

Together At Play and Song Toolkit

Intergenerational Program

PREPARED BY



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TOGETHER AT PLAY AND SONG (TAPS)

An Intergenerational Program

VIRTUAL AND IN-PERSON MUSIC PROGRAM

Age Groups:

Older Adults (65+ years old)
Toddlers (1-5 years old) + Parent/Guardian for Toddler
Adapted versions offered for older youth

Duration:

TAPS - Virtual: Minimum of 3 sessions
In person: Minimum of 3 sessions to on-going

Overview:

An adaptable intergenerational music therapy program. It was originally designed for older adults in skilled nursing or assisted living facilities addressing social, emotional, and communication goals and objectives. However, the therapeutic music activities and educational songs are adaptable for all older adults and a range of youth age groups.

About this Toolkit

Together at Play and Song (TAPS) virtual program and in-person program were designed and facilitated by Shalom Park, a long term care facility located in Aurora, Colorado. This program was originally designed by music therapists to be facilitated by music therapists and music therapy interns and has been adapted to be delivered by facilitators who are musically-inclined. Participants include older adults, young children and their guardians. This program can be offered either in person or virtually, details are provided in this toolkit.

The team at Shalom Park worked with LinkAGES to create a multitude of resources including a song book, videos, and a sample session. We hope that you find this useful!

Contribute to the World of Intergenerational Programming!

Evaluation and adaptation are central to LinkAGES. Please help us improve this program by making changes or adding your unique improvements or cultural songs and activities. We want to learn with you. We will be sharing data and learnings with everyone who submits the evaluation form.

Please fill out the short evaluation at [ToolkitSurvey.org](https://www.ToolkitSurvey.org).

About LinkAGES

LinkAGES (www.linkagesconnects.org) believes that healthy, resilient, and vibrant communities are only possible when all ages are thriving and meaningfully engaged with one another. By making intergenerational programs easier to facilitate and sustain, we help lower loneliness and social isolation experienced by youth and older adults and also decrease ageism. LinkAGES provides tools, educational resources, coaching, evaluation, and more to entities and people seeking to facilitate high-quality programs across the country in a variety of formats. Please visit our website to access more tools, learn about the Collaborative Network for Intergenerational Connections, and get to know our online community!

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Shalom Park: San Baek, Activity Coordinator, Stephanie Bouldin, Music Therapist

About Shalom Park

Shalom Park nursing home offers long-term admissions for Elders from all backgrounds, rehabilitation services, a wellness center and more. Residents at Shalom Park participate in a daily schedule of fun and exciting activities. Elders and Care Partners work together and empower each other to experience the rhythm of daily life. Shalom Park's community follows the Eden Alternative philosophy to improve the quality of life by meeting the emotional, spiritual, social, residential and medical needs of its Elders.



This toolkit was created thanks to the NextFifty Initiative. Thank you for your generous funding and vision.



Together At Play And Song

INTERGENERATIONAL MUSIC PROGRAM

Program Overview

Together At Play & Song (TAPS) promotes intergenerational connection between older adults and early childhood populations. Through its design, both generations experience the mental and physical therapeutic benefits of music. Children also receive educational programming and the opportunity to practice fine motor skills as well as nurture cognitive development.

Who Should Facilitate This

The designers and facilitators at Denver's Shalom Park are trained music therapists. The included schedules and activities (in both the song book and video recordings) were created as therapeutic music activities. If you are a music therapist, then fantastic!

This program can also be facilitated by any person who is musically-inclined. Whether you play a single instrument, have been musically trained, or are a choir director. Please do not feel intimidated by the term "therapeutic."

TAPS is NOT, however, a music lesson. The music and activities are designed to facilitate meaningful intergenerational connections between the participants.

Format

TAPS has been developed for both in-person groups and virtual pairs. This toolkit will provide tools to facilitate both versions and a hybrid option as well as suggestions for further adaptations.

Program Duration

In both the online formats and in-person, this program is designed as a multi-session program. It must be scheduled for a minimum of three sessions in order to facilitate meaningful intergenerational connections and reach the desired outcomes below. For in-person formats, it can also be designed as an on-going program.

Overview

Virtual

Format: 100% Virtual

Frequency: Once per week, minimum of 3 sessions

Duration: 20–30 minutes

Facilitator: 1 facilitator representing the older adults, 1 music facilitator.

Participants: 1 older adult, 1 toddler/preschooler, and their guardians.

TAPS connects one older individual and one child in their own locations. The facilitator can either be with the older adult or also virtual. TAPS involves curated therapeutic music sessions on a weekly basis for intergenerational communication, social interaction, opportunities for self-expression, and other music therapy benefits in domains of physical, psychological, emotional, social, communicational, and educational areas.

Note: Depending on the independence of either the older adult or child, it may be necessary to have either a guardian or facilitator present in-person to assist with technology, instruments, and instruction.

In-person

Format: 100% In-Person

Frequency: Once per week, ongoing

Duration: 45–50 minutes

Participants: 10–15 older adults, 5–10 toddlers/preschoolers and their guardians

Facilitators: 1–2 facilitators representing the older adults, 1 music facilitator

The in-person sessions are designed as a large group activity where everyone participates together. At first, they may appear similar to many singalongs. However, sessions are intentionally designed to meet development goals and to create opportunities for meaningful intergenerational connection. The in-person program is designed as an open invitation that encourages people to show up on a routine basis but does not require one-on-one pairings.

Note: Hybrid best practices to follow.

Further Adaptations

For more information, see “Alternative Options” on page 20.

1. **Preschool to Elementary Aged Children** (In-Person/Online/Hybrid)
2. **Middle School to High School-College Aged Teenagers** (In-Person/Online/Hybrid)

Supplemental Materials

To make this program as easy to facilitate as possible, we are happy to provide:

1. A playlist with sample songs and how to facilitate them. View them on our [YouTube Channel](#).
2. A songbook with 50+ songs!

Desired Outcomes

The therapeutic music activities (including singing, playing instruments, and physical movement practices) promote the building of meaningful relationships through positive interactions between older adults, parents/guardians, and children.

Desired outcomes for pre-school children

- Improved literacy skills
- Increased fine motor skills
- Improved meaningful social interaction
- Promote Intergenerational interaction
- Decrease in ageist beliefs
- Opportunity for self- expression
- Increase sustained attention
- Facilitate sensory integration
- Exposure to music, rhythm, and instruments
- Exposure to educational opportunities (song topics include alphabets, colors, shapes, etc)



Desired outcomes for older participants

- Decrease in social isolation
- Improved mental health (decreased depression)
- Increased physical/gross and fine motor movement (through instrumental playing)
- Increased communication
- Positive psychological and emotional experience
- Improved quality of life through meaningful social interaction
- Provide memory stimulation
- To build rapport
- To stimulate life review
- Facilitate orientation to activity engagement

Equipment

Virtual

Each participant is working with the same instruments. If the older adult is working alongside the music facilitator, they may have access to additional instruments. Each child participant and their guardian receives a package prior to the program. It should include the equipment they will need (as decided by the program facilitators from the list below).

