The Age Allies Project

Free Age Awareness Training for your Team

The Age Allies Programme

Age Allies is a new Programme, funded by the City Bridge Trust, that provides FREE Age Awareness Workshops to organisations and businesses across London. The three hour workshops have been developed in collaboration with older Londoners and are designed to help participants identify their own unconscious attitudes and assumptions about older people. They use a series of interactive exercises which are co-facilitated by older volunteers.

> "The Age Ally workshop brought unexpected benefits, improving customer awareness and the quality of interactions and service delivery across the board."

Unconscious bias

Attitudes to age and older people have not kept pace with changes in society. Life expectancy has increased enormously and people are living active and healthier lives for longer than ever. Yet 50 is still often seen as the point when one is considered old. These days that would make us old for almost half our lives! Does the label of "old" put all those people in the same category? Are they one homogenous group or a varied and diverse array of individuals with different life-styles, life-chances, motivations and responsibilities who often do not perceive themselves as "old"?

> "The workshop opened my eyes to the invisibility of older people in some situations."

Everyone holds unconscious beliefs about various social and identity groups, and these biases stem from one's tendency to organize social worlds by categorizing. Our biases are influenced by our background, cultural environment and personal experiences.

Innovation and Forward Thinking

The Age Allies Programme is a unique opportunity to develop age awareness within your team. The results have the potential to influence service and product design and delivery and can have real and positive impacts on operational effectiveness and performance. Participants leave the workshop with a greater awareness of themselves in relation to older customers and service users, and with a personal way forward.

> "Thank you for running the workshop – all of us over here agreed that it was a very valuable session. It was great in stimulating us to think about all sorts of issues, both personal and relating to our work."

Age Allies Workshops

The workshop format has been developed with a small group of older volunteers who also act as co-facilitators in the workshops. The content and techniques have been refined and edited through the delivery of a series of pilot workshops to ensure they are effective in the "real" world. They have been designed in such a way as to be effective across sectors and business types. They are not just for customer service workers - they are relevant to staff in all roles and at all levels.

> "The workshop was in good hands. I found people's experiences inspiring. The exercises made you think."

NO death by PowerPoint – Guaranteed!

The workshop uses a series of interactive exercises to raise awareness of age and attitudes about older people. We hear directly from older people about their own experience and begin to understand the consequences of attitudes and language. We move through a process of identifying the current situation and our own unconscious assumptions, through establishing a way forward for individuals and your organization, to an invitation to commit to personal change. Each workshop is three hours and will ideally have between ten and twenty participants. They can be delivered on site at your place of business or at Age UK London.

For smaller organisations, we can organise "mixed" groups and hold the workshops here at Age UK London's offices in Tavistock Square.

> "The workshop was both enlightening and enjoyable."

The Next Step

If you would like to find out more about the workshops and discuss the benefits for your organisation, please get in touch. I am always happy to meet with you for a chat.

In the first instance, please contact me by email:

Richard Norman, Age Allies Programme Officer, Age UK London
rnorman@ageuklondon.org.uk.

Oh, and don't forget – the workshops are FREE!

What participants have said about the Workshops...

"We enjoyed it. Particularly good to have your co-facilitators with lived experience who can share personal stories. Certainly gave us food for thought about our attitudes to older people. Our internal age friendly employer working group are currently considering actions we can take."

"I wasn't sure what to expect but I really enjoyed it. I felt that the discussions and shared experiences made me think about the impact of words and attitudes. I hope to proactively take more time to engage with others. Thank you for a great workshop."

"The "Timeline Selfies" was a brilliant exercise to make us all think about how we make assumptions."

"I particularly appreciated how everyone was included, how they were able to share first hand experiences and how it was able to not only show each of us our strong points but also where one needs to improve."

"I thought the workshop was great (as you can tell from my 10/10 rating), very thought provoking, and I felt it was particularly good that the discussion was directed by the group and the perceptions they have."

"The "Old Words" exercise was very good. I found discussing people's views and perceptions of ageing very interesting and useful. I will think more about today and try to think more about, and recognise, diversity among older people."

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