

Afternoon at the Museum

Intergenerational
Connectedness Through
Art and Food

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Tammy Duong, Xiaochen Zhong,
Chloe Cheng, Peter Ureste,
Nathaniel Jenkins

Overview

This event intended to foster an intergenerational social and emotional connection between UCSF learners, clinicians, and San Franciscan older adults, in partnership with Openhouse and the de Young Museum.

Participants experienced community engagement and shared life stories, facilitating a sense of wellness and intergenerational togetherness.

Data Snapshot

The event featured 16 participants from UCSF, including interprofessional health students, residents, fellows, and faculty. There were also 19 older adults and 2 staff members from Openhouse. Pre- and post-surveys reflected a significant increase in feelings of wellbeing and intergenerational connectedness.

Resources

<https://www.openhousesf.org/>

<https://www.famsf.org/>



Project Details

Participants were recruited from UCSF and Openhouse, a local non-profit organization providing community, services, and supportive housing for LGBTQ+ older adults.

Openhouse older adults were each paired with an UCSF participant for the duration of the event. The event featured four guided Access tours of the Ansel Adams exhibition at the de Young Museum, with assisted listening devices provided for those with hearing impairments. There was also time for self-guided museum exploration, followed by a catered lunch and guided discussion. Transportation to and from the event was provided via Onward, a healthcare transportation service for aging communities.

We administered a voluntary, anonymous pre- and post-survey to Openhouse older adults, to assess changes in feelings of wellbeing and social connectedness. Survey items were adapted from pre-existing scales, including the Museum Wellbeing Measure for Older Adults and the Social Connectedness Scale.

Project Challenges

Challenges arose due to the event having fewer volunteers than the target number, despite multiple rounds of email recruitment. Throughout the event, we encountered operational challenges, such as an inefficient sign-in process and difficulties in launching and concluding guided tours on time. Consequently, participants had limited one-on-one time in their intergenerational pairs and triads. We utilized the Social Connectedness Scale in both pre and post-event surveys, but it should be noted that the scale had not been validated in older adult populations and might not accurately assess social connectedness in individuals over 18 years of age. Lastly, all older participants completed the pre-survey, while four participants did not complete the post-event survey.

Lessons Learned

Older adults affiliated with Openhouse expressed desires to connect with individuals of all ages despite limited opportunities. UCSF and Openhouse participants were self-selecting and voluntarily chose to participate in this intergenerational event. Nonetheless, this event's success highlights that even brief interventions can have a positive impact. Creating an inclusive space for interaction and exchange resulted in an improved sense of wellbeing and intergenerational connectedness for participants. These outcomes underscore the importance of providing opportunities to promote social engagement and interaction across age groups.