

10

STEPS FOR ENGAGING ADULTS

50+

**A RESOURCE OF THE
GEN2GEN LEARNING HUB**

Developed by

Encore.org's Gen2Gen campaign

and

The Alliance for Strong Families
and Communities' Second Acts Initiative

**STEP 1:
AN AGE-INCLUSIVE
ENVIRONMENT**

GENERATION TO
GENERATION

STEP 1

AN AGE-INCLUSIVE ENVIRONMENT

Creating a culture and climate in which every member of the team — regardless of age or role in the organization — feels valued, acknowledged and respected is probably the most important thing you can do to ensure success when engaging adults 50+.

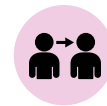
So how can you create a work environment that makes everyone feel welcome? Here are some things to pay attention to:

- Context
- Open Communication
- Learning Style
- Cross-Mentoring
- Accessibility
- Respect



CONTEXT

Many adults 50+ want to know how their role relates to others' roles and how their work contributes to an organization's overall program or mission. Connecting everyone's role to a common outcome helps people attach value to others on the team, and seeing value can help overcome bias.



OPEN COMMUNICATION

Honest, immediate, transparent communication can surface issues before they become problems. Communication styles, practices and vocabulary can vary with age, and understanding those differences can help people make easier adjustments. For example, some adults 50+ may prefer face-to-face conversation on critical topics instead of emails and texts.



LEARNING STYLE

Some adults 50+ may process new information differently, wanting to relate it to a previous work or life experience. Questions may be different and more frequent than from younger adults. They may also prefer to learn in groups or on the job instead of from tutorials or books.



STEP 1

An Age-Inclusive Environment

(continued)



CROSS-MENTORING

A multigenerational workforce enables people of different ages to learn from one another. Learning is not a one-way street from the older to the younger. Adults 50+ are often willing to share their professional networks and expertise while younger adults may share new methods and technologies.



ACCESSIBILITY

All organizations benefit from creating environments and services that are accessible and welcoming to staff, volunteers and clients of all ages with a range of physical abilities.



RESPECT

In a multigenerational workplace, people of all ages should feel accepted, included and valued, just as for other dimensions of workplace diversity. This involves getting to know and appreciate each individual for who they are, and checking assumptions relating to age.



STEP 1

An Age-Inclusive Environment

(continued)

TAKING ACTION

Check which of these statements reflects your current organizational practices or ones you will adopt as part of your plan to intentionally engage adults 50+.

If you have questions about how to implement anything on this list, don't forget that you can ask questions in the [Gen2Gen Champions Group](https://bit.ly/gen2genchampions) (bit.ly/gen2genchampions)!

AGE-INCLUSIVE ENVIRONMENT CHECKLIST

- Context
- Open Communication
- Learning Style
- Cross-Mentoring
- Accessibility
- Respect

CONTEXT

- Everyone understands our intention to be welcoming to people of all ages.
- This intention is clearly expressed in our policies, values, behaviors, on-boarding, etc.
- Everyone's role is explicitly connected to a common outcome, mission or goal.
- Every position description defines responsibilities in relation to mission.
- Every worker (paid or unpaid) knows how their work relates to others on the team.

COMMUNICATION

- Honest, immediate and transparent communication is a clearly stated value.
- Communication styles and practices align with individual preferences (e.g., face-to-face, email, text etc.)
- Preferred communication styles are covered during our on-boarding process.
- Organizational jargon is clearly explained and generation-specific jargon is avoided.
- Intergenerational connections are encouraged to facilitate open communication.



STEP 1

An Age-Inclusive Environment (continued)

LEARNING

- New information is presented in ways that align with age-specific learning styles.
- Training designed for younger adults is adapted to suit the learning style of adults 50+.
- Learning and development opportunities are available for team members of all ages.

CROSS-MENTORING

- Opportunities exist for people of all ages to learn from one another.
- A cross-mentoring program identifies specific skills and developmental goals to guide the learning process.

ACCESSIBILITY

- The physical work environment accommodates people of all abilities.
- Adjustments are made as needed for mobility, lighting, sound and other factors that can be anticipated for overall accessibility and as they arise for older workers.

RESPECT

- Staff, volunteers and others on our team participate in training about topics like bridging connections across generations and cultivating empathy.
- Everyone is expected to accept, value and include others and to refrain from assumptions about abilities or interests based on age.



STEP 1

An Age-Inclusive Environment

(continued)



MORE INFORMATION

- Exercises from [Working Across Generations](https://bit.ly/gen2gengenerations) (bit.ly/gen2gengenerations)
 - [Personal and Generational Accomplishments and Lessons Worksheet](https://bit.ly/gen2genaccomplishments) (bit.ly/gen2genaccomplishments)
 - [Reflections on My Role and Supports Exercise](https://bit.ly/gen2genroles) (bit.ly/gen2genroles)
- [Let's End Ageism](https://bit.ly/gen2genageism). Ted Talk by Ashton Applewhite. (bit.ly/gen2genageism)
- [Boomer Volunteer Engagement Guide](https://bit.ly/gen2genvolunteer) (bit.ly/gen2genvolunteer)
 - Chapter 2: Structuring for Innovation: Process & Assessment. pages 25-43
 - Exercise: Sample Needs Assessment pages 39-43

