



Old People Driving
A Study Guide for Social Work Educators and Students

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Foreword

This guide has been developed to assist social work educators and students in using films from the CSWE film festivals in their classrooms. It is one in a series of CSWE curriculum resources designed to enhance the teaching and learning of social work concepts.

We welcome your comments as the library of these resources is refined and expanded.

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Overview

Old People Driving

Film Information

Title: <i>Old People Driving</i>	A Film by: Shaleece Haas
Running Time: 24 minutes	Distributed by: New Day Films, www.newday.com

Context: *Old People Driving* chronicles the adventures of 96-year-old Milton and 99-year-old Herbert as they confront the end of their driving years. Through their stories, we discover what’s at stake for the generation that came of age with the automobile—and their families and caregivers—when they consider hanging up the keys.

Overall Themes:

1. Driver Safety
2. Growing Old
3. Ageism
4. Life Transitions

Time Code	Topic	Central Quote	Salient Themes
00:00–03:20	I’ve Been Driving for 80 Years	“When that comes to be, I’m not driving anymore.” (2:04)	Growing Older, Planned Change, Ability
03:21–08:10	The Myth of Accident Risk	“Don’t wait for others to have to Intervene.” (4:54)	Voluntarily Giving Up the Keys, Switching to Bike, Physical Challenges, Caregiving
08:11–11:09	Model T	“For men, the car is a measure of identity.” (10:30)	Family Intervention, Gender Differences, Status Symbols
11:10–14:46	Tragedy	“I always thought it would be the other guy.” (12:25)	Elderly Driver Licensing, Ageism Versus Safety Concerns, Testing Limitations, Independence
14:47–20:49	The Trade	“If this can be repaired ... I don’t know.” (15:57)	Physical Impacts of Aging, Handicap Designation, Decision Making to Let Go
20:50–23:42	Fairly Stationary	“If I couldn’t drive, I don’t know what I would do.” (20:50)	Mental Health, Loss of Spouse, Adjustment

Topics

I've Been Driving for 80 Years

Time Code: 00:00–03:20

Central Quote: “When that comes to be, I’m not driving anymore.” (2:04)

Themes: Growing Older, Planned Change, Ability

Abstract: Viewers are introduced to 96-year-old Milton and 99-year-old Herbert. Both personalities are adequately presented in this introductory clip. Milton looks forward questioning whether he will ever need to transition from driving. Herbert has already made a decision to engage in an alternative to driving.

Learning Objectives

1. Explore the transitions that characterize septuagenarians, octogenarians, and nonagenarians.
2. Identify driving as one of the primary skills of the elder adult.
3. Articulate your perceptions about older drivers.

Discussion Questions

1. How long do you plan to drive?
2. Have you ever considered that you may reach a point in life when you are no longer able to drive?
3. What would be your transition plan if you decided that you could no longer drive?
4. List the challenges you assume face older drivers.

Suggested Readings

Ackerman, M. L., Crowe, M., Vance, D. E., Wadley, V. G., Owsley, C., & Ball, K. K. (2011). The impact of feedback on self-rated driving ability and driving self-regulation among older adults. *The Gerontologist, 51*, 367–378.

Sullivan, K. A., Smith, S. S., Horswill, M. S., & Lurie-Beck, J. K. (2011). Older adults' safety perceptions of driving situations: Towards a new driving self-regulation scale. *Accident Analysis & Prevention, 43*, 1003–1009.

Thompson, K. R., Johnson, A. M., Emerson, J. L., Dawson, J. D., Boer, E. R., & Rizzo, M. (2012). Distracted driving in elderly and middle-aged drivers. *Accident Analysis & Prevention, 45*, 711–717.

The Myth of Accident Risk

Time Code: 03:21–08:10

Central Quote: “Don’t wait for others to have to intervene.” (4:54)

Themes: Voluntarily Giving Up the Keys, Switching to Bike, Physical Challenges, Caregiving

Abstract: Ninety-nine year old Herbert’s story is framed in the context of a planned life transition. We meet his caregiver. Herbert opts for a tricycle and visits a bike shop to try one out.