Minimum:

- Electrical
 - Tablets (Expectation that they would give them back)
 - Device stand
 - We have included devices/tablets, but if participants can access their own electronics, then that would be the true minimum.
 - Instruments (Each participant gets a kit delivered to them)
 - Lollipop paddle drum (with mallet)
 - Egg shaker (Adaptation: A plastic easter egg with rice in it)
 - Tablet (that they would return)
 - Claves (Great for fine motor skills)
 - Props
 - Dance scarves (fabric from home)

Moderate:

- Electrical
 - Tablets (Expectation that they would give them back)
 - Device stand
- Instruments
 - A small musical kit like [this one on Amazon](#)
- Props
 - Dance scarves

In-person

- Minimum: If you're starting from scratch, you can adapt by making your instruments from household items
 - Electrical
 - Microphone
 - Bluetooth Speaker(s)
 - Instruments
 - Egg shaker → easter egg with rice in it (Every single person needs)
 - Small percussive Instrument or Rhythm Sticks → Rhythm Sticks (chopsticks, spoons, empty plastic containers, dollar store) (Every single person needs)
 - Rain Sticks
 - Tambourine (Every person needs)
 - Props
 - Dance ribbons/scarves → Clean scarves and cloth materials from home (you can invite parents to bring something) (Every single person needs)

Moderate

- Electrical
 - Microphone
 - Bluetooth Speaker(s)
- Instruments
 - Egg shaker
 - Small percussive instrument and/or Rhythm sticks
 - Rain Sticks
 - Tambourine (Every person needs)
- Props
 - Puppets
 - Felt board with felt pieces (Mary had a Little Lamb and Itsy Bitsy Spider)
 - Parachute
- Books
 - You are My Sunshine
 - I'm a Little Teapot
 - Or other primary books

Maximum: The more instruments you have, the better. High-ticket items can be used by the facilitator while other participants use rhythm sticks or egg shakers, and then she calls someone up and they get a chance to use it- you share it

- Electrical Equipment
 - Bluetooth Speaker(s)
 - Microphone
- Instruments
 - Cajon
 - Djembe set (stackable)
 - Drumsticks
 - Egg shakers
 - Foot tambourines
 - Kids conga drum
 - Ocean drum
 - Reverie harp strings
 - Shekere
 - Tubano set
 - Wrist jingles
- Books
 - All You Need is Love
 - Imagine
 - Forever Young
 - Moon River
 - Octopus's Garden
 - Sun on My Shoulders
 - What a Wonderful World
 - When You Wish Upon a Star
- Props
 - Bubble guns (set of 6)
 - Bubble gun blower
 - Bubble solution
 - Butterfly glider
 - Dance ribbons
 - Farm animal bucket
 - Floor rug
 - Large parachute
 - Sun plush toy



Facilitators

For this program to run smoothly, we recommend at least one music facilitator with a musical background, and a desire to facilitate this type of interaction. Some examples could be: music therapy interns, music therapists, music educators, choir directors, early childhood specialists who utilize music in their classrooms, and activity/program staff with musical backgrounds.

Virtual

- Required: One music facilitator
- Option 1 (Recommended):
 - Music facilitator is joining from Zoom with an array of instruments
 - A second facilitator sets up the room for the older adult with devices, instruments, and props. Depending on the independence of the older adult, the facilitator can either leave or remain to hand off instruments and help with activities and electronics
 - Guardian is with child at home to help with instruments and activities
- Option 2:
 - Music facilitator is in the same room as the older adult, both on camera
 - Guardian is with child at home to help with instruments and activities

In-person

- Required: One music facilitator
- 1-2 additional facilitators for 10-15 older adults
- 5-10 guardians with 5-10 children

Location Best Practices

Virtual

Because you are working with such a young population over video conferencing while they are at home, be patient and flexible. There may be sessions with extra distractions and you may need to be flexible about activities and the length of sessions. Remember, the goal is to help encourage connection.

- Duration: 20-40 minutes.
- A single pairing of one older adult and one child (or even two children) with their guardian is ideal.
- Keep pairings consistent over time, don't mix up participant pairings over the course of the program.
- Parents/guardians are responsible to manage technological needs for their children.
- Parents/guardians can be made responsible to schedule the weekly session. It is a good idea for the participants to provide their contact information and keep it updated for communication with the facilitators.
- Set up your technology so it is easy to see the screen and no one has to handle any devices directly.
- For older adults, make sure the volume is turned up high enough and any hearing aid devices are functioning for the best experience.

In-person

- Choose a location that is big enough and accessible to everyone to gather in one large circle with room to dance and share instruments.
- If working with an older adult population who lives in the same facility, host the event on-site for ease.
- ADA accessible, parking lot, trained on-site staff who can help.
- Arrange the circle seating so that the generations are mixed up and you are encouraging intergenerational interaction.
- Technology needs: Portable speaker, device to play recorded music, electric keyboard.
- Bring all of the instruments and props to set up beforehand.

Hybrid

- Schedule some sessions that are 100% in-person and then some that are 100% in a virtual format.
- Keep virtual pairings consistent.

Session Setup and Schedule

With such young participants, predictability and routine are key. You can follow the arc of the session schedules that we have provided with a formula that can be used for each session. We have also provided a sample session with a number of songs and activities, with their intentions and benefits, for both a virtual paired session and an in-person group session.

For your use:

- A song book with 50+ songs with lyrics and music.
- A YouTube playlist with a music therapist demonstrating the different songs (e.g., scarf, rhythm, percussion, singalong, etc).

You can also switch out songs and activities for ones you like, those that match your community's cultural traditions and histories, or themes like holidays. Check out the YouTube playlist [here](#).

Key

MF= Music Facilitator

Virtual

TAPS sessions occur each week between an older adult and youth participant. Each session includes 3–6 musical activities (per the session plan) and lasts between 20–40 minutes, based upon preschool aged attention spans. Format is also based on energy level, developmental/cognitive abilities, and needs of participants.

Below is a sample session class, the formula should look similar for your own class. You can choose songs from the provided song book, songs from your own culture, songs you like, and songs that align with themes like mutually-celebrated holidays.

