Universal Design in Intergenerational Programming

Colorado Public Health Parks and Recreation Collaborative
June 6, 2025

Presenters:
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OUTCOMES

- Understand the importance of intergenerational programming

- Recognize how ableism and ageism can create barriers in intergenerational programming

- Understand what Universal Design is and how to apply it

- Reflect on how accessibility choices shape participant experience

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Intergenerational Connection Hub

Our Hub Makes It Easier to Offer Intergenerational Programs in Your Community:

- **Access Our Blog:** Stay informed on our latest insights.
- **Utilize Our Toolkits:** Use our detailed toolkits to create and implement successful programs, including Art, Music, and Storytelling.
- **Explore Video Resources:** Learn through videos that cover essential topics like designing impactful intergenerational programs, conducting evaluations, fostering age-friendly environments, and more.

AGING Dynamics

SCAN HERE

OUR INTERGENERATIONAL PHILOSOPHY

Intergenerational programs that are built around mutuality create a connection based in mutual contribution and benefit. Rather than the model of charitable giving or "serving", mutuality is rooted in the recognition that every participant is contributing and also receiving.

WHY INTERGENERATIONAL MATTERS

- Builds empathy and mutual understanding

- Reduces isolation for both youth and older adults

- Strengthens community resilience

WHAT DO WE MEAN BY INCLUSION & ACCESSIBILITY?

INCLUSION

Intentional practices to ensure everyone feels welcomed and valued

ACCESSIBILTY

Removing barriers that prevent engagement across physical, sensory, cognitive, and emotional dimensions

CONCLUSION: When inclusion and accessibility are prioritized, programs become spaces where everyone can meaningfully participate, connect, and thrive.

UNIVERSAL DESIGN

7 PRINCIPLES OF UNIVERSAL DESIGN

Design usable by all people, to the greatest extent possible, without adaptation or specialized design.

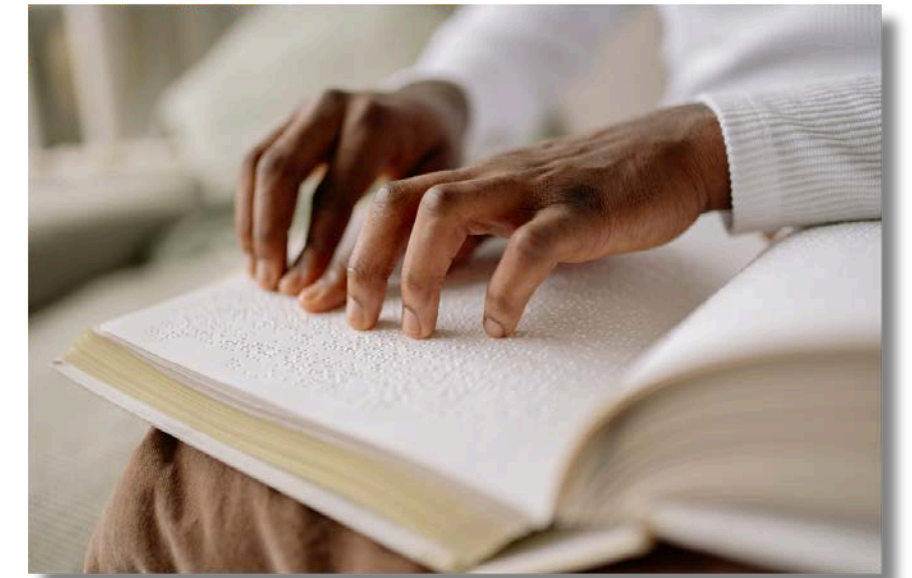|	
Inclusive	Can be used by everyone easily, safely, and with dignity.
Flexible	The design provides choice and can be used in different ways by different people.
Simple and Intuitive (Understandable)	Easy for everyone to understand and use.
Convenient	Requires little effort to use and engage with.
Accommodating	Designed regardless of age, gender, mobility, or other circumstances.
Welcoming	Removes barriers that might exclude some.
Responsive	Considers what people say they need and want.

UNIVERSAL DESIGN IN ACTION

- Music program providing multiple types of instruments

- Outdoor art event with sound amplification, seating + materials in multiple formats

- Mentorship with written and oral prompts

- Using #CamelCase for digital content (social, web)

HOW DO ABLEISM + AGEISM SHOW UP?

- What is Ageism?
  - ex. Calling participants "seniors", assuming tech aversion

- What is Ableism?
  - ex. Only offering printed materials; no microphone in large spaces

