

LINKages Society of Alberta

**“LINK Project: Linking Intergenerational Needs and Knowledge -
Train the Trainer”**

Intergenerational Best Practices Guidelines

May 2008

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Intergenerational Best Practices aims to bring people together in purposeful, mutually beneficial activities and initiatives by promoting a greater understanding and respect between generations thus, to link ages and connect generations.

This document is meant to be a guide to inform, to support, and to educate. It is a learning and development tool which helps to identify strengths as well as development needs, to help advance intergenerational practices, as such there are no right or wrong responses, nor is it intended to judge or be punitive, and while the document is organized to highlight key or core areas that encompass current best intergenerational practices it is not meant to be completed in a linear manner, rather it identifies areas for consideration and discussion when contemplating the pursuit of intergenerational practices. The evolution of practice is a continual process of learning and adapting, thus the Intergenerational Best Practices Guidelines are to be used on an on-going basis.

Increasingly there is an expectation to demonstrate the quality, diversity and inclusiveness of Intergenerational Practices and Practitioners. The Intergenerational Best Practices Guidelines has been developed to be used by agencies and organizations to support, guide, and celebrate their vital and important work in Intergenerational Practices. The Guidelines have been designed to respect and acknowledge the scope and diversity of intergenerational practices while providing a reasonable and practical framework for assessing, facilitating, supporting and advancing core or key areas of intergenerational best practices.

With respect to continuous improvement, the Intergenerational Practices Guidelines need to evolve and change as the field of Intergenerational Practices, evolves, adapts, advances and changes (the Guidelines document has been designed to be a “living document”). The LINKages Society of Alberta in conjunction with stakeholders (internal and external), and partners will need to re-visit this document on an annual basis to ensure accuracy and relevance.

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1. An Introduction to Intergenerational Best Practices

Intergenerational Best Practices (herein refers to Intergenerational Practice, Programs, Projects Initiatives and Pilots; “IGPs”) aims to bring people together in purposeful, mutually beneficial activities and initiatives by promoting a greater understanding and respect between generations thus, to link ages and connect generations (Beth Johnson Centre for Intergenerational Practice, 2007). Intergenerational practices are all about helping communities become more inclusive, accepting, respectful, vibrant and cohesive through the process of linking, connecting and ultimately developing intergenerational positive relationships. Intergenerational practices is also collaborative, building on the assets, gifts and positive resources that different generations have to offer and share with each other, those around them and their communities; underscoring the “interconnectedness” of people, communities and life itself (Temple University, Center For Intergenerational Learning, 2005) (Larkin & Rosebrook, 2006).

Increasingly there is an expectation to demonstrate the quality, diversity and inclusiveness of Intergenerational Practices and Practitioners (staff and volunteers). The Intergenerational Best Practices Guidelines and Checklist has been developed to be used by a multitude of agencies and organizations to support, guide, affirm and celebrate their vital and important work in Intergenerational Practices (Beth Johnson Centre for Intergenerational Practice [BJCIP], 2007). The Guidelines (while not exhaustive) have been designed to respect and acknowledge the scope and diversity of intergenerational practices while providing a reasonable and practical framework for assessing, facilitating, supporting and advancing core or key areas of intergenerational best practices.

Ultimately, the measure of any best practices guidelines’ effectiveness is in its contribution to achieving and sustaining quality in practice. The following core intergenerational best practices guidelines and the corresponding best practices checklist are designed to help guide the continuous improvement and development of Intergenerational Practices and Practitioners (staff and volunteers).

2. Rationale for the Development of Intergenerational Best Practices Guidelines

There is a need for leadership in the area of Intergenerational Practices in Alberta particularly in supporting agencies and organizations (please note, the terms “agency” and “organization” are used interchangeably in order to respect and support the diversity of intergenerational practice and practitioners and are used without preference or bias) to overcome barriers and develop core best practices, including skills, commitment, connections and resources to successfully provide quality sustainable Intergenerational Practices and fulfill the potential for such practices to benefit elders, youth and communities in Alberta (University of Calgary, Faculty of Social Work, Centre for Social Work Research & Development, “Intergenerational Programs in Calgary, Literature Review and Environmental Scan”, 2005).

