

Rocky Mountain Conference on Aging Aging in the Workplace

Walking in Older Moccasins

Presenter Name: Laurel Kubin

Presentation Date and Time: 10/24/07, 3:30pm

“Walking in Older Moccasins” was a presentation geared towards those who have not yet experienced aging. The presenter engaged the audience in a number of activities to simulate some common physical issues aging individuals face. As we age, our bodies and senses change. These activities were designed to allow younger people to experience what it might feel like to be an older person dealing with these changes.

The presenter offered the chance of “instant aging” for participants. This was accomplished by giving each person a bag with a number of aging aids. These included corn kernels in the shoes, glasses to simulate common vision deficits, rubber gloves to numb the sense of touch, cotton balls in the ears, and tape around the knuckles for the feeling of arthritis. Participants then attempted to engage in normal activities with their new bodies, which indeed proved difficult.

Throughout the presentation, Kubin discussed the different issues the aging individual faces. She actually highlighted the names of medical conditions as well as some prevalence information. The issues discussed ranged from vision and hearing difficulties to osteoporosis and changes in strength and flexibility.

Kubin also offered some practical tips to assist the aging individual in the workplace. She talked about avoiding look-alike products (like Comet cleaner and parmesan cheese) which could be dangerous to those with vision deficits. She also discussed communicating effectively with older people by doing things like wearing bright lipstick, keeping hands away from the face, and using clear text when using written communication.

Submitted by: Amanda Meier, University of Northern Colorado, November 3, 2007