- Hello Song
- Sing Along
- Rhythm
- Movement/Dancing
- Percussion
- Goodbye Song

Virtual Program Activities				
Activity	Song(s)	Equipment	Goals	Musical Experience
TME # 1: Hello Song	"Hello Song" (Frere Jaques)	MF: Guitar	Hello songs build rapport between participants, guardians, and facilitators. Set the tone for the session and engage in socialization. Learning Objective: Orientation and socialization.	MF begins playing "Hello Song;" MF greets child; MF sings through response; MF greets older adult; MF sings through response.
TME # 2: Sing Along Total Time: 2 Minutes	"Mr. Sun"	MF: Guitar, Sun plush	To engage in socialization Learning objective: Familiarity and socialization	MF (or facilitator) hands older adult sun plush to hold; MF begins playing through song; MF slows down on the final chord progression and ends the song.
TME # 3: Movement Total time: 3 mins	"Shake my Sillies Out"	MF: Guitar MF & Participants: Shakers or tambourines	To facilitate gross motor functioning Increase opportunities for social interaction Participants move their arms and legs. Movements may include: Shaking, jumping, rolling, clapping, raising arms, kicking legs, running, dancing, reaching, etc. Learning Objective: Music helps us get moving.	MF states: "Now we are going to move around and get our bodies moving together. So grab a shaker and get ready to move." MF begins playing "Shake my Sillies Out"; MF adds additional movement options based on what child is doing; MF asks elder and child for additional movement options; MF sings through the last verse and slow down on chord progression ending on the refrain.

Virtual Program Activities				
Activity	Song(s)	Equipment	Goals	Musical Experience
<p>TME # 4: Counting</p> <p>Total time: 2 minutes.</p>	<p>“Five Green and Speckled Frogs”</p>	<p>MF: Guitar 5 green felt frogs (or toys)board or felt board</p>	<p>To facilitate counting 1:1 correspondence</p> <p>Increase opportunities for social interaction</p> <p>Learning Objective: Counting backwards from 5</p>	<p>MF hands older adult a visual board to hold during the song; MF plays and sings through first verse; MF pauses on v7 chord and removes frog from visual and prompts child to count how many frogs are left; MF sings through second verse; MF pauses on V7 chord and removes frog from visual and prompt child to count how many frogs are left; MF sings through third verse; MF pauses on V7 chord and removes frog from visual and prompt children to count how many frogs are left ;Continue this process until there are no frogs left; MF ends the song going from V - I chord.</p>
<p>TME # 5: Sing and Move Along</p> <p>Total time: 2 minutes</p>	<p>“We are the Dinosaurs”</p>	<p>MF: Guitar, Dinosaur PuppetParticipants: Egg Shakers</p>	<p>To increase opportunities for social interaction</p> <p>Gross motor movement</p> <p>Learning Objective: Social interaction, and music helps get us moving</p>	<p>MF hands older adult a dinosaur puppet and tells child to grab an instrument to play along with; MF begins singing through song; MF ends song with refrain and prompts child to roar before slowing down to the final chord;</p>

Virtual Program Activities				
Activity	Song(s)	Equipment	Goals	Musical Experience
<p>TME # 6: Vowel Sounds</p> <p>Total time: 3 minutes</p>	<p>"Apples and Bananas"</p>	<p>MF: Guitar, Apple and Banana Shakers Participants: Egg Shakers</p>	<p>To increase vowel sounds</p> <p>To work on vowel shapes and increase socialization</p> <p>Learning Objective: Pronunciate different vowel sounds</p>	<p>MF hands shakers that look like an apple and a banana to older adult (child can also shake along); MF begins singing through song; MF pauses in between each verse and prompt child to state the next vowel.</p>
<p>TME # 7: Sing Along</p> <p>Total time: 2 minutes</p>	<p>"Skinamarink"</p>	<p>MF: Guitar</p>	<p>To engage in socialization</p> <p>Learning objective: Familiarity and socialization</p>	<p>MF begins playing through song; MF slows down on the final chord progression and end the song.</p>
<p>TME # 8: Goodbye Song</p> <p>Total time: 1 minute</p>	<p>"Goodbye Song" (Oh my Darling Clementine)</p>	<p>Animal Visuals</p>	<p>To build rapport and orientation to activity engagement</p> <p>Set the tone for the end of session and engage in socialization</p>	<p>MF shares that it's time for the goodbye song; MF sings through the song a capella and hand the animal visual to the older adult after each line in the song.</p>

In-person

In-person sessions occur bi-weekly or monthly lasting 35-45 minutes. Include 15 minutes of socialization with snack time after the direct music group experience.

The formula for an in-person session is below. You can choose songs from the provided song book, songs from your own culture, songs you like, and songs that align with themes like mutually-celebrated holidays.

- Hello Song
- Movement Circle Song
- Instrument/Rhythm Song
- Dancing
- Rhythm Instruments
- Music Facilitated
- Parachute
- Goodbye Song

In-Person Single Session Format				
Activity	Songs	Equipment	Goals	Experience
Hello Song	"Good Morning to You" "Wiloughby Wallaby Woo" (elephant song)	MF: Guitar, Elephant puppet	Build rapport Orientation to activity engagement	Greet each child and elder by name Scaffolding rhythm with each repetition (MF leads rhythmic cueing)
Movement circle song	"Mulberry bush"	MF: Guitar	Facilitate gross motor movement increase opportunities for social interaction.	Row/Rock/Bounce alternating movement for each verse of "Row your Boat;" Walk around circle instead and add "All wave hello" for Elder interaction.
Drumming/Rhythm	Rhythm and vocal (syllabic) improvisation, ("You Are My Sunshine") ("Farmer in the Dale")	Gathering Drums, Sound shapes, Percussion instruments for individuals	Facilitate gross motor movement Increase opportunities for social interaction.	Simple beats, three different meters; New beat and syllable for each meter; Can use a simple song to provide additional structure if needed.
Scarf Dancing	Classical (various songs)	MF: Piano/Keyboard; Participants: Scarves	Increase self-expression Gross motor movement Non-verbal social interaction	Expressive, free movement following music; Pianist provides pleasing classical music, brief pieces with contrasting tempos/meters, etc.

In-Person Single Session Format				
Activity	Songs	Equipment	Goals	Experience
Rhythm instruments	"Iko Iko" "We've Got Rhythm"	MF: Guitar Participants: Bells, shakers	Increased sustained attention to task Self-expression	Within context of each song as led on guitar by MF Start/stop cueing Fast/slow cueing Loud/soft cueing
Music-facilitated story time	"Puff the Magic Dragon"	MF: Keyboard/Guitar Participants: Dragon puppet, "Puff the Magic Dragon" picture book	To increase sensory stimulation Imagery recognition Increase impulse control.	Children sit on floor in center of circle; MF team leads story-telling with music (Elder could read/hold the book).
Movement with Parachute	Various classical (Waltz)	MF: Keyboard/guitar Participants: Parachute, large soft blanket	Increase sensory stimulation Meaningful social interaction.	1. Children lay on floor in center of circle; 2. Elders/Parents manipulate parachute up/down.
Goodbye Song	"Goodbye"- from Sound of Music	None	Orientation to end of session	

Alternative Programs: Older Youth Participants

This program could be facilitated with age groups including young children, middle school, and high school aged students. The sessions would be geared specifically towards the goals of each age group, as informed by the youth facilitator/teacher/parent who is guiding their developmental path. See below.

