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PRELIMINARY AGE FRIENDLY COMMUNITY SUMMIT REPORT **GATHERING #7 – RESPECT & SOCIAL INCLUSION**

August 19, 2016 – Brant County Sports Complex

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PRELIMINARY AGE FRIENDLY COMMUNITY SUMMIT REPORT
RESPECT & SOCIAL INCLUSION
August 19, 2016 – Brant County Sports Complex

PARTICIPANTS

11 Organizations

18 Participants representing:

- Alzheimer Society
- Brant County Public Library (2)
- Brant County Health Unit
- Brant County Health Unit
- Brantford Community/Social Service(3)
- Brantford Public Library (2)
- Creekside Village-Burford Housing Development (3)
- Grand River Community Health Centre
- Karlin Communications
- Operation Lift
- Six Nations Community Services (2)

Retirees

30 Participants indicated they were retired

Where do Retirees live?

City of Brantford (17)	North end (7)
	Central/East Ward/Echo Place (4)
	West Brantford/Holmedale (2)
	South/Eagle Place (4)
County of Brant (13):	Paris (8)
	St. George (2)
	Burford (1)
	Scotland (2)
Other:	Hamilton-Social Work Student

The participants were advised that this Gathering would provide an opportunity for them to identify what “age-friendly” Respect & Social Inclusion mean to them. They then had an opportunity to provide suggestions related to planning for all aspects of accessing and delivery of these services.

Table Facilitators gathered the demographic information and asked each participant to identify the reason for their attendance. These reasons are listed on page 3 of this report. The Table Talk then focused on identifying concerns/implications and providing suggestions for consideration.

It is important to note that this Gathering was a “brain storming” session designed to capture ideas “outside the box”. There has been no attempt to identify impact or cost implications. The suggestions apply to all three municipalities.

INTRODUCTION

MPP Levac outlined the vision he has for the entire Age-Friendly Community Summit process and expressed his appreciation to everyone for their willingness to participate in each of the eight Gatherings. Their input will be included in the Final Report to be given to all levels of Government.

Lucy Marco, President of the Grand River Council on Aging, described what is meant by an “age-friendly” community. This was followed by questions that could help participants define what “age-friendly Respect & Social Inclusion” could mean to them. Examples are: What does “age-friendly” Respect & Social Inclusion Service mean to you? What is working well? How could they be improved? What do you think the public image of older adults is? What should intergenerational programming consist of? What do you think about older people being involved in planning?

The Table Facilitators also reviewed the World Health Organization Respect & Social Inclusion Checklist (Page 4) that was provided to participants.

THE COMMUNITIES

Changing Demographics

It was noted that people are living longer and that by 2030, the population of the City of Brantford and the County of Brant (including Six Nations) will be made up of 35.2% age 55 and over

Communities and Services In This Report

City of Brantford	An urban community (population 93,650) with an acute care Hospital and Services. As well, it is the central location for the delivery of Social and Health Services and includes a public Transit System, including Brantford Lift for physically challenged riders, and various community activities and services.
County of Brant	A rural municipality (population 35,638 including Burford, Glen Morris, Harley, Middleport, Mt. Pleasant, Oakland, Onondaga, Paris, St. George and Scotland) with farming as the major industry. With the exception of Urgent Care Services provided in Paris, residents must go to Brantford to access most services and a variety of social activities. However, there is no public transportation system but there is a subsidized service for medical appointments.

Six Nations of the Grand: Six Nations (population 25, 660) with no public transportation and limited social and community services.

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Reasons for Attendance

The participants were asked to state their reason for participating in this Gathering. Previous Gatherings had several reasons reported whereas the responses to this question were quite specific as follows:

From Agencies/Organizations

18 To learn from seniors and then ensure services meet their needs

From Retirees

23 To meet other seniors, compare stories and make suggestions

4 To advocate for those with disabilities

3 To learn about seniors programming

OVERVIEW OF PERSPECTIVES

Respect & Social Inclusion are very personal for each individual. Specific suggestions will follow this summary. However, it is important to note that the following considerations for future planning were shared across the participants in this Gathering.

