

"Intergenerational programs – bringing youth and elders together to enhance social connectedness"

Jessica Simionato

La Trobe University, Melbourne

Mental Health Symposium 2024

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[2024/05/17 12:58] Elektra Panthar: Hello everyone.

Today's presentation is being transcribed so those without audio or who require text only can participate in real time.

Some speakers may be using a text teleprompter tool for some or all of their presentation.

Transcriptionists will fill in any gaps and support the Question & Answer section at the end.

A little explanation about this service.

Voice-to-text transcriptionists provide a translation of the key ideas discussed, NOT a word for word transcription.

Voice-to-text services provide an in-the-moment snapshot of ideas and concepts, so that those who are unable to hear or to understand the audio program are able to participate in real-time.

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Transcription is provided by Virtual Ability, Inc.

The transcriptionists are:

Elektra Panthar

Shaerken Changeheart

The speakers will be identified by initials as they speak.

The following initials in the transcription record will identify the speakers:

JS: Jessica Simionato

[2024/05/17 12:59] twistypyro19 Resident: hello everyone and welcome to today's conference. I'd like to introduce myself if I may. My name is Twisty and I have Williams Syndrome. I'm a budding musician, and currently working on my next track. In SL I love seeing my friends and catching up with people. I would now like to introduce our speaker for the night. Please welcome Jess Simionato, our speaker for the night. She's an early career public health researcher with a clinical background in Speech Pathology.

[2024/05/17 13:02] Elektra Panthar: JS: hello everyone

[2024/05/17 13:02] Gentle Heron: "Intergenerational Programs – Bringing Youth and Elders Together to Enhance Social Connectedness" presented by Jessica Simionato, MPH BSp

(Image of the central campus of La Trobe University in Australis showing tall buildings, many students walking singly or in small groups across the lawn where a traditional statue of a man in a cloak stands atop a square pedestal inscribed La Trobe... but the statue is standing on its head)

[2024/05/17 13:02] Elektra Panthar: JS: Thank you for being here today, I'm happy to have been invited

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

La Trobe University acknowledges our campuses are located on the lands of many Traditional Custodians in Victoria and New South Wales. We recognise their ongoing connection to the land and value their unique contribution to the University and wider Australian society.

La Trobe University is committed to providing opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, both as individuals and communities, through teaching, learning, research and partnerships across all our campuses.

[2024/05/17 13:03] Gentle Heron: Our Campuses

Showing images of the main campus at Melbourne (Bundoora) and other campuses at Bendigo, Albury-Wodonga, Mildura, Shepparton, (central Melbourne) City, and Sydney CBD (central business district).

[2024/05/17 13:04] Elektra Panthar: Our campuses
Melbourne (Bundoora)

Located in the heart of Melbourne's growing north, our 235-hectare campus offers a unique bushland setting for learning, research and employment. Featuring a state-recognised Research and Innovation Precinct, Sports Park and wildlife sanctuary, it has a vibrant culture with cafes, shops and student events.

Bendigo

Located in Victoria's fastest-growing regional city, Bendigo campus offers world-class facilities and a diverse range of local partnerships in sport, business, the arts, health and more.

Mildura

Our Mildura campus offers intimate class settings, dedicated staff and industry-responsive courses in arts, business, education, health, IT and science.

Albury-Wodonga

Located on the border of Victoria and New South Wales, the campus features modern facilities and partnerships with local organisations, including the unique rural medical pathway program with the University of Melbourne.

Shepparton

Our Shepparton campus offers strong connections to local community and industry-standard facilities, with a AU\$20m campus redevelopment completed by 2025.

City

Located in the heart of Melbourne's central business district, the City Campus offers a range of postgraduate degrees in business, health and law, with access to career and study support in modern facilities.

Sydney

Located in Sydney CBD, our AU\$10 million Sydney Campus offers courses ranging from foundation studies to full degrees.

[2024/05/17 13:04] Gentle Heron: Acknowledgements:

Dr Daryll Archibald, PhD

Senior Research Fellow (Methodology)

Olga Tennison Autism Research Centre

La Trobe University.

A/Prof Hassan Vally, BSc(Hons), Grad Cert(Higher Education) MAppEpid PhD

Associate Professor in Epidemiology
School of Health and Social Development
Deakin University.

Image is of a campus building with highly stylized windows in geometric shapes

[2024/05/17 13:05] Elektra Panthar: JS: this research coincided with a time of growth and change for me and was therefore quite transformative

[2024/05/17 13:05] Gentle Heron: Hello! [text]

(Image is of a smiling young white woman with long brown hair and dark eyes wearing a black top.)