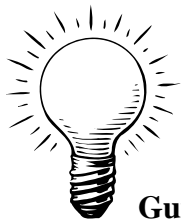
The LINKages Society of Alberta, a registered charity since 1994, has developed a reputation as an expert in the delivery of intergenerational programs. LINKages has an opportunity with the successful implementation of the **LINK Project** - Train the Trainer (Linking Intergenerational Needs and Knowledge) to advance their vision, mission and strengthen their influence in Alberta. The LINK Project is thus, a bridge toward the further development and strengthening of Intergenerational Practices both internal and external to the LINKages Society of Alberta.

LINKages is prepared to take a leadership role through the development of the Intergenerational Best Practices Guidelines, an Intergenerational Best Practices Guidelines Checklist as well as recommending best practices resources (e.g. United Generations Ontario’s, “Connecting Generations Tool Kit, Best Practices in Intergenerational Programming”, 2006). The Intergenerational Best Practices Guidelines will inform LINKages program delivery and facilitation, training, community outreach and development initiatives.

The LINKages Society of Alberta would like to thank and acknowledge **The Calgary Foundation** as this important undertaking is possible through their financial support of the **LINK Project**. The LINK Project through its implementation, especially the development of the Intergenerational Best Practices Guidelines, Checklist and Recommended Intergenerational Best Practices Resources (tools, toolkits, best practices training, training modules and web-sites) will

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serve as the foundation and framework for the LINKages Society of Alberta's moving forward its strategic goal of becoming a recognized leader in Intergenerational Practices and thus, a resource, advocate and facilitator for and of intergenerational best practices and community practitioners. To this end, LINKages acknowledges the wisdom, support, input and advice of the **LINKages Intergenerational Practices Advisors Circle** (for more details please see LINKages Intergenerational Practices Advisors Circle, Terms of Reference).



The reader will note that a number of questions and/or comments have been referred in the document, as indicated by the stylized light bulb. This signifies a point of discussion, something to consider, a learning and development opportunity, etc. and is used in conjunction with the Intergenerational Best Practices Guidelines Overview and Checklist.

3. Benefits of Intergenerational Best Practices

Intergenerational practices are an effective way to address a number of issues – many of them key government priorities – such as building active-healthy communities, promoting citizenship, regenerating neighbourhoods and addressing inequality (BJCIP, 2000). Intergenerational practices have direct impact on participants as well as on their communities. Participants may feel increased self-esteem from being able to give to and receive from others. They can experience improvements in health and a greater sense of being valued members of their communities.

Elders can provide younger people with positive role models both as engaged citizens and through active living and healthy ageing. Correspondingly, young people may also represent a link and a connection to the future for older people, who are their elders. In short, according to “Centre for Social Work Research & Development, Intergenerational Programs in Calgary: Executive Summary, 2005”, it appears that there is a strong rationale and potential for intergenerational programs. As a result, there have been increased efforts to bring together elders and youths to increase the solidarity among generations and to foster intergenerational relationships.

4. Intergenerational Best Practices Guiding Principles and Values

The following key principles guide intergenerational best practices:

