

## Cognitive Dissonance and Unhealthy Aging Practices

**Introduction:** In this activity, we will explore the concept of cognitive dissonance, which refers to the discomfort we feel when we hold conflicting beliefs, values, or behaviors. We will examine unhelpful tips for healthy aging and identify how they might create cognitive dissonance.

**Instructions:** Working in pairs, examine the unhelpful tips for healthy aging listed below. Choose **five** tips that resonate with you or that you have observed in others. Discuss how these behaviors might create cognitive dissonance, using the example provided as a guide. Then, complete the table for each chosen tip.

### Example:

- **Tip:** Smoke or Use Tobacco Products
- **Cognitive Dissonance:** “I know smoking is harmful, but I find it relaxing.”
- **Conflicting Values:** Pleasure (I enjoy it) vs. Health (I want to be healthy)

### Unhelpful Tip List:

1. Smoke or Use Tobacco Products (Example Tip)
2. Avoid Physical Activity
3. Eat a High-Sugar, High-Fat Diet
4. Isolate Yourself Socially
5. Drink Excessive Alcohol
6. Ignore Regular Check-Ups
7. Ignore Dental Care
8. Avoid Drinking Water
9. Ignore Sleep Quality
10. Avoid New Learning Opportunities
11. Ignore Signs of Chronic Conditions
12. Refuse Vaccinations and Preventive Measures
13. Avoid Discussing End-of-Life Decisions
14. Avoid Sun Protection
15. Refuse to Adapt to Change

### Discussion Questions:

1. **Reflect on Your Choices:** Why did you choose these particular tips? How do they create conflict between different beliefs or values?
2. **Discuss Solutions:** What strategies could be used to resolve the cognitive dissonance related to these behaviors? How can individuals align their actions with their beliefs about healthy aging?

**Note:** Be prepared to share your insights with the class during the group discussion.

Tip Number	Cognitive Dissonance (e.g., conflicting thoughts)	Conflicting Values (e.g., Pleasure vs. Health)