Learning Objectives

1. Explore the social and psychological process of a major life transition.
2. Review the physical considerations included in a mobility change.
3. Identify the roles of caregivers in work with elders making mobility changes.

Discussion Questions

1. Why do you think older drivers are more likely to cause an accident?
2. State your agreements and disagreements with Herbert’s comment, “The fact that I plan to feel helpless may protect me from feeling that way.” (5:19)
3. Do you think that it is time for Herbert to give up his keys? What supports your determination?
4. Do you think that having the bike as an alternative is helpful to Herbert’s transition? Why or Why not?

Suggested Readings

Bartley, M., & O’Neill, D. (2010). Transportation and driving in longitudinal studies on ageing. *Age and Ageing*, 39, 631–636.

Oxley, J., Langford, J., & Charlton, J. (2010). The safe mobility of older drivers: A challenge for urban road designers. *Journal of Transport Geography*, 18, 642–648.

Webber, S. C., Porter, M. M., & Menec, V. H. (2010). Mobility in older adults: A comprehensive framework. *The Gerontologist*, 50, 443–450.

Model T

Time Code: 08:11–11:09

Central Quote: “For men, the car is a measure of identity.” (10:30)

Themes: Family Intervention, Gender Differences, Status Symbols

Abstract: We learn about Milton’s obsession with the Model-T, the first car he drove. Milton explains his choice of the car over the care and feeding of a horse. Milton’s wife recounts her story of nine flat tires while on a date with Milton.

Learning Objectives

1. Explore age and gender differences in driving.
2. Identify the motivations that evolve with driving experience.
3. Articulate a connection among social activity, cognitive decline, and driving in old age.

Discussion Questions

1. Why do you think it is easier for women to give up driving than it is for men?
2. What did you take as the meaning when retired California highway patrolman Kent Milton stated, “They’re never going to stop driving. In fact, they’re going to drive themselves to their own funeral.” (10:42)
3. How would you go about negotiating a plan with an older relative to give up his/her keys and right to drive?
4. How would your approach differ with a female relative versus a male relative?

Suggested Readings

Cestac, J., Paran, F., & Delhomme, P. (2011). Young drivers’ sensation seeking, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control and their roles in predicting speeding intention: How risk-taking motivations evolve with gender and driving experience. *Safety Science*, 49, 424–432.

James, B. D., Wilson, R. S., Barnes, L. L., & Bennett, D. A. (2011). Late-life social activity and cognitive decline in old age. *Journal of the International Neuropsychological Society*, 17, 998–1005.

Rhodes, N., & Pivik, K. (2011). Age and gender differences in risky driving: The roles of positive affect and risk perception. *Accident Analysis & Prevention*, 43, 923–931.

Tragedy

Time Code: 11:10–14:46

Central Quote: “I always thought it would be the other guy.” (12:25)

Themes: Elderly Driver Licensing, Ageism Versus Safety Concerns, Testing Limitations, Independence

Abstract: The film presents the story of George Weller, an 86-year-old California driver. Weller was driving the car that killed 10 and wounded others in a Santa Monica farmers’ market in 2003. The event energized the debate over elder rights specifically related to driving.

Learning Objectives

1. Identify multiple systems affecting the right and sanction to drive.
2. Compose standards of practice and testing that may be applied to reduce dangerous driving.
3. Articulate the complexity of individual, family, and community attempts to limit any right, including driving.

Discussion Questions

1. What do you think contributed to George Weller’s accident? Include micro, mezzo, and macro factors in your response.
2. What system changes would you recommend to prevent accidents among drivers who are 75 years of age and older?
3. Would you be willing to impose similar restrictions on drivers who are 70 years of age and older?
4. How would you rewrite driving competence testing to better screen for dangerous drivers?
5. Would you be willing to impose the same testing for all would-be drivers?

Suggested Readings

Kelly, M., Nielson, N., & Snoddon, T. (2014). Aging population and driver licensing: A policy perspective. *Canadian Public Policy*, 40(1), 31–44.

