Positive Impact of Social Engagement Program for Older Adults

July 28, 2019
engAGED: The National Resource Center for Engaging Older Adults
engAGING with this Workshop

• Discussion and interactive activities
• Notecards for your ideas/comment
• Posters around the room for additional thoughts about social engagement
engAGED National Partners
engAGED: The National Resource Center for Engaging Older Adults

- Promotes and provides opportunities to improve the rates of social engagement in older adults.
- Supports the Aging Network with information about emerging trends, resources, and replication strategies that can be used in their communities.
- Educates and informs about innovative engagement approaches and programming.
- Collaborates with diverse organizations to develop and promote engagement opportunities through a wide variety of channels.
What is social isolation?

- Social isolation is commonly defined as an objective measure of the number of contacts that people have.
- Loneliness, on the other hand is a subjective feeling about the gap between a person’s desired levels of social contact and their actual level of social contact.
- Both are associated with negative physical and mental health impacts in people experiencing these feelings.
What is the Value of Social Engagement?
What is the Value of Social Engagement

• Communities with socially engaged older adults benefit the knowledge, talent, skills, experience and wisdom of older adults. For example:
  • Caregiving activities and mentoring others
  • More consumers spending money
  • Entrepreneurship and small business formation
  • Experienced and resourceful employees
  • Contributions through volunteer hours
Alex Glazbrook

Older Adults Technology Services
High Need Meets High Tech:
Fighting Social Isolation Among Older Adults
2004: Tom Kamber and a group of volunteers launch Older Adults Technology Services (OATS) in New York City.

The purpose? To help seniors learn and use technology to live better in the digital age.

The inaugural program is a free ten-week computer course for people age 60+.

Classes meet twice weekly in community technology labs.

First taught in Bedford-Stuyvesant, Brooklyn, OATS courses are soon spreading all across New York City.
Within ten years, OATS teaches 10,000 class sessions at over 70 partner sites and builds 30 new computer labs in New York City.

In March, 2013, OATS launches the Senior Planet Exploration Center in Manhattan—America’s first technology-themed community center for older adults. Nearly 15,000 seniors attend during the first year.

The Senior Planet motto is “Aging with Attitude.”
2015: OATS expands programs outside of New York City for the first time.

- A new Senior Planet center launches in Plattsburgh, New York, focused on rural aging and technology.
- Partnerships with local sponsors bring OATS to Maryland, Florida and California.

In 2018, foundation grants of more than $3 million help expand Senior Planet into Texas and Colorado.

Also in 2018, international partnerships bring OATS to Israel and launch a consultancy in Spain.
OATS offers more than 25 courses on topics including:

- Device Essentials (iPad, PC, or Chromebook). Available in five languages.
- Digital Culture
- Connect!
- Money Matters
- Start-Up
- Team Senior Planet
- Activate!

Courses are taught in groups of 10-15, with a written course book, professional trainer, and over 400 online modules.
Program elements:
• Senior Planet @ Home
• Connect!
• Connecting in the Digital Age
Desired outcomes:
• Increased healthy days
• Reduced feelings of loneliness
• Reductions in social isolation
• Enhanced feelings of inclusion
Priority Locations
• North Country, New York
• San Antonio, TX
• Colorado
Characteristics:

- Mainstream technologies
- Group learning experiences
- Content linked with outcomes
- Relevance to daily life
- No impact is too small

Sample results

- San Antonio program increased mean monthly healthy days by 3
- @ Home program participants reported 30% reduction in feelings of isolation, belonging increased by 20%
- Overall, 77% felt more connected to friends and family
THANK YOU

Alex Glazebrook
Director of Operations
alex@seniorplanet.org
917-620-94600

www.oats.org
Sheri Steinig

Generations United
Intergenerational Engagement
2 in 3 adults would like to spend more time with people outside their age group.

More than 3 in 4 wish there were more opportunities in their community for people from different age groups to meet and get to know one another.
Intergenerational programs bring people of different ages together in purposeful, mutually beneficial activities that promote greater understanding and respect between generations.

Such engagement builds on the positive resources that young and old have to offer each other and to their communities.
The Intergenerational Lens

Advocacy
Safety
Job Readiness & Entrepreneurship
Neighborhood Revitalization
Language & Literacy
History & Culture
Friendly Visiting

Mentoring
Health & Wellness
Diversity & Inclusion
Environment & Gardening
Technology
Caregiving
Lifelong Learning
Arts
Intergenerational Engagement Continuum

- **POINT 1**: Learn About Other Ages
- **POINT 2**: Contact From A Distance
- **POINT 3**: Meeting Each Other
- **POINT 4**: Periodic Activities
- **POINT 5**: Pilot Projects
- **POINT 6**: Ongoing Programs
- **POINT 7**: Intergenerational Settings
Intergenerational Programs

- Respectful
- Responsive
- Empowering
- Reciprocal
- Relational
- Inclusive

Intergenerational Programs
Benefits for Older Adults

➢ Decrease in social isolation and loneliness
➢ Improved health and well-being
➢ Renewed sense of purpose
➢ Break down ageist stereotypes
➢ Increased opportunities for leadership and mentoring
➢ Engaged in opportunities to help children and youth thrive
Benefits for Children and Youth