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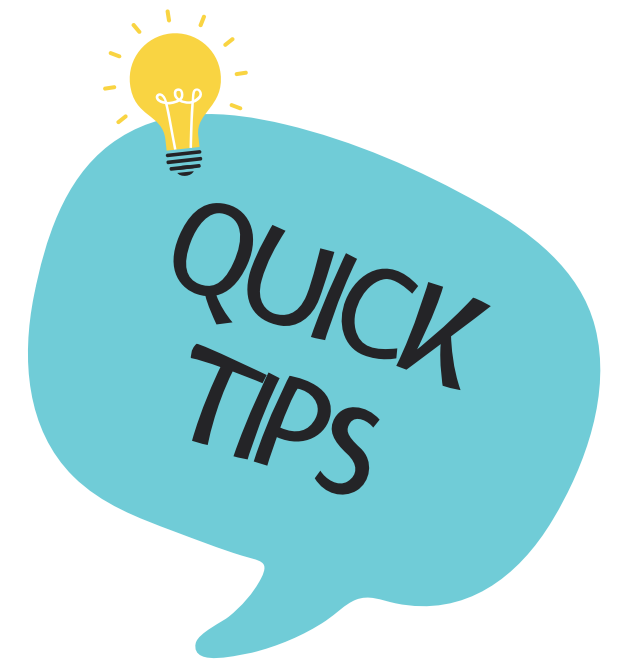|	
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REFLECTIVE QUESTIONS → ACTION STEPS

- When was the last time you asked participants what they need to participate?
- Are materials offered in multiple formats?
- Are there assumptions about who will attend and what they will need?

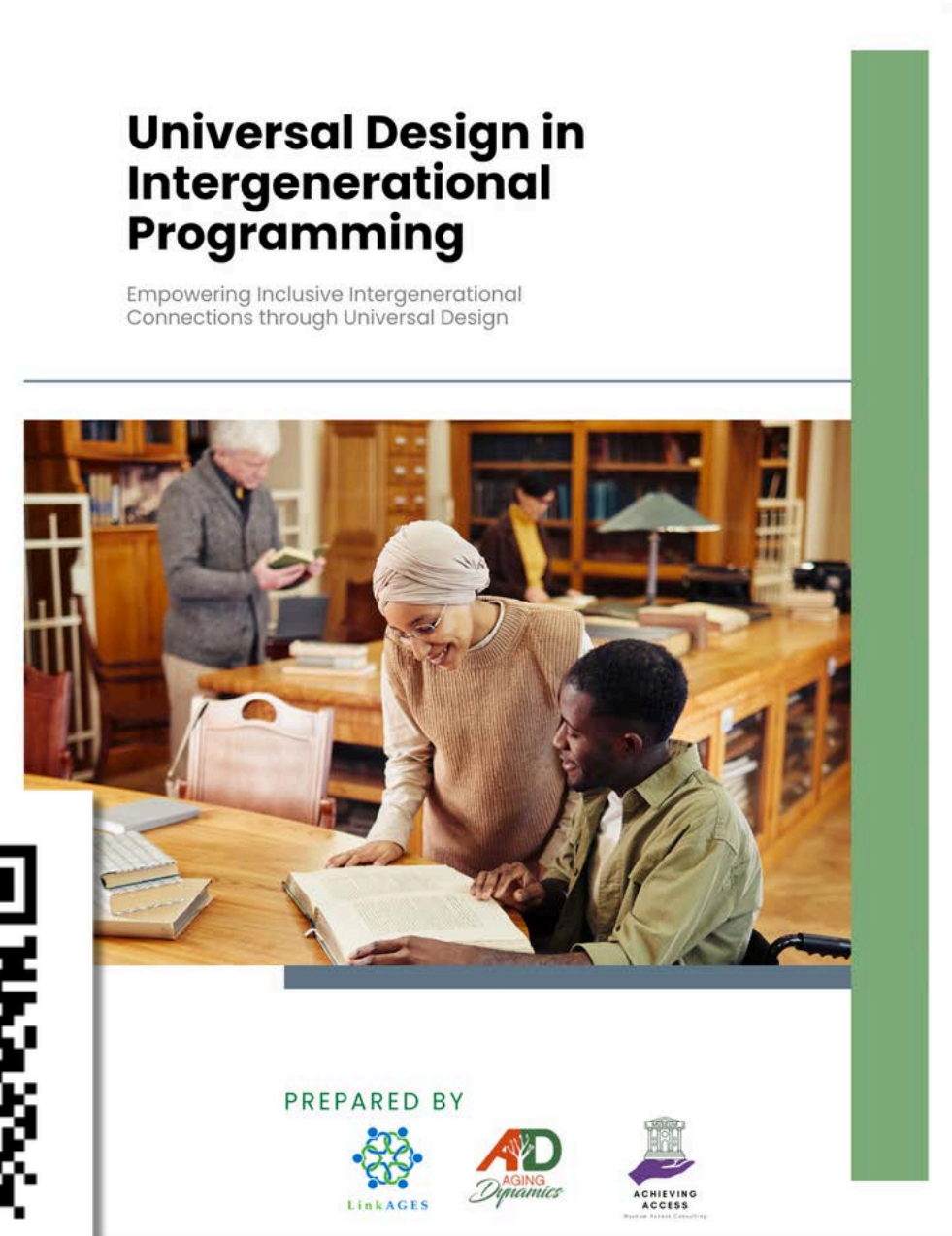Call to Action: Pick one thing to apply to your next program

QUICK TIPS FOR GETTING STARTED

QUICK TIPS

- Use 7 Universal Design principles as checkpoints during program design
- Evaluate and adapt iteratively
- Toolkit is a flexible resource — not a checklist

Scan to download the Accessibility Toolkit

Universal Design in Intergenerational Programming

Empowering Inclusive Intergenerational Connections through Universal Design

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STAY CONNECTED

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