who Can Complete the Assessment Tool**

The VSC Assessment and Reassessment Tool is to be completed by a social worker or a registered professional nurse.

- **Initial Assessment**

The initial assessment must be completed using this assessment tool and must be completed prior to the commencement of VSC services. The initial assessment will determine the applicant's eligibility for utilizing VSC services

- **Reassessment**

The reassessment must be completed at least annually and/or whenever there is a significant change in the client's status. The reassessment must be completed by a social worker or a registered professional nurse. The assessment tool must be used for any and all reassessments.



Virtual Senior Center Assessment and Reassessment Protocol Instructions

About the Tool

The assessment tool has a total of 10 questions. The questions vary in format from use of yes/no question formats, Likert scales to open ended questions. The applicant may not necessarily be known previously to the assessor. If that is the case, it may be helpful for the assessor to review any pertinent records that have been provided for this client such as referral and intake forms. In some instances it may be helpful to have a caregiver who is knowledgeable about the client present for the assessment to solicit their input. The questions should be answered by the assessor based on their findings when meeting with the client and/or their caregiver. Although it may be necessary to ask the client and/or their caregiver direct questions in order to respond to the assessment questions accurately, the assessment is not intended to be completed by the client but rather based on the assessor's findings. The questions assess the applicant's/client's:

- Connections with others
- Isolation level
- Physical and cognitive abilities
- Computer experience
- Availability

The assessment requires the professional assessor's overall recommendation of the client's ability to use and benefit from the VSC based on the assessment tool.



Virtual Senior Center Assessment and Reassessment Protocol Instructions

General Information

- **Organization Name:** Enter the name of the organization the individual client is affiliated with
- **Assessor Name:** Enter the name of the individual completing the assessment
- **Assessor Title:** Enter the assessor's title and credentials, i.e.: RN or MSW
- **Assessor Telephone Number:** Enter the phone number of the assessor where they can be reached
- **Assessor Email address:** Enter the organizational email of the assessor (do not use private email address)
- **Date of Referral:** Enter the date when the individual was referred for a VSC assessment. If unknown, enter the date of the assessment
- **Applicant/Client Name:** Enter the applicant's name
- **Home Address:** Enter the address of the applicant
- **Telephone Number:** Enter the telephone number of the applicant or the phone number of the responsible caregiver
- **Email address:** Enter the email address of the applicant. If the applicant does not have an email address, indicate that they do not have an email address
- **Date of Birth:** Enter date of birth of applicant in the following format. MM/DD/YYYY
- **Gender:** Enter the stated gender of the applicant
- **Race:** This is a voluntary field for the applicant to self-declare. They may prefer not to answer. If that is the case, please indicate prefer not to answer in the space provided.
- **Ethnicity:** This is a voluntary field for the applicant to self-declare. They may prefer not to answer. If that is the case, please indicate prefer not to answer in the space provided.
- **Education level:** Please indicate the applicant's highest grade in school or highest degree in college or certificate from trade school.
- **Language(s) spoken:** Enter the preferred language the applicant speaks
- **Emergency contact name:** Enter the name of the person to be contacted in the event of an emergency
- **Emergency Contact Relationship with Applicant:** Indicate the relationship of the emergency contact with the applicant such as: son, daughter, spouse, friend, neighbor
- **Emergency Contact Phone Number:** Enter the phone number of the person identified as the emergency contact
- **Emergency Contact email address:** Enter the emergency contact email address. If they do not have an email, please indicate none.
- **Caregiver Contact Name:** Enter the name of the primary caregiver
- **Caregiver Contact Telephone Number:** Enter telephone number of caregiver. Indicate if this number is a home phone or cell phone number
- **Caregiver Contact Email Address:** Enter email address of caregiver. If there is none, indicate none.



Virtual Senior Center Assessment and Reassessment Protocol Instructions

Social Networks

Question 1

This question asks the assessors to rate the applicant's connection with other by asking the assessor to strongly agree to strongly disagree with three probing questions.

If the client is unknown to the assessor, prior to completing this section it may be necessary to ask a series of probing questions that encourages the applicant to talk about the activities they engage in with their family and friends and whether they attend activities in their community that they find interesting and fulfilling. The assessor may also want to ask the applicant a series of open-ended questions which describe their relationships with their family and friends. If the caregiver is present, the assessor may want to ask the caregiver for their response to these questions as they relate to the applicant as well.

Question 2

This question asks the assessor to rate the applicant's isolation level by asking the assessor to strongly agree to strongly disagree with a series of statements about the applicant's time spent alone, changes in health status, personal interest in activities and whether their interest has diminished. The assessor will need the feedback and input of both the individual being assessed and the individual's caregiver to answer these questions especially if the applicant has any cognitive issues or has been referred as a result of their perceived isolation.

Physical and Cognitive Ability

Question 3

This question asks the assessor to indicate with a yes or no, if the applicant requires help with any of the listed activities of daily living. In order to obtain an accurate response to this question, if the assessment is being performed over the telephone, due to an inability to make a home visit, the care giver should be consulted with.



Virtual Senior Center Assessment and Reassessment Protocol Instructions

Question 4

This question asks the assessor to rate the applicant's cognitive status from strongly agree to strongly disagree with a series of statements which are intended to assess the ability of the applicant to actively participate with the VSC platform. These questions solicit whether the applicant's cognitive ability will affect their participation on the platform and affect their ability to use the service. Input on behavior, ability to follow directions, ability to communicate or whether special devices are required to view the virtual programming.

Input from the applicant and the caregiver is necessary to complete this section accurately. It may be necessary to obtain additional information pertaining to special devices and other accommodations after a need for such has been determined.

Technology

Questions 5-6

Questions 5 through 6 asks the assessor to respond to specific questions about the applicant's computer experience and rate them from Beginner to Advanced. They are also asked to indicate the internet broadband provider used by the applicant. Assessors are requested to identify the provider and determine if there is a person residing in the household who can troubleshoot and assist with remote installation of equipment



Virtual Senior Center Assessment and Reassessment Protocol Instructions

Recommendations

Questions 7-9

Questions 7-9 require the assessor to indicate whether the individual is appropriate and eligible for the VSC based on their responses to the Questions 1 through 8. If the assessor does not consider the individual appropriate for VSC, the assessor is asked to elaborate. There is additional space provided for the assessor to make comments or identify concerns that may not have been captured in the assessment.

What Makes An Individual Eligible?

Eligibility is based on several factors. Generally, individuals are eligible if they meet the following criteria:

- Lack connection with others (refer to responses in question 1)
- Are lonely (refer to responses in question 2)
- Are socially isolated (refer to responses in question 2)
- Physically disabled (refer to response in 3)
- Are homebound –
 - Homebound for this purpose mean an individual is unable to leave their home without difficulty. And due to this difficulty, generally does not leave their home.

What Makes An Individual Ineligible?

- If an applicant's cognitive status or behavior disrupts theirs' or others' participation on the platform the VSC may not be appropriate.
- Does not have computer capability or the technology necessary to access the platform.
- Does not have a caregiver to help with engagement and use if necessary

Final Recommendation

Assessor is requested to indicate whether the applicant is eligible for the initiation or the continuation of VS services.

Signature

Assessor should sign with appropriate credentials and date the form.