Why People Fall

A: Accidental

Number	Type	Example
1	Environmental	Tripping or slipping on external objects, poor footwear, footwear being put on the wrong feet
2	Errors of Judgement	Misjudging distances, moving too fast
3	Loss of Balance	E.g. being knocked by someone or something happening unexpectedly.
4	Poor use of walking aids	E.g. losing control of crutches, wrong type of aid, such as a zimmer frame without wheels, incorrect height.
5	Tiredness/Drowsiness	E.g. at night your level of alertness is lower therefore you can be more at risk of falls.

B: Psychological

Number	Type	Example
1	Fear of falling	Fear after previous fall
2	Lack of cognitive awareness	Dementia, not being able to follow instructions given by carers or too many instructions being given so the person is unable to process the information, causing confusion.
3	Lack of awareness of own ability	Attempting movements that are too complex.

C: Physiological

Number	Type	Example
1	Drop attacks	Characterised by sudden collapse
2	Fainting	Characterised by the person becoming floppy and losing control
3	Pathological fracture	Characterised by severe pain
4	Hypotension	Characterised by fall when going from a sitting to standing position
5	Epilepsy/Seizures	Characterised by uncontrolled falls followed by typical seizure actions.
6	Medication	E.g. sedatives can cause drowsiness which leads to loss of concentration. Other drugs can cause loss of balance.
7	Ear Infections / Urine Tract Infections	Dizziness and swaying due to vertigo. Confusion.
8	Postural Problems	Leaning back or forwards can cause loss of balance

For a better life

D: Physical

Number	Type	Example
1	Decreased strength and joint range or movement	E.g. arthritis, pain, joint stiffness and weakness.
2	Walking pattern and balance	E.g. unsteady when walking or turning; walking with an altered walking pattern (e.g. shuffle or dragging one leg), relying on use of furniture to keep their balance when walking

E: Neurological

Number	Type	Example
1	Falling due to neurological condition	Parkinson's, stroke, head injury, MS, impaired gait pattern, CP Types of fall can be varied.
2	Perceptual Problems	Unable to judge distance, e.g. depth of a step which can cause falls on steps

F: Sensory

Number	Type	Example
1	Falling due to poor eyesight or hearing.	If wearing/not wearing glasses can affect balance and may trip.

G: Deliberate

Number	Type	Example
1	Patient deciding to sit down wherever they are and whatever they are doing.	Dementia, challenging behaviour, can be sudden or slow – client fully conscious and subsequently may refuse to get up, although capable of doing so.

NB: These are just some examples, it is impossible to list all possible causes. For a person considered at risk, please refer to your local Community Team for People with Learning Disabilities.

For a better life