The most significant elements to preserve are:

- The purpose of the program: intergenerational and music therapy benefits for participants,
- Consistency with schedule (on a weekly or bi-weekly schedule),
- Pairing up the same youth participant and older adult participant for the entire length of the program.

The arc of a session with older youth would mimic:

- Vocal warm-ups,
- Moderate movement,
- Singing songs (alternating generations),
- Songwriting together for certain sessions,
- Simple instruments like hand drum/tambourine/shaker can be added into chosen songs,
- Goodbye songs.

Alternative Programs

- **Preschool to elementary children:** These age groups can be in-person groups or virtual pairings. The focus is more literacy and relational based. Sessions are playful and nurture how each respective generation can share a form of unconditional love they might not find elsewhere. The goal is also to allow children to be exposed to new activities and ideas from an older generation that might not be available otherwise.
- **Middle-School to High School:** Student-based programs should focus more on bridging the generational gap to help dissolve ageist stereotypes or negative attitudes. In this format, students and older adults are paired and would both focus on a singular instrument that they each play already. This is NOT a music lesson.

Participants choose which songs they want to play together and alternate. Both generations are exposed to new music and they develop a better level of respect and generational connectedness for each other based on a shared passion for music.

Re-tooling the toolkit for your own uses

Adapting for your community

LinkAGES is excited to share this toolkit. It is a template based on research and a program that we have successfully facilitated, however, it is intended as only a guide. Depending on your community, culture, specific participant group, and organization, anticipate ways you can adapt it to provide the best experience.

Culturally Sensitive Programming

Cultural Responsiveness: Including the Perspectives of All Voices

From Thana-Ashley Charles via [TCCGroup](#)

Cultural responsiveness is a tool to ensure the inclusion of various points of views and experiences. It often requires that those in a position of power take stock of their role in society and the advantages that may come with it. It also encourages the learning and understanding of other groups to foster respect, trust, and inclusion of that understanding in every step of decision-making. This includes the recognition of demographic, sociopolitical, and other contextual characteristics. For a program officer or director, this might look something like embracing the various viewpoints of the participants you serve and incorporating them into your design of programs and services.

When needed, interpretation services should be considered. Program staff should also ensure that materials intended for beneficiaries are friendly for all levels of literacy. Thana-Ashley Charles

Cultural responsiveness can be manifested through various aspects of a program. Here are some simple strategies that program staff might try, regardless of the issue area they are working in.

Simple Strategies to Build an Inclusive Program

1. Engage Community Stakeholders

Stakeholders could be members of the community who would be beneficiaries, community leaders, or others who are familiar working with the community and their needs. By engaging stakeholders in the design and implementation of your programming, the program is able to align its goals with what community members need.

Engaging stakeholders throughout the process of program design and implementation also helps to foster a stronger relationship with the community. This ultimately allows for the program staff to better understand the realities of the intended beneficiaries and craft a program that will best fit their lives.

2. Use Inclusive Language in Communication with and About Participants

The language used to define the program's goals as well as materials used to promote its services to the community members should be as inclusive as possible. The program should be using languages that are spoken by members in the community (both technically and colloquially).

When needed, interpretation services should be considered. Program staff should also ensure that materials intended for beneficiaries are friendly for all levels of literacy. By using more inclusive language in communication, the program is more inviting to community members and reflects an effort being made to acknowledge their differences.

Note: Outreach materials should explicitly state the ways that you are adapting the program/space/services in order to be inclusive. This includes: interpretation services offered, valet parking, ADA compliant spaces and bathrooms, closed captioning, videos permitted to be off, childcare, food, etc.

3. Adapt Elements of The Program Design

Organizations often want to be evidence-based in their programming, since this approach increases the chances of success and best use of resources. However, it is important to keep in mind that there is no uniform way to interact with a community. In implementing programming, organizations ought to be willing to adapt their design and tools so that they work for the community they are serving.

There may be specific circumstances that apply to the community not previously considered in the evidence-based design. In order to be responsive to that, programs must be willing to show some flexibility in design and not ignore specific needs for the sake of maintaining program fidelity. Remember that the ultimate goal is to improve the lives of the beneficiaries and at times willingness to make adjustments will better enable the program to do that.

4. Reflect Continuously

It is important to think of cultural responsiveness as a continual process. Just because a program is culturally responsive at present, does not mean that it will not eventually have to shift in order to maintain that responsiveness as participants' realities and needs may change over time.

Prepping Your Participants

Intergenerational programs bring two or more generations together who grew up in vastly different times. Not only are there age differences amongst participants, but differing cultures, viewpoints, perspectives, and world experiences. Sensitize both sets of participants to ensure the smoothest experience for all.

Helpful Hint: Once an older adult confirms they will participate, send out an online form or email to get a clearer picture of who it is that's signing up. Give your participants a chance to reveal who they are and what they think is relevant about this program.

1. Why did you sign up for this?
2. Where did you grow up?
3. Is there anything else you think I need to know before we meet?

Preparing Your Program Staff

The staff from your partnering agencies are likely highly trained to work with the populations that they serve, but less likely, at the outset, to have as much information about the other generation.

Depending on who signs up to participate, your staff may need to be trained to work with people from different age groups, demographics, cultural identities, abilities, races, and/or people who speak another language as their first language.

This is the beauty of collaboration! Partnering agencies should carve out time to cross-train one another, have structured conversations, and develop the best approaches to serving all participants. See the previous checklists as well as the resources below.

Prepping Music Facilitators

If a music facilitator is working with one or both age groups for the first time, they should familiarize themselves with what to expect from each age group.

Train music facilitators in the benefits of intergenerational programming including increased self-expression, social interaction, and communication as well as music therapy benefits such as decrease in depression and maintenance of physical and cognitive abilities. Provide the Literature about Positive Aging section below for further reading.

The facilitators representing the older adult population should also prepare them with whatever training materials they have or important information about the participants they'll be working with.

Preparing Older Adults for Your Program

It is important to consider the ability and willingness of each older adult who will participate so facilitator, or staff member can adequately explain what they will be participating in and what it will look like.

Facilitators should work with the Activities/Volunteer department (in most cases, the facilitators would be part of this department) of the older adults living facility (independent, assisted, and skilled nursing facilities) for individual referrals for this program. This preliminary vetting process is important as direct care staff would have the most information regarding older adult participant's physical, cognitive, and attention functioning level. Participant's interest in intergenerational and music programming is another factor. Older adults that would benefit the most from this program should be considered and prioritized for participation. (depression, lack of socialization or participation in other programming, etc.)

Once the referrals are made and potential participants are identified, the facilitator can initially assess the older participant. General observations of the ability to verbally communicate (speaking and listening), engage physically by playing instruments and singing along, and maintain attention for the duration of each session will be the primary identifier for participation in the program.