- **Challenges Stereotypes** (LINKages Society of Alberta, 2007);
- **Emphasizes Learning, Capacity Building and Sustainability** (SACHYN, “Knowledge Mobilization Framework”, 2007);
- **Intentionally Promotes the Well-Being of Children, Youth, Older Adults and Families** (Temple University, Center For Intergenerational Learning, [TUCIL], 2005);
- **Makes Full Use of the Assets/Gifts of People at Every Stage of Life** (TUCIL, 2005);
- **Promotes Interaction, Engagement and Interdependence Across Ages by Designing Developmentally Appropriate Activities, Projects and Initiatives** (TUCIL, 2005);
- **Encourages Interdependence-** e.g. People feel a sense of shared responsibility for one another. There is an emphasis on reciprocal sharing of resources across generations; people of all ages rely on one another for care, support and nurturing (TUCIL, 2005);
- **Emphasizes Reciprocity-** e.g. People of all ages have opportunities to give as well as receive support-to teach as well as to learn (TUCIL, 2005);
- **Respects the worth of each person and values the diversity of people** - e.g. because we believe in the inherent value and worth of each person, we respect and nurture diversity, life experience, and ways of knowing, cultural heritage, unique potential and capabilities of each person (Government of Saskatchewan, Saskatchewan Human Services, “Working with Communities”, 2000);
- **Encourages Inclusion-** e.g. Engages all citizens and sector providers relevant to intergenerational practices (SACHYN,2007); Policies and programs are designed for all members of the community (Source: Government of Saskatchewan, Saskatchewan Human Services, [GSSHR], 2000);
- **Promotes Equity-** e.g. A respectful, barrier-free environment is fostered, where individuals have opportunities for equal access and equal benefit. Fairness is reflected in all policies and services. Advocates for the young and old are not pitted against one another for limited resources; (GSSHR, 2000); and,
- **Encourages Social Connectedness-** e.g. Social relationships are viewed as vehicles for enhancing the everyday lives of community members. Formal networks foster opportunities for connection across ages and cultures, thus building a shared sense of community (GSSHR, 2000) (TUCIL, 2005).

5. Key Intergenerational Best Practices Guideline Definitions

- **Intergenerational Practices** (referred to by the following names, from Practice (broad based or macro scope) to more specific programming/activity based and focused scope, Programs, Projects, Initiatives and Pilots/Demonstration Projects) - e.g. aims to bring people together in purposeful, mutually beneficial activities which promote greater understanding and respect between generations (BJCIP, 2007);
- **Elders** - e.g. An elder is a person who is still growing, still a learner, still with potential, still in pursuit of happiness, joy and pleasure, and her or his birthright to these remains intact, and whose life continues to have within it promise for, and connection to the future; whose work it is to synthesize wisdom from long life experience and formulate this into a legacy for future generations; usually means persons over the age of 50 years although being an elder is more about one's approach and perspective on life rather than one's chronological age (The Live Oak Project, undated);
- **Youth** – e.g. Younger people usually persons under the age of 25 years; Engaged youth make a real difference by connecting with elders and their peers in the community, they enhance their personal development and leadership skill as they maximize their potential through volunteering, they also increase their empathy, understanding, and sensitivity for the many issues that elders experience through meaningful and mutually beneficial relationship development with their elders (LINKages, 2007);
- **Participants** - e.g. Engaged and involved participants are vital for effective mutually beneficial intergenerational practices usually they are the people served by intergenerational practices (BJCIP, 2007);
- **Volunteers** - e.g. A volunteer is someone who works for free for a community or for the benefit of natural environment primarily because they choose to do so; “volunteer” comes from the Latin word meaning “free will” (Wikipedia, 2008). Volunteers are vital for the evolution, on-going adaption, capacity building and sustainability of intergenerational best practices; According to Temple University's, Center For Intergenerational Learning, “Connecting Generations, Strengthening Communities, “Volunteers are the heart of intergenerational programs”;
- **Evaluation and Outcomes** - e.g. On-going research to determine whether the program, project or initiative achieved the stated long-term results; to assess whether the planning outcomes were achieved; to understand how the process of implementing practices can be made more effective; to find out what worked and what did not work; and to produce documents and share them so others can learn (Generations United Magazine, Vol. 11, No. 2, 2006); and,
- **Knowledge Exchange and Sharing** - e.g. Exploring knowledge structures and how to develop experiences and insights to transfer knowledge (what has been learned) (LINKages, 2007); Capacity is enhanced when knowledge is mobilized (SACYHN, 2007).

