May 7th, 2020

Ageism 2 Action: Purposeful Education, Engaged Retirement Report prepared for OACAO

Introduction
The following summary represents small group responses by question based on 6 face-to-face A2A Peer Project workshops held between February 7th - 26th, 2020.

How the world has shifted since the beginning of March until now! As a result, this summary to older centres must necessarily be considered through the lens of the COVID19 experience and its impact on your centres.

We encourage readers to review the themes that emerged in the workshop and to reflect on how the COVID19 experience many have changed your thinking about these themes. How beneficial are they to your centres as you move forward? You will find new probing questions following the individual question summaries.

In addition, the responses to the workshop evaluation question *"How do you plan on using what you learned about today?"* are included at the end of the summary. You may want to reflect on your responses in light of COVID19 to determine the strategies that you expect to remain relevant post-pandemic and to think creatively about new ways to work with and use the information generated by the workshops.

No one will deny our current challenges and the need for adaptive change. While periods of extreme disruption undeniably bring hardship, these periods of flux also present opportunities for innovation and creativity. Let's support one another to leverage these opportunities for the benefit of everyone – yourselves and the individuals you serve.

We are extremely grateful to the 200 people who participated in the 6 workshops and the one webinar for your willingness to so energetically engage in the process and for providing feedback from which we can all learn. Thank you.

Small group work related the workplace

Question #1: List as many examples as you can think of about what ageist attitudes and stereotypes look like in the workplace.

Themes that emerged:
Theme 1: Technology
Theme 2: Assumptions based on age (ageism)
Theme 3: Workplace culture, policies and practices

Individual responses. Note that there are some responses that may not directly fit into an overall theme but may be, nonetheless, important. You will see these listed under 'other". Please also note that these themes are not always discrete. For example, it can be argued that *"offered more or less opportunities"*, which you will see connected to Theme 3, could just as easily be affiliated with Theme 2. The themes represent overall trends.

- Technology – computers
- Accessibility with technology
- Not tech savvy
- Slow to learn technology
- Technology, assumptions related to it
- Misperceptions (of skills e.g. digital literacy)
- Depending on technology which can inhibit face-to-face socializing
- Assuming capabilities/incapabilities – e.g. technology
- Older people not up to date with technology
- Paperless, changing technology

- Slower – not as productive
- Assumptions: missing a lot of workdays; not as committed; grouchy older adults; not as reliable; taking a younger person's job
- Assumed cognitive decline
- Assumed skill set
- Assumptions about skills, abilities and needs
- Hair colour
- Less productive
- Seniors are most often to complain (we recognize that they have more time to observe)
- Seniors are slower
- More likely to make mistakes
- Close minded; not able to change their routines (can't teach an old dog new tricks)

- Employment downsizing – the eldest staff the first to let go
- Not included socially (beer) Pushed towards retirement by younger
- Assigned work beneath their capability
- Informal comments that contribute to culture
- Offered more or less opportunities
- Narrow opportunities as they assume you can't do new things Maternity leave – close to retirement
- Face of company (youth)
- Assigned work beneath their capability Limiting internal opportunities because someone is close to retirement
- Overqualified
- Salary differences – early departures

Other responses
- Looking differently
- Assumed family obligations
- Respectful language to older adults (hun, sweetie, lovie, dear)
- Unnecessary modifications
- if present as looking older, some jobs feel you need to be younger
- Pressure to keep up social trends
- People have the knowledge and experience so you can't always reject them
- Our opinion does not matter
- Mandatory retirement policies
- Taking away benefits (OASSIS)
- Less important as a volunteer

- May not be able to take direction from a younger person
- How people dress
- Walk in with cane
- Assume older person is in management
- Assumed not keeping pace with change in the organization
- Automatic assumptions of what people can do according to age
- Mobility – energy
- Speed – lack of capacity to multitask, remembering
- Assuming an older worker cannot do the physical work – e.g. climbing ladders, moving tables
- Assuming age limits physical and cognitive abilities and technology
- Assumption that all older people are resistant to change
- Less productive
- Negative reflections, an excuse "Senior moment – sometimes"
- If younger, too young to know about seniors' issues
- Forgetful/ill

- Your decisions don't count
- Lack of flexibility/understanding
- Lack of understanding about diversity, inclusion and intersectionality
- Mobility
- Required to be 'up with modern times'
- Defining skills to age group
- 70 years old and not able to continue teaching
- People have the knowledge and experience so you can't always reject them
- Our opinion does not matter

New!
The pandemic has brought ageist attitudes and the human rights of older persons to the fore. However, there have been extraordinary examples of retired nurses and doctors temporarily coming out of retirement, putting their own health at risk, to serve others.