- Aging at home and living alone often leads to isolation
- Financial stability is quite different depending on source of income. Incomes vary from below the poverty line to those with healthy pension plans and health benefits.
- Location and physical accessibility often deter taking part in activities and/or reaching services.
- Transportation availability has an impact on the ability of individuals to access needed services.
- Not all seniors have family or friends available to assist with coping with changes in their personal lives, whether they be due to changes in finances, health or accessibility.
- Seniors want to have central sources for community support and health service information. Not everyone uses the internet.
- Personal living changes, due to health or financial issues, are emotional at any age. Interpersonal dynamics can result in even further difficulties i.e. isolation, depression, addiction. Due to pride, many seniors are hesitant to ask for help.
- All entrances to buildings and office structures should include accessibility options.
- Transportation is a major issue in accessing services for residents of Brant County and Six Nations.
- Respect, courtesy and allowing others to maintain their dignity are sadly lacking in customer service practice.
- There is a need for help in identifying options and planning life decisions.
- Not everyone has a family member to assist with chronic illness or end of life planning.
- Downsizing and moving decisions create emotional stress.

ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Issue/Opportunity

Suggestions

Respectful and Inclusive Services

-Enhance customer service training to include age-friendly practices for all direct customer/client facing positions

(Banks, Insurance Companies, Health Care providers, Professions, Retail, Entertainment, Government, Tourism,etc.)

-Improve physical environments

- Dementia friendly recognition practices i.e. managing obvious confusion
- Include practices to deal with recognition of difficulty with hearing, eyesight, language and mobility
- Encourage customers/clients to provide feedback on expected service when not satisfied
- Encourage customers/clients to express appreciation of good service
- Solicit input from those with "lived experience".....examples age, accessibility, disability
- Utilize experience "stories" as part of any training
- Large retail to consider a "floater" position that can help reach for goods on higher shelves, lift heavy items, etc.
- Encourage employees to practice patience and offer clarification and/or explanation if customer is having difficulty understanding
- Training should include advice about talking to the actual client and not the attending caregiver
- Use respectful.....not dismissive.....language (i.e. drop the "dear, kiddo, hon")
- Remove dim lighting
- Ensure signage is clearly visible and readable
- Ensure menus are readable
- Consider impact of choice of fonts and colour contrast
- Consider choice of music and how loud
- Remove/reduce loud noise
- Provide seating alternatives where there is potential for long lines
- Ensure automatic door openers allow sufficient time for mobility challenges

- Encourage organizations to take feedback on accessibility seriously
- Ensure smooth walkways

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Respectful & Inclusive Services Continued

- Continue dialogue about aging process

- Continue "Gathering" process on an ongoing basis to maintain an awareness of changes in aspects of daily living over time
- Involve seniors in all planning processes
- Provide identified needs/changes to organizations that need to know

Public Images of Ageing

- Increase the awareness of seniors as part of society
- Create a culture of respect for seniors and their experience

- Encourage more inclusion of seniors in visible advertisements for all types of products and services (not just diapers, insurance, etc.)
- Recognition of "fit" seniors in advertising
- Include communicating with seniors in all employee training programs
- Include the "aging process" in elementary, secondary and post secondary education programs
- Produce digital and print documentaries re planning for life transitions
- Publication of "success" stories
- Develop practices that encourage others to share "stories"
- Recognize that "ageism" applies to all age groups and that some "jokes" are not funny

Intergenerational and Family Interactions

- Facilitate interaction between youth & seniors

- Expand SKIP (Senior & Kids Intergenerational Programs) to include secondary students – currently consists of elementary students visiting nursing homes
- Invite grandparents into the classrooms
- Encourage volunteering for activities where seniors are
- Initiate volunteer services for individuals needing help where they live
- Implement neighbourhood "buddy" systems

-Funeral Homes to encourage inclusion of youth and children
i.e.reception lines, sharing of memories during services

-Initiate community family "fun" days in neighbourhoods
-Offer activities for different age groups at community events

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-Facilitate community family events to include
Seniors

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Public Education

-Create Public Awareness of age-friendly practices

-Advocate for inclusion of the "aging process" as part of the
curriculum for elementary, secondary and post secondary
education systems

-Invite seniors into the classroom to discuss impacts of the aging
process

-Encourage customer/client direct service providers to provide age-
friendly environment and services

-Individually and publicly recognize those organizations providing
age-friendly environments, services and practices

-Publicize role of libraries in their ability to assist residents with
obtaining access to all types of information

-Provide meaningful information

-Ensure message is current, clear language, concise and readable
-Make available in hard copy as well as electronically

-Get information to where seniors are i.e. churches, clubs, Legions,
golf courses, small communities, pharmacists etc.