6. Intergenerational Best Practices Focus

Practices specific to intergenerational programs, projects and initiatives, generally fall into three categories:

- Members of one generation supporting another;
- People from different generations working together to address community issues and concerns; and,
- People from different generations learning together (TUCIL, 2005).

It is paramount in intergenerational best practices to demonstrate the intergenerational nature of the program/project and the awareness of the particular issues associated with working with different generations (why are you planning an intergenerational program/project).

Intergenerational Best Practices demonstrate that issues regarding youth and elders have been examined and are reflected in the program/ project implementation and outcomes.

Evidence that will demonstrate this understanding would include:

- The Program/Project Business Plan (e.g. is the target audience clearly defined?);
- Practice Guidelines on issues such as Ageism, Inclusiveness and Diversity;
- Meeting minutes/notes demonstrating the involvement of youth and elders in planning e.g. focus groups (and demonstrating that planning is collaborative);
- Orientation and training materials e.g. pamphlets and hand-outs;
- Training for staff, volunteers and participants;
- Written examples of what intergenerational practice/relationships means to your agency/initiatives e.g., developing an Intergenerational Pledge: “I pledge – To respect, not judge, the ways of other ages (BC Council for Families, “Intentional Intergenerational Programs”);
- To relate to other generations with an open mind;
- To promote intergenerational harmony throughout my community, (BC Council for Families);
- Testimonials, photos (if permitted), DVDs on and about intergenerational practices; and,
- The specific needs, abilities and preferences of each generation are considered and addressed during the planning and delivery stages of the program/project so that each



How does the agency ensure the intergenerational nature/focus of its intergenerational practices, specifically, in the delivery of intergenerational programs, projects, initiatives and pilot projects?

7. Intergenerational Best Practices Overview

To help advance intergenerational practices, program/project titles and descriptions need to accurately reflect the purpose, operation and implementation of best intergenerational practices. In order to effectively demonstrate this, it is recommended that program/project descriptions communicate how the program/project will be mutually beneficial for different generations.



What are the agency's current intergenerational practices (programs, projects, initiatives and pilots) called and what language and terms are used to describe these practices?

Effective intergenerational practices draw upon knowledge of human development across the life span to implement programs/projects in a purposeful manner, by promoting ideals and goals which mutually benefit both youth and elders (Larkin & Rosebrook, 2006). Intergenerational best practices is inclusive, as it builds upon the positive gifts, experiences and resources that different generations offer to benefit themselves as individuals, while creating a more cohesive and healthy community.

When agencies become more aware of why and what they are endeavouring to achieve, the work undertaken through careful planning on the outcome(s) and impact of their program/project, becomes more meaningful and strategic.

Clearly defined goals and objectives are the foundation of intergenerational best practices (they guide the work), with goals in place, completing the other planning steps encompassing intergenerational best practices becomes easier. In intergenerational best practices, it is thus essential to develop goals and outcomes of the work, as well as the means in which these goals will be achieved. For example:

- To reduce the isolation of elders;
- To develop meaningful volunteering opportunities for youth and elders; and,
- To increase the amount of positive interactions and engagement between youth and elders.



What are the goals of the intergenerational program, project, initiative and pilot that you (as a practitioner) and the agency are developing (or have developed and

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are now endeavoring to sustain)? Are they relevant and meaningful and do they help to guide your practice and that of the agency?



What is the agency planning to achieve by undertaking Intergenerational Practices (added value, outcomes and impact)? Is this clearly understood?