In what ways do you think assumptions based on age (Theme 2) have been impacted by COVID19? What are the implications for your centres?

In terms of Theme 1, many of us have had to rely on technology more than ever, both personally and professionally. Older adults sheltering-in-place in long term care homes, for example, have been isolated from their loved ones and not all have had access to technology. There have been extraordinary stories of staff members facilitating video chats between adults living in homes and their families.

In addition, with older adult centres closed during the pandemic, many of you have responded by implementing Seniors' Centre Without Walls.

What do you expect might be the impact of technology on your centres as you move forward? Might you offer more programs online? Are there opportunities for you to offer your members workshops related to using video chats et cetera?

Question #2: Being aware of possible age discrimination in interviews for paid employment and/or volunteer positions, what do think an older person should focus on when preparing for an interview?

Themes that emerged
Theme: Skills and experience
Theme: Personal characteristics
Theme: Adaptability/flexibility

Individual responses. Note that there are some responses that may not directly fit into an overall theme but may be, nonetheless, important. You will see these listed under 'other". Please also note that these themes are not always discrete. For example, responses related to *"past experience"* might be found under either Themes 1 or 2.

• Highlight their background and tech skills • Share a key skill/event that showcases them (that a millennial wouldn't have) • Experience and knowledge more important than age • Examples of previous work • Past experience/focus on the future • Experience, abilities, be prepared to take control, don't anticipate that one is over/under qualified or job won't be appropriate 'prejudging by interviewer' • Experience and ability • Focus on resume writing – include skill set, job and life experience • Focus on skills and experience • Focus on experience and learned skills • Bring a portfolio • Life experience • Use experience and knowledge as an asset • Really focus on the value of experience • Emphasize your experience	**Other responses** • Focus on foundation of workplace • Company/workplace policies, procedures and culture • Dress code • Understand your rights (inappropriate questions) • Personality – looks good. Dress up good. • Does not want to invest in short term employment • Prepare using employment agency • Pay scale. • Denied job because of age, even when qualified • Supply and demand • Physical appearance • Put a positive spin on all questions • Appearance can be a roadblock for women – grey hair, wrinkles • Less of a distraction • Storytelling • More reliable • Know what they want you to do • Remove dates from resume – e.g. when someone gets a degree • Know the company • Interviewer should be listening to answers • Need to find a way to explain that you aren't getting ready to retire • Established coaching • Be prepared with examples • Don't allude to/make excuses about age • Use current language • Demonstrate tech skill

• Focus on strengths • Ability to continue to grow • Know your skill set and job desires • Bringing to the table • Be more outgoing • Show passion • Be open minded • Experience • Interest • Willingness to seek challenges • Know and communicate your skills • Explain what you can bring to the table • Confidence • Sell yourself • Self awareness of what you can contribute • Focusing on new learnings and their strengths • Focus on willingness to adapt to their abilities i.e. I can't lift a 20- pound box but I can get a trolley to move it • Adaptability • Give examples of how you work/interact with different generations Being current and learning about changes in resumes/interviews	• Established coaching • Be prepared with examples • Don't allude to/make excuses about age • Use current language • Demonstrate tech skill • Prepare and research the company • Don't mention wages until you're hired (mentioned by two groups) • Hired – worked a day – did the paper work and then asked to • Leave and take his tools and let go. No pay, because his age 67

New!

One of the fallouts of the pandemic has been the enormous loss of jobs and, as a result, the need for people to seek new employment opportunities and, for many older adults, the need to work longer than they may have anticipated.

Does this reality create new program opportunities related to all three of these themes for older adult centres?

Question #3: Brainstorm possible solutions for reducing barriers in the workplace and for fostering a positive work environment.

Themes that emerged
Theme: Flexibility/reasonable accommodations
Theme: Training/education
Theme: Multigenerational approaches
Theme: Creating a positive environment
Individual responses. Note that there are some responses that may not directly fit into an overall theme but may be, nonetheless, important. You will see these listed under 'other". Please also note that these themes are not always discrete.

