

CHESTERFIELD SUMMIT ON AGING
SESSION 5: ENGAGEMENT OPPORTUNITIES – IMPROVING WHAT WE HAVE

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Description of the Session: The community has formal and informal opportunities to support residents and demonstrate the qualities of a caring community. The physical and social environments can promote independence among individuals and strengthen the civic and social ties among them. How can we improve what we have and identify what is missing?

Outcome of the Session:

- First Choice Community for Seniors
 1. Age Wave Ready, improve engagement.
 2. Transportation – huge. Need it to provide services, prevent isolation, assist when there are money concerns, and to get you places. Some adults would love to go to church in their community, but there is no transportation.
 3. Bringing things out to seniors and engaging them from where they are. It is also nice for the senior to leave where they spend most of their time (home).
 4. Seniors want to be able to share expertise – stay involved.
 5. Constant education needed to inform people on what’s out there. The Library is a starting point – need to keep the staff updated.
 6. Help with navigating through.
 7. Is information out there? Where?
 8. Will seniors use the internet? We may not be marketing things the right way (TV, paper and Chesterfield Government cable access channel).
 9. We have great printed materials – need to get them out.
 10. Create a “go to them” culture. Pick the right mode of communication.
 11. Consider both the senior and younger-family members who might likely to be computer savvy.
 12. Do we ask people what they want? What is important?
 13. Who is a “senior”? Older adult? What is the target audience? It is wrong to lump “seniors” in one group.
 14. Opportunities for engagement may be fragmented. People are not considering what they do to be volunteering. It is not always structured.
 15. Coordination of places where people volunteer. Look at interest, not age. Diversity within the group. Intergenerational approach. I may be part of that group and have a connection to them.
 16. Different experience depending on cultural values – the elderly.
 17. Geographical challenges: People are spread out; how do we get to them? People new to the community who have come to be with family.

- Strategy for Improvement:
 1. Collaboration – example: VCU nursing students out in community.
 2. Emphasize those with intellectual disabilities – more isolation for this population (sub-populations).
 3. Non-English speaking.
 4. GLBT (grief, official rights/standing/role diminished).
 5. Grandparents raising grandchildren – world is very different.
- Major Themes:
 1. Diversity in population requires different strategies for communication, etc. (face-to-face, social media, multiple modes).
 2. Access to resources – information, transportation, barriers in language/cultural.
 3. Finding out what seniors want – the customer.

With so many people aging, there are lots of opportunities to engage people and get them involved.