[2024/05/17 13:05] Elektra Panthar: JS: I am an early career public health researcher with a clinical background in Speech Pathology.

My Master of Public Health research focused on intergenerational programs and I hope to evolve this into a PhD.

I am a wife, and mum to a two year old

I love connecting to nature and making and sharing good food.

It is a pleasure to be here with you all today in this fantastic environment

[2024/05/17 13:05] Gentle Heron: Let's Explore Together

(Image of a dry-land forest)

[2024/05/17 13:06] Elektra Panthar: JS: Let's explore together

Intergenerational programs

Social connectedness

Adolescents and older adults,

and their unique connection

How we completed the research

The "so what." of the review

Opportunities in the virtual world

[2024/05/17 13:06] Gentle Heron: (Image of a hand holding up a card showing a question mark.)

[2024/05/17 13:07] Elektra Panthar: JS: Which circumstances promote social connectedness in older adults participating in intergenerational programmes with adolescents?

We used several models to bridge the gaps in the literature

We are developing a generation at a time

There was a gap also between adolescents and older adults

[2024/05/17 13:08] Gentle Heron: What are intergenerational programs?

(Image shows front page of an issue of the Myrtleford Times with a photo of a smiling elderly woman hugging large stuffy rabbit with a pink shirt in one arm and with the other arm about a young child who is holding a cookie with one hand and waving with the other.)

[2024/05/17 13:08] Elektra Panthar: JS: What are intergenerational programs?

Programs where two generations experience mutual benefit through shared experiences and a known mechanism for improving social connectedness.

Intergenerational programs may provide a sense of inclusion and empowerment in older adults (Gamliel & Gabay, 2014),

improve cardiovascular health (Schroeder et al., 2017), reduce obesity (Werner, Teufel, Holtgrave, & Brown, 2012) and

Prevent (Murayama et al., 2015) and improve mental health outcomes (Hernandez & Gonzalez, 2008).

In the picture: Intergenerational playgroup – myrtleford Victoria

Involves residents of an aged care facility, school children and local preschoolers

This is a great program, and this was a teddy bear's picnic

These programs are happening worldwide

[2024/05/17 13:10] Gentle Heron: Social (dis) connectedness and why it matters
(Image of a spooky misty path through a forest of tall barren trees.)

[2024/05/17 13:10] Elektra Panthar: JS: Social disconnectedness, loneliness and social isolation can be

as damaging to health and wellbeing as smoking and obesity and may result in a reduced life expectancy

Older adults who remain socially connected without episodes of isolation or loneliness have lower rates of mental and chronic illnesses such as cardiovascular disease or depression

Poor health either due to acute or chronic conditions, cognitive decline or frailty can also influence an older person's ability to carry out personal, domestic, social or community activities and in turn increase their risk of social disconnectedness

However, older adults who remain socially connected without episodes of isolation or loneliness have lower rates of mental and chronic illnesses such as cardiovascular disease or depression

For example, in post-retirement age older adults, maintaining participation in just two groups results in a six-fold reduction in early death risk

Adolescents and older adults – at the crossroads of psychosocial development

Erikson's theory of psychosocial development tells us that adolescents and older adults are both facing a period in their psychosocial development that focuses on identity.

This motivation to pass on wisdom to the next generation is termed generativity and is important for the wellbeing of older adults as well as broader social health

Erikson, 1995; Knight, Skouteris, Townsend, & Hooley, 2017

This pairing is deliberate

[2024/05/17 13:12] Gentle Heron: Adolescents and older adults – at the crossroads of psychosocial development

(Image on left is teen girl with green short hair and large round glasses, image on the right of a group of smiling seniors with arms outstretched and hands stacked. Images separated by a double-headed arrow labeled Identity)

[2024/05/17 13:13] Elektra Panthar: JS: they are both facing big changes and a search for belonging and purpose

Adolescents, emerging from childhood are looking to their peers to 'fit in' and to understand society through the eyes of others.

Older adults, usually recently retired, are trying to maintain their identity, with a desire to remain useful in society.

