

Centre on Aging



UNIVERSITY  
OF MANITOBA

INTERNATIONAL INVITED SYMPOSIUM

# MAKING RURAL AND REMOTE COMMUNITIES AND PLACES MORE AGE-FRIENDLY: WHY AND HOW?

Key Points from the International Invited Symposium on Age-Friendly Rural and Remote  
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## Background

The following are key points from the public forum of the International Invited Symposium on Age-Friendly Rural and Remote Communities and Places. The forum involved presentations from two “distinguished seniors” on aging and the meaning of place, followed by an international panel on the nature of place and whether the places we live can become more age-friendly.

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## Why should we become more age-friendly?

Age-friendly is an opportunity to create an environment for all people to be able to live life as they should.

We should become more age-friendly because:

- Age-friendly assists and empowers, not only the vulnerable members of our society, but all of society.
- We are part of a greater whole and are in the world together.
- We are all ageing from the day we are born.
- Although there may be costs initially, it will cost a lot more if we do not become age-friendly.

## How do we become more age-friendly?

### Make older peoples' voices heard

- Empower older adults to give voice to their concerns, their goals and achievements.
- Ask and be responsive to the needs of older people; for example, in areas of medical care, financial issues, housing.

### Challenge authority and advocate for change

- Have a process whereby people can discuss their needs with leaders.
- Ensure there is government support.

### Foster strong leadership

- Have leaders that empower people to make the needed changes.
- Support and value the champions in the community.
- Use a bottom up approach that begins with the people and then approach governments.



## Understand the community we want to change

- Define the community (for example, geographical, political, school based, church-based, and workplace).
- Examine the resources within a community that enable older adults to navigate with relative ease.
- Identify the community's needs.

## Promote interdependence between the generations

- Realize that family and kinship ties are important.
- Teach that we are all part of a greater whole; that we are a part of a broader community.
- Develop communities where people can age in place.

## Create socially inclusive communities

- Be sensitive to the fact that communities are not homogenous.
- Recognize and accept others as part of our communities.
- Treat all ages with respect and dignity.
  - Older persons are resources and not burdens.
  - Elder is a sign of authority, knowledge and respect.

## Remove barriers ...

- To health care services, for example medical and dental care (such as timeliness, access and cost).
- To employment for all ages.
- To housing that accommodates people with various needs.
- To adequate transportation.



## Develop partnerships

- Create partnerships, for example with the business community and industry.
- Develop funding partnerships that may be linked to other initiatives.
- Create committees dedicated to particular goals that are made up of individuals from many groups (government, older adults, and academics).

## Share information and stories

- Share progress and failures between communities.
- Make small changes that will spark wider interest in age-friendly.



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### Snapshot of how to become more age-friendly

- Make voices heard
  - Challenge authority
  - Foster strong leadership
  - Understand the community
  - Promote interdependence
  - Become socially inclusive
  - Remove barriers
  - Develop partnerships
  - Share information
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