- Reasonable accommodations
- Part-time
- Assistance for some tasks
- Suitable tasks for their capabilities and needs
- Flexibility in work hours
- Adding more staff to help
- More flexible job description
- Offer alternative work
- Physical – barrier-free facility
- Flexible work arrangements
- Flexible

- Computer classes
- Training
- Availability – good, patient teachers
- Workshops, tools, location
- Have more info for employees
- Mentor and training in centres
- How to use online interview platforms
- Provide training and webinar opportunities
- Bring in resources/agencies/partner
- Education opportunities for all, not just young leaders
- Bring ageism to the forefront and have those conversations (tons of policies about discrimination but not regarding age)
- Educate
- Mentoring
- Professional development for all
- Anti ageism campaigns – posters, social media
- Educate staff about ageism
- Use education available

- Be supportive of peers
- Recognize the value of elders with monetary compensation
- Socialize
- Respectful work environment
- Clear communication
- Invite people to experience programming
- Create an environment to call each other out (in a nice way)
- Backing up your staff/volunteers
- Give an outlet to voice opinion
- Don't make assumptions
- Explain why the change is needed
- Making it a mandate to reduce barriers
- Increase physical accessibility – detailed information, clear instructions

	Other responses
• All ages (reflect community) • If an organization is equitable for its staff of all ages and abilities, it will be equitable for the people it services • Mentorship/intergenerational • Activities for all ages Use individuals' strengths • Integration of elders with juniors for any task • Do more intergenerational activities • Combine age generations – intergenerational mentorship • A variety of ages/backgrounds/abilities • Intergenerational • Integrate ages – e.g. mentoring	• Fitness • Interview in pools, cross section of stakeholders, feedback/input of barriers, consider probation/job shadowing • Mindset • Keep focus on skills and safety • Focus groups • Promote commonalities • Incorporate community resources (e.g. Lee Valley Tools had supplies prepped so new users could participate) • Rate of pay • Multimedia – paper, tech, in person • Language • Not consider volunteers as staff: Asked (volunteer) vs Told (staff) • Encouragement to hire young is an obstacle • Don't make assumptions. Delegate based on skill. • Hiring based on skills • More promotion

New!

That word 'flexibility' practically jumps off the page! If ever there was a period that has required all of you to be flexible, it has been the last few months! What do you think will happen in the world of work as we move forward? Do you think the trend to working remotely will continue? How might your workplaces look? How will you balance physical distancing with your capacity to offer face-to-face programs? Will you stagger staff and/or volunteer schedules to have fewer people on site? Will there be increased opportunities for multigenerational programs? Might more of your educational programs be offered online? What new mentorship opportunities could you create?

Small group work about volunteering

Question #1: What trends in volunteering have you observed at your centres in the past 5 years?

Trends that emerged
Theme: Short term, episodic/commitment
Theme: Reduction in volunteers/few volunteer opportunities
Theme: Personal factors

Individual responses. Note that there are some responses that may not directly fit into an overall theme but may be, nonetheless, important. You will see these listed under 'other". Please also note that these themes are not always discrete.

	Other responses
• One-time volunteering	• Word of mouth
• Time expectations and/or restrictions	• Volunteer board (posting board) – i.e. colours of paper etc.
• Commitment	• More placement students being
• Short term, episodic + important	• Re-educating opportunities (through partner organizations)
• Shorter commitments	• Developmental delays – they stick with it for a long time
• Want less commitment	• Drop out rate is the greatest in the first 1-2 months
• Long term volunteers committed; new volunteers not as committed	• Too much screening
• Need to create new positions and create succession plans to attract new talent	• We can just pay someone to do it
• People want to do micro volunteering and not long-term volunteering	• Give project management tasks to volunteers
• Most want to micro volunteer	• Greater diversity
• Micro volunteering	• Historical positions – very little change in positions
• Terms are shorter for volunteering	• Low turnover rates – many volunteers have been in positions for many years
• Less commitment	• High degree of ownership
• Project specific – shorter duration	• Same people volunteering
	• Commitment to a delegated responsibility
• Traditional roles not engaging – dishes, kitchen	• Influx in applicants
• Challenge to get volunteers for higher roles	• Need for specific skill set
• Reduction in volunteering due to increased need for paid employment	• More waivers, liability, training
• Not as many volunteer opportunities	• Volunteers are younger Fewer volunteers
• Retired teachers, nuns, etc who have had professions that give/help community/society/individuals know the importance of volunteering and giving back to the community	• Consistent need for volunteers – e.g. Meals on Wheels
	• There are more younger people wanting to volunteer but this could be due to the hours they need for school.
	• Not enough interest – why? We aren't sure Need to restructure volunteering
	• Sharing volunteer positions
	• Older adults – less flexible (longer shifts)