Intergenerational interactions, either through family or in a program context support the development of generativity

The likely benefits of this particular generational pairing in an intergenerational program context were yet to be reviewed

[2024/05/17 13:13] Gentle Heron: (Image of title of BMJ Open Article) "Circumstances that promote social connectedness in older adults participating in intergenerational programmes with adolescents: A realist review" by Simionato, Vally and Archibald

Image showing Theory Refinement Occurring as Stages Progress in an iterative, non-linear process: Stage 1 Clarify scope & develop theoretical framework, Stage 2 Search strategy. Stage 3 Selection and appraisal, Stage 4 Data extraction, Stage 5 Data synthesis and analysis, Stage 6 Theory refinement with stakeholder.

[2024/05/17 13:14] Elektra Panthar: JS: The research – a realist review

Realist review provides a framework for understanding complex interventions and why they deliver the outcomes they do

Circumstances that promote social connectedness in older adults participating in intergenerational programmes with adolescents: a realist review

Authors: Jessica Simionato, Hassan Vally, Daryll Archibald

<https://bmjopen.bmj.com/content/13/10/e069765.info>

You can go back and forth and test different phases

Improvement to research continues

I enjoyed the process

Realist reviews focused on why something is effective or not

[2024/05/17 13:15] Gentle Heron: Methodology

(Image showing a hand hovering over a series of printed pages on which several sticky notes are stuck.)

[2024/05/17 13:16] Elektra Panthar: JS: METHODOLOGY

Identification and review of studies

Development of a priori theories

Refining the theories based on the evidence

Developing these into Context Mechanism Outcome Configurations (CMOC)

Developing a logic model

8 circumstances ideal for situations where adolescents are involved

[2024/05/17 13:16] Gentle Heron: Flow Diagram

(Image showing process by which 434 articles are identified, screened, checked for eligibility, and 9 included for review)

[2024/05/17 13:17] Elektra Panthar: JS: 9 included studies from many identified

Inclusion criteria:

Study reported on intergenerational programs

Participants from non-familial generations

Aged 13-19

Aged 65 and above

Published 2000-2020

Published in English

Exclusion criteria:

Reported on non-intergenerational programs

Studies involving the study of grandparents / grandparenting or family intergenerational relationships

Aged <13

Aged 20-64

Published before 2000

Not published in English

RESULTS

CMOC 1: Understand the participants psychosocial development phase and attitudes towards each other to foster generativity

“... the interaction between students and elders led to a progressive increase in the attitude of the youngsters to speak to the elders and involve them in activities, up to playing and joking with them and exchanging looks of complicity. ...the interaction with the institutionalized older people led to a change in the attitude of the adolescents, who improved their ability to listen, empathy, and understanding of the elders.”

(Santini et al., 2018, p. 7)

CMOC 2: Conduct the program in community settings to support social health outcomes and build social capital

“the present study ... seems to suggest that intergenerational activity based on reminiscence is a source of emotional support that contributes to the improvement of social interaction and consequently to the individual and the community's wellbeing.”

(de Souza, 2013, p. 468)

It's important we have preprogrammed measure to understand who these people are

Many of the studies matched about the effectiveness of reminiscence

These programs showed strength through the mediators who were already part of the group

CMOC 3: Include a trained facilitator to promote program participation

“One constant that was clear from the mentor interviews and the post-project focus group was the pivotal role of Matt, the project facilitator, to the project. Matt not only had the skills to ensure that the construction project happened, but he also had a capacity to ‘read’ what was going on and to communicate differently with both mentors and mentees.”

(Wilson et al., 2013, p. 422)

The theories start to build on each other

This gives the participants a way to break the ice

These facilitators can be from a wide range of paths

CMOC 4: Use a pedagogic framework to trigger generativity, intercommunity connections and deliver social health outcomes

“While many of the older adults took part in the project ‘for the children’ rather than for themselves, they recognised how much the social contact with the younger generation had brought them pleasure and ... ‘quite exciting to think that someone was going to tell my life story’ – a story that had meaning to them but had not, until now, seemed meaningful to others.”

(Knight et al., 2017, p. 173)

This is context rich and very engaging

The older adult is motivated to pass their knowledge on to the adolescents

CMOC 5: Identify shared goals between program participants to build reciprocity and support program engagement

“Primarily the mentors acknowledged that while doing a practical project was important, the core outcome of the program was using a task that had meaning to all participants as a vehicle to enabling social interactions between different groups of men.”