8. Intergenerational Best Practices Infrastructure Support

Appropriate infrastructure e.g. business, financial and learning plan (practitioner development) development, is one of the most important elements in planning, delivering, the capacity building and sustainability of intergenerational best practices. Appropriate infrastructure (and the assessment of internal/agency capacity) as well as timely and easy access to organizational support is paramount for the advancement of intergenerational best practices (BJCIP, 2007). For example, job descriptions are beneficial in that they help clarify the role and responsibilities of both staff and volunteers. Moreover, guiding principles, procedures and policies greatly assist the agency to achieve its mission, goals and outcomes.

Evidence of appropriate organizational infrastructure support would include:

- Job Description(s);
- Role Description(s) and Contracts for Staff;
- An Organizational Chart (identifying performance accountabilities and line reporting);
- Copies of Key Policies/Operational Guidelines/Terms of Reference developed for the Program/Project/Initiative; and,
- Evidence is located in an accessible location such as in an Agency/Staff/Volunteer Resources Binder and is reviewed annually for accuracy and relevance.



What organizational, management structures and systems exist to support and advance intergenerational practices in the agency?

It is important to provide evidence that supervision/performance monitoring is implemented and conducted on a regular basis and that those leading the program/project have a clear understanding of their role, responsibilities and accountabilities.

Demonstration of assistance, support to and development of staff, could include the following:

- Supervision sessions with appropriate documentation e.g. session notes;
- Regular Schedules Staff Performance Reviews and Annual Performance Evaluations (including Peer reviews and input), Development Policies, Work and Learning Plans;
- Staff Training Participation (in alignment with the Intergenerational Best Practices Guidelines and an mutually agreed/supported Learning/Development Plan); and,
- Documentation/data of staff qualifications/credentials.

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How are staff recruited? Does staff receive an orientation and access to on-going development and training?



What support systems (infrastructure) exist to ensure staff coordinating and delivering intergenerational practices are operating programs, projects, initiatives and pilots effectively?



Is there regular supervision and performance review sessions?



Are development plans, learning plans and performance evaluations linked to Intergenerational Best Practices Guidelines?



Does the agency seek continuous feedback and input from staff for quality improvement, adaption and change to practices?

9. Intergenerational Best Practices Participants Administration

Participants (those served), involved in intergenerational best practices, link back to, connect with and compliment the goals and objectives of practices be they programs, initiatives or pilot projects. It is important to identify the processes in which participants are recruited.

Examples of evidence would include:

- Equal Opportunities Policy and Practice Guidelines;
- Promotional and Marketing Materials;
- Funding Applications/Proposals; and,
- Marketing and Communications Plans.



How does the agency identify people (people served) for participation in the agency's intergenerational practices?



How are participants recruited?

Intergenerational Best Practices demonstrates that relevant and important practice issues have been thought out and addressed to ensure proper matching of participants. Effectiveness would also be enhanced if partners and partnerships were also in alignment with the practices' mission, goals, objectives and outcomes.

Evidence would include:

- Guidelines on establishing and sustaining mutually beneficial relationships; and,
- Application and Agreement (Contract) Forms for Participants and Volunteers.



What method(s) and strategies are used to determine appropriate and mutually beneficial matches between participants of different generations?



How does the agency prepare and support participants involved in Intergenerational program(s), project(s), initiatives and pilots?



Does the agency seek continuous feedback and input from participants for quality improvement and adaptation of intergenerational practices?

10. Intergenerational Best Practices Volunteer Administration

Intergenerational practices is a relatively new field that may be integrated with many aspects the agency and its business practices, this may include risk management, human resources management, privacy protection guidelines, and program/project development. It is important to address issues of protection, personal safety, liability and appropriate behaviour.

Examples of evidence would include:

- Update/Progress Notes and Status Reports, Milestones Reports, Year-end Reports and Annual Reports;
- Orientation to the Program/Project;
- Training and presentations to challenge stereotypes;
- Training and presentations on safety and risk reduction (for staff, volunteers and participants), expected and appropriate behavior and deportment;
- Code(s) of Conduct; and,
- Volunteer and Participant Handbooks, training/orientation materials/available and accessible resources, supports and links for on-going/continuous development opportunities e.g. Are learning goals clearly stated? Are they relevant to current Intergenerational Best Practices?

