

Creative Responses to the idea of Age-Friendly Culture

On 18 July, 20 older people came together with writer, Sarah Butler to creatively explore the idea of Age-Friendly Culture as part of the Elders Investigate programme. Below are just five of the great pieces of work produced during the session.

Age Friendly Culture, by Janice

Age is bad
Friendly is good
Culture is good

Age is black
Friendly is yellow
Culture is red

Age is falling
Friendly is embracing
Culture is startling

Age is a double bass
Friendly is a xylophone
Culture is a violin

Age is an epitaph
Friendly is a pun
Culture is a sonnet

Age is King Lear
Friendly is Much Ado
Culture is Hamlet

Age is an encyclopaedia
Friendly is a comic novel
Culture is a classic.

Age Friendly Culture, by Sandy

Culture is the sea you swim in
The strokes you use
The touch of life on your skin, on nerve ends.
You're part of it, whether you like it
Or not.
Whether it's friendly

Or not.

You swim with others.

Do they speak to you?

Do they understand what you say?

Do they recognise you?

Do they care how you got here?

How you learned to swim?

Whose culture needs to be age-friendly?

There's plenty of fish in the sea.

Who trawls their experience?

Who decides what goes into the 'hold'?

What is landed, sold, presented, bought into?

What happens when you can't keep up,

When the shoal moves off

And you're tired of swimming

And there's no land in sight?

Rules for An Oldie's Visit to the Theatre, by Graham

Matinee or evening, which is the best?

A heavy jumper or a sparkly vest