Next is to confirm the commitment to the program from older adults. Facilitator will communicate that this program requires routine, scheduled participation to develop ongoing intergenerational connection with the younger participant. While clinical and physical decline of the older participant can occur and continuing the individual session may not always be a possibility, facilitators should offer this programming to elders who can participate for a minimum of 3 sessions promoting continuous intergenerational relationship.

Lastly, the expectation of this program should be communicated to the older participants. Benefits of intergenerational and music therapy programs will be reviewed. Sharing information of younger participant's attention-span and grade (education) level, and required participation of singing songs and playing instruments together will be communicated. This is when the "professional boundaries" between older and younger participants should be discussed.

Preparing Younger Participants and/or Guardians *materials also that would include benefits to consider, facts about older adults, and what sessions will consist of typically.

With participants under five years old, guardians can help prepare their children for the expected communication and interaction with older adults. Share the Literature about Positive Aging below with guardians ahead of the program.

Provide guardians with statistical facts about aging and what to expect with any specific cognitive abilities of older adults, especially for those participants who are paired with older adults with dementia.

Guardians should also be informed about evaluations and research surveys you will use to collect data from the session experience.

Topics to cover:

- If programming will occur within a senior housing facility, give participants a tour either in-person or virtually before their first visit.
- Review effective intergenerational communication skills.
- Be prepared to address issues of loss and grief.

Note: Family/children participants may not receive specific clinical information about the paired elder participants due to HIPPA, but can be directed to resources that provides generalized information about dementia/Alzheimers where parents/guardians can curate and disseminate appropriate facts about interacting with older adults to their participating children. Ex. <https://www.alz.org/alzheimers-dementia/what-is-dementia>)

Literature about Positive Dimensions of Aging

Provided by Amy Delpo, Director of Older Adult Services, Denver Public Library

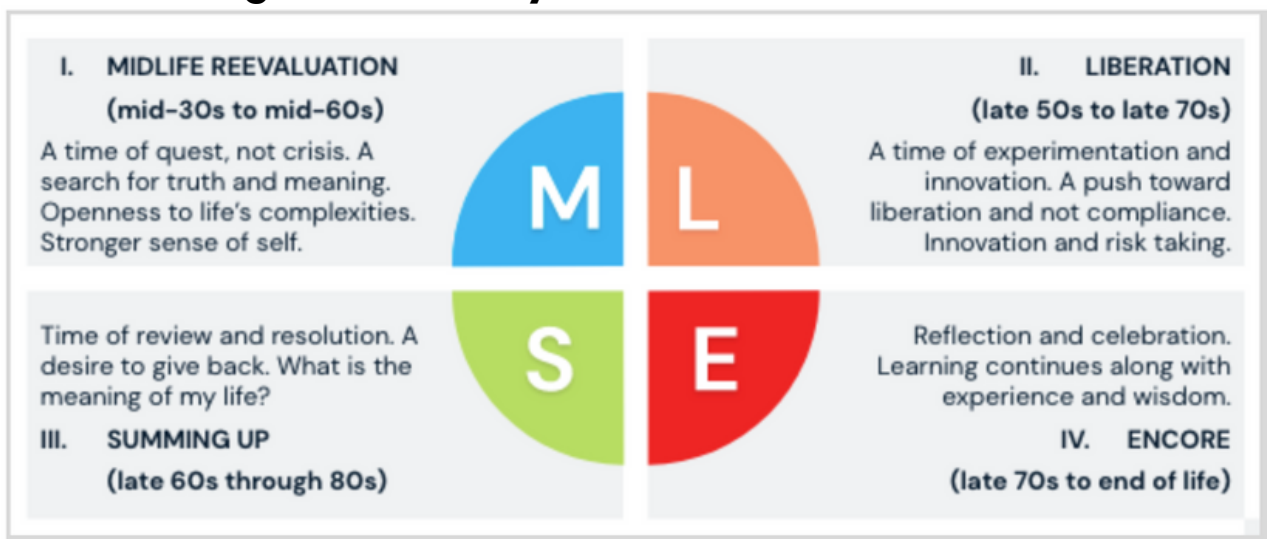
There are many positive dimensions to aging.

Carl Jung offered a positive, life-enhancing approach to aging in which psychological and spiritual development is possible across the lifespan. People in the second half of life can enjoy continued creativity and fulfillment, and a deepening of spirituality. The key is to turn inward. We can open ourselves up to new ideas and experiences, continue to grow and learn, and discover a new sense of meaning and purpose in our life. This process can open us to new ways of thinking about ourselves, our identities, and the past. It can also lead to new values and goals that can bring vitality and energy to our lives as we age.

The second half of life can be about liberation, reflection, and celebration.

Gene Cohen's MRI imaging and research of thousands of older adults backed Jung's outlook scientifically. Cohen posited that we are all endowed with an Inner Push that urges us on with our development at every age, including old age. The aging brain can form new memories and grow new brain cells. He identified the four stages of maturity below.

The Four Stages of Maturity



Developmental Intelligence is a gift

As we age, the brain's developmental intelligence reflects "the maturing synergy of cognition, emotional intelligence, judgment, social skills, life experience, and consciousness."

In youth, we see things in black and white. In older age, we can hold paradox, tolerate complexity, and approach things from a deepening of wisdom.

Changes in the brain as we age

- The brain's emotional circuitry becomes more balanced
- The limbic system grows calmer
- The architectural circuitry becomes more complex
- Young people use one hemisphere or the other; older people use both at the same time

New research on emotions show the benefits of aging

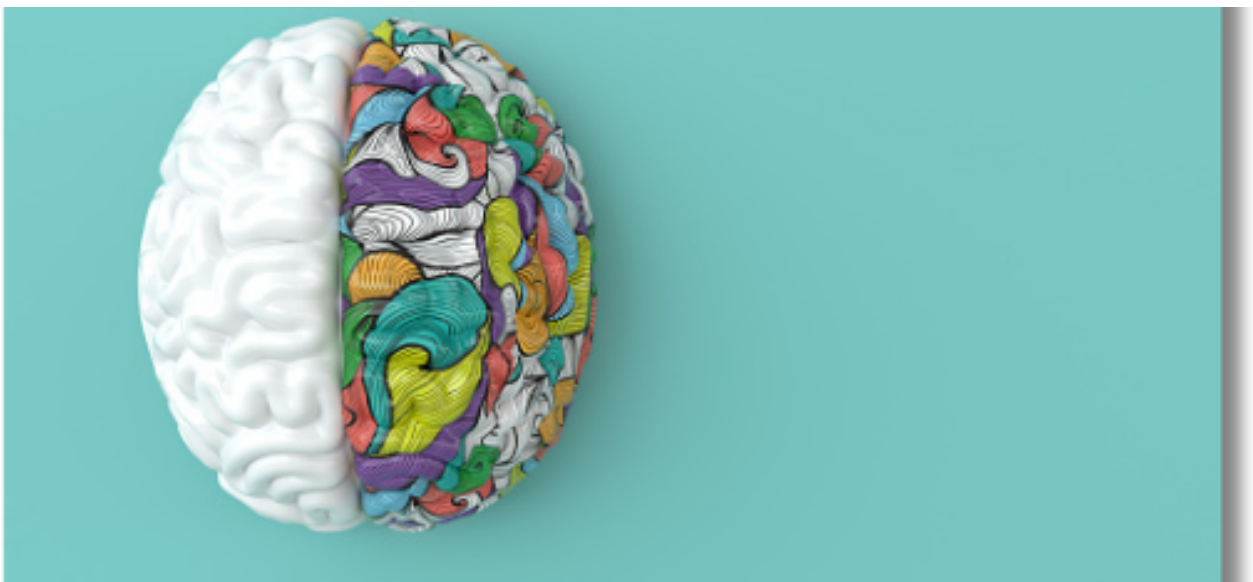
- Older adults experience stronger desires than younger adults
- Older adults are better at resisting these desires
- Older people tend to have more positive emotions and fewer negative ones
- Older people are more emotionally stable
- Older people tend to be happier
- Older people are better able to be present