Proper methods and procedures need to be in place to provide orientation, appropriate and relevant training as well as on-going support and development opportunities for volunteers.

Evidence would include:

- Goals, Objectives & Outcomes of the Program/Project;
- Orientation Training Materials;
- Volunteer Handbook;
- Code(s) of Practice;
- Volunteer Supervision (On-going), Support Guidelines and Processes and Procedures; and,
- Training and development program and opportunities (on-going training and development opportunities; is training interactive and is it in keeping with current adult learning principles).



How are volunteers recruited?



How does the agency prepare and support volunteers so they can function effectively and successfully in their role (e.g. are they clear about their role and are they comfortable in carrying out this role)?

It is critical for those involved in Intergenerational Best Practices to be screened to ensure (maximize) safety, to minimize any potential risks and reduce liabilities e.g. secure use of technology; elimination of negligence, ensuring participant confidentiality is respected. This includes arrangements for staff (part-time, term, and seasonal staff), volunteers and participants.

Examples of evidence would include:

- Reference letter(s);
- Health & Safety Guidelines;
- Child Protection Guidelines;
- Adult Protection Guidelines;
- Guidelines on Privacy, Safety and Well-being;
- Orientation Training Package;
- Contract letters for project/term staff;
- Risk and Liability Assessments and On-going Reviews (e.g. Annual) and Monitoring;
- Safety, Risk and Liability Reduction Training /Practices Guidelines Documentation;
- Dealing with complaints;
- Ensuring participant/volunteer confidentiality;
- Ensuring the secure use of technology;
- Ensuring participants are covered by relevant insurance; and,
- Ensuring parental, family or third party consent

(Mentoring and Befriending Foundation, 2007) and (BJCIP, 2007).



What screening, personal protection, safety arrangements and training does the agency provide?

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Has the agency conducted a safety and risk assessment review and analysis to address issues of safety, risk reduction and liability? Is this updated on an on-going basis? Is this information and feedback shared with volunteers? How?

In intergenerational best practices, ongoing management is provided to support to sustain and improve the quality of work being undertaken.

Examples of evidence would include:

- Documentation of sessions/meetings on safety, risk management and liability reduction;
- Documentation explaining and providing examples of risk management, liability and risk reduction;
- Monitoring Reports;
- Risk Assessment and Liability Reduction Action Plan and Review sheet(s); and,
- Participants (persons served) feedback sheet(s).



Does the agency provide continuous support, training and monitoring to and for volunteers for the advancement of Intergenerational Practices? How?



Does the agency seek continuous feedback and input from volunteers for quality improvement and adaptation to intergenerational practices?

11. Intergenerational Best Practices Partnerships

Establishing a network of associated organizations and individuals with a commitment to intergenerational best practices is essential. It is imperative that partners and associates hold a background in variety of relevant disciplines, such as education, psychology, sociology, history, literature, community development, social work, arts, etc. In addition, having a wide range of practitioners, researchers, policy-makers and program/ project development personnel in addition to younger and older participants of intergenerational practices is fundamental (Larkin & Rosebrook, 2006).

Examples of Intergenerational Practices partners may include: schools/colleges/universities; seniors centers; day cares/play schools; care facilities; recreation centers; businesses; family education resource centers; community associations and community service organizations; media (e.g. radio/television/cable/newspaper).

Evidence of intergenerational practices partnerships would include:

- Notes/Minutes of Meetings;
- Joint Protocols and Partnership Agreements/Memorandums of Understanding;
- Training and Training Resources/Materials to prepare, support and educate partners (on-going);
- Evaluation/feed-back documents of the partnership(s); and,
- Profiles of current partners.



How does the agency identify, prepare, involve and educate (e.g. knowledge sharing and exchanges opportunities such as participation in and support of the development of an “Intergenerational Practices Network”^{*} partners and partner organizations?