(Wilson et al., 2013, p. 422)

We had vulnerable groups here and they were teaching each other as they were going through the project
The link was already present

CMOC 6: Plan inclusive activities that trigger generativity and improve physical, cognitive, psychological and social outcomes
“Another student was also moved by her experience of the programme and consequently began volunteering at the aged-care residential facility where the programme took place.”
(Knight et al., 2017, p. 173)

Here the participants connected back into the community
That's why these connections are important

CMOC 7: Deliver pre-program training and support participants to 'break the ice'
“...the mentors wanted more structured opportunities to feel more connected to the mentees and their families through planned “meet and greet” social gatherings at the start and at timed intervals during the programme... to gain an insight into each mentee's possible interests and potential in order to better design individualized support and activities”
(Wilson et al., 2018, p.116)

Programs that held elements of codesign are more sustainable for participants
The participants were wanting to redesign the program to make it more effective for themselves
Also more likely to participate in it again in the future

CMOC 8: Design the program to be frequent and have a clear structure to support participation and improved social connectedness
“An important dimension of our intervention was the scheduled, regular opportunities for follow-up that provided predictability, stability, and regularity to when support was available. Attending to the participants' specific questions, contributing to ad hoc problem solving, or showing how an interest could be pursued encouraged use of the iPad and learning”
(Ostensen et al., 2017, p. 50)

This looks at digital literacy program where adolescents taught older adults
Problem solving and consistency was important to avoid frustration

[2024/05/17 13:32] Gentle Heron: A logic model where you can have your cake and eat it too!

(Image is a plate under a 5-layer cake with 4 frosting swirls.)

The plate is labeled Contexts and includes psychosocial phase, participant attitudes, community setting, pedagogic framework, and program structure.

The layers are Mechanisms, including pre-program training, opportunity to “break the ice,” relationship-based activities, reciprocity through shared goals, and trained facilitator.

The frosting is labeled Outcomes, and include social capital, social connectedness, generativity, and physical, cognitive & social health.

[2024/05/17 13:33] Elektra Panthar: JS: if you got the paper from the link the cake logic was maybe a bit too fun but I saved it for presentation

When I talked about configuration and breaking bread together, I was thinking about how to design the program and how to apply it to the real world
The key contexts are on the 'cake' to deliver these concepts to both groups of people
Community setting and pedagogic framework is important
So then we move through the layers - shared goals, relationship based activities
Connection through stories and problem solving
Success depends also in training before the program
Once we have the context and framework in place we have the frosting of improved social connectiveness

[2024/05/17 13:38] Gentle Heron: Opportunities in the virtual world
(Image shows several hands giving a thumbs up)

[2024/05/17 13:38] Elektra Panthar: JS: I really love this image!
Opportunities IN the virtual world

Digital literacy and intergenerational groups

Leveraging off existing groups or intergenerational relationships

The virtual world being another "setting" for individuals to access these types of groups

How these tools can be useful, the study on the use of the iPad was an example

Co-Author A/Prof Hassan Valley and Jodie McVernon wrote an article on disease modelling using World of Warcraft which has some parallels. <https://www.doherty.edu.au/news-events/news/did-accidental-blood-plague-world-of-warcraft-help-scientists-model-covid>

I'm excited about potential interactions with environments such as these

[2024/05/17 13:41] Gentle Heron: Call to Action

(Image is a stylized drawing of a multicolored group of individuals)

[2024/05/17 13:41] Elektra Panthar: JS: Call to action

Can existing groups include an intergenerational element?

Who could facilitate an intergenerational group?

Could the group meet regularly and in the same place?

What about activities to do together?

This review has provided a logic model that can be used

These intergenerational programs have multiple positive outcomes

My biggest goal is to have this embedded into school curriculums

So that the students can connect to different parts of society as they age

We will need to do more testing on these logic models

In multiple different processes

[Thank you all, I'd like to open up the opportunity for any questions]

[2024/05/17 13:43] Gentle Heron: Key References

These are in a notecard you get by clicking the red box at the base of the podium.

[2024/05/17 13:44] Shaerken Changeheart (ChangeheartShaerken Resident): .Please preface chat ?'s with Q: or ?: so we can differentiate between audience questions and audience discussion (both are encouraged and are cherries on the top!).

[2024/05/17 13:44] Mook Wheeler: QUESTION: Human relationships are naturally rich and messy. Full and rounded relationships include the 'good' and 'bad' and everything in between, including disagreements, bad moods, shouting matches and power-plays, and, very importantly, the *resolution* and problem-solving of such tricky situations. Do intergenerational programmes allow for the full range of interaction to naturally take place,

or are they mediated for 'positive' effect/affect only? And if they *are* skewed that way (possibly for safety), it would affect the results and implications in any study. How does the intergenerational programme field of study handle this factor?