Our personalities are not fixed– they are fluid and malleable

- People tend to become more conscientious and agreeable and less neurotic
- The dark triad of personality traits – narcissism, machiavellianism, and psychopathy – go down
- We develop into more altruistic and trusting individuals
- We develop a better sense of humor
- People tend to be nicer and more socially adaptive

Working with Diverse Communities

Culturally sensitive materials (songs/instruments/education materials in different languages and cultures) can be adapted to the session depending on the diverse backgrounds of the participants.



Creating Courageous Containers

When we invite people into a space— in-person, virtual, or hybrid— we take on the responsibility to create a courageous container for them to learn, explore, and be vulnerable. Pay attention to each of the pieces below and put as much thought and intention into each one so that you can facilitate an experience that brings generations and diverse cultures together to create meaningful connections.

When inviting diverse age groups and cultures to convene and connect authentically, we cannot expect all people to “feel safe” all the time. In fact, people from certain communities may never feel safe. Instead, let us create spaces in which people can show up courageously and with respect for one another— to be honest, to be open to discomfort, and to continue to be present and civil whilst reaching a deeper understanding of one another’s lived experiences.

Communication

When you’re working with older adults, always assign one point of contact. Usually this is the facilitator that represents them. This facilitator should be charged with all meeting invitations, program communications, and incoming phone calls and emails from participants.

For all participants, create a space that is as welcoming as possible before people arrive until after they leave.

- Communicate clearly in the person’s preferred communication channel the where/when/what of the program details.
- Follow up with reminders about the event.
- Share all details they need.

Setting up the Space

To make the space— online and in-person— as welcoming as possible, be intentional about all of your participants. Below are holistic considerations with further detail into each format.

- Print sizes should be large enough for everyone to see both in print and online.
- Have many ways to engage different learning styles and comfort levels throughout.
 - In-person, consider using whiteboards, giant poster boards, or post-its.
 - Online, you can use Google Docs, Google Slides, and the chatroom to share information and engage in conversation.
- Create welcome gift bags with small gifts like a branded notebook and pen, a bottle of water, pamphlets about any relevant agency information.
 - For virtual programs, mail the gift bag with a kit including everything they need for the course. Ask them to bring it to the first session.

Watch [this](#) video to learn more about setting up in-person spaces.

In-person

- Everyone should wear a name tag every time. Facilitators should write them so each name tag is legible
 - You can also include people's preferred pronouns
- Sound is really important in-person. Use a microphone if possible and test it beforehand.
- Be mindful of seating. Provide chairs with arms for older adults, chairs without arms for people of different sizes, chairs with no wheels which are unstable.
- Ask participants to sit mixed up instead of all young people on one side and all older adults on the other.
- Make sure it's easy to get from people's seats to the bathroom or exits, and that the bathrooms are set up with hand soap, dryers, toilet paper, etc.
- When participants aren't using their devices for the class requirements, remind them to remain present and engaged with the class.

Online

- Pose icebreaker questions in the chat and remind people as they arrive to answer.
- Be intentional with the use of music. Be mindful of volume, song and genre choice, and how and when to use it. It can help people to focus and feel creative while working independently. It can also be useful to connect participants.
- Have a facilitator present on the screen to welcome participants by name as they arrive, ask them how they are, and remind them when they'll start.
- Remind everyone that it's their choice to have their cameras on if they want to. Of course, it makes it much easier for people to connect with cameras on AND sometimes people need to turn their camera off for various reasons.
- Set the room to a gallery view so everyone can see everyone.
- Set the closed captioning.
- Direct everyone to any translators or sign language interpreters who are present and introduce them.
- Encourage the use of chat when asking questions to allow people various ways to respond. Include Zoom polls or [Polleverywhere.com](https://www.polleverywhere.com) for larger groups.
- Ask people to create their own Google slides to present on certain topics.

Guiding Principles, Group Agreements, or Ground Rules

To create courageous spaces, the co-facilitators should help establish group agreements or ground rules that help shape the container for the group. These should be specific to the format that you intend to use. There are three ways that facilitators can establish the ground rules and your choice depends on the length of the program.

Three ways to establish ground rules:

1. The facilitators choose the ground rules. Use this for shorter programs and programs that do not engage in trauma-informed work, i.e., a three-session program where sessions do not exceed 2 hours.
2. The facilitators choose some of the ground rules and then propose them to the group. You can then ask if there is anything else the participants would like to add.
3. All of the participants and facilitators work together to choose and discuss the ground rules. Use this method for programs that are longer, engage in trauma-informed work, bring together diverse cultures/languages/viewpoints, and when social justice issues may arise. Integrate the discussion as part of the program itself, seeking deeper understanding and laying the ground rules for how you will engage.

Best practices:

1. **Discuss what each rule means.** “Be respectful” is a rule that everyone can likely agree upon, but demonstrating respect may look different in different cultures. Ask the group, “What does respect look and sound like in a group setting?”
2. **Choose between three to six, and make sure there is group consensus.**
3. **Include the rules in the online meeting invite** for all formats (hybrid, virtual, in-person).
4. **Write all principles down where the whole group can see them in every single session.** If you’re in a physical room, write them on a white board or poster board. If you’re also using a virtual conference, write them in the chat or virtual white board.
5. **Verbally review the rules at the start of each session** since people may come late to a meeting they may not see the chat and if they are on the phone they may not have access to a virtual white board or the chat feature.

Refer back to the rules. When discussions arise, always lean back to the rules.

Suggestions:

- Everyone’s personal story belongs to them. If someone shares something, no one else is allowed to tell their story outside of this space.
- Every person has equitable time and space to share.
- We engage in civil conversation, even when we disagree.
- It is ok to be uncomfortable, we can move through it in this courageous space.

