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Ageism, Passed Down from Generation to Generation

Amy L. Gothing

Merrimack College

2018

MERRIMACK COLLEGE

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AUTHOR: Amy L. Gothing

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Abstract

This participatory social justice focused project used both qualitative and quantitative approaches to examine how the intergenerational model challenges ageism in society. This project provided a space for knowledge creation and committed action of community leaders of the North Shore, MA. Through analysis of current literature as well as respondents' participation in surveys, observational and interactive activities during a 2-hour training: All Ages All Together it was found that by intentionally planning for intergenerational programming you allow opportunities for relationships to grow; by raising awareness of the role media plays on the construction of stigmas and stereotypes participants were able to spot and call out ageist attitudes and behaviors; by viewing community through the Age-Friendly model both individuals and organizations were able to asses where they can best implement and support intergenerational programs; and by examining values across generations it was discovered we have more in common than we might think. This project supports the intergenerational model as a community tool that is likely to increase overall quality of life.

Executive Summary

In January of 2018, Governor Charlie Baker announced that Massachusetts had enrolled in the AARP Network for Age-Friendly Communities and doing so became the second state in the nation committing to our changing demographics. Statistics show that the whole Baby Boomer generation will soon reach the demographic title of senior, pushing our nation for the first time in history to having a larger aging than youth population. This is all taking place during a period of increasing technologies that are allowing people to live longer and healthier lives. This project supports the move towards age-friendly communities and adds to the literature on benefits and best practices of the intergenerational model as a way to challenge ageism in our current society.

The negative effects of ageism casts a large net over many aspects of our communities and has an insidious way of undermining our communities' attitudes, behaviors and policies. These negative perceptions create our socially normative attitudes that then affect policy, community development, as well as individual's overall quality of life. This project was conducted by first creating a review of existing literature and then sharing resources and knowledge to participants of how ageism has manifest itself in a society through language, media and history. Participants gained a foundational level of knowledge to move forward in challenging and recognizing their own bias as well as being able to address and notice ageist attitudes in their own community settings. This project supports the intergenerational models as a best practice to challenge ageism in society.

Through a workshop training *All Age All Together*, this participatory project provided tangible resources and skills to community leaders and activists so that they are able to share gained knowledge and spread commitment to direct action on how to best participate and support

the intergenerational model. Through a variety of activities, lecture and discussion over a 2-hour session, participants were able to engage with like-minded community members to best learn what is already being done in their communities and opportunities for further implementation and development. By increasing opportunities for intergenerational relationships to exist, the overall community is likely to have an increase of overall quality of life.

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Ageism, Passed Down from Generation to Generation

It has been said that there is no greater distance between two people than a misunderstanding. When misunderstandings take place at generational levels there are large communities of people who, if left in a silo, will never close that gap. The ages that we identify with upon birth and through our life trajectory hold many symbols and values that are contributed to these labeled demographics. People can become comfortable with the familiarity of being around those of similar ages this leading to a culture with many areas of disconnection. The culture divide that takes place between generations has a vast array of consequences such as loss of culture, wisdom and increased social isolation (Alford, 2009). This division of ages can be prevented. Allowing spaces for intergenerational engagement provides opportunities for connections between ages therefore increasing the chances for creating a more inclusive and rich culture.

There is an increase of urgency to spread awareness of age related isolation. With the launch of the 2006 global campaign towards an Age-Friendly World brought on by the World Health Organization (WHO) and the American Association of Retired Persons (AARP), there has been increased effort to spread awareness and create sustainable lasting change to communities to better their efforts at achieve an "Age-Friendly" status.

As a nation we are aging, and we must prepare for our changing demographic. A comparative study done by Brashears, McPherson and Smith-Lovin (2006), finds the core concepts of discussion in America have changed regarding social isolation. The 1985 survey showed that respondents reported having an average of three confidants whom they felt safe and comfortable to discuss important matters. When the survey was repeated in 2004, respondents

reported having no confidants, and while they had more confidant networks around spouse and parents, there was decreased voluntary associations to neighborhoods. Within one lifetime the structure of how people connect to each other has changed at a fast rate. To have people reporting no confidants supports the idea that there is a growing disconnection among our social communities. This leads to interconnections of densely similar people. With this project we are given foundational insight as to changes that have been taking place in our society as well as areas to be addressed. If people are not engaging out of kin confidants and more likely to stick to their own similar minds, there is then the creation of silos.

With a good foundational knowledge and history allowing understanding of ageism in our current day society, this training will then move towards development. Improving social networks and social supports with the intergenerational model will be the focus of these development trainings. Because confidants and social capital are low, this will be a primary focus.

An action plan to educate and engage from all levels of the community starting with the community leaders as role models and advocates showing support and providing legitimacy for the individuals to engage will be utilized as a best strategy of engaging the greater community as a whole. The training and development that will follow this project on intergenerational programs will focus on bridging barriers between ages due to cultural diversity of age. As such the collaboration of frameworks provided by AARP and the World Health Organization will be referenced and followed as guidelines. Advocacy and policy work has become increasingly focused on this area and will continue through this proposed plan of participatory action. With development of a greater intergenerational community we can create and foster positive relationships that will be able to provide positive changes in many areas of life.

Literature Review

"It's paradoxical that the idea of living a long life appeals to everyone, but the idea of getting old doesn't appeal to anyone."

— *Andy Rooney*

Research shows it clearly, we are now a part of an aging population. Data suggests that 10,000 baby-boomers turn 65 every day (Pew Research Center, 2010). For every hour we live, the average human lifespan is increasing by up to 15 minutes (Fishman, 2010). By the year 2030, all baby boomers will all have reached the demographic title of senior (Blancato & Ponder, 2015). Not only are we reaching a population that increasingly ages longer but people are also feeling younger, with 61% of Boomers reporting feeling 9 years younger than that of their reported age (Pew Research Center, 2010). We are a part of a world that lives longer, due to a variety of variables, from improvements of health, medicines and our overall quality of life. This means that the time is now to establish a culture that represents our people at all phases of life. By viewing aging in a positive frame, we allow ease for integration of all ages to come together so that culture, wisdom and community may flourish. This project will go over ageism as it exists today and the effects that is has on the social aspects of the aging population with the World Health Organizations initiative for Age-Friendly Cities being used as a model of positive aspects for our communities to follow (WHO, 2006). This initiative will hope to challenge the perpetuation of ageism from being passed along from one generation to the next. The negative perception of aging compared to the glorification of youth will be debunked and a new plan of action is called upon. Intergenerational programing is the way of the future.

Ageism in America: Can You Spot it?

Ageism is a term coined by psychiatrist Robert. N Butler, M.D. in 1969. The topic came up due to debates and oppression of the housing market and the inability for older adults to have access to quality housing. This concept of ageism has since been able to be transferable to larger realm of our overall social and economic culture here in America. Butler says, "Age-ism describes the subjective experiences implied in the popular notion of the generation gap. Prejudice of the middle against the old in this instance and against the young in other," going on to claim that in 1969 - over fifty years ago - that this is "a serious national problem" (Butler, 1969, pg. 243). It was a problem then and it is still a problem now. It is an aspect of our culture that leads us all towards a dark future if we do not recognize how our perceptions of aging can lead to consequences.

According to Ageism Hurts, a website launched in April of 2011 to provide a forum for discussion, support and scholarly information to share with its visitors, "ageism is the stereotyping or discrimination of a person to a group of people because of their age" (2017). This term is inclusive of both ends of the age battle. The creation of the website is a great indicator of the need to promote awareness of ageism as a social issue. With more information accessible to the public, there is the ability for spreading of awareness that leads to education and knowledge needed so that we achieve a positive societal understating.

Ageism creates barriers to the development of good policy on aging. It puts a narrow scope on the thoughts of the topic aging. The definition of ageism has created issues by clumping together those sixty-plus year-old people in one category. This is neglecting the aging population at each stage going further. We go from babies to toddler's preteens and teens all of which have been defined and studied to debate the different developmental stages that take place. We then

become young adults and then adults, middle-aged and then once the age of sixty comes you are now a part of the sixty plus community (Robbins, 2015). This is a community that has the ability to age out into their eighties, nineties and well beyond. That is forty years of aging that society has placed into one lump group, denying visibility and perpetuating the cycle of ageism. This lack of recognition diminishes the differences that are present between these ages. This grouping of sixty-year-olds and beyond keeps alive the thought process that aging means the end and/or that there is nothing after sixty. Limiting categories and age demographics have a direct connection to formation of social policy and whom it is meant to benefit.

There is evidence to support the effect of a negative self-perception and that "older individuals' internalized age stereotypes contribute to the formation of their self-perceptions of aging, which, in turn, can have a physiological outcome" (Levy et al., 2002, pg. 261). Such perceptions of aging are presented to us at a very young age and we grow up engrained to have a certain view of our aging population. Just as other stigmas and stereotypes resonant within an individual, at any age, after being exposure to perceptions and this the frames the view in which we see the world and those members of it. If we are viewing our aging population with negative stereotypes and they, themselves are internalizing such prejudice we have created a circular cycle of oppression. There needs to be a wrench thrown in and some effort put in to rebuilding how we choose to perceive our aging communities.