Stav, W. B. (2014). Updated systematic review on older adult community mobility and driver licensing policies. *American Journal of Occupational Therapy*, 68, 681–689.

Tada, M., Noma, H., Utsumi, A., Segawa, M., Okada, M., & Renge, K. (2014). Elderly driver retraining using automatic evaluation system of safe driving skill. *Intelligent Transport Systems, IET*, 8(3), 266–272.

The Trade

Time Code: 14:47–20:49

Central Quote: “If this can be repaired ... I don’t know.” (15:57)

Themes: Physical Impacts of Aging, Handicap Designation, Decision Making to Let Go

Abstract: We learn about disabilities experienced by Herbert and Milton. Herbert has trouble operating his new tricycle received in a trade for his car. Milton discusses his two falls and limitations related to walking and lifting.

Learning Objectives

1. Identify the typical physical impact of old age.
2. Articulate a connection between driving as a means of mobility in the context of limited physical (bodily) mobility.
3. Explore the psychological impacts of awareness of physical limitation in old age.

Discussion Questions

1. What do you think Herbert’s caregiver meant when she stated, “It’s so much a part of who he is to let go of the things that are going”? (19:44).
2. Do you think it was a fair trade: Herbert’s car for a tricycle?
3. Do you think that Milton’s relationship with driving has anything to do with his reactions to aging? What evidence supports your view?

Suggested Readings

Grady, C. (2012). The cognitive neuroscience of ageing. *Nature Reviews Neuroscience*, 13, 491–505.

Huisman, M., Poppelaars, J., van der Horst, M., Beekman, A. T., Brug, J., van Tilburg, T. G., & Deeg, D. J. H. (2011). Cohort profile: The longitudinal aging study Amsterdam. *International Journal of Epidemiology*, 40, 868–876.

NCA Self-Study Committee. (2014). *Parking and vehicle control regulations*. Charleston, IL: Eastern Illinois University. http://thekeep.eiu.edu/eiunca_integrity_docs/28/

Fairly Stationary

Time Code: 20:50–23:42

Central Quote: “If I couldn’t drive, I don’t know what I would do.” (20:50)

Themes: Mental Health, Loss of Spouse, Adjustment

Abstract: We observe seemingly stark contrasts between Herbert’s and Milton’s views of the driving question. Milton discusses sitting at home as waiting to die. Herbert reveals his basis for loss comparison.

Learning Objectives

1. Explore the differences in loss accounting and their impact on decision making.
2. Articulate the connections among perspective, autonomy, and mental health.
3. Map how physical disabilities impact or are overcome for the sake of mobility.

Discussion Questions

1. Contrast Herbert and Milton’s views of the choice to give up driving.
2. Do you think Herbert and Milton’s views are fundamentally different? Articulate some similarities with their perspectives.
3. Outline family differences that may account for part of the difference between Herbert and Milton’s views on driving. Name other characteristic differences that may contribute.
4. What do you think Herbert meant when he said, “If you have to be by yourself, tell yourself you’re in good company”? (23:11).

Suggested Readings

- Cawthon, P. M., Fox, K. M., Gandra, S. R., Delmonico, M. J., Chiou, C. F., Anthony, M. S., ... & Harris, T. B. (2011). Clustering of strength, physical function, muscle, and adiposity characteristics and risk of disability in older adults. *Journal of the American Geriatrics Society*, 59, 781–787.
- De Vries, N. M., Van Ravensberg, C. D., Hobbelen, J. S. M., Olde Rikkert, M. G. M., Staal, J. B., & Nijhuis-van der Sanden, M. W. G. (2012). Effects of physical exercise therapy on mobility, physical functioning, physical activity and quality of life in community-dwelling older adults with impaired mobility, physical disability and/or multi-morbidity: a meta-analysis. *Ageing Research Reviews*, 11(1), 136–149.
- Perkins, M. M., Ball, M. M., Whittington, F. J., & Hollingsworth, C. (2012). Relational autonomy in assisted living: A focus on diverse care settings for older adults. *Journal of Aging Studies*, 26, 214–225.