[2024/05/17 13:45] LillyLal Resident: You have to let kids be kids and mess up.

[2024/05/17 13:45] Shaerken Changeheart (ChangeheartShaerken Resident): JS: Thank you Mook, very thoughtful question.

Each generational program is supported by a facilitator

Some parents were concerned around the adolescent about older adults becoming unwell. There was feedback from a participant that students would come into facility and be loud or have differential behavior.

I agree with you it does have to account for that messiness of human interaction

I hope that answers some of your questions.

[2024/05/17 13:47] Gentle Heron: Jess, I'm a former Girl Scout leader. I know how impactful youth-elder cooperative projects can be.

QUESTION - What are the best (most effective?) age ranges for youth and for elders in these kinds of projects? I mean, our very youngest kids wouldn't work well with our very oldest elders. Would they?

[2024/05/17 13:48] Shaerken Changeheart (ChangeheartShaerken Resident): JS: I won't pretend to know the list of research evidence to support these .. the evidence is very visible I think my 2 yr could have sat with a 101 yr old and [they could have done an activity together] it would work.

Someone is facilitating – encouraging people to participate.

Some activities are not age appropriate.

The facilitator is imperative. It's part of these programs to find out if that connection actually helps.

[2024/05/17 13:49] Gentle Heron: [13:48] Lyr Lobo: Comment: Wouldn't it be nice if the Makerspaces had programs at Elder living centers and places where young and older people could gather, learn crafts, play cards and games, and share with elder friends?

[2024/05/17 13:50] Lyr Lobo: I used to host and lock up after an evening games event at an elder center here... was such fun

[2024/05/17 13:50] Shaerken Changeheart (ChangeheartShaerken Resident): JS: Yes, Lyr!

There is cross chatter.

The nursing home for 4 yr olds can be watched on TV, I'll look for a link to send to Gentle for her to share.

[2024/05/17 13:51] AmarisPop Resident: Ageism cuts both ways. Has the program helped attitudes the older adults have about youth?

[2024/05/17 13:51] danielharrys76 Resident: HEY GUYS! Can someone explain how ageism is and which it is

[2024/05/17 13:51] Shaerken Changeheart (ChangeheartShaerken Resident): JS: Ageism, yes we did measure the change in various people's attitudes from the adolescent and older adult perspectives.

GH is speaking that AmarisPop is our next presenter.

GH is seeking clarification on danielharrys76?

AP: Ageism is about people's misdirected attitudes about age.

AP is giving examples that include "older adults don't know how to use technology."

[2024/05/17 13:52] LillyLal Resident: Ageism is when people discriminate based on age.

[2024/05/17 13:54] Shaerken Changeheart (ChangeheartShaerken Resident): JS: Yes, people are saying that they thought younger adults were rude and were pleasantly surprised to be proved wrong in the study.

[2024/05/17 13:54] Gentle Heron: Other questions for Jess?

[2024/05/17 13:54] Shaerken Changeheart (ChangeheartShaerken Resident): What time is it where JS lives? It's almost 7am.

JS: Yes, it is Saturday, 7am, my young one is sleeping soundly now.

[2024/05/17 13:54] LillyLal Resident: Question: Does the program have any protections built in to protect people from racist, homophobic, etc, individuals?

[2024/05/17 13:55] Shaerken Changeheart (ChangeheartShaerken Resident): JS: we haven't yet tested that Lilly

Yes, it is important!

We look forward to testing it.

We would need to have working with children checked.

We would need a program design

That would be a very important consideration

[2024/05/17 13:56] Gentle Heron: Let's give Jess a round of applause and then take a break

[2024/05/17 13:56] Elektra Panthar: 🎵🎵🎵🎵 Applauds 🎵🎵🎵🎵

[2024/05/17 13:56] LillyLal Resident: Thank you Jess

[2024/05/17 13:56] Roxksie Logan: 💎 Applause 💎

[2024/05/17 13:56] Itico (Itico Spectre): Thank you Jess!

[2024/05/17 13:56] Gemma (Gemma Cleanslate): /me APPLAUDS!!!

[2024/05/17 13:56] Widget Whiteberry: Well done, Jess

[2024/05/17 13:57] Zzri Avian (Zri Portal): clap clap clap!

[2024/05/17 13:57] Brian Aviator: Excellent Presentation. Nicely done.