From One Generation to the Next

"Most people don't grow up. Most people age. They find parking spaces, honor their credit cards, get married, have children, and call that maturity. What that is, is aging."

— *Maya Angelou*

We see the American dream, a white fence, children maybe a dog and two happy healthy parents, but there is something missing from this frame… the grandparents. Parents did not get there on their own. There was a large community that helped support and reach such fulfillment of the so claimed, American dream. The breakup of the family unit has had an effect on our aging population. Families are spreading out and moving away this leaves less people to remain in close contact with the older adults of their families and communities. This plays into the roles of perceived value; there is less of a connection so there is less of a value.

This image and understanding, that those who came before us were there to help pave the way, will stand as foundation for the need of an understanding culture. Society is social and community based, we learn from those around us. The idea that health and well-being are determined not only by our genes and personal characteristics but also by the physical and social environments in which we live our lives (WHO, 2017). There is an idea that new relationships and partnerships must be built as a part of the strategy for sustainability and that this is a strategy outside the traditional realm is argued by Feather (2015). Recognizing the individual relationships in the community that are present in society is key to understanding how ideas are shared threw it.

Utilitarianism is the doctrine that actions are right if they are useful or of the benefit of a majority such as the greater good of the community (Mills, 1901). This theory and thought process of what benefits the larger masses has been used as a way to justify why society has negative perceptions of aging. With such thinking that the aging people are of no benefit to the masses creates a social allowance that perpetuates discriminations of our aging adults. Older adults put large amounts of positive inputs back into our community after years of providing

labor and outputs of their time. This is misleading to have such a high focus on outputs such as time put into the working system.

As a retiree in America, according to Office of Personal Management (OPM), our governmental agency "Eligibility is determined by your age and number of years of creditable service" (2017). That age of retirement is viewed as the end to many and has not been updated in over thirty years. It is your stopping point where you are no longer deemed desirable to the workforce, in fact you are no longer fully eligible to work. The idea that it is serving the greater good to view the aging population with such lack of interest is wrong. Retired and aging people spend more time at shopping malls, they go out to eat and support our local economy, and they are creating an economic demand that keeps our society spinning.

Our aging population has great wealth beyond economic inputs and outputs to share with us. There is a wealth of wisdom to share and pass down from generation to generation. This is invaluable and priceless information. Concepts of wisdom among the aging population is a positive perspective to take when considering our aging population. While just by reaching a certain age, you do not automatically reach such enlightenment of wisdom, the ability to go through so many life experiences provide people with common knowledge and exposure to a variety of events. This is what Alford argues in his book, *How to Live*, is the ability to share with other experiences that influence the common greater good, this is the sharing of wisdom (2009). This follows the balance theory of wisdom presented by Sternberg (1990), that defines wisdom as the use of one's intelligence, creativity, common sense, and knowledge and as mediated by positive ethical values toward the achievement of a common good through a balance among intrapersonal, interpersonal, and extra personal interests, over the short and long terms to achieve a balance among adaptation to existing environments, shaping of existing environments,

and selection of new environments. As an older adult, living sixty plus years of life has provided increased chances of experiences and a variety of perspectives. With such gained perspectives there a diverse eye in which the world can be viewed and an ability to be able to see things from many various outlooks and perspectives.

You Won't Be Here Long Anyway, Next!

"You don't stop laughing when you grow old, you grow old when you stop laughing."

— *George Bernard Shaw*

Such thoughts of growing old and aging have long had, deep seated issues within in our population. Butler (1969), in his research said that this view of aging has reflected an uneasiness with the process and a negative view of situations that we may feel lead us to disability, death and an overall feeling of powerlessness. The idea that old age is related to death and the inability to take care of one self is a common perceived imagine of the elderly. Times are changing, and data suggests that by 2050, the 85-plus age group will reach 19 million (Institute on Aging, 2018). That is some 20-plus years of living after the demographic title of senior has been applied. There is more to be gained when it comes to old age than current society has constructed us to value.

American-Canadian scholar, Henry A. Giroux launched a project in 2014, entitled *Disposable Life*. He goes over the politics of disposability in our neoliberal times. Neoliberalism in America is a social and economic view that supports an open market (Giroux, 2014). The aspect of being vulnerable is now viewed as being considered excess. Giroux argues that the perception of people becoming "excess" is directly connected to the systematic structure of a culture that does not value longevity.

A capitalist mindset, constantly increasing rates of consumption, and always searching for the next best thing, also plays into this theory of disposability. To put it in Giroux's words, he says that now people are "discarded by the corporate state, dispossessed of social provisions and deprived of the economic, political and social conditions that enable viable and critical modes of agency, expanding populations of Americans now find themselves inhabiting zones of abandonment marked by deep inequalities in power, wealth and income. Such zones are sites of rapid disinvestment, places marked by endless spectacles of violence, and supportive of the neoliberal logics of containment, commodification, surveillance, militarization, cruelty and punishment" (Giroux, 2014). With these systems removing the visibility of social problems such as ageism, they remove social responsibility of the people.

There is a common association between old age, disease and death (Achenbaum 2015). With such an association there are negative consequences to follow. Such a negative view becomes a justification as to why society does not invest in this population. If there is not a perception of vitality, there is no desire to invest. If we do not invest in our aging population, we are not protecting the common good. This is a frame of ageism that must be re-worked. If we continue to view people as disposable, we will soon have a disposable world and that is not a positive view for the greater masses.

In a study done by Levy (2002) of 660 people aged 50 years and older, those with more positive self-perceptions of aging lived 7.5 years longer than those with negative self-perceptions of aging. We have a culture of viewing our aging population in a negative view and we have a culture that internalizes their perceptions, and this has actual statistic evidence to show it is killing us. We have a world that views aging in a negative way; it has been commodified; beliefs that aging does not, as utilitarian's have argued, benefit the greater good; and we see that theses

perceptions affect individual lives. We have begun to figure out that there is more at play here than a few individuals viewing aging as a disability or a loss of power. There is a cultural systemic force that has been shaping these views.

Fountain of Youth, Tickets on Pre-Sale

> "There is a fountain of youth: it is your mind, your talents, the creativity you bring to your life and the lives of people you love. When you learn to tap this source, you will truly have defeated age."
>
> — *Sophia Loren*

At this point is should come to no surprise that aging has developed into a market all of its very own. With such a negative view on aging we of course want to stop it from happening and that comes at a very high price. We prize youth and have created a market of anti-aging. We are an aging world, we are an aging people yet somehow, we have developed a culture to resist such changes that come along with age. We have viewed aging as a disease, as an illness and a loss, yet if we are lucky if we ourselves get to learn the wonders of age. We do not tolerate anti-women or anti-race so why do we allow for anti-aging to be marketed all around us as a normal commodity to purchase and gift (Robbins, 2015). This is a simple logic. If viewed merely economically, of course corporations and media want you to view aging as a downfall because there is a billion-dollar industry to help you fight the battle of aging. In the year 2016, Olay Regenerist Micro Sculpting was the leading anti-aging facial brand in the United States with sales of $88.7 million (Statista, 2017). According to the 2016 Plastic Surgery Statistics Report, $16.4 billion was spent on cosmetic procedures in the U.S (2017). There is a very large amount of money being spent on avoiding the appearance of aging. The market does not sell you pills to age faster that is something that comes naturally and would be much harder sell.

Statistics show that in 2013, the global anti-aging market was estimated to be worth $122.3 billion dollars; the anti-aging market is estimated to see a compound annual growth rate of 7.8 percent between 2013 and 2019 (Transparency Market Research, 2016). We see an increasingly mainstreamed adornment of looking youthful. The market has constructed an image of beauty that is forever young in appearance. This is the marketers and advertising companies attempt to create a standard of appearance that focuses on a youthful look. With such a wealthy driven market place, there is a great demand to keep the tragedy of ageism in existence in our current society.

The idea that the youth are also not given their own voice, plays into the cycle of ageism. We as a society want to look young but we do not want to respect the young. This further supports the discussion of the internalization of ageism at a young age. This creates an interesting paradox when taking a step back and looking at our society and their views on aging. This perception of the power of youthful, ageless beauty and appearance coupled with limited youth wisdom is a misunderstanding in society that can create tension between ages.

