STAND UP SPEAK OUT
27-29 JULY 2026

2026 AUSTRALIAN ELDER ABUSE CONFERENCE

Connection as Protection:

Intergenerational Practice as a Continuum for Preventing Elder Abuse

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Australian Institute for Intergenerational Practice

EAAA Elder Abuse Action Australia

caxton COMMUNITY LEGAL CENTRE

ADAAustralia Your Aged and Disability Advocates

Acknowledge country

We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the lands on which we live, work, and connect today, and pay our respects to Elders past and present.

We honour the deep intergenerational connections that First Nations peoples have maintained for tens of thousands of years, and acknowledge the vital role these traditions continue to play in shaping more connected, respectful, and inclusive communities for all Australians

Workshop objectives

By the end, participants will:

- Understand the foundations of intergenerational practice (IGP)
- Recognise the links between **ageism, disconnection, and elder abuse**
- Explore how IGP can act as a **protective and preventative mechanism**
- Reflect on **generational experiences and assumptions**
- Identify practical ways to embed IGP in their own context

What Do We Mean by Intergenerational Practice?

Intergenerational Practice (IGP):

- Purposeful and structured activities that bring different generations together in ways that benefit all participants.

Characteristics:

- mutual benefit
- meaningful engagement
- ongoing interaction
- intentional design

Intergenerational Programs in Action

Examples across Australia:

- Intergenerational playgroups
- Early learning and aged care partnerships
- School and community
- Shared campuses
- Digital literacy mentoring
- Community storytelling programs/poetry

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INTERGENERATIONAL PRACTICE CONTINUUM

From Contact to Transformation: Building Meaningful Connections Across Generations

1 CONTACT

"We are in the same space"

WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE

Brief or one-off interactions between generations.

KEY OUTCOME

Awareness and exposure.

2 ENGAGEMENT

"We interact, but within limits"

WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE

Structured interaction with guided activities and conversation.

KEY OUTCOME

Increased comfort and reduced stereotypes.

3 PARTICIPATION

"We do things together"

WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE

Shared activities with active contribution from both generations.

KEY OUTCOME

Inclusion, contribution, and mutual learning.

4 RELATIONSHIP

"We know and value each other"

WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE

Ongoing, meaningful, and reciprocal relationships.

KEY OUTCOME

Belonging, empathy, and connection.

5 TRANSFORMATION

"We change how we see and support each other"

WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE

Intergenerational connection influences culture, systems, and community.

KEY OUTCOME

Reduced ageism and stronger communities.

happy
wonderful
useful
pleased
great
wise
good

Research

From Nice to Wise

- Psychological/behavioural effects
  - Reducing ageism
- Built environment
- Health and wellness impacts
  - Social isolation and loneliness
  - Preventing frailty
  - Hope, resilience,
- Workforce impact
  - New career path
- Educational theory impacts
  - Gerontology – “eldergogy”
- Potential economic impacts
  - Delayed institutionalisation
  - Space, Place and Housing
  - Social Prescribing

International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health

MDPI

Article

Key Considerations to the Introduction of Intergenerational Practice to Australian Policy

Katrina Radford [1,*], Janna Anneke Fitzgerald [2], Nerina Vecchio [3], Jennifer Cartmel [4], Ryan Bruce Gould [1] and Jennifer Kosiol [5]

Research on Aging
Volume 43, Issue 7-8, August–September 2021, Pages 283-293
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https://doi.org/10.1177/0164027521996191

SAGE journals

Article

Implementation of Evidence-Based Practices in Intergenerational Programming: A Scoping Review

Shannon E. Jarrott, Rachel M. Scrivano, Cherrie Park, and Angela N. Mendoza

Research Article

Human resources practices for intergenerational learning: a systematic literature review

Ramona-Diana Leon

Pages 749-764 | Received 06 Apr 2021, Accepted 17 Jan 2022, Published online: 09 Feb 2022

Cite this article https://doi.org/10.1080/14778238.2022.2035278 Check for updates

Beyond Programs: Cultural Shifts

Intergenerational practice helps shift narratives about ageing.

- From → To

Older people as dependent → Older people as contributors
Age groups separated → Shared community
Age as decline → Age as experience

Changing Perceptions Through Experience

When children interact with older adults:

Children see:

- wisdom
- humour
- patience
- safety

Older adults see:

- curiosity
- joy
- possibility
- deep connection

Elder Abuse – A Relational Issue

Types: Psychological, Financial, Neglect, Physical

Underlying drivers:

- Ageism
- Social isolation
- Power imbalance
- Lack of understanding between generations

Elder abuse doesn’t occur in strong, visible, valued relationships

LET’S MIX IT UP

Time to open the envelope, get up from you table and find your new table buddies

ROUND 1

Understanding the Problem

“What do you think are the underlying causes of elder abuse in our communities—not just the symptoms?”

Round 2

Generational Perceptions

“How do stereotypes about younger and older generations contribute to conditions where elder abuse can occur?”

Round 3

The Power of Connection

“What changes when meaningful intergenerational relationships are present?”

Give some examples

Round 4

“In what ways -do you think- can intergenerational practice actively prevent elder abuse—not just respond to it?”

Round 5

From Insight to Action

“What is one practical way you could embed intergenerational connection into your context, to reduce risk of elder abuse?”

Intergenerational Practice as prevention

- Builds:
  - Empathy
  - Visibility
  - Voice
  - Mutual value
- Evidence-informed insights:
  - Increased respect and reduced stereotypes
  - Stronger social networks
  - Improved confidence in older adults
- Shift from **service delivery → relationship-centred practice**

The Intergenerational Relationship Continuum (SAFEGUARDS)

©

STAGE 1: CONTACT

"We are aware of each other"

Brief or incidental interactions where different generations are present in the same space, but with little or no meaningful exchange.

- Does not significantly shift attitudes or behaviours
- Older adults may still remain passive, invisible, or objectified

STAGE 2: ENGAGEMENT

"We interact within boundaries"

Structured interactions where generations engage with one another through facilitated activities or guided conversation.

- Relationships remain surface-level
- Limited impact on power dynamics or voice

STAGE 3: PARTICIPATION

"We do things together"

Both generations actively contribute to shared activities, projects, or goals.

- Still often task-focused rather than relationship-focused
- Connections may not extend beyond the activity

STAGE 4: RELATIONSHIP

"We know and value each other"

Ongoing, meaningful, and reciprocal relationships develop over time, extending beyond individual activities or programs.

- Reduces isolation and invisibility
- Builds informal safeguarding through shared awareness and connection
- Increases likelihood that concerns are noticed and acted upon

STAGE 5: TRANSFORMATION

"We reshape how generations connect and belong"

Intergenerational relationships influence attitudes, practices, systems, and community culture.

- Prevention becomes systemic, not reactive
- Communities actively value and safeguard older people
- Power imbalances are reduced through shared humanity and connection

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What is the one thing you have learnt?

- About intergenerational practice
- About elder abuse
- About safeguarding

Final thoughts

"When people are known, valued, and connected across generations, the conditions for abuse diminish.”

“Intergenerational practice is not just ‘nice to have’—it is a quiet but powerful safeguard."

6TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE

19–20 February 2027 • Gold Coast

Making Waves Together

Turning Actions into Connections

AIIP

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