^{*} a network is a web of free-standing participants cohering through shared interest and values; networking is building partnerships with other individuals and organizations or communities and permits the mobilization of resources to achieve common goals and to share information; networking is also people connecting with people, linking ideas and resources (GSSSH, 2000).

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Partnership agreements and expectations need to be clear and understood by those involved. Open and continuous communication between all partners involved is vital in collaborative projects, encouraging a better understanding of the Program's/Project's communication process and providing an outlet for feedback and suggestions, sharing and exchanging knowledge, as well as mutually agreed upon conflict resolution process.



Is effective communication and commitment consistently demonstrated by partners and partner organization(s)?

12. Intergenerational Best Practices Evaluation

Evaluation is a learning tool as well as an opportunity to celebrate achievement and learning for everyone involved in Intergenerational Practices (BJCIP, 2007).

To demonstrate quality work, one must demonstrate what has changed (the impact e.g. how this will assist intergenerational practitioners in their daily practice?) as a result of intergenerational practices. It is necessary to develop and establish measures (including financial support, plans and budgets) to assess the project/program results and achievements on what has been accomplished and what are the outcomes as result of investing in intergenerational practices.

It is equally important to develop strategies to disseminate outcomes and achievements to funders, participants, volunteers, researchers (to integrate research into practice) and other key stakeholders and partners. Additionally, vehicles for knowledge sharing and exchanges (what was learned and how was learning captured to improve intergenerational knowledge and practices?) are key to the advancement of intergenerational best practices; these may include utilizing web-site technology to share resources and share learning.

Examples of evidence would include:

- Participants and Volunteer feedback/input sheets;
- Logic model and outcomes development and evaluation documentation;
- Recorded evidence, statistics and outcomes;
- Produced Program/Project Materials;
- Monitoring/Milestone Reports;
- Electronic Questionnaires-Surveys per Quality Improvement;
- Evaluation Reports;
- Strategies to “share learning and exchange knowledge”;
- Program/Project Final Report;
- Data/evidence collected throughout the implementation of the initiative(s);
- Documented case studies and testimonials;

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- Examples of best/better practices to link practice locally, nationally and inter nationally via utilization of technology such as the inter-net (posting lessons learned on web-sites); and,
- Financial (Budget) and Business Plans.



How is the effectiveness of the program, project, initiative and pilot evaluated?

When (timeline/timeframe)? Are monitoring, reviews and evaluations cyclical and implemented in conjunction with planning? Using what methods and strategies?

13. Barriers to Delivering and Sustaining Intergenerational Best Practices

According to the “Intergenerational Programs in Calgary: Executive Summary, 2005”, conducted by The University of Calgary, Faculty of Social Work, Centre for Social Work Research & Development, the majority of participants surveyed were able to identify barriers, and often multiple barriers to offering intergenerational programs.

Three major types of barriers were identified by survey participants, they were:

- Resource barriers;
- Accessibly barriers; and,
- Barriers relating to knowledge, skills and attitudes.

Additionally, access to transportation, hours of service, staff resources, volunteer resources, financial resources, access to partners, access to participants, awareness of intergenerational best practices, accessibility, and barriers related to knowledge-skills and attitudes and adequate facilities. It is clear that there are multiple barriers to implementing and sustaining intergenerational practices at the organizational, staff and participant level.



What barriers to the implementation and delivery of Intergenerational Practices has the agency encountered?



What strategies has the agency used to overcome these barriers?



Have these strategies been shared with Intergenerational colleagues? How e.g. via the development an Intergenerational Practices Network?



Is the sustainability of practices considered in planning?