- No individual is the spokesperson or representative of a whole group– whether they're in the room or not.
- We respect one another's time by eliminating distractions as much as possible.
- We want everyone to feel respected and valued. So we do not put one another down or other groups down, even and especially through jokes about race/gender/age/sexual preference/identity.

Evaluation

There are several options for evaluation with this program. You can choose to blend several approaches. We recommend watching the LinkAGES Evaluation Education YouTube series to understand the purpose and process of evaluation.

Quantitative Evaluation

Quantitative Data: Measures of values or counts often expressed in numbers, e.g., "how much," "please rate," "number of sessions attended." You can give a quantitative evaluation survey to guardians asking them about their attitudes around aging, feelings of acceptance, and observations of the interaction between their child and the older adult after the first and last sessions.

Once everyone completes their surveys, the numerical answers from each question are averaged and compared. Facilitators often want to use quantitative data to see a change in attitudes through a definitive number.

Tips for organizing quantitative data:

- Use a table or spreadsheet
- Place participants on the left and write the questions across the columns
- If in Excel the facilitator can highlight an entire question column and average the data instantly using the "Σ" key

Best practices for handing out quantitative surveys:

- Keep surveys brief, less than 10 minutes to complete
- Provide an informed consent document; this is a document that says why you are doing the research and what you are using it for
- Request parental consent for research involving individuals under 18.
- Provide a survey to individuals during the first, middle, and last sessions of the program.
- Assign a "code" to each participant so that you can track change while keeping surveys anonymous– codes could be made up of last letter of first name, birthday, and first letter of your hair color.
- Keep the surveys in a private space
- Start with simpler statements that lead to more complex ones
- Connect Survey Questions to Desired Outcomes

Desired outcomes for pre-school children

- Improved literacy skills
- Increased fine motor skills
- Improved meaningful social interaction
- Promote Intergenerational interaction
- Decrease in ageist beliefs
- Opportunity for self-expression
- Increase sustained attention
- Facilitate sensory integration
- Exposure to music, rhythm, and instruments
- Exposure to educational opportunities (song topics include alphabets, colors, shapes, etc)

Desired outcomes for older youth participants

- Improved literacy skills
- Improved meaningful social interaction
- Promote Intergenerational interaction
- Decrease in ageist beliefs
- Opportunity for self-expression
- Increase sustained attention
- Facilitate sensory integration
- Exposure to music, rhythm, and instruments

Desired outcomes for guardians

- Decrease in social isolation
- Improved mental health (decreased depression)
- Positive psychological and emotional experience
- Improved quality of life through meaningful social interaction
- Improved connection to community
- Reduced ageist beliefs
- Promote intergenerational interaction

Desired outcomes for older adult participants

- Decrease in social isolation
- Improved mental health (decreased depression)
- Increased physical/gross and fine motor movement (through instrumental playing)
- Increased communication
- Positive psychological and emotional experience
- Improved quality of life through meaningful social interaction
- Provide memory stimulation
- To build rapport
- To stimulate life review
- Facilitate orientation to activity engagement

Sample Observational Questions (Children)

These questions ask guardians to observe their child's attitudes and the benefits they've received through this program. These questions are used to receive feedback from young children who may not be able to meaningfully participate in a survey.

Type of Question: Likert Scale Questions

Participant instruction: How much do you agree with the below statements on a scale from 1-5?

- 1= Disagree
- 2=Somewhat Disagree
- 3=Neither Agree nor Disagree
- 4=Somewhat Agree
- 5= Agree

Question Bank

1. My child enjoys this program.
2. My child is learning more social skills through participation in this program.
3. My child interacted with an older adult during this program in a positive way.
4. My child was able to express themselves during the program.
5. My child was exposed to rhythm and instruments.
6. My child was exposed to educational opportunities like books, learning the alphabet, and playing with learning toys.
7. My child's fine motor skills improved during this program.

Sample Survey Questions (Guardian)

These questions are adapted from a combination of the Berlin Social Support Scale, Perceived Community Support Scale, Satisfaction with Life Scale, and the Meaning in Life Questionnaire.

Type of Question: Likert Scale Questions

Participant instruction: How much do you agree with the below statements on a scale from 1-5?

- 1= Disagree
- 2=Somewhat Disagree
- 3=Neither Agree nor Disagree
- 4=Somewhat Agree
- 5= Agree

1. I feel satisfied with my relationships with my peers.
2. I feel satisfied with my relationships with people of older generations.
3. I feel satisfied with helping, encouraging, and giving advice to others.
4. I feel satisfied with learning new things by interacting with others.
5. My life has a clear sense of purpose.
6. I have a good sense of what makes my life meaningful.
7. I am satisfied with my life.
8. I care about my community.
9. Others in my community care about people my age.
10. I enjoy participating in different events in my community.
11. I feel included in different events in my community.
12. I have someone to reach out to when I need help.

Sample Ageist Beliefs Questions (Guardian)

To measure attitudes around older adults and aging caregivers are given questions adapted from the Anxiety About Aging Scale.

Type of Question: Likert Scale Questions

Participant instruction: How much do you agree with the below statements on a scale from 1-5?

- 1= Disagree
- 2=Somewhat Disagree
- 3=Neither Agree nor Disagree
- 4=Somewhat Agree
- 5= Agree

Question Bank

1. All older people are the same.
2. I worry that my health will get worse as I grow older.
3. As I get older I expect to become lonelier.
4. As I get older, I expect to be able to do the things I've always done.
5. We can learn a lot from older people.
6. Older adults are a drain on the economy, including health systems.
7. When I think of older people, I think of them as grumpy and miserable.
8. Old people do not get respect in society.

Evaluation Question Bank (Older Adults & Older Youth Participants)

A quantitative survey is formed from the following categories and scales. Keep in mind that facilitators can use as many or as little questions as they would like but it is encouraged to use questioning from all categories to match the desired outcomes. These surveys are handed out at the beginning, middle, and end of the program to measure participants' progress in their scores.

Please note: These survey questions can be given to older youth participants (Middle School and High School), but not younger.

Age Perspectives

These questions help give perspectives on how each age group views each other. You do not need to use every question, just the ones you find relevant to your desired outcomes.

Type of Question: Likert Scale Questions

Participant instruction: How much do you agree with the below statements on a scale from 1-5?

- 1= Disagree
- 2=Somewhat Disagree
- 3=Neither Agree nor Disagree
- 4=Somewhat Agree
- 5= Agree

Question Bank: Youth Participants

For Younger Generations about Older Generations (Adapted from Ambivalent Ageism Scale).

1. It is important to tell older adults when they are too old to do certain things; otherwise they might get their feelings hurt when they eventually fail.
2. Even if they want to, older adults shouldn't work because they have already paid their debt to society.
3. Even if they want to, older adults shouldn't work because they are fragile and may get sick.
4. It is good to speak slowly to older adults because it may take them longer to understand things.
5. People should shield older adults from sad news because they've already been through enough.
6. Older adults need to be protected from the harsh realities of society.
7. It is helpful to repeat things to older adults because they might not understand the first time. Even though they do not ask for help, older adults should always be offered help.
9. Most older adults interpret innocent remarks or acts such as being ageist.
10. Older adults are easily offended.
11. Older adults exaggerate their problems.
12. Older adults are a strain on the economy.

