

Advanced Engagement Subcommittee

Meeting Notes

5.30.2023

Attendance: [Sophia (Grant Staff); Taylor (Student); Alice (Older Adult); Janet (Older Adult); Elizabeth (Older Adult); Linda (Older Adult); Brenda (Older Adult); Beverly (Older Adult); Lisa (Older Adult); Myrna (Older Adult)]

Missing: [Naomi (Older Adult); Loretta (Older Adult); Nancy (Older Adult)]

Welcome, Introductions, and Guidelines

The team welcomed new members and conducted introductions and received updates:

Bios

- To continue learning about one another, the group agreed to submit bio sketches
 - Taylor will reach out individually about Bios.

Newsletter

- The group was updated about the newsletter, which will be used to communicate between meetings and to ensure more meeting time can be spent on action as opposed to refreshing memories and updating.

Focus Groups

Initial Findings

- Taylor reiterated the structure and purpose of the focus groups. There were four sessions with three distinct groupings of people, including students, older adults, and academics/researchers. The purpose of these focus groups was to review our video series that talks about the benefits of engaging older adults in research. Taylor then provided a brief overview of the initial findings, including:
 - People like the animation style of the videos.
 - People were unsure of the audience, which may mean the videos are widely applicable or that they are a bit confusing.
 - Some want even more diversity in imagery.

Key Takeaways

- Myrna, a co-facilitator in the focus groups, also provided an update on her takeaways from the experience:
 - She loved the older adult focus group session and emphasized that older adults understood the series and gave great feedback. Gave a lot of feedback about different looking older people—wanted more variety.
 - Myrna is worried that the one-size fits all style of video might not work.
 - She felt students need more education to be more confident.
 - There were some who were concerned that the messages, as presented, were too sophisticated for older adults and may be on level for early career researchers (while others disagreed).

- She feels we need to pay attention to researcher bias and address it.
- The group discussed Myrna's experience and concerns:
 - Some members felt disrespectful behavior from researchers was predictable. Members noted how we anticipated this behavior and tried to account for it on how we structured the groups; however, hosting researcher focus group sessions separately may have implicitly validated researchers' "elite feelings"
 - Some members do not like the term "target community" because often, the target community was targeted in a violent way in the past.
 - Our members also understand the hope that people in the aging field would see older people as valuable. It is disappointing to see how bias against older adults is present.
 - The group emphasized the value and adeptness of older adults despite researchers' bias against them. Members pointed out that even when accessible designs are necessary or recommended, such as writing materials at an eighth-grade reading level, we could still offer folks the opportunity to learn and grow. This might look like adding new terms to our materials followed by accessible definitions, allowing our audience to learn these new terms.

Taylor emphasized that the group sessions were overall a positive experience. He explained that the grant staff are currently sifting through the data and will work with the subcommittee to interpret the data.

Meeting Scheduling Approach

- Taylor discussed shifting to a new meeting scheduling approach due to the addition of new members and number of hours spent scheduling. Before, Taylor would create a poll for each meeting. Now, after agreeing on the best day/time, all meetings will be scheduled.
- Members are sympathetic to the amount of time it takes to schedule and applaud the democratic effort. Planning in advance may make it easier to plan around meetings. Members will fill out the scheduling preference poll after the meeting.

Subcommittee Representation at Steering Committee

- Taylor discussed that we have added some new members who serve on both the Steering Committee and Subcommittee. However, we still want Subcommittee members to attend the Steering Committee as representatives. Subcommittee members who served on our prior project may be best, as they have useful background knowledge. Members will reach out to Taylor if they are interested.

Review and Discuss Training and Mentorship

Program Launch and Goals

- Members feel our goals are right about the readiness of researchers— this is validated by focus group findings. Shifting researcher's bias should be a priority.
- The group expressed the fact that researchers need a connection to a group like the subcommittee and felt that seniors can train people the best about seniors.

Target Trainees

The subcommittee discussed which groups to reach with training:

- Members suggested expanding to researchers beyond healthcare such as Sociology, Social Work, Psychology, Gerontology
- Need to reach the rehab group (physical, speech, occupational therapists)
 - These professionals (and their biases) are front and centered, especially for older folks with higher health support needs. One member shared dehumanizing experiences in appointments- being considered a “sick older person” often means being disregarded.
- Need to reach architects and city planning and public transportation (target environmental factors)
- We need to focus on the younger folks (students, early career researchers).

Advisor Preparation

After hearing positive reviews on the last projects’ researcher feedback sessions, we are hoping to plan more for this project. To make sure that experience is seamless and productive, Taylor asked the subcommittee about their needs/ wants for researcher feedback sessions:

- It would be good to have a focused conversation going deeply into their research expertise vs their bias. We can help cut down on the bias against seniors.
- We need to see an overview of their study plans ahead of time, however, we don’t want pose too many barriers for a potential attending researcher.
- We can rely on the experience of our older adults in the subcommittee who have done research before.
- New members would benefit from looking at the meeting notes of the previous researcher meetings.

Representation

While considering target groups, it was highlighted that no men are in the Subcommittee. This led to an additional conversation about representation in the Subcommittee:

- Recruiting men has been a struggle for us.
- This gap is an issue across research, but obvious here.
- Perhaps develop an inspirational question: what do we need from elder men?
- The group identified barriers to recruiting older men, including:
 - Many older men are not aging as healthfully.
 - Do older men have access to get onto our meetings.
- The group also discussed the challenges and benefits of allowing our partners to identify themselves an older adult:
 - Its not always easy to identify as “older”
 - Some people feel older because their life span/expectancy is shorter

Upcoming Activities and Next Steps

- Members will fill out scheduling poll
- Sophia will Start researcher training outreach with attention to the groups that members identified
- Sophia and Taylor will send out newsletter
- Taylor will reach out about bios

- Taylor and Sophia will send previous researcher feedback session note to new members