-Approach Brant News about Upcoming event page similar to
Expositor

Community Inclusion

-Provide opportunities to enhance services and
Social activities

-Solicit input from those with lived experience

-Recruit volunteers for social activities

-Consider transportation and accessibility when planning services
and/or activities

-Consider a balance of available "fun" and "information" activities

-Encourage development of "neighbourhood" activities

-For digital surveys – provide more opportunities for written
feedback

-Consider mobility issues

-Provide access for walkers and scooters

- Provide easy access to mobility devices if seated otherwise
- Ensure seated space provides sufficient room between rows and aisles
- Ensure smooth walkways

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Community Inclusion Continued

-Consider location and transportation required

- Ensure ample parking for size of event, activity or service
- Consider number of "handicapped" spaces required
- Ensure location is externally and internally accessible
- Determine if bus service or other options will be available
- Other options could include businesses offering scheduled van services
- Retirement Communities could expand their scheduled activities to include others in their neighbourhood
- Review current practice of reducing public transit service on weekends
- Select neutral welcoming meeting locations (i.e. library versus a nursing home)
- Encourage County to develop local social programs in smaller communities
- Advocate for transportation options in County and Six Nations

Economic Inclusion

-Provide opportunities for economically disadvantaged older people

- Cease discriminatory practice of higher price for a single versus couples
- Tourism industry to offer rooms for "singles" at comparable price to cost per person for a room for two, etc.
- Offer a seniors discount for expensive entertainment/sporting events
- Encourage Banks and Financial Advisors to review all of the client's needs when discussing options
- Museums, galleries, etc. to consider offering "seniors" days
- Provide tax breaks for seniors
- Encourage trustworthy small repair businesses at reasonable costs

Maltreatment Addressed

-Ensure frequent publicity re types of violated trust

-All media to be aware of need for regular publicity of issues (i.e. physical, mental, emotional, sexual, financial, etc.)
-Encourage police to release “stories” re physical or financial abuse and what can be done
-Empower “survivors” to share their experience to prevent further incidents

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Maltreatment Addressed Continued

-Be aware of vulnerable individuals

-Implement “ Neighbour Watch” initiatives
-Encourage family/neighbours to report suspected abuse
-Encourage individuals to have an “advocate” to contact if a questionable situation arises
-Get information to where seniors are i.e. churches, seniors clubs, small communities etc.
-Publicize need for wills and powers of attorney
-Ensure appropriate family members and/or advocate has knowledge of end of life wishes
-Create a culture of it’s OK to ask for help
-Doctors to be more involved in life style assessments and decisions (i.e. driving, mobility, awareness, etc.)

CLOSING REMARKS

Several participants brought up the suggestion that the education system train “navigators” or life style consultants. The concept of “Navigator” is borrowed from other agencies that counsel within their own organization and affiliates. The Age Friendly Community movement includes all eight of the domains/pillars of daily life identified by the World Health Organization. Therefore, the suggestions being made were that a new career is evolving that includes knowledge of all eight domains and the ability to consult with clients and their families as they move towards the later stages of life.

Agencies, services and caregivers for seniors have to work within very structured mandates and rules set down primarily by funders. Businesses created for and working with seniors can be as flexible as the business operator – but they need to make a profit to stay viable. The “navigator” or consultant will be very knowledgeable about ALL stressors on the individual and be able to provide assistance and referrals for issue resolution.

Health may be at the top of the hierarchy of needs. However, if transportation, housing, finances or isolation (to name a few) are major stressors, then health and everything else is impacted.

IT WAS ONCE AGAIN THE GENERAL CONSENSUS OF THE PARTICIPANTS THAT IT IS EXTREMELY IMPORTANT TO BRING FORTH THE FOLLOWING MESSAGE:

"IT IS IMPORTANT TO LISTEN TO AND UNDERSTAND THE VOICES OF LIVED EXPERIENCE"