



## Through an Age-Friendly Lens: Planning for an Inclusive and Economically Vibrant Niagara November 7, 2013 Presenters: Paula Gardner & Dominic Ventresca

On November 7th, 2013 Niagara Connects, in partnership with the Niagara Age-Friendly Community Network, hosted a webinar entitled "*Through an Age-Friendly Lens: Planning for an Inclusive and Economically Vibrant Niagara.*" Paula Gardner explored principles of age-friendly work and provided global examples. Dominic Ventresca then presented background information on the Niagara Age-Friendly Community Network and discussed how global concepts are currently applied within a Niagara context. Exchange with participants throughout the presentation focused on how age-friendly principles intersect with and impact other sectors (e.g. work and employment, economic development etc.). To view a recording of this event, visit: <http://bit.ly/1fBGn8q>

This webinar was just one part of a much larger and ongoing conversation about age-friendly work in Niagara. To help continue this dialogue, our presenters, Paula Gardner and Dominic Ventresca have provided additional context and resources in response to the following participant questions that we were unable to address during our time together on November 7<sup>th</sup>.

### **ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS**

**Question: Ageism emerged as a major issue from the Niagara age-friendly roundtables. What can our next steps be?**

Ageism in our society has developed over a long period of time and will take some time to change. There is evidence that with the increasing longevity and active ageing tendencies of many baby boomers, these out-dated notions of older persons are gradually changing. As Age-Friendly Community Champions, we need to continually help our citizens understand the value and contributions of older adults and help change people's attitudes one person and one group at a time through various personal and collective approaches.

Team building exercises and small group activities help to bridge cultural gaps (of any kind) and support a more collective and productive work environment. Consider bringing in someone to try these activities with members and also to act as a moderator for meetings. There are lots of these activities available - here is one resource:

<http://www.huddle.com/blog/team-building-activities/>

**Question: Would like to educate the children on respect for seniors - through the teachers?**

This is an important but challenging goal with broad societal implications. “Respect and Support for all Citizens” is one of the principles of age-friendly communities and “respect and social inclusion” is one of the key Age-Friendly Community dimensions identified by the World Health Organization. As Age-Friendly Community Champions, we reach out to all citizens in Niagara, including in the education sector, to enable a better appreciation of the importance of respect and to share this with teachers and students.

- <http://afc.uwaterloo.ca/PDF/AFC-Projects.pdf>

**Question: Is this Niagara Initiative going to address direct issues around healthcare delivery? I am particularly concerned about how we address the removal of hospital services, for example.**

The Niagara Age-Friendly Community Network is committed to enabling the implementation of the World Health Organization’s eight key dimensions for age-friendly communities. One of the dimensions is “community health and support services” which would include access to hospital services. The Network reaches out to all citizens in Niagara, including in the health care sector, to enable a better understanding of the needs of older adults.

As Age-Friendly Community Champions, we need to continually help our citizens understand the value of hospital services to older adults and to all citizens in general. The Network Leadership Council will be discussing what its role should be in advocating to decision makers on issues that are important to older adults in Niagara, such as retention of valued hospital services.

**Question: How can we change the attitude in terms of hiring older persons - hiring personnel seem to think that old person means old thinking - another stereotype of the elderly, therefore even if an older person wants to work for salary, they are unable to do so. They cannot supplement their income and often feel a lack of purpose; they are only able to do volunteer work.**

“Respect and Support for all Citizens” is one of the principles of age-friendly communities and “respect and social inclusion” and “civic participation and employment” are two of the key Age-Friendly Community dimensions identified by the World Health Organization. As Age-Friendly Community Champions, we need to continually help our citizens understand the value and contributions of older adults and help change employers’ attitudes one person and one group at a time through various personal and collective approaches. We also need to provide positive reinforcement to older adults who are interested in paid employment and encouragement to showcase their abilities, experience and reliability as a valued employee in a contemporary work environment.

This is tricky, as it requires a cultural shift. Education is key, for both workers and employers. Some resources include:

- <https://www.workhoppers.com/blog/the-new-hiring-strategy-for-top-companies-recruitment-of-older-workers/>
- <http://www.seniors.gc.ca/eng/working/fptf/promoting.shtml>

## **SUPPLEMENTARY EVENT RESOURCES**

If you are interested in learning more about Age-Friendly work, check out these supplementary resources shared during the webinar:

- [Niagara Age-Friendly Webinar: Supplementary Resources](#)
- [WHO Age-Friendly Principles](#)
- [Niagara Age-Friendly Community Network](#)
- [Niagara Age-Friendly Community Initiative: Year 3 Final Evaluation Report](#)
- [What is Age-Friendly? How Do You Fit In?](#)