• Snowbirds • Caregivers to grandchildren • Positions. What they are willing to volunteer for • Don't want to do 'grunt' work • Motivation • Do what they retired from or do nothing like what they did before • Priorities of family vs community work • Want to volunteer to give back and make meaningful connections • Desire for greater purposed on volunteer roles (meaning	• Younger adults – need more flexibility (different times and roles) • More requirements to volunteer – e.g. training required • More flexibility – length of role • People repeat – same folks do many tasks • Rather not volunteer, have someone else do it • Same volunteer – volunteering at many places • Focus on high school students (40 hours of mandatory community service) • Provide key expectations for specific roles • Very specific activities of own interest • Willing to try, open to communicating if they want to leave – 'trial and error' • used as fewer volunteers • People do want to volunteer more and more – it's what they want to do • Tangible recognition, time limited • Need for jobs….youth • Often newcomers want to become involved • Grouping – e.g. breaktime • Older adults and high school volunteers • We usually fit volunteers into existing jobs vs finding/creating jobs that would be interesting for volunteers

New!

Has your experience during the pandemic changed the type of skills you might seek in future volunteers? What impact do you think the pandemic has had on volunteers? Do you think more people will seek volunteer opportunities that allow them to work from home? Do you expect an increase or a decease in people coming forward to volunteer – or, do you think it will remain much the same?

Will your screening practices and other processes change as a result of your recent experience?

Question #2: What do you think prevents some individuals from coming forward to volunteer? How might you address these barriers?

Themes that emerged
Theme: Personal factors
Theme: Process barriers
Theme: Solutions
Individual responses. Note that there are some responses that may not directly fit into an overall theme but may be, nonetheless, important. You will see these listed under 'other". Please also note that these themes are not always discrete.

- Have nothing to offer
- Unsure about what they are volunteering for
- Doesn't feel needed, isn't asked
- Don't know what's involved, scary
- Need to be convinced
- Kids moved back home causing older adults to work
- Feel like they don't have the qualifications: want to see the job description
- Language, cultural, financial and accessibility barriers
- Socially shy
- Fear of committing on a regular basis
- Transportation
- Family commitments, caregivers, lack of time
- Language barriers
- Caregiver
- Shy, not confident
- Disability
- Language
- Health
- Transportation in order to volunteer
- Bad experience – others volunteers not friendly/welcoming
- Experience was not what they expected – it was boring or repetitive
- Scheduling – some are so busy with many commitments
- Seasonality (Florida)
- Physical disabilities – limitations/accommodations
- Grandparenting
- Don't know where to look
- Unaware of opportunities

- Time commitment – make it manageable, short chunks
- Solution: volunteer opportunities that build skills (meaningful volunteerism/transferable skills)
- Transportation barrier. Solution: virtual volunteer opportunities (over the phone)
- Remove fear – volunteer will take my job. Solution: Volunteer is complementing my job, not taking it.
- More specific roles listed on marketing
- Make them feel welcome
- Volunteering on one's own schedule
- Matching process is so important for eliminating barriers
- flexibility for all stakeholders – training/expectations.
- Provide positive, meaningful feedback while volunteer is in the role, posting roles clearly
- Following up with individuals
- Individual invitations to opportunities with the community helps to increase participation/turn out
- Having descriptions/list of opportunities
- Changing up volunteer responsibilities
- Make rotation schedule to avoid having too many volunteers to participants
- Online portal – like applying for a job
- To address barriers – restructure roles – match skill sets

- Some people don't want to commit themselves - Shyness and cultural barrier - Long term commitment (inability) - Need for paid jobs - Am I good enough for the volunteer position? - Fear of being accepted because of language, age, race - People think they do not have anything to offer. We are ordinary people. Everyone has something to offer - A lot of paper work- training "Official: No process to volunteer - Process becomes a barrier - Cost to volunteer – police checks, trainings, etc. - Volunteers needing medical clearance, immunizations - Training - Getting police checks – process, not so much the money - May not know the role of volunteers at the centre - People to look after - Vulnerable sector checksTraining - Cost (criminal reference check) - Transportation - Schedules more full - Other interests - Daycare for grandchildren - Finding out what is available - Language barriers, cultural	**Other responses** - the 'over-volunteer' - take on too much responsibility (keys, $, etc) – need to pull back some of this responsibility – then they may get offended Barrier – burnout – same people doing everything - Environment is too established – feels unwelcoming to new people - Hierarchy among volunteers - Time commitment - Tech online training and orientation - Need for specific roles vs being a team player - Barrier risk management - To connect and make a difference in someone's life could be life changing for some people Ask people (people do not come forward)

New!
    The topic of what prevents people from coming forward to volunteer and your small group responses seem to suggest this is an area ready for innovation? How can you adapt your volunteer recruitment processes to make it easier for people to volunteer? Are there ways to more closely match volunteer opportunities with people's skill set and experiences? What else can you do to ensure that people are aware of volunteer opportunities? How can you diversify your recruitment to reach a broader cross section of your community?

Question #3: What new opportunities/roles do you envision for volunteers?

Themes that emerged
Theme: Multigenerational opportunities
Theme: New and/or adapted roles
Theme: New programs
Individual responses. Note that there are some responses that may not directly fit into an overall theme but may be, nonetheless, important. You will see these listed under 'other". Please also note that these themes are not always discrete.

• Intergenerational and multigenerational opportunities • Figure out what works for volunteers • Couples volunteer together, coaching from experiences • Have volunteers take on leadership roles • Focus group to help them identify what skills they bring to the table • Project managers – episodic, virtual • Evolve potential volunteers in the creation of their roles • Have a dedicated volunteer hunter – talent acquisition Modify job descriptions • Cater to their abilities • Engage them in planning • Opportunities for training volunteers – workshop on ageism! • Creating new programs (Saturday night cards/dinner) • Cooking demonstrations • Create new micro volunteer role • Meaningful roles – impact, challenge • Kitchen work • Social dining • Writing, peer mentoring Skill specific opportunities e.g. paint night, technology Technology training and work	**Other responses** • Social networking; positive social experience • More get togethers and interaction • Equipping them with lots of training • Facility maintenance • Groups - friends/teams • Ensure there is a fit – not just a spot being filled • A welcome tour – volunteer/peer • Continue to offer regular volunteer opportunities (often for older volunteers) and the special event opportunities (often for younger volunteers) • Paid volunteering at other people's homes, enabling them to stay in their own homes • Identify them within organization

New!
Similar to the previous question, do you envision new opportunities for recruiting volunteers and new or adapted roles that have emerged as a result of the pandemic and that have promising possibilities for moving forward?

Question #4: How do you currently recruit, train and support volunteers? Are there additional strategies you could use?

Themes that emerged
Theme: Personal outreach
Theme: Recruitment/process options
Individual responses. Note that there are some responses that may not directly fit into an overall theme but may be, nonetheless, important. You will see these listed under 'other". Please also note that these themes are not always discrete.

• Individual encouragement, face-to-face • Word of mouth/bulletin board/social media • Email available shifts to a group and allow them to fill in when available • Call, email, face-to-face • Word of mouth (mentioned by 3 groups) • Person to person **Other responses** • Skills needed • Who is invested in the program? Want to keep it going, see the value • Succession planning • Screening recruits – criminal records, medicals, background • Policies handbook • Being voted in	• Presentations about the centre Instead of general approaches, call outs • Presentation class in civics class to get high school volunteers • Emails are coming to their (staff) personal devices – they find this very helpful • Recruitment/training – online, digital boards, word of mouth, newsletters, Better Impact volunteer software, post in centres, paper and online applications, bulletin boards) • Use your network, your connectors • Ask, current volunteer referrals • OACAO website, newsletter • Social media • Centralized recruiter • Outreach – screening – interviews • Being approached and a little arm twisting • Advertising • Community • Flyers and posters • Online hubs and portals • Volunteer fairs • Volunteers are the best promoters. Campaign • Information about opportunities made available and easy to find • Target the skills you are after

New!

Do you think face-to-face outreach is likely to change in the future? Might you leverage technology more for promoting opportunities?

From the workshop evaluation:

"How do you plan on using what you learned about today?"

- Advertise for more volunteers
- Help others better understand ageism
- Share with team
- Create new volunteer positions
- Through my everyday language and spreading positivity with seniors ability
- More information sharing with staff and members and our club
- Share with the board and hopefully implement
- Get involved
- New terms / trends
- Immediately looking at systematic obstacles that may limit our older adults at centre
- Use ideas to recruit volunteers
- Review volunteer process
- Try to get some volunteers to assist the convenors with set-up and take down of items needed for the day's activity
- Developing more programs for employment skills
- Planning for new operating model
- Language in programs
- Promotions and employment opportunities
- Inclusion of concepts to frame age-friendly community planning
- Links to partner groups
- Improve delivery of volunteer services
- Let the members of the club take advantage of volunteering
- Because were integrated Asian Club - Translating into Hindi, Punjabi, English
- OACAO Hub Volunteer Board
- Continue to talk and explore ways to engage older adults and bring in resources for all
- By continuing what we already do with the implementation of these new tools
- Was good to hear from SALC's about volunteer issues
- Explanation of what volunteers are needed for

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