

SENIOR CENTRES ARE PART OF THE SOLUTION!

HOW SENIOR CENTRES PLAY A ROLE IN HEALTHY AGING
IN ALBERTA

THE ALBERTA PICTURE

- There are over 300 senior centres and drop ins throughout the province of Alberta
- As of 2018 there are 551682 people are over the age of 65
- In 2018 there are 1,089,053 between 45 + 64 *so think of what that will mean in 2030, that is only 11 years away!*

Are we able to support our older adult?



SETTING THE STAGE

University of Alberta Research 2013 Senior Centres Needs and Capacity

Highlights:

- Of the 344 centres in Alberta 77 participated in the research. 27 were classified as Urban locations and 41 as rural locations and 9 could not be classified due to missing location information.
- Exert: *More than half of the participants (61%) believed seniors spent between 2 to 3 hours per day visiting their centre and almost a third (27%) declared seniors spent more than three hours at their centres. Seniors in rural areas seemed to spend more time at their senior centres.*

SETTING THE STAGE

Uof A research cont.

- Urban senior centres tended not to own their space /facility compared to rural centres.
- Of the centres participating in the research the rural centres (63%) had been open more than 30 years compared to urban centres where only 50% were open more than 30 years.
- The most popular Board structure is Administrative with rural being at 50% and urban at 30%

Something to think about: Rural centres have been around for a long time, in most cases longer than urban what have we done in our rural communities to connect with the local centre.?

SETTING THE STAGE

FCSS Senior Services Evaluation Report Oct. 1999 prepared by Brenda J. Simpson and Associates Calgary AB

- One of the recommendations was to develop the social integration model in areas of the city where no outreach services are available. *This should be developed in collaboration with senior centres and outreach workers.*

SETTING THE STAGE

Research: Social Participation and its benefits – August 2013

Centre on Aging University of Manitoba

Focus of research: Benefits of social participation in general as well as the benefits of seniors centres

The benefits of senior centres

**“Research on senior centres demonstrates that participation is associated with social, mental and physical health benefits. Senior centres promote health by providing health and support services, encouraging active and healthy aging, and by fostering a social environment that is conducive to social participation and wellbeing. Senior Centres are also ideal venues for health promotion interventions, such as falls prevention, influenza vaccines, diabetes management and much more”
exert from research document pg. 1 Executive Summary**

SETTING THE STAGE

Centre on Aging University of Manitoba Aug 2013 continued

Key findings from the interviews:

- **Virtually all participants felt that the activities they engage in almost always or often give them a sense of accomplishment.**
- **80% or more also felt that the activities increased their knowledge, helped them gain self-confidence, and provided an opportunity to try new things.**
- **Provided them with social benefits, allowing them to interact, be part of a community, and develop close relationships**
- **Activities help them stay healthy. 90% stated that activities contribute to their emotional well being, and 85% stated that it helped them to relieve stress**

SETTING THE STAGE

Centre on Aging University of Manitoba Aug 2013 continued

- **Being socially engaged helped cope with mental illness and addictions**
- **Centres promoted older adult health by providing physical activities, health education, and some health services**
- **Centres provided volunteer opportunities that enabled people to socialize and contribute to their communities, and share their knowledge and skills**

NATIONAL COUNCIL ON AGING (NCOA) RATIONAL OF WHY SENIOR CENTRES ARE IMPORTANT

Benefits and impact

Research shows that older adults who participate in senior center programs can learn to manage and delay the onset of chronic disease and experience measurable improvements in their physical, social, spiritual, emotional, mental, and economic well-being.

