Mission: To facilitate healthy aging by providing leadership and encouraging collaboration in creating age-friendly places (communities) that optimize the ability of all older Manitobans to do the things they feel are important.

explore learn act celebrate

Communities Committed to Healthy Active Aging

Developing Policies, Programs and Initiatives that Support Healthy Aging: An Age-Friendly and Healthy Aging Lens

The National Seniors Council, which at the time included Manitoba's own Jim Hamilton, Chairman of the Working Group, with the support of officials from Employment and Social Development Canada and the Public Health Agency of Canada produced the document titled above.

This document is a valuable resource for those dedicated to creating age-friendly environments. Through the workings a "Lens" was created.

This Lens facilitates the development and implementation of age-friendly policies, programs, and initiatives that promote healthy aging.

The approach also encompasses initiatives that may not specifically target seniors but can still impact them. It aims to challenge assumptions and identify both positive and negative potential effects of policies or programs on healthy aging.

By applying the Lens, municipalities can assess their ideas/projects with respect to older adults' needs, perspectives, lived experiences and contributions. This evaluation spans the entire process including planning, development, implementation and evaluation.

The Lens aims to:

- Promote age-friendliness in all policies
- Enhance health and quality of life for older adults
- Reflect a positive view on aging
- Combat ageism
- Foster intergenerational solidarity
- Encourage respect and inclusion for older adults
- Prioritize diversity and equity
- Ensure safety and security

The concept of "healthy aging" has evolved; initially centered on the absence of disease, it now embraces a more comprehensive definition. This holistic view is rooted in the life course and functional ability perspectives. The World Health Organization (WHO) characterizes healthy aging as "the process of developing and maintaining the functional ability that enables well-being in older age" (WHO, 2015).

This definition includes a person's capacity to:

- meet their essential needs
- learn, grow, and make informed choices
- maintain mobility
- build and sustain relationships
- contribute to society

Anyone with a vested interest in the age-friendliness of their municipality is strongly encouraged to review the entire document for the information and the exceptional guidance it provides.

Embracing Age-Friendliness: Enhancing Well-Being This Holiday Season

As the holiday season approaches, it's essential to foster an environment that is welcoming and inclusive for individuals of all ages, particularly older adults. Age-friendly practices not only enhance the quality of life for seniors but also enrich our communities by promoting intergenerational connections and understanding. All organizations and individuals play a roll in enhancing the age-friendliness of their community. Here are a few tips that we can all consider…

Ways to Be Age-Friendly This Holiday Season

Accessible Events: When planning holiday gatherings or community events, ensure venues are accessible to everyone. Consider factors like wheelchair access, seating arrangements, and transportation options. Providing information about accessibility in advance helps attendees feel more comfortable participating.

Engaging Activities: Offer activities that cater to a range of abilities and interests. This might include craft sessions, storytelling, or music events that invite participation from all ages. Tailoring activities to be more inclusive ensures that everyone can contribute and enjoy.

Creating Intergenerational Opportunities: Encourage family members and friends to involve older adults in holiday traditions. This could be as simple as cooking together, sharing stories, or engaging in holiday crafts. These moments strengthen bonds and create cherished memories.

Providing Technology Support: Many older adults may find it challenging to navigate modern technology. Offering workshops on using social media, video calls, or online shopping can empower them to connect with loved ones and participate in virtual celebrations.

Mindful Communication: When communicating during the holiday season, be patient and attentive. Speak clearly, and don't hesitate to repeat or clarify if needed. This shows respect and consideration for older adults, making them feel valued in conversations.

Volunteer Opportunities: Encourage younger community members to volunteer their time to assist older adults during the holiday season. This could involve helping with shopping, delivering meals, or simply spending time together. Such acts of kindness foster community spirit and connection.

Celebrate Diversity: Recognize and celebrate the diverse backgrounds and traditions within your community. Organizing events that highlight various cultural practices fosters understanding and appreciation among all age groups.

Thoughtful Gifting: When choosing gifts for older adults, consider their interests and needs. Practical gifts that enhance their daily lives, such as subscriptions for audiobooks or magazines, or personalized items that evoke memories, can bring joy and show thoughtfulness.

In Conclusion…

Being age-friendly fosters a culture of respect and inclusivity, especially during the holidays. Thoughtful practices ensure everyone feels engaged and appreciated. The holiday spirit lies in building connections and sharing joy across generations. Embrace age-friendliness to make a positive impact in your community.