

Best Practices for Hosting a Creative Aging Event

Engaging, Empowering, and Inspiring Older Adults Through the Arts

Creative aging events offer more than just programming—they provide meaningful ways for older adults to express themselves, build connections, and keep growing through the arts. Whether you're planning a workshop, exhibit, or performance, these best practices will help you create welcoming, impactful experiences that reflect the spirit of Kaleidoscope.

1. Plan with Purpose: Advancing an Age-Positive Culture: *Your event can empower individuals and help society reimagine aging as a time of possibility, vitality, and voice.*

How Creative Aging Helps Individuals: Invites older adults to define aging as a time of growth, joy, and self-expression.

- Builds confidence and a renewed sense of purpose
- Encourages lifelong learning and curiosity
- Fosters emotional well-being and connection through creativity

How Creative Aging Helps Society: Challenges ageism and reshapes how society views older adults.

- Highlights vibrant, creative contributions of older adults
- Promotes intergenerational understanding
- Shifts narratives from decline to engagement and possibility

2. Accessibility

- All Kaleidoscope events should be free of charge to participants. Removing cost barriers ensures that everyone can take part.
- Choose venues that are ADA-compliant and easy to navigate.
- Consider sensory needs, such as large-print materials and assistive listening devices.
- Be mindful to use language that relates to your audience

3. Outreach and Advertising

- Share your event in community spaces like senior centers, libraries, and newsletters.
- Include clear details about accessibility, transportation, and registration.
- Use age-positive messaging and imagery in all materials and outreach.

4. Partnering with Skilled Teaching Artists

- You may partner with any teaching artist for your event. A list of Teaching Artists who have been trained in Creative Aging Best Practices can be found [here](#).

- If the teaching artist is new to creative aging work, encourage them to complete the free, online course: “[Creative Aging Essentials](#)”.
- Encourage teaching artists to foster community, self-expression, and confidence.

5. The Event Experience: *Include time for sharing and conversation—social connection is a key outcome of creative aging. Consider adding a welcome activity or informal social time before or after the event.*

For Workshops or Classes:

- Focus on creativity and engagement; emphasize process over perfection
- Welcome all skill levels and create space for exploration and learning.

For Exhibits & Performances: Seek to create an *engaging*, rather than a *passive* experience. A passive art experience involves simply observing, while an engaging art experience invites the viewer to interact with the art—interpret, appreciate, reflect, and respond.

Visual Art Exhibits:

- Display work at eye level, with clear labels and artist statements if possible.
- Make exhibits physically accessible, and offer large-print guides or verbal tours
- Host an opening reception with time for artists to speak or mingle.

Performances:

- Design for comfort—consider event length, seating, and lighting.
- Include short artist talks or reflections to connect the audience with the work
- Publicly acknowledge and celebrate participants—never pressure anyone to perform.

8. Reflect and Learn

- After your event complete evaluations: the Kaleidoscope planning committee will provide evaluations for both hosts and participants
- Gather feedback: Ask what participants enjoyed and how they felt.
- Use these insights to improve future events and deepen impact.