

Lets Talk Some More About Ageism

Generations Working Together Thematic Network

Date: 25/01/2022 @ 10 am – 11.30 am

Zoom Online

In attendance: Bella Kerr, Jeny Brodie, Dwight Tse, Nicola McCardle, Emma Gee, Fiona Sinclair, Michelle Wilbrew, Muriel Connel, Natalie (Moat Brae), Graham Hunter, Valerie, Mairi Graham, Jane Fifield, Catherine Canada, Kathleen Robertson, Jen Novotny, Carol Wylie, Maryan, Kerry Geddes, Claire Vol Action, Wilma Porteous, Kirsty Cartin, Dinna Likonde, Pam Maxwell, Lara O’Callaghan, Lesley Dunbar, Levi Tippet, Lynn Thain, Maria Carlander, Susan Smith, Trishna Singh, Paul Armstrong, Olive Bryanton, Maggie, Nicky MacLennan, Lottie Brook.

Apologies: Arzu Yilmaz, Kimberly O’neill, Maria Ponte, Kathleen Robertson, Diana Findlay, Lynn Adams, Gordon Gilfillan, Doreen Leith, Sonia Inkster, Thornton-Nicol, Elaine, Marie Lindsey, Fidelma Guest, Kirsty McDougall, Kirstine Sloan, Nelson, Jean, Elaine McAlinden, Susan Currie

1. Welcomes and apologies.
2. **Bella Kerr (GWT) offered a short introduction about ageism** with a short film depicting young people wearing hoodies at a bus stop and an older lady’s perception of them. This set the scene for the workshops and each workshop covered different probing questions to keep the conversation going. There were 4 workshops in total. The sessions at workshops allowed 20 minutes for conversations to grow, though it has been noted that in future people do require more time for this.
3. **Feedback from Workshops –**

Workshop 1

Key points:

- How ageism is everywhere one person is 43 and has been challenged about the colour of her blusher being told it is too young for her – she is too old for that colour?
- At a care home for older people in their 80s – people are mentally young but physically not so young and as such their physical capabilities are a challenge for them. People want to spend time

with older generations, and he notes positive interactions every day, enabling and encouraging people to connect.

- ‘You are only as young as you feel’
- Often as people get older they have to get permission to get out, and that we should encourage more expectation instead of saying can I get out, it should be how do I get out. So, its about enabling and not being risk aversive with older people.
- One person offered the session an example of her own life and how her life has changed. She moved to a different country 5 years ago returning to Scotland and although she has aged physically, she has grown mentally. She is physically restricted which is part of ageing but has picked up so much technically and through technology has been able to reach out to other parts of the world. It’s a major difference being able to connect online. Being online has made a major difference to her life but she has no contact with younger people.
- One person spoke about aches and pains and her work across the Highlands with all ages, working with toddlers and going to a day care centre. She also conveyed a message of ageism towards teenagers and how it can be a challenge for young people. Also discussed perceptions and fear of young people in hoodies and older people at cash machines and the fear of being robbed, touching on stereotypes and the reality. Its all about knowing that age group and more work needs to be done to break down barriers and connect people. It’s a good place to start by building an understanding from a young age, It’s been a tough few years due to COVID 19 and connections have been digital to keep up the momentum.
- One person connected with all ages and involved in lifelong learning, mid and body, finding other and new ways to keep going, people talking about ageism and facing it more in their 40 s and 50 s. Most people do not realise that ageism is happening to us.
- Touched upon building the capacity of older adults.
- One person spoke about working with children and the importance of storytelling. She also mentioned that she was challenged as being a woman with short hair, something to do with age and hair. Touched upon the subject of storytelling age and image.

Workshop 2

Key points:

- How old do we feel? We still feel young. Is it our mindset? Physically our bodies have aches and pains, and we cannot do as much physically. Our use of language? Older person and categorising.
- Is there a right word to use for a mixed age range?
- 27 year old feels 27.
- Looking at physically do I stop now?
- Do I find a solution?
- Dark nights - signage – incorporate ageing process – demographics – there are more older people than young.
- There is value in participation for everyone.
- The restrictions of COVID 19 has aged everyone and no one is socialising.

Workshop 3

Key points:

- The use of “AGELESS” – a feeling / activity description to break down barriers and a welcome notice. Responsibility to consider equity / equalities around making something free of barriers for all to participate in regardless of age and intersectionality to be embedded.
- Ethnic and cultural differences need to be considered – including with those who share culture and ethnicity, but not experiences. “ageing process does not happen in a vacuum”
- Stereotyping could be a great discussion type (supported by videos like one shown) for intergenerational groups to open up thinking and explore ‘is stereotyping always a mistake?’ ‘Why do we use stereotypes?’
- Third stage of life means different things to different people and different age groups. Considering autonomy v peer / social pressure and ability / interests changing as a flow rather than a fixed pathway. We can change our own views dramatically depending on who and what we experience – eg realising people in their 80s feel too fit, sprightly and capable to be included in ‘cycling for age’ projects...or views around retirement goals / continuing to work – and who actually has choice?

- Being involved intergenerationally seems a real strength for all – breaking down barriers, negativity and false expectations around self / others.

Workshop 4

Key points:

- Relationships and the benefits of friendship of different ages.
- Older – age seems to be less important.
- Spaces in communities – natural spaces planned or spontaneous.
- Raise our children – Stranger Danger.
- We don't have the freedom with our own children and there is a reduction of meeting people of a different age.
- There is a commonality between generations, and both can be equally isolated and lonely.
- They can become friends which what they share.
- Should older adults require tests because of their ability?
- Men's Sheds – there are amazing opportunities for people of different ages getting to know each other.

4. GWT Quick Update Training Events, from Lorraine George

<https://generationsworkingtogether.org/training>

Info on conference:

<https://generationsworkingtogether.org/news/intergenerational-conference-2022-15-12-2021>

Info on Global Intergenerational Week:

<https://generationsworkingtogether.org/global-intergenerational-week>

Further conversations:

- The conversation continued and Jane Brooks offered some information and suggestions around enlightened employers with a need to change employment practices – could there be possibilities for a sabbatical etc. Some kind of offboarding programme. Could days be shortened, encourage people to train in other areas? Look at employment in a completely different way?

- Value what we know.
- Unspoken knowledge and experience how do we make it valuable?
- Think.
- Language at work changes.
- Time on earth is different now want to know more about culture etc.
- Ageism in employment.

5. Close of session and evaluation

Date of Next Network Meeting: Thematic meetings will take place after the conference in March 2022.

See Thematic Calendar on website

<https://generationsworkingtogether.org/downloads/61d45d970ebf6-thematic-calendar-2022.pdf>