Fleisher and Reese (2013) gathered anecdotes and interviews of women in our aging world in their book, The New Senior Woman. They came up with two phenomena, when attempting to understand the reasoning why intergenerational communications either take place or do not, they are temptation and opportunity (2013). There is the temptation of staying inside ones' bubble and taking the path of least resistance. This was expressed in shared stories of misunderstandings of older adults and youth. Some of the ladies were wondering why youth did not want to take the paths of their parents. They were uncomfortable with the fact that kids sometimes talk too fast and when they asked them to repeat themselves, they felt like the youth developed the perception that the older adult was not able to understand; when this was not the

case, they just did not hear. This is the temptation of avoiding vulnerability and sticking with what you know. The idea of opportunity allows for conversation to take place. When the opportunities are presented for generational conversations and were perceived to be safe, conversations happened. It was noted that after retirement, there are limited opportunities to have intergenerational conversations and interactions. Once the break room conversations that used to take place ended, so did many opportunities for older adults and those who have retired have to interactions with other generations. In many cases, after a person retires they are replaced by a younger citizen ready to start their time in the workplace.

The marketing of youth is growing larger and the connections between generations and age segregation grows. This is all taking place as our society is aging at an increasing fast rate. Without opportunities for intergenerational connections, misunderstandings between generations will continue. We must provide more opportunities for intergenerational conversations to exist so that we can break down these barriers and stop the exploitation of our people by the free market.

Come One, Come All, Fun for the Ages

"The afternoon knows what the morning never suspected."

— *Robert Frost*

As a species, human beings have assumed top priority over this natural world we live in. With the power and control of our social world order, we are born into this privilege. We are born to a life filled with social interactions. Blancanto and Ponder (2015) bring up an interesting perspective, not every person will be a victim of sexism, racism or classism but we all have the chance to fall victim of ageism. This leads to the idea that the aging populations, from a societal standpoint, have more to offer us.

There is a constant debate if what we are doing with our lives is truly of our own discretion; if the way we act and view the world is truly all our own. This is a bit philosophical, yet society becomes curious and wants to have a better grasp on the unknown. There has been thought on the power of one's ability to be able to spend a day in someone else's shoes, this would then give insight into another perspective. Such an allowance of changed perspective provides the chance of understanding that there may be misunderstanding of the differences we experience in our daily lives compared to another. Now imagine the differences between yourself and other ages and how we as a people want to be able to understand why people are the way they are, especially in regard to differences between the generations. I could bet a phrase similar to "back in my day" has been tossed around in social circles a time or two. We look at differences between our populations as generational differences. Twenge (2013) argues in the *Society for the Study of Emerging Adulthood* that such generational differences are actually cultural differences and that they are taking place at the very beginning of when youth begin their socialization. There are new and different values that are called upon (2013). With the ability to have conversation with each other from variety of generations we can close these gaps of misunderstanding and recognize our similarities.

The ability for generations to engage together at all levels increases the creativity of all participants. There is research to support the theory that staying among like-minded individuals perpetuate the same cycles and beliefs and people do not see perspectives of others (Bringle & Hatcher, 2002). The ability for groups to get together and do different activities also increases the quality of engagement. The diversity of the interactions leads to stronger relationships.

In 2006, an international effort of moving towards an Age-Friendly World was launched by the World Health Organization (WHO, 2017). "An age-friendly world enables people of all

ages to actively participate in community activities and treats everyone with respect, regardless of their age. It is a place that makes it easy for older people to stay connected to people that are important to them. And it helps people stay healthy and active even at the oldest ages and provides appropriate support to those who can no longer look after themselves" (2017). This plan was devised by our world leaders and many nations and cities across the globe are jumping on board.

We are social people and we need social connections. There are people across all landscapes that suffer from social isolation, but the largest of those is our aging population. Social isolation is the absence of meaningful contact with individuals or communities (Cattan, Kime, & Bagnall, 2011). Our increasingly aging populations who are socially isolated are keeping their wisdom and we as a society are missing out on a huge wealth of knowledge. Cornell and Waite (2009) found that aging adults are more likely to have social isolation compared to their younger counterparts. Up to 32% of adults over age 55 report feeling lonely at any given time (Masi et al., 2011). Further research stresses the social variable and the role socialization and social participation plays on decreasing social isolation (Tomaka et al., 2006). We as a society have lots of tools necessary to decrease social isolation of our aging population. We are the tools; our friends and family are the tools.

Blanchflower and Oswald (2007) argue that happiness and life satisfaction are U-shaped in age. You are happiest when you at the start of your life and at the end of your life. So why is it that there is such stigma associated with these two phases of life? It makes sense when you begin to break down the immense amount of responsibilities and expectations that come during those middle ages of life. The idea behind intergenerational programing is to level out this curve and relieve pressure from the middle so that all phases (on average) are enjoyable and happy. A

community that participates in intergenerational activities will see an integration of ideas, culture and support throughout each aspect of their lives. These aspects could range in a variety of areas such as social support, with the older adults having a bit more time after retirement and are able to show support of childcare to those who work long hours. At all phases of our lives we need someone to talk to, as a teen experiencing so many changes with their body both physical and emotional there is always something to talk about. Who better to talk about it than with someone who has been there and would genuinely love to listen to you? When getting the youth and the older adults together, the increase of socialization benefits both sides. They are both populations who have limited voices in the social world. By reaching out to your seniors for conversation and advice we are gaining a wealth of knowledge and wisdom from experience. By allowing all ages to interact together, we can inspire creativity and promote the ideals of community.

A six-month study done by Arnetz and Theorell (1983) that wanted to assess social participation shows increased activity of the specifically senior experimental group compared to the senior control group after social participation was increased. Once they began participating in the activities they went on and participated in more. By engaging and participating in activities seniors were more likely to continue their engagement and to search for more opportunities than compared to those who were not made to initially participate. This was also seen in a 2009 study (Dickens et al.) showing that over 80% of participatory interventions of home visits resulted in positive benefits compared with 44% of those categorized as non-participatory. Findlay (2003) would argue based on his research that while much testing has been done on interventions of social isolation there is not enough data to support claims of benefits and there must be review of evaluations. In May 2005, Help the Aged and Zurich Community Trust launched a three-year national program, *A Call in Time*. This program was to establish phone conversations with

isolated older adults. The telephone befriending service helped older people to re-engage with the community and their external environment. Three themes emerged from this program: life is worth living, a sense of belonging, and knowing there's a friend out there (Kime & Bagnall, 2008). People want to be connected and they want to have meaning in their life at all stages. Intergenerational programing keeps this in mind, it keeps it at its core. If we want to have a community that values empathy and recognizes others, intergenerational programming can achieve success in a variety of ways across a wide array of land.

Further research on participatory action-based programs are necessary, more specifically the effects of intergenerational programing that increase awareness of ageism and decrease social isolation among the aging community. Intergenerational activities need to be readily available and accessible so that all member wishing to participate are granted opportunities to do so. We are an aging world and we deserve to live with dignity and the wisdom of those who have come before us.

Project Plan

Our older generations have been silenced, forgotten and overlooked even after years of devotion and dedication to society. Ageism is a prejudice that we all have a chance to be effected by and it is a prejudice that we are learning to have against our future selves. Through this social justice education and action project we hope to provide a space for knowledge creation and committed action to community leaders and activist of the North Shore, MA. This project uses participatory action to share the intergenerational model as a way to challenge ageism in our society.

Situation Statement

Every hour, our expected life span increases by fifteen minutes. We are expected for the first time in our history to have a larger elder than youth population by 2030, cultural views on ageing impact social, physical and economic qualities of life of all people throughout our community.

Define Your Goals

Goal 1: To foster friendships across generations.

Goal 2: To promote positive attitudes on aging.

Goal 3: To engage the community to increase capacity to understand generational factors so that we can provide more effective programs that create opportunities for youth and our aging population to connect.

With an overview of the changing demographics that are taking place in our world there is a shared knowledge among the training. An estimated 216,000 people worldwide will be turning sixty-five in the year 2031 (Fishman, 2010). By every hour we live the average human lifespan is increasing, by up to fifteen minutes (Fishman, 2010). As these statistics go up there is also a rise in the need of opportunities for children and older adults to have meaningful engagement (WHO, 2010).

The goal of providing a flexible structure of education and events allows for open communication and organic energy to be created among the generations. The goals are about the process and the journey that is hoping to create an inclusive social culture for all.

The desire is to promote mutual respect and understanding between and beyond the generations. Using the ideas presented in Goodman and Illich essay *Deschooling* (1975), we will

attempt to establish imaginative alternatives to our current thinking and have the function of education to be social rather than state and be community based rather than institutionalized.

Target Audience and Stakeholders

The target audience is community leaders and interested residents along with policy and program makers of the North Shore of Massachusetts. This audience is a broad range of community organizations such as councils on ageing, academic and nonacademic institutions and staff. Those whom would be intentional in increasing their knowledge on ageism and the benefits of intergenerational programing.

Stakeholders for this informational workshop and training are The Beverly Council on Aging, Massachusetts Council on Aging, National Council on Aging, City Officials, Beverly High School, Beverly Children's Learning Center, Briscoe Middle School, North Beverly Elementary, Endicott College, Monserrat College, Gordon College, Beverly Resource Group, the Beverly Library, and the general public of Beverly, MA.

Crafting a Clear Message

Everyone who's lucky grows older, and with expanding technologies, we are living longer. This allows us a great opportunity to embrace our time with varied ages and pass along traditions, stories and memories from one generation to the next. Communities will benefit from increased intergenerational programs that create links for generations to connect, cultivate culture and hopefully break down negative social basis based on age.

Incentives for Engagement

Stakeholder: Young Children

Incentive: Increased sense of history, stronger identity more likely to be successful.

Stakeholder: General Public

Incentive: Bring awareness to severity of this issue as well as tools to do better.

Stakeholder: Older Adults

Incentive: Provide socialization that decrease social isolation. Allows for empowerment and positive views of self and other.

Stakeholder: City Officials

Incentive: Increase quality of life of community leading to positive economic and health outcomes.

Stakeholder: Community Partners

Incentive: Larger volunteer base to draw from. Positive view from the public showing that you care about the community at all levels.

Stakeholder: Media

Incentive: Large viewing pool increasing ratings.

Stakeholder: Middle Aged Adults

Incentive: Are getting closer to this aging demographic and with directly benefit from positive views of aging as well as insight into their future life.

Stakeholder: Job Market

Incentive: More people to work and engage within the community.

Identify Outreach Methods

The power of this training lies on the participation of stakeholders and key audiences. It requires that they hear about the training, find it useful and adaptable to their own organization or community, and that they understand the material shared. They must also find it transferable to implement these practices into their communities. Six main tools for outreach will be used.

- There will be a video segment that is going to be on Beverly Public T.V channel. This will reach a broad audience and hopefully attract those members of the community looking for opportunities to engage.
- Flyers will be drafted to promote the event. Sharing details of location, time and community partners.
- Word of Mouth. Personally, promoted at local events such as resource group meetings, local city meetings and schools. The staff of the Beverly Senior Center will be invited to the training.
- An email invitation will go out to, schools, Massachusetts council on aging and city officials'.
- Advertisement will go out in the Beverly monthly newsletter.
- Expose' on Intergenerational to be published in local paper along with training information.

The space requested holds 25 people. I will have an RSVP request to gauge who will be attending. The event will be advertised as open to the public and will request that you sign up in advance. There will be a volunteer at the door managing the registration table. They will check people in, provide the pre and post-tests, as well as hand out any supplementary materials. Name tags will be distributed at check-in. There will be a limit on the room capacity therefore those who pre-registered have priority. If enough people show up, a second training can be arranged. By having pre-registration it is hoped that any chance of exceeding room limit will be caught ahead of time and adjusted prior to the event.

Table 1: Outreach Chart Tracker

NAME	ORGANIZATION AFFILIATION	OUTREACH METHOD	DATE OF ENGAGEMENT	CONTACT INFORMATION
City Officials		Email Phone		Phone: Email:
Community Organization Senior Staff		Email Phone		Phone: Email:
Mid-Low Staff		Email		Phone: Email:
Community Members		Flyer		Phone: Email:
Academic Teachers		Flyer Email		Phone: Email:
Program Directors		Email Phone		Phone: Email:
Young Families		Flyer		Phone: Email:
Community Leaders		Flyer Email		Phone: Email:
Students		Flyer Email		Phone: Email:

- The T.V broadcast takes place on February 13, 2018..
- Flyers will be placed strategically on college campus and local coffee shops, following the start of the spring semester.
- Email invitations will be sent out on Tuesday morning and followed up upon a Thursday mid-morning.

- Local meeting will be attended, flyer will be brought and contact, and training information will be provided.

Responsibilities Chart

NAME	ORGANIZATION OR AFFILIATION	RESPONSIBILITIES	CONTACT INFORMATION
Amy Gothing	Lead Facilitator	Creation of Media kit Creation of timeline of training Training Facilitation and implementation Evaluation Analysis	Phone: 774-276-7573 Email: gothinga@merrimack.edu
Community Organization	Community Partner	Provide Space for training Encourage staff to attend	Phone: Email:
Bev Cam	Media Support	Bev Cam studio scheduling Video editing and publishing	Phone: Email:
Melissa Nemon	Project Support	Coaching and Question Answerer Tools and Practices	Phone: Email: nemonm@merrimack.edu
Community Organization	Community Partner	Share tips on training Ideas and networks to reach Best tools and practices	Phone: Email:

Mayor Cahill	Community Leader	Increase network Provide access to city agenda	Phone: Email:
Friendly Face	Assistant	Assist in survey pass out and collection of Attendance Keeping on time during training	Phone: Email:

Tools/Measure to Assess Progress

To be measured (attendee take away):

1. Gained greater awareness of ageism.
2. Recognized their own biases.
3. Feel that the content can be adapted to their own work.
4. Confidence in implementing intergenerational programing.

Tools and measurement of this training with be gathered through a method of both qualitative and qualitative approaches. A pre and post survey will be passed out to participants. The pre-survey will be emailed upon registration and be completed online. The post surveyed will be handed out upon check the day of the event in the provided folder and time at the end of the workshop with be provided in hope to have immediate reflection.

During Event an assistant will have an observational rubric. They will track the number of Attendees and the number of engaged members. Observation during the event done by the assistant who will have met with me to be coached on what to look for include; conversations, questions, engagement and transferability of material. They will be observing to find out if

participants are perceived to think they can use this model? If people are engaging in conversation with other attendees. If they are staying on topic or going off topic.

Individual impacts:

- A self-sense of empowerment will be provided by engagement
- Increase in social and human capital
- An improved quality of life

Community impacts:

- Increased community engagement
- Greater, stronger and more sustainable interactive networks
- Community culture of trust allowing for creative action
- Decreased negative influence of ageism

Structural impacts:

- With less stigma of ageism, policy will be started more inclusively, decreasing the discrimination of jobs, policy and health care.
- Architecture of buildings and roads ways that are accessible to all
- Funding to community engagement projects
- Less exploitation of the aging community

Implementation Timeline

January 2018	Community partner should be established. Location, date and time should be established. Media kit should be finalized.
February 2018	Launch of media campaign. Email chain BevCam Video filmed 13th

March 2018	Personal phone calls Verified RSVP list Local Paper will publish an exposé on topic Invitation of training in BCOA newsletter
April 2018	April 4, 2018 training date Pre-survey and post survey Thank you email sent out Evaluation Follow up on training Continue improving and marketing
May 2018	Revisit past project at each section Evaluate evaluation Continue campaign on positive aging

Logical Framework

The plan is to increase foundational knowledge of community leaders with a training and development on ageism and what the benefits of intergenerational programs are. This will bring leaders together therefore increasing networks of like-minded community members, policy and program makers as well as providing skills and tools to move forward.

So that:

Awareness of ageism increases.

So that:

There is a rise in visibility on the public agenda creating social allowance of the topic.

So that:

More informed discussion can be had among the community.

So that:

The aging community's needs can be recognized, listened to and understood, with direct engagement from them.

So that:

Advocacy and policy work can become increasingly focused on creating an age friendly community and formulate an action plan.

So that:

Policy and funding goes towards cultivating an age friendly community.

So that:

That can community engagement increases at all levels and active aging is promoted.

So that:

Engagement will go up and ageism goes down.

So that:

The message becomes you are welcome and wanted here.

So that:

Networks of resources feel prompted to facilitate preferred practices into their own culture.

So that:

There can be a reciprocal cycle promoting positive aging spinning on a wheel creating ongoing competencies and standards to uphold.

Methodology

This project and training was to provide a space for knowledge creation and committed action so that communities of the North Shore can effectively and actively work towards greater inclusion and reduction of age bias. This was done through strategies and best practices of intergenerational programming. The objectives that were achieved by the workshop were to share knowledge on the social process of the perceptions of aging in society. Topics discussed were ageism in America, intergenerational programming and the North Shores existing resources as areas for growth and opportunity to move forward. With knowledge and guided activities this workshop hoped to change perceptions and behaviors of the community and diverse stakeholders in it, to mobilize towards an age-friendly city.

Participants

Community leaders: community leaders from ranging local government and non-profits in the area were invited to attend. The town's recreation department who is responsible for many of the town's activities and summer camps. Existing organizations that work with an intergenerational model to share their past experiences. Both of which have direct access to the diverse community of students and community members and partners. Ages are expected to range from 30-65. These are people who are looking for ways to enhance what they are already doing as a way to better the overall community.

Council on Aging staff: council on aging staff from surrounding areas as well as the local office were invited to attend. This is a population ranging in age from 20-65 and work directly with our aging population. They are able to bring in past experiences as well as have a great connection to the resources to implement intergenerational programing and positive aging in language.

Aging population workers: this is a group of people and organizations who activity are serving the aging population. Transportation and senior living associates were invited to represent the communities that they serve on a daily basis. Staff ages ranging from 30-70 and represented a diverse range of age, gender, race and socioeconomic statuses of those they serve. Academic teachers and staff: academic teachers and staff from the local high school and colleges were invited to attend the workshop as a direct connection to the populations and students they engage with each day. The principal of the local high school was invited to represent the local secondary schools. Service learning department staff was invited as to better engage and raise awareness of diverse population that are able to serve and be served. They also are able to incorporate this model and topic into their current curricula.

Activists: local activist were invited to help spread the word and share the information they would gather. Local media and newspapers who have published work on senior centers and quality of life in the community were invited. They were expected to bring what they learn back into the community and gain public attention.

Beverly Council on Aging Members: council on aging members and senior citizens of the community were invited to attend the workshop. This age is expected to range from 60-95 as well as provide diverse gender and socioeconomic statuses as well as a wealth of past and present life experiences.

Youth and Students: youth and students from the local high school and colleges in the community were invited to attend the workshop. Ages are expected to range from 16 to 27 and there will be a mix of genders, races/ethnicities, and socioeconomic statuses. As populations who are able to directly participate in shared knowledge as well as implementation to apply in their current life as well as a mindset to take with them going forward.

Materials

The workshop space was located at The Beverly Council on Aging Senior Community Center at 90 Colon Street Beverly, MA 01915. This was in a meeting room with moveable tables that holds up to 25 people. There was audio/visual (A/V) projection provided with the space. A power point was projected on the screen from a laptop, as well as printed out for participants to follow along with. The tables were set up in a U-shape to encourage engagement between the participants.

Surveys were used both pre-workshop and post-workshop as to gain further data from the attendees (see Appendices C and D). An observation rubric was used by the assistant to gather data during the workshop (see Appendix E). Eight posters were placed upon the walls that contained pictures and descriptions of each of the Age-Friendly domains.

- Each participant received a folder upon registration. The folder contained a name tag, colored stickers, post-it notes, the workshop agenda, activity guides, a list of resources (covering ageism, benefits of intergenerational communities, similarities between you and aging populations, and people first language), pledge of commitment, copies of the PowerPoint presentation with lines for note-taking, and positive quotes on aging.

Procedure

The workshop required a pre-registration as well as a pre-survey to verify attendance and foundational knowledge of the topic.

The workshop began at 10:00 AM with a volunteer running the registration check in table. Upon registration each attendee received a folder full of information for the 2-hour session. Clipped to the top of the folder were the participants name tag and affiliation, as well as a slip of

colored stickers along with following instructions: "*Along the wall you will see 8 posters that contain a different domain of the Age-Friendly Model. A brief description along with a symbol will be atop the poster. Place a sticker in each area you feel yourself/organization are actively and presently engaged in.*"

This gallery walk is used to give participants a chance to review the practices of an age-friendly city as well as give them a chance to socialize and network before the official beginning of the workshop. The posters will be followed up on toward the end of the workshop. On the screen at the front of the room a slideshow of photos will displayed and light music will be playing to keep the atmosphere light and inviting.

Around 10:15 AM the instructor officially welcomed everyone to the workshop. She introduced herself and her own personal background as well as an overview of materials in folder. Following her introductions, the group was invited to introduce themselves and the organization they are affiliated. After introductions have finished the facilitator begins with the formal PowerPoint presentation on the topic of ageism in America. The presentation is informational and educational and runs about 15 minutes. The slides went over proper language and vocabulary as well as shared statics and data on our changing demographics.

Following the presentation around 10:35 AM was an interactive activity. Activity 1 was titled *Can you Spot it*? The room is asked to divide into small groups. Each group is provided with a variety of magazines. The point of this activity was to allow participants to look through magazines and pull out ads and articles that had ageist language, images and attitudes present. The goal is to recognize the prevalence of ageism in our current society and that it is present even when we may not be noticing it. Following this activity is a reflection and question portion of the activity. Questions reflecting on the activity and providing insight and observation

included: What was the overall takeaway from the activity? Did anything surprise you? Did you expect to see something else?

At 11:00 AM the group is brought back together. The facilitator then went back in front of the class and began the presentation and overview of intergenerational programming. This slideshow consisted of vocabulary, data and statistics as well as anecdotal experiences of past intergenerational activities. This section highlights the benefits and best practices of intergenerational programing.

At 11:15 AM Activity 2 was introduced, *The Wise and the Wiser*. The room was split up into small groups and each group was provided with a paper that contained a list of values. The group was informed that this is an activity that could be done at their own intergenerational event. The participants were instructed to make a list of their own personal values. They then were to compress their list into their top five values and were asked to share with the small groups what and why they choose their values. This activity was provided to allow members of the group to understand and view how other generations may have different or similar values and why. By having a variety of perspectives on one topic you are able to gain insight into the minds of how and why others think and act the way they do. The groups were then instructed to come back together as a large group and share their experiences and thoughts. The facilitator used a large paper pad and maker and compiled a list of values for the room.

By 11:35 AM the group is back together, they are now ready to review the posters along the walls. This activity is titled *Who's Stuck Where*. Some posters have many stickers and some posters had none. The facilitator goes around to each poster and opens discussion back up to the group, asking about what is working and what is it that can be done better. Inside the participants folders are post its and the attendees are encouraged to come up with ideas to expand

participation in each of the age-friendly domains. They wrote their ideas on the post-it note and stuck them up on the correlating poster.

At 11:45 AM a pledge of commitment was presented to the attendees. This pledge card asked the participants to commit to pursuing the advocacy of age friendly and the intergenerational model. They were prompted to commit to a specific action in a specific time frame.

By 11:50 a video from the AARP showing interactions between different ages and perceptions that were changed (AARP, 2016). This was shown as one last reminder of the benefits of aging together.

Finally, at 11:55 AM the closing message and thank you to the attendees was provided. In the participants folders a post survey was provided and asked that they fill it out before they left.

Results

The overall results and takeaways from the participants after attending this workshop were positive. This ranged from insights into the individual as well as addressing thoughts about the greater community.

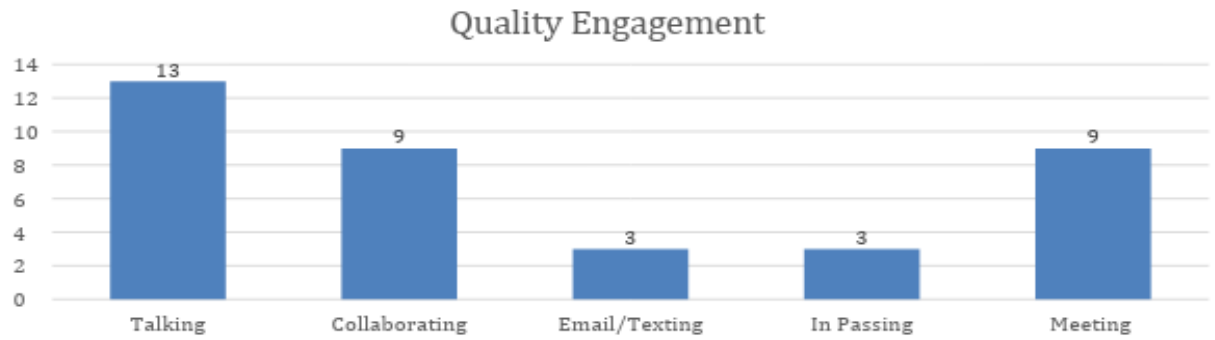
Survey Results

Of the 23 participants 14 filled out the pre-survey as well as 14 responding to post-surveys. Ages of workshop participants ranged from 22 to 83. Of the group, 9 participants self-identified as female, 9 as male and 1 did not answer.

Participants were asked, “Other than immediate family, how often do you engage with someone of a different generation than you in a given month?” with 71.4% of respondents

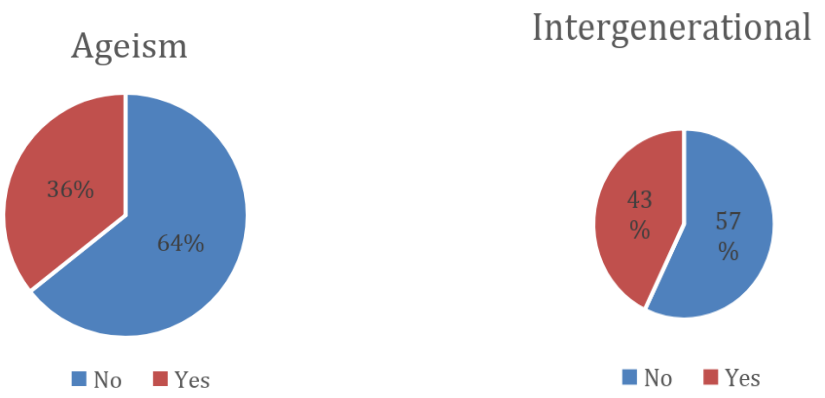
reporting All the Time and 28.6% reporting Sometimes. This question was then followed with, "Which of the following do you consider quality engagement?" to which 93% reported Talking both in person or on the phone to be a quality form of engagement. 64% of respondents reported that Collaborating on Projects is considered quality engagement similarly 64% agreed Meeting up in person or for coffee is considered quality engagement. Both Emailing/Texting and Saying Hi in Passing was reported by 21% of respondents to be considered quality engagement.

Figure 1: What is Considered Quality Engagement



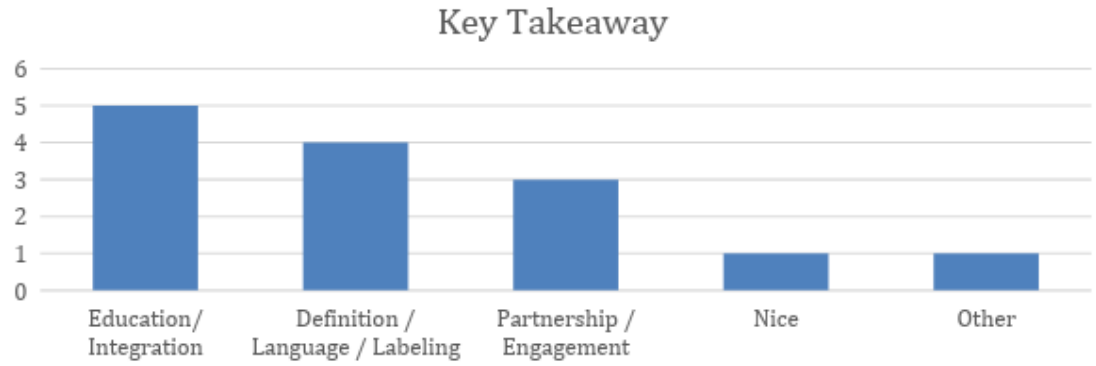
When asked about previous attendance of a workshop on ageism, 64.3% of respondents reported "No." Similarly, 57.1% of respondents reported "No" when asked if they had attended a previous workshop on intergenerational programming.

Figure 2: Previous Attendance at Workshops Breakdown



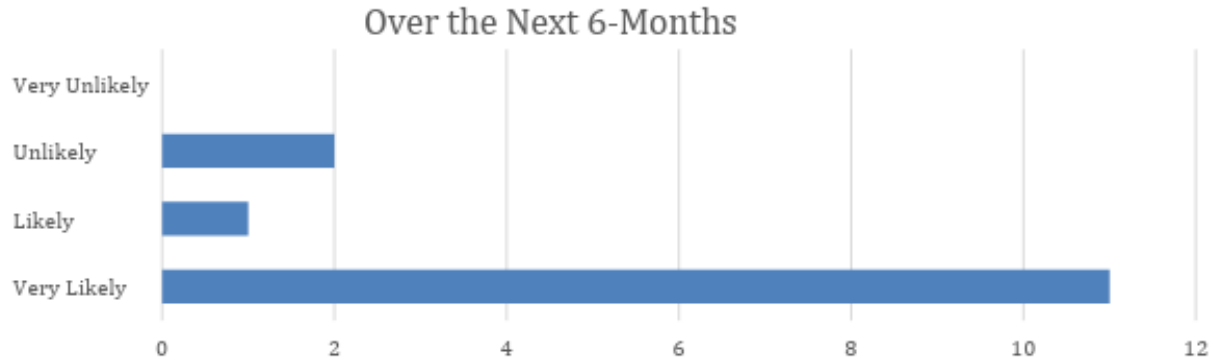
In the post-survey, respondents were asked a range of scaled and open-ended questions to gather their overall experience with both the content and the workshop. Themes of education and integration (n=5); definitions, language and labels (n=4); as well as partnerships and engagement (n=3) all were reported by the respondents.

Figure 3: Key Takeaways from Workshop



Eleven people reported "Very Likely" when asked if they would intentionally engage with different generations in the next 6-months, while one person noted they were "Likely" to do the same and two individuals noted they were "Unlikely" to purposefully engage with someone from another generation other than their immediate family.

Figure 4: Purposely Engage with Generations

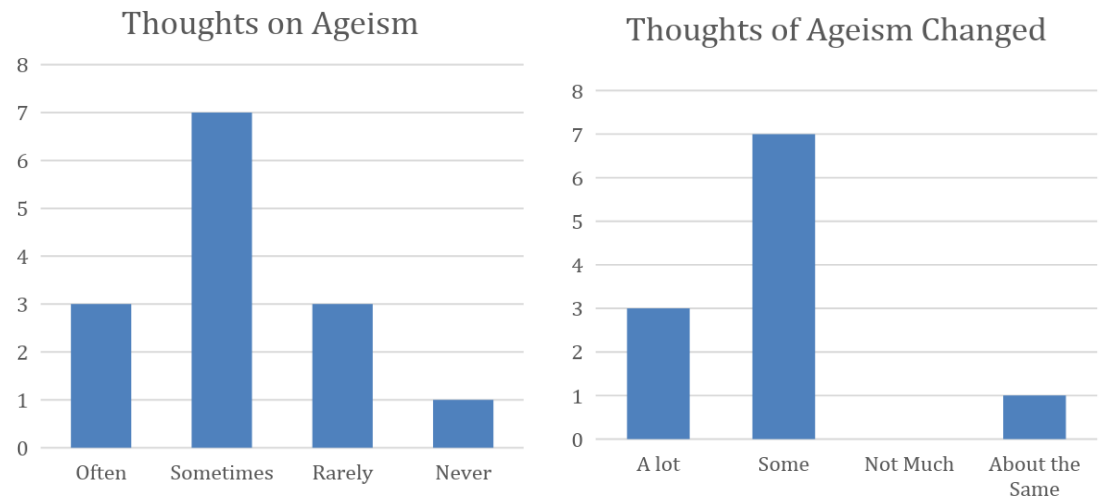


Respondents were also asked to report on their thoughts about ageism now that they have been provided a framework of ageism through the workshop. Participants were asked, “How often did you think about ageism before attending this workshop?” as well as “How do you feel your thoughts on ageism changed after attending the workshop?”

Fifty percent of respondents agreed that they Sometimes thought about ageism before attending this workshop, 21% reported they Often thought of ageism, 21% reported Rarely and .07% reported Never to thinking about ageism before the workshop.

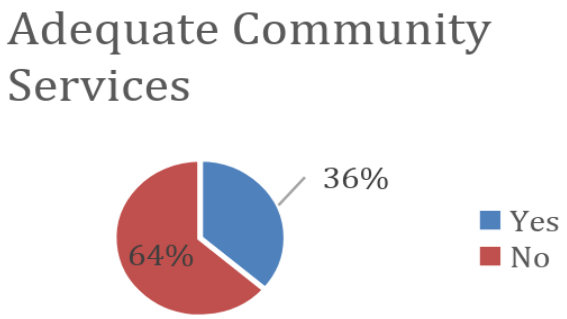
Fifty percent reported that their thoughts of ageism changed Some after attending the workshop, 21% reported their thought on ageism changed A Lot and .07% reported their thought on ageism where About the Same after attending this workshop.

Figure 5: Comparison of Thoughts on Ageism



Almost two thirds of respondents (64%) reported that there are not adequate services in the community that address our aging population.

Figure 6: Existing Adequate Services in Community



Participants were also asked, "Do you feel you have enough knowledge to advocate for intergenerational programming?" About 93% responded that they Agree they have enough knowledge to advocate for intergenerational programming, and of those who Agreed 54% responded that they Strongly Agree.

Participants were asked to reflect on places and spaces that could be places of opportunity for fostering intergenerational relationships. The responses included schools, summer camps, civic domains, arts organizations, workshops, outdoors, theaters, breakfast clubs, and housing.

Table 2: Examples of Spaces to Foster Intergenerational Relationships

Schools	Arts Organizations	Theaters
Summer Camps	Workshops	Breakfast Clubs
Civic Domains	Outdoors	Housing

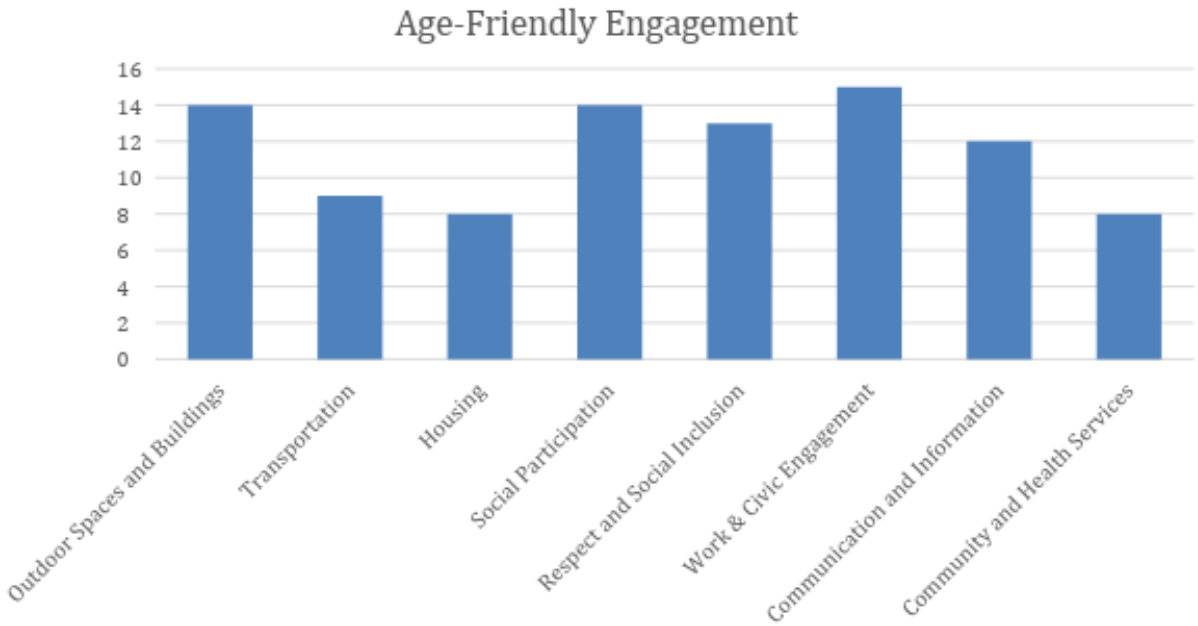
Participants were asked, "What is one thing that can be done to support intergenerational opportunities in our community?" Responses ranged from topics of feasibility of achieving these opportunities, such as transportation, and facilities that cater to a broader range of social supports, promoting benefits of intergenerational relationships of both the individuals and the greater community.

All participants (100%) agreed that intergenerational programs can increase quality of life. Lastly, of the 14 respondents, 100% reported "Yes" when asked "Would you recommend this workshop to others?"

Observation Results

Each of the workshop participants received stickers to place upon posters that they felt their organization or they personally were currently engaged with. This activity was called the *Sticker Walk*. The posters followed the eight domains of Age-Friendly Cities as defined by the World Health Organization (2006). Results of current intergenerational community engagement included 14 participants reporting to be engaged with Outdoor Spaces and Buildings; 9 reporting engagement in Transportation; 8 engaged in Housing; 14 reported to be engaged in Social Participation; 13 in Respect and Social Inclusion; 15 reported to engaging in Work and Civic Engagement; 12 in Communication and Information; and 8 reported to engagement in Community and Health Services.

Figure 7: Current Engagement in Areas of Age-Friendly



The majority of engagement was reported to be happening in respect to work and civic engagement as well as in social participations' and outdoor spaces and buildings. The least reported categories are those engaging in housing as well as community and health services.

During activity 1, *Can you Spot it?* observers noted that there were a range of repeated conversations that took place. Topics of the invisibility of older ages in the magazines kept coming up, the idea that it is not just what was being shown but what was missing. The ad campaign #ageless was brought in questioning the language. The idea that youth are being targeted at such a young age and are being constructed a certain image of beauty were all repeated topics among the small group conversations. In *Men's Health* it was reported that there was not one photograph of a man over the age of 30. There was a group consensus that the magazines knew what they were doing by not showing positive ads of aging. One participant reported that there was an ad that promoted hiking as an activity for all ages but then in the photo along with the article there was not adequate representation.

During the activity 2, *Wise and Wiser*, the participants were instructed to make a list of their own personal values. They then shared their values with their small groups to compare and share reasoning. The group came together as a whole and compiled a list of values which included autonomy, inclusiveness, open-mindedness, acceptance, love, family, peace, and wisdom. All agreed it was interesting listening to rational and gave insight into why a person may value one concept over another.

Discussion

This project aided those people that want to better their own and their community's quality of life by providing strategies, resources and best practice techniques on intergenerational

programming as a tool to challenge ageism. This project supports the idea that when opportunities of intergenerational engagement take place, there are many societal benefits. This further confirmed the benefits of challenging ageism with the intergenerational model. The high rates of social isolation and the many ways to decrease these statistics were discussed throughout this project and were re-confirmed by the conversations and data of the workshop. The three major themes of this project focused on were education, language and engagement. By sharing knowledge and creating opportunities for engagement to take place there is real change and growth that flourishes within a community that challenges the stigma of ageism. Respondents were extremely engaged and excited to discuss how to best apply the knowledge and strategies to their organizations.

The goal to broaden the scope of how we as a society view aging was achieved by the participants. The idea that we need to address aging and not allow it to be hidden away was a topic that aligned with both the literature and the data received from the participants of this project. While small groups flipped through magazines, they analyzed what they saw and what they did not see presented by the media. It became very clear to the participants that media is very intentional with their advertising. The media has an agenda and know who they are trying to appeal to and what they are trying to sell. With the beauty magazines in particular the media and ads presented their perception of beautiful, which was very young and thin and active. One of that participants pointed out that the #ageless campaign of an anti-wrinkle cream was clearly meant to reach the younger demographics. We know beauty is a billion-dollar industry and they have much control over cultural perceptions.

The most common talking point of the small groups was less about what was visibly being advertised and more about what was not present. There was no age diversity and no

positive aging ads or literature. No pictures of older men, women or non-binary individuals were present in the magazines. People are aware that media hopes to reach a certain demographic but were surprised as to what was left out and how much was actually being said by the seemingly non-harmful ads when viewed with a specific eye focused on ageism. This concept of invisibility was also noted by Giroux (2014) and his theory of disposability and the being discarded by corporations and their abandonment of social and economic support.

When discussing the culture created by media the participants were also understanding and becoming more aware of ageist language. The participants began to dissect slang and common phrases that are said every day. At first participants did not see "60 is the new 30" as having any negative condescension. They first viewed this expression to be exciting and agreed with the saying, seeing not negative bias in the language. Through some guided reflection questions, the discussion opened up about and the group began to analyze how saying that one is the other (60 is 30) and the younger is better than the other is the issue. They are not the same and they will never be the same and that is okay. This aligns with the literature that individuals internalize age stereotypes and that this forms their perceptions of aging (Levy et al., 2002). By not embracing 60 as it is on its own, and by portraying it as younger and therefore better, promotes the message that younger is better.

Blancanto and Ponder (2015) provided the perspective that while not everyone will be a victim of all prejudices, we all have the chance to fall victim to ageism. This was brought up as to why intergenerational programming is so important to create a sustainable and strong community. Participants shared thoughts and ideas on how the community can support intergenerational programming and they came up with suggestions such as engaging with the schools, promoting positive attributes of aging, as well as aspects of funding social supports and

opportunities for activities and programs to take place. Through shared wisdom and intergenerational relationships, people are able to explore aging and gain insight into what is to be expected as the process of aging takes place. Of the 14 respondents, 100% agreed the intergenerational programming improves quality of life. This is supported by Alford (2009) that shared experiences influence the common greater good.

While 57% of participants have never attended a workshop on intergenerational programs before, 100% agreed that they would be an advocate for intergenerational programming in the future after attending this workshop; and 50% of those whom agreed, strongly agreed to this fact. Notably, 79% of respondents marked “Very Likely” when asked how they felt about sharing the information they gained throughout the workshop. This supports the idea that the concepts are easily shared and the benefits are perceived to be salient for the broader community. Participants were asked to pledge to immediate action of promoting positive social views on aging and integrating intergenerational practices at their own organizations.

Post workshop, participants reached out and hoped that this workshop would presented at their places of work. They felt this information was important enough to be shared with the rest of their company. The town Recreation Department reached out and informed me that since the workshop they have been brainstorming ways to engage older adults and possibly start a senior summer camp in the town. Once the education was shared, it was able to be turned into direct and obtainable action.

People want to understand how to make people’s lives better and they understand that community engagement is important to build sustainable inclusive communities. This was demonstrated through sharing’s of past attendees who participated in intergenerational programs. One of the senior members said “That's why I come, to learn from them!” This idea of shared

wisdom truly highlights Sternberg's (1990) balance theory of wisdom and that our interactions shape our existing environments. This was also seen when a high school senior was quoted saying, "Senior breakfast club has been one of the most rewarding programs I have had the honor of being a part of in high school... This club has given me a new perspective of what's important in life and how I want to live mine." By engaging our generations, we are allowing the flow of wisdom. This shared wisdom aligned with the major themes of education and integration of intergenerational throughout our community, notably ideas suggested by respondents to look for more opportunities to engage and to utilize local councils on aging as well as being intentional in the planning of programming

One of the older adults suggested that by getting together with the college students at the intergenerational game nights it allowed her to understand that these kids are working really hard and that they are down to earth and as she put it, "Maybe I should not listen to the news so much." This is a direct benefit of how intergenerational programming can shift and change a person's perception. This interaction aligns with Fleisher and Reese (2013) phenomena of temptation and opportunity. The temptation is staying away and resisting interactions between ages due to misunderstandings and preconceived notions. While the opportunity piece allows for conversations to take place and for perceptions and relationships to form.

During the workshop the groups were given an activity that engaged with the concept of values. The group was presented with a list of values and then they were asked to define their own values and then share with the group. As the exercise went on people had a hard time narrowing down their own values but what was interesting was how many people had the same values even though they were from different generations. The value of family brought up an interesting discussion. This brought about how families have changed and how they are spread

apart and no longer always live in the same physical communities as they once did. Interestingly, an older senior said that they valued being jaded and that they have experienced so much they already know what is going to happen. This value was discussed further, and the group re-framed this value in a more positive light by calling it wisdom.

The eight domains of Age-Friendly *Sticker Walk* activity brought forth interesting data that showcased areas that had high levels of active engagement of the community present as well as areas of further progress to be made. The topic of housing did not range high in active engagement, however 8 out of 14 organizations felt engaged and this created a tense discussion in the room. The aging population had many feelings about affordability and accessibility to proper housing. Topics of being forced out of their home due to higher taxes related back to their previously stated values of autonomy. If a person is unable to live in their community, it brings up an interesting concept of not being welcome in their home. Rating the same low score was community and health services and it was clear that areas of future focus in this community should be these domains. During this activity, worries about transportation came up and many tips and programs were shared. Interestingly, work and civic engagement ranked the highest in engagement followed by social participation and outdoor spaces. This shows that there are many opportunities for programming to exist.

This project provides many areas for improvements as well as areas for further growth. Emphasis on education, information on positive language and opportunities for engagement were notably the overall takeaways. These concepts, along with understanding the role of media in creating cultural norms and where people's values come from, all affect how we engage with the domains of an Age-Friendly community.

Limitations

While this project achieved success and had an overall positive impact on the participants, there are a few limitations that will be addressed. Limitations ranged from procedural impact, statistical and data limitations, and study design. The limitations will be addressed as to how they may have had an effect on the project.

While the results were very positive, the project looked at ageism and intergenerational programming within a specific location in the North Shore area of Massachusetts. These findings may not translate to other areas of the country or the state. The overall demographic makeup of the respondents was not statistically significant or diverse. The sample size of the participants was limited due to regional invitations as well as physical space provided for the workshop.

This project was constricted to be competed over a 9-month period of time. This required an expedited review of current literature as well as limiting the options of obtainable activities and procedures. There was low funding to support this project. Aspects of age-appropriate data and sources cited in this project should be noted; and assumptions may have been placed upon data that has recently been reviewed.

Implications

This project was able to create a space for knowledge creation among a group of interested individuals of the North Shore community as well as an outlet to showcase current engagement in intergenerational programming and highlight areas of needed improvement. Implications for future project should consider what questions were raised by this study, what has not been answered, and potential future issues that would become a part of this social issue.

The main implication is that we need to have more opportunities and advocacy for an intergenerational community model. It seemed throughout this project process that many

organizations participate in some aspect of Age-Friendly Cities. However, it is unclear whether they are aware of it or if they are intentionally doing so. This relates back to the idea of invisibility that was noted in both the literature and the data. If organizations are engaged, they need to be able to explicitly state so and this will in turn aid in challenging ageism and bring light to the topic of the intergenerational model and the benefits that it provides to the community.

This study, while engaging with the each of the eight domains of Age-Friendly Cities, should be delved into more thoroughly as to present the participants with full foundational knowledge beyond the given definitions. This would further grant insight into how to best act and support each domain. These domains could have a workshop specific to itself and would benefit from addressing where each individual or organization of the community would best be suited taking action.

The topic of social isolation was researched as an area that would decrease with the integration of the intergenerational model. This is a topic to be further studied possibly looking into how we reach those who are most isolated from society and what can our communities do to support them. It was reported that 32% of surveyed adults over the age of 55 have felt lonely (Masi et al., 2011) and this project corroborates why social participation is one of the highest-ranking domains of engagement. An area of further review is to explore how and who is participating, and if it correlates to decreased loneliness. Understanding that the youth and older individuals have many social similarities is a great starting point and could provide further insight into this topic.

Housing and community health where low scoring areas of engagement in this project. These aspects should be further researched to better understand why these aspects that are

seemingly necessary to a community have the lowest levels of engagement. It is also noted in research that those who hold positive self-perception views of aging lived 7.5 years longer than those who held negative views (Levy, 2002). This would be an interesting area to study more to see if by increasing autonomy through accessible and affordable housing and addressing areas of health would increase a person self-perception.

This project aligned with themes that life is worth living, having a sense of belonging and knowing there's a friend out there or the idea you are not alone as presented by Kime and Bagnall (2008). By gathering further insight into the values of the individuals in a community we as researchers are able to have a better understanding as to why members of the community do as they do. If allowed access to a community and the ability to assess their values as there could be an abundance of research topics that address community interactions and perceptions on how they directly relate to community policies and create a system of cultural norms.

We are all social beings and we have been granted the privilege of time on this planet. We have evolved and created communities small and large, local and global. Communities have culturally and socially flourished and embraced the whole process of life, living and dying; this is a topic to be continuously examined in hope to reciprocate the positive and wonderful aspect each of our own communities bring. Highlighting the benefits and opportunities that are present and are able to continue to grow throughout history. As it has been said, history repeats itself so let us make sure we are utilizing the wisdom of the past and leading our generations towards a bright and friendly future.

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Appendix A: Pre-Event Survey

All Ages All Together

This is a Pre-survey for All Ages All Together. Amy Gothing is leading this workshop and would like to gather a bit of background information to best guide the content of the workshop.

* Required

1. **What is your age?** *

_____

2. **What gender to you identify with?**

_____

3. **Other than immediate family, how often do you engage with someone of a different generation than you in a given month?** *

Mark only one oval.

- ◯ All the time
- ◯ Sometimes
- ◯ Rarely
- ◯ Never

4. **Which of the following do you consider quality engagement?** *

Check all that apply.

- ☐ Emailing / Texting
- ☐ Collaborating on Projects
- ☐ Meeting up for coffee/lunch etc.
- ☐ Saying Hello while passing by
- ☐ Talking in person or via. Telephone
- ☐ Other: _____

5. **Have you ever attended a workshop on ageism?** *

Mark only one oval.

- ◯ Yes
- ◯ NO
- ◯ Other: _____

All Ages All Together

6. **Have you ever attend a workshop on intergenerational programming?** *
Mark only one oval.

- Yes
- No
- Other: _____

7. **What organization are you representing?** *

_____

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Appendix B: Post-Event Survey

Please take the time to reflect and evaluate All *Ages All Together* workshop.

What is a key component of this workshop you will take with you?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Circle Response that Applies

How likely are you to share this information with others?

Very Likely *Likely*

Unlikely *Very Unlikely*

How likely are you to purposely engage in the next 6 months with someone other than family from another generation?

Very Likely *Likely*

Unlikely *Very Unlikely*

How often did you think about ageism before attending this workshop?

Often *Sometimes*

Rarely *Never*

How do you feel your thoughts on ageism changed after attending this workshop?

A lot *Some*

Not much *About the same*

Do you think there are adequate services in the community to address our aging population?

Yes *No*

Do you feel you have enough knowledge to advocate for intergenerational programming?

Strongly Agree *Agree*

Disagree *Strongly Disagree*

If ageism has never affected you before how has this workshop changed your mind on aging?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

After completing this workshop are there some spaces or more spaces you think that could be places of opportunity for fostering intergenerational relationships?

Yes *No*

*Examples:*_____
_____
_____

What is one thing that could be done to support intergenerational opportunities in our communities?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Would you recommend this workshop to others?

Yes *No*

Do you feel intergenerational programing opportunities can increase a person's overall quality of life?

Yes *No*

Additional Comments:

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Thank you so much for attending *All Ages All Together*!

Amy Gothing | ALL AGES ALL TOGETHER

Appendix C: Observation Rubric

All Ages All Together				
Observational Rubric	Noted	Who/How Many	When/ What Activity	Add. Notes
What does the room feel like?				
Registration				
Ageism Content				
Activity #1				
Intergenerational Content				
Activity #2				
Resource Pooling				
Pledge of Commitment				
Wrap up				
Conversations that mention:				
Personal Bias				
Political Bias				
Community Bias				
Pervasiveness of ageism in community				
Does organization have existing policy on age				
How ageism affects them				
How ageism affects community				
Mentions new idea				
Makes a new connection				
Talking off topic				

Appendix D: Workshop Agenda

ALL AGES ALL TOGETHER

AN INTERGENERATIONAL MODEL

Wednesday, April 4th 2018

10:00AM- Registration / Networking / Sticker Walk

10:15AM – Introduction and Welcome
* *Ageism in America*

10:35AM- Activity #1 Can you Spot it?
* *Reflection & Questions*

11:00AM – Overview of Intergenerational Programming
* *Benefits and Best Practices*

11:15AM- Activity #2 The Wise and the Wiser
* *Reflection & Questions*

11:35AM– Resource Pooling and Assessment
* Who's Stuck Where?!

11:45AM- Pledge of Commitment
* AARP Video Clip

11:55AM- Closing and Thank you!

"If you only talk to people like you, you'll never learn anything new."
Albert Einstein

ALL AGES ALL TOGETHER AGENDA AMY GOTHING