Photovoice:
A participatory action research tool

What is Photovoice?

Photovoice is a creative, participatory action research method that researchers can use to document, illustrate, express and share a topic of concern, one's environment and/or experiences with others. It is often described as a creative process of empowerment in which people, often those who are under-represented, disadvantaged, with limited power in society, can share their lived experiences through photos or video. Providing explanations or captions for the visual materials they produce help participants to explain their world to others.

Photovoice is a method for 'awareness raising' about a specific issue, employed to bring about change where previous traditional methods are inappropriate or have been unsuccessful.

Caroline Wang and Mary Ann Burris are credited with the first Photovoice project in 1992 based on the work of Paulo Freire. In the current research by the OA-INVOLVE team, photovoice is being used to explore the experiences of team members and partners involvement the AGE-WELL conference. In this context, suggested topics for your Photovoice project at the AGE-WELL conference:

1. Travel: to, during and from the conference
2. The conference app: experiences using it, what it helps you achieve
3. Accessibility: the conference hotel, meeting venue, the city of Winnipeg
4. OA-INVOLVE Lunch 'n Learn, Wednesday, October 18, 12-1:30 pm
5. Learning about AGE-WELL NCE and technologies
6. Open topic: identify/pick your own

We will debrief this activity and discuss how we will use the projects at one of our national meetings post-conference.

Photovoice

Learn about Photovoice
Take photos
Discuss photos & reflect on experience
Record   narratives
Choose photos   for sharing
Invite people   to discussion
Present &   share
Reflect & move forward

OA-INVOLVE: Adapted from L.S. Lorenz 2005

Photovoice of the Conference:

Purpose: To share with OARPG to speak about the conference and about involvement/ experiences of older adults

Take 10-20 photos, review them at the end of the conference and document why the image was important for you to capture

Guidelines about taking the photos: (consent)

Key concepts about Photovoice:

❖ Images teach
❖ Pictures can influence policy
❖ Community members should participate in creating and defining the images that shape public policy
❖ The process requires that from the beginning, planners bring policy makers and other influential people 'to the table' to serve as an audience
❖ Photovoice emphasizes individual and community action

Tips for a successful Photovoice project:

✓ This is an optional activity for the AGE-WELL conference
✓ If you choose to participate, have fun! Photographic experience is not required
✓ Photo quality is not important…your photos will not be critiqued
✓ Use any camera for your project (35 mm, digital, smartphone, iPad)
✓ Select a topic that is of <u>interest to you</u> which you wish to illustrate through imagery: this is <u>your</u> project

- ✓ Think of some questions about your topic you want your images to answer; questions can be positive and/or negative
- ✓ The project is about your experience of taking photos that are important to you and your selected topic as an older adult; who might view your photos?
- ✓ Take as many pictures as you like, however, select a maximum of 5-10 pictures for your project
- ✓ Ensure you are safely standing and on a solid surface while taking pictures
- ✓ Write notes as you take your photos: why did you take each picture?
- ✓ Avoid taking photos of other people: signed consent is required
- ✓ Pictures can be black and white, color or a combination of these
- ✓ Stand about 3-5 feet from your subject
- ✓ Hold your elbows close to your sides and try not to shake while taking photos to reduce blurry images
- ✓ Take photos using different angles, lighting, reflect different viewpoints
- ✓ Be mindful of the area lighting; if outside, keep the sun at your back or to the side
- ✓ Center your subject in your camera lens, ensure it fills the frame
- ✓ If possible, after you take a picture, have someone look at it for clarity
- ✓ Note captions of your selected pictures to add to them

Suggested readings:

1. Implementing Photovoice in Your Community
   http://ctb.ku.edu/en/table-of-contents/assessment/assessing-community-needs-and-resources/photovoice/main
2. Photovoice Facilitators' Guide
   http://www.lslorenz.com/papers/Photovoice_Facilitators_Guide.pdf