Today's senior centers are reinventing themselves to meet the needs and desires of the aging baby boom generation. Boomers now constitute more than two-thirds of the 50+ population. Senior centers are developing new programs and opportunities for this dynamic generation of older adults

American



SENIOR CENTRES PLAN CITY OF EDMONTON 2011 - 2021

Key Findings

- **Seniors' centres model research demonstrates the importance of seniors' centres as a part of the facility continuum available to older adults in the community. Seniors' centres offer a vital service with diverse recreation and social services programming ranging from physical activity, cultural programs, wellness programs, and outreach to lifelong learning and social support. They are community hubs providing resource information, services and critical support to older adults. *Exert from the research document***

SENIOR CENTRES PLAN CITY OF EDMONTON

Seniors' centres are part of the facility continuum available to older adults and are "designated as community focal points that not only provide helpful resources to older adults, but serve the entire community with information on aging; support for family caregivers, training professionals, lay leaders and students; and, development of innovative approaches to addressing aging issues."²

"Seniors' centres provide vital programs and services that enable seniors to be independent, healthy, and connected to other seniors and to the community at large. Centre serve as central gathering places helping to build stronger community hubs and neighbourhoods."³

The importance of seniors' centres with an aging population is quite significant.

2 Seniors Centre Model Research Report, December 2009, by Jane Reid p.7

3 City of Edmonton's Seniors' Centres Long-Term Funding Strategy (2007-2017)

THOUGHTS

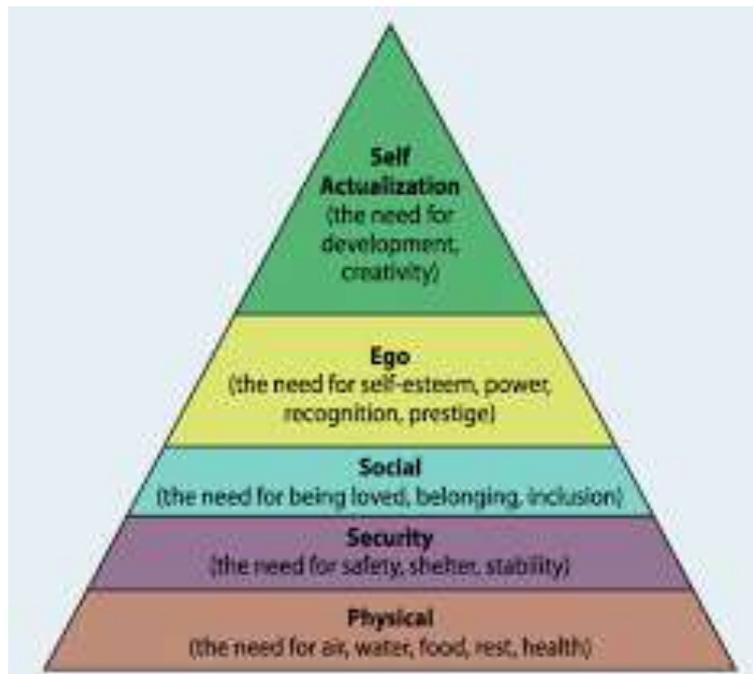
“Senior Centres protect older adults against the negative health consequences associated with social isolation.” Center on Aging Uof M report

Documented research on the social benefits of senior centre participation:

- **Friendships (Aday, Kehoe, & Farney, 2006)**
- **Social support (Fitzpatrick, Gitelson, Andereck, Mesbur 2005)**
- **Social networks (Ashida and Heaney, 2008)**
- **Social inclusion (Moody and Phinney, 2012)**

Is this not what we as humans want Maslow's hierarchy of needs

AS A SENIOR CENTRE DO YOU SEE YOUR ROLE



LETS BREAK IT OUT

Physical need: Need for food, water, rest, and health

What can we do?

- Providing health education,
- meal programs,
- contributing to chronic disease management by providing programs that address health concerns like diabetes education, physical activity programs that address functional mobility (frailty). Physical activity is a pillar in most chronic disease management suggestions.

LETS BREAK IT OUT

Security; safety, shelter, stability

What can we do:

- **Ensure that older adults are getting all of their financial supports that they are entitled to.**
- **Provide information on housing in our areas**
- **Provide information on how to access placement coordination if moving into supportive living is what a person needs to do.**
- **Provide education on elder abuse. How to access shelters for those fleeing elder abuse as well as domestic violence.**
- **Provide educational opportunities on frauds and scams. How to protect themselves.**

LETS BREAK IT OUT

Social: the need of being loved, belonging, inclusion

What can we do?

- Ensure that we are providing programs and opportunities to engage people in our centres.
- How are we reaching out into our community to let them know what we do? Do we speak with our local PCN, health clinics, doctors offices, FCSS. Are they aware of what we have to offer? This is especially important that these connections are made in the rural communities.
- Do we ask the people/communities that we serve what it is that people want to see happening. Rural centres need to reach out and ask these questions as well as urban.

LETS BREAK IT OUT

Ego: self esteem, power, recognition,

What can we do:

- Are we providing opportunities for people to build self esteem. Do we provide opportunities for volunteering. Do we ask people to engage and share their skills, knowledge and talent? What do we do for volunteer recruitment? How have we promoted our centre to our community so people know how they can get involved?
- Do we recognize our volunteers?

LETS BREAK IT OUT

Self Actualization: the need for development and creativity

What can we do:

- Do we provide learning opportunities for people?
- Do we have opportunities for creativity? What new creative outlet have we provided for the people we serve?

LETS BREAK IT OUT

Using Mazlow's Hierarchy of needs lets us think about who we engage our community. How we help build a strong foundation of basic needs, ensuring that they are being met, and help build each individual to their maximum potential.

We are social beings and senior centres are a natural gathering place for people. A place where people can make social connections and build relationships.



WHY WE ARE IMPORTANT

We address:

- **Social isolation**
 - **Healthy aging**
 - **Potential to reduce hospital visits**
 - **Part of the bigger system to promote aging well – we provide the social model of good health in tandem with the health model of good health provided by the health care system.**
 - **Prevention ability through programs and services to ensure aging well**
 - **Senior Centres address the social deterrents of healthy aging: Physical and Mental Health, Social Environment and Engagement, social support, personal wellbeing, physical environment, safety and security.**
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WHAT WE NEED TO THINK ABOUT

- **Have we reached out into our community to ensure that we are meeting the needs.**
 - **Have we done an environmental scan to establish the needs or gaps and found ways to meet the needs/gaps.**
 - **Have we connected with potential partners to see what we can do to meet the needs/gaps in our community. (In the rural area have you connected with your local senior centres/drop ins to find out how you can address some of the identified needs/gaps)**
 - **Are we looking at how to be progressive in our programming so that we meet the needs of the baby boomers as well as the older members that come to our centres?**
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WHAT WE NEED TO THINK ABOUT

- **Do we have an up to date strategic plan that looks at where you want to be 3-5 years down the road. Do we include community stakeholders in our strategic planning. Senior centres are part of the community and having community input can enrich the plan.**
 - **Have you had conversations with your local health care providers about what they are seeing as a need and then seeing if your centre can address that need?**
 - **Do you get involved in community tables in your area so that you can bring the voice of the people you serve. In areas where there is not a strong presence of your local senior centre/drop in at community tables have you invited them to be part of the conversation emphasizing the importance of their participation.**
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FOOD FOR THOUGHT FOR VOLUNTEER RUN CENTRES

You have a long history in your communities and you play a very important part in ensuring that people age well, we need you to be vibrant hubs so what is it going to take to be that place.

Ideas for success:

- **Engage your membership in a visioning exercise (strategic plan). You have the ability to leave a legacy to your community for the people coming down the road how will you ensure that your doors are still open? Invite the community to be part of the planning day as they are your potential new members. Ministry of Culture and Tourism have people that can help facilitate this exercise at no cost.**
- **Understanding that change can be painful but change can also be the life blood of an organization. What is it that we need to change to attract new people and volunteers. How can the long standing volunteers pass on the knowledge and history to inspire new volunteers to join?**

NOT A SENIOR CENTRE HOW CAN YOU HELP

- **If you live in a community that has a senior centre/drop-in find out how connected it is to the community.**
- **Find out what they have to offer.**
- **Find out how you can help if they are stagnant and need some support to move forward.**
- **Let them know how important they are to the fabric of the community and that they play an important role in aging well in Alberta**

FROM THE SOAP BOX

Senior Centres and drop-ins are part of the solution to aging well in Alberta we need to get everyone on the bus to be part of the solution. We need to educate our community stakeholders that we are also part of the solution even though we do not live in the health model.

We make a difference in peoples lives and we help people age well.



Questions

