

TUE MAR 22 Mapping Perceptions

The MoMA Alzheimer's Project Summit

Zoom Out: Programs and Perspectives gave participants an opportunity to share information about their own programs for people with dementia or their work in general. During this afternoon session, individuals from museums, care organizations, and other professional fields shared successes and challenges that they have experienced in their work, with colleagues from their professional cohort as well as those working in other environments.

Participants began by reflecting on their own work, considering topics such as how they define quality, what they are most proud of, their professional ambitions, and issues that they would like to discuss with other colleagues.

After this period of reflection, participants paired up to discuss these issues with individuals from their own professional cohort. That is, museum professionals paired with each other, whereas staff working in the health sector paired with others working in a similar capacity. After the initial discussion each museum pair joined non-museum pair, in order to invite new perspectives on the issues at hand. They continued to discuss their ideas in groups of four for the remainder of the session.

Below are some ideas/topics, arranged thematically, that came out of the discussions. They in no way represent the breadth of the discussion; nor do they present any definitive answer as to the best ways to design and implement programs for this audience. They merely present the ideas, experiences, concerns, and areas of interest of some Summit participants.

Engaging audiences and interpersonal exchanges

- Applying personal interest to professional situation or objective
- Humility in your approach can create a more receptive audience
- Importance of educators selecting relatable topics and finding commonalities between members of the group
- Methods for engaging participants through an initial, alternative sensory experience
- Importance of involving families in experience and framing programs for people with dementia as family programs
- The “win-win” aspect of arts programs for people with dementia: caregivers and the participants with dementia benefit from the experience and artists/ educators want to give back/learn from the experience
- Considering the potential benefits for a medical center (e.g. the Cleveland Clinic) to engage participants that aren't patients. How might doing so change the perception of a hospital experience?

- Ways of maintaining participant interest/awareness when you can't offer a program as frequently as you might like

Participant experience

- Intergenerational programs- young people provide a comfort level
- Using graduate students as educators can have a positive effect on participants and provide another layer of intergenerational connection
- Relationship between the physical environment that programs take place (ie, The Kreeger Museum explained that works for them is the museum itself. That is a peaceful environment especially for people who are coming from living facilities. The participants are happy to be in a light filled space that is surrounded by beautiful objects)
- Potential for engagement with the arts to "connect" people
- Through participation, individuals can form a relationship (or an attachment) to an educator and/or institution
- Importance of giving information in terms of the tone or the environment that you create
- The role of reminiscence vs. the role of new experience and creation- to what degree should these ideas play into the goals and experience of any given program?

Resources and training

- Training volunteers/educators to work with people/groups with dementia
- Providing volunteers/educators with access to reading lists and library materials on pertinent topics
- Caregivers can/should also access to museum materials for their own use
- Educators potentially go through an "internal" training process wherein you train yourself to teach differently
- Training for other museum staff (not just those working on the program)
- How to best train volunteer staff

Notions of quality

- Both meeting expectations and slightly exceeding those expectations
- Flexibility
- Quality of communication-shutting up and listening
- The idea of attention and silence
- Keeping people's dignity at the center of the work; it becomes the compass
- Well-maintained, efficient, with structured goals
- Marrying fuzzy senses of quality with more concrete ideas

Collaboration and community involvement

- Relationship of an area's size and the access it has to the community and programs (i.e. Cape Cod is an isolated area)
- Ways of utilizing local cultural resources- creating a network to draw upon resources and take advantage of potential collaborations

- Finding a kindred spirit in another institution in order to initiate collaborations
- Ways of reaching out to African-American communities
- Importance of balancing partners' respective interests
- Ways to have a stronger impact through collaboration or partnership
- Ways of sustaining a program within a community
- Support from partnerships (like the Alzheimer's Association)
- In forming partnerships, credibility affords openness

Institutional concerns and considerations

- Membership: at some museums the membership is aging
- Budget: not putting all of your eggs in one basket; making sure that your focus isn't entirely on any one audience or program
- Development: importance of having a dialogue with development about what programs can do in order to determine language that isn't too sensational
- Scheduling: difficulty for medical facilities to book tours
- Diversifying audiences
- Staffing:
 - Staff time can be the highest cost
 - Hiring someone from outside to train volunteers/educators
 - Importance of support staff- it can take a lot of people to make programs work effectively
 - Working with staff at all levels of an institution
- Advertising:
 - Need for more advertising for programs to get participants
 - Advertising programs as a family program