14. Intergenerational Best Practices SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) Analysis

SWOT is a tool that can help identify the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of a program to an agency. Specifically, SWOT is a model that assesses what an agency can and cannot do as well as its potential opportunities and threats. The method of a SWOT analysis is to take information from an environmental analysis and separate it into internal (strengths and weaknesses) and external issues (opportunities and threats). Once completed, a SWOT analysis can help determine what may assist the agency in accomplishing its objectives, and what obstacles must be overcome or minimized to achieve the desired results (Answers.com, 2008).



Has the agency conducted an Intergenerational Practices SWOT Analysis, if so, has this information been shared as well as utilized to improve the quality of Intergenerational Practices internal and external (knowledge sharing and exchanging) to the agency?



Does the agency have a copy of The University of Calgary, Faculty of Social Work, Centre for Social Work Research & Development: “Intergenerational Programs in Calgary October 2005, Final Report” (Prepared for: The City of Calgary and the LINKages Society of Alberta and funded by: Family & Community Support Services)?

15. Intergenerational Best Practices Feedback Loops and Processes

The first key standard for both agency and intergenerational practices health and well-being is effective communication. Relevant feedback is communication the agency and program is receiving about itself and its need to change, multi-dimensional factors determining agency and program communication patterns can be treated as information. For example, extrinsic individual motivation, a top-down social dynamic and a major challenge can be considered negative feedback for change, while intrinsic motivation, a “bottom-up” agency culture and a minor challenge can be treated as positive feedback (Leonard, 2007) (Capra, 1997).

While constructive feedback and input is not always easy to receive, if, increasingly it is sought and eventually welcomed it will support the continuous improvement of intergenerational practices (*the key is adaptability and responsiveness facilitating change in performance and practice*) change. Surrounding ourselves with people who speak the truth and valuing those who speak the truth is paramount to the advancement of intergenerational best practices. Lack of frequent useful feedback is the leading negative influence on performance. *Implementing feedback loops and feedback processes within intergenerational practices (e.g. this document) is also the most cost-effective intervention solution that leads to improved performance, thus lending itself to the development of best practice* (Leonard, 2007). Providing staff and volunteers with more frequent, cumulative feedback about their progress and development will improve their adaptability and thus their performance. Implementing of “feed-back loops” results in:

- Staff and volunteers feel motivated to make suggestions;
- The agency and program, project and initiative is viable (moving beyond surviving to thriving);
- On-going financial and budget monitoring;
- Continuous practice improvement;
- Successful monitoring of the environment; and,
- Periodic surveys to determine if staff are using appropriate, relevant language and tools.



Has the agency implemented feedback loops and processes? If so, how is feedback utilized and shared (is it documented) e.g. is it shared with staff and volunteers to adapt and change practices; is feedback utilized for planning purposes?

16. Intergenerational Best Practices Ideas, Knowledge Exchanges and Recommended Links/Web-sites

To support and guide agencies and intergenerational practitioners in their work the following resources are recommended for Intergenerational Best Practice:

- BJ Centre for Intergenerational Practice: www.centreforip.org.uk;
- Generations Together, University of Pittsburgh: www.gt.pitt.edu;
- Generations United: www.gu.org and Generations United i-path (a gateway to a comprehensive on-line library of knowledge regarding Intergenerational Programs, Actions, Technologies and How-To);
- International Consortium for Intergenerational Programs (ICIP): www.icip.info;
- LINKages Society of Alberta: www.link-ages.ca;
- Penn State University Cooperative Extension System – Intergenerational Programs and Aging: <http://intergenerational.cas.psu.edu>;
- Temple University’s Center for Intergenerational Learning: www.TempleCIL.org;
- The Institute for Volunteering Research and Volunteering England: www.volunteering.org.uk (Risk Toolkit, 2007);
- The Journal of Intergenerational Relationships: www.haworthpress.com/store/product.asp?sku=J194; and,
- United Generations Ontario: www.UnitedGenerations.ca.

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“Beth Johnson Foundation for Intergenerational Practice: Approved Provider Standard for Organizations Providing Intergenerational Projects or Programmes - August, 2007”.

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