Question Bank: Older Adult Participants

For Older Generations about Younger Generations (Adapted from Public Attitudes to Young People)

1. Young people are trustworthy.
2. Young people don't work as much as I did when I was their age.
3. Young people take responsibility for their own actions
4. Young people lack communication skills.
5. Young people help others in need.
6. Young people cause trouble in their local area.
7. The behavior of young people today is no worse than it was 30 years ago.
8. Young people are portrayed positively in the media
9. Young people care about people my age.
10. Young people have things in common with people my age.

Authentic Relationship Building

These questions are to help gauge how much the participants were able to meaningfully engage with a person from another generation.

Type of Question: Scale

Participant Instruction: Rate your answer on a scale from 1-4.

1 = Not at All

2 = Some

3 = Moderately

4 = A lot

Question Bank: All Participants

Edit the highlighted part to reflect the opposite generation than whoever is answering.

1. To what extent did you engage in the program with the youth participant/older adult
2. How much did you feel like you connected with at least one youth participant/older adult in the program?
3. How much did you feel like you had an impact on at least one youth participant/older adult in the program?
4. How much do you feel that at least one youth participant/older adult had an impact on you during the program?
5. How much do you feel the interactions you had during this program helped you understand life better?
6. How much do you feel that the interactions you had during this program helped you cope with current challenges in your life?

Mental Health

In the case that any of your facilitators and/or participants may need additional mental health resources, we have included several from the CDC at the end of this toolkit.

These questions are developed with a standardized, evidence-based mental health assessment used on all ages. It is a 5-point scale.

Type of Question: The Kessler 6

Participant Instructions: Please answer your questions based on the below scale.

1 = "All of the Time"

2 = "Most of the time"

3 = "Some of the time"

4 = "A little of the time"

5 = "None of the time"

Question Bank for All Ages

1. During the past 30 days, about how often did you feel **nervous**?
2. During the past 30 days, about how often did you feel **hopeless**?
3. During the past 30 days, about how often did you feel **restless or fidgety**?
4. During the past 30 days, about how often did you feel **so depressed that nothing could cheer you up**?
5. During the past 30 days, about how often did you feel that **everything was an effort**?

During the past 30 days, about how often did you feel **worthless**?

Program Feedback

These questions only apply to the middle and end of the program, as participants cannot rate a program before it begins! There are several types of questions included in this section. You will ask the participants to provide feedback on the program overall, the program environment, and specific activities that you facilitated.

Type of Question: Scale

Participant Instruction: Rate your answer on a scale from 1-4.

1 = Not at All

2 = Some

3 = Moderately

4 = A lot

Question Bank 1: All Participants

1. How satisfied were you with this program?
2. How likely would you be to participate in a future, similar program?
3. To what extent did you feel respected and included in this program?

Type of Question: Rate

Participant instruction: Here is a list of all of the activities we did together! Rate each activity on a scale from 1-5 that represents your interest in this activity.

1 = Disliked

2 = Not interested

3 = Neutral

4 = Somewhat interested

5 = Very interested

No question bank. Provide a list of all the activities.

Facilitator Feedback

These questions are to help gauge how the facilitator affected the participants' experience in the program.

Type of question: Likert Scale

Participants instruction: How much do you agree with the below statements on a scale from 1-5?

1= Disagree

2=Somewhat Disagree

3=Neither Agree nor Disagree

4=Somewhat Agree

5= Agree

Question Bank for All Ages

- a. The facilitator was well-prepared.
- b. The facilitator has provided clear explanations of why we are participating in this program with older/younger people.
- c. The facilitator inspired me to show up and participate in every session.
- d. The facilitator made all participants feel welcome to share their views and perspectives.
- e. The facilitator was well-organized so activities ran smoothly in each session and throughout the whole program.
- f. The facilitator has made an effort to enhance participation.

Final Question

g. On a scale of 0-4, I would rate the overall facilitation effectiveness of the facilitator as:

0 = Poor

1 = Acceptable

2 = Satisfactory

3 = Good

4 = Very good

Observational Evaluation

Observational evaluation is measured by a third-party observer (i.e. not a participant or guardian). A third-party observer will sit and check the box each time a member of a generation completes a measurable interaction.

Communities might choose to do an observational assessment if they want to see consistent impact over time or if they want to focus more on observing natural interactions.

Example Observational Evaluation Sheet for One Session (For all Ages)

Measurable Interaction	Guardian	Child	Older Adult
Initiate Verbal Interaction			
Verbalize Relevant Response			
Engage in simultaneous instrument play			
Initiates Movement Cue			
Imitate Movement			
Engage in simultaneous singing			
Demonstrate One Personal Preference through choice			

Question Bank for All Ages

- a. The facilitator was well-prepared.
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- d. The facilitator made all participants feel welcome to share their views and perspectives.
- e. The facilitator was well-organized so activities ran smoothly in each session and throughout the whole program.
- f. The facilitator has made an effort to enhance participation.

Additional Resources

Mental Health & Urgent Medical Resources

The free and confidential resources below connect individuals with a skilled, trained mental health professional.

Mental Health

- Suicide and Crisis Lifeline (Phone, for English or Spanish): 988
- Crisis Text Line (anonymous crisis counseling): 741741, Text "SIGNS"

Abuse/Assault/Violence

- [National Domestic Violence Hotline](#): 1-800-799-7233 or text LOVEIS to 22522
- [National Child Abuse Hotline](#): 1-800-4AChild (1-800-422-4453) or text 1-800-422-4453
- [National Sexual Assault Hotline](#): 1-800-656-HOPE (4673) or [Online Chat](#)

LGBTQ+

- [Trans Lifeline](#): 1-877-565-8860 (para español presiona el 2)
- The Trevor Project's [TrevorLifeline](#): 1-866-488-7386
- [SAGE National LGBT Elder Hotline](#): (877) 360-LGBT (5428)
- The SAGE Hotline connect LGBT older people and their caregivers with friendly responders who are ready to listen.
- [LGBTQ+ Lifeline](#): 988
- This page offers information and resources for LGBTQ+ individuals who are struggling with suicidal feelings or mental health crises.

Older Adults

- [The Eldercare Locator](#): 1-800-677-1116 – [TTY Instructions](#)
- Alzheimer's Association Helpline: 1-800-272-3900 (para español presiona el 2)
- [SAGE National LGBT Elder Hotline](#): (877) 360-LGBT (5428)
- The SAGE Hotline connect LGBT older people and their caregivers with friendly responders who are ready to listen.

For inquiries, contact
us.



LINKAGES

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