- Increased involvement in community service and volunteer opportunities
- Engagement in healthy activities
- Enhanced perception of older adults and aging
- Improved interpersonal skills and in problem-solving abilities
- Strengthened relationships with caring older adults
- Increased leadership and teamwork skills
- Improved confidence and motivation to do better in school
Nearly 9 in 10 adults believe community programs that serve kids and older adults actually end up benefiting everyone.
Benefits for the Community

➢ Create a vehicle to bring generations together
➢ Reduce age-segregation
➢ Increase social, recreational, and volunteer efforts that build a sense of community
➢ Improve community infrastructure and facilities (e.g. gathering spaces, parks, gardens, theatre, and art)
➢ Improve individual health and well-being
Generations United
Programs & Services

- www.GU.org
- Activity & Resource Guides
- Programs of Distinction Designation
- Intergenerational Program Directory
- Training & Technical Assistance
For more information…

Sheri Steinig
Generations United
ssteinig@gu.org
www.gu.org

Because we’re stronger together®
Steve Thaxton

Center for Osher Lifelong Learning Institutes
Lifelong Learning = Social Engagement
Osher Lifelong Learning Institutes of the OLLI Network
# Why Lifelong Learning?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>% Answering:</th>
<th>US Population</th>
<th>LLI Population</th>
</tr>
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<td>&quot;The best&quot; or Better than normal&quot;</td>
<td>24%</td>
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Source: Road Scholar LLI Network: 2015 Rank & File Member Survey, n=5000
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Source: Road Scholar LLI Network: 2015 Rank & File Member Survey  n=5000
Happiness Level: Social Relationships

- Very Happy: 49%
- Happy: 42%
- Unhappy: 5%
- Very Unhappy: 4%

Percent by responding membership

Osher NRC
National Resource Center
Lifelong Learning is not just LLIs

• Faith Communities
• Senior Centers
• Neighborhoods
  o Villages; CCRCs; libraries
• Clubs and Organizations
  o Cultural; athletic; fraternal/guild/service groups
Osher Lifelong Learning Institute (OLLI) Network

- 124 Institutes
- 390 towns & cities served
- 26,000 Volunteers ~ 200 per
- 1,200 Members (median)
- 82 Offer travel & fieldtrips
200,000 Student / Members
Program Age & Gender Distribution

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Age Group</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Under 55</td>
<td></td>
<td>0 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55-59</td>
<td>0 %</td>
<td>0 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60-64</td>
<td>0 %</td>
<td>0 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65-69</td>
<td>0 %</td>
<td>25 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70-74</td>
<td>5 %</td>
<td>25 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>75-79</td>
<td>10 %</td>
<td>20 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80-84</td>
<td>15 %</td>
<td>0 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>85+</td>
<td>0 %</td>
<td>0 %</td>
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Percent by responding membership
Members Primary Areas of Interest

Percent by responding institutes

- HISTORY
- FINE ARTS
- CURRENT AFFAIRS
- LITERATURE
- RELIGION, PHILOSOPHY, SPIRITUALITY
- HEALTH AND WELLNESS
We See & Share Common Values

- Cognitive exercise
- Social learning communities
- Volunteerism
- Respect for “olders”
- Honoring the academe
- Collegiality & curiosity
“My primary friendships are now people that I have met through OLLI and now continue to see; both at OLLI and in other social contexts.”

“After being widowed for 5 years, I met and married my 2nd husband at OLLI.”

“Any class is an opportunity, not just to learn something new; but for socializing, meaningful exchange of views, and knowledge. It’s opportunities for making new friends and just having a good time in an inspirational environment.”
NRC Website: www.Osher.net

Home Page

OLLI Location Map
Monthly Osher Institute Newsletter

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To get email delivery
Lifelong Learning = Social Engagement
First Breakout Question
What are you currently doing in your communities around social engagement? How can you use some of this information in your communities?
engAGED Toolkit
Walkthrough
Empower.

OUR MISSION:

EngAGED promotes and provides opportunities to improve the rates of social engagement in older adults because remaining socially engaged improves quality of life and is associated with better health.
engAGED Community Toolkit

The number of adults in the United States age 65 and older is expected to grow from 46 million today to more than 70 million in 2030—a 52 percent increase in just over 10 years. This growth in the number of older adults over such a relatively short period of time should be the impetus to transform how our society thinks about the assets of older adults—and how communities can harness the tremendous resource they represent to make positive change.

Further, as the national dialogue on the impact of social isolation grows, many are beginning to analyze new and innovative ways to address social isolation among older adults. Increasing the number and types of activities that incorporate older adults, and encouraging social engagement are just a few ways to reduce social isolation.

In recognition of the Older Americans Month theme of Connect, Create, Contribute, engAGED: The National Resource Center for Engaging Older Adults has developed a toolkit to assist the Aging Network as it identifies approaches and develops effective practices to overcome obstacles and increase the social engagement of older adults.
The engAGED Community toolkit includes:

- Customizable Brochure: Staying Active and Connected
- Customizable infographics
  - Staying Connected Helps Older Adults Stay Healthy
  - Social Engagement Benefits Older Adults and the Community
  - Ways Older Adults Can Get—and Remain—Socially Engaged
- Customizable Fact Sheets
  - Talking Points on Social Engagement for the Aging Network
  - Five Steps to Increase the Social Engagement of Older Adults
- Calendar of Social Engagement Opportunities for Older Adults
- PowerPoint presentation to use in community presentations
- UCLA Three-Item Loneliness Scale
- Sample Articles
Second Breakout Question
What are some of the impediments to engagement in your communities? What kind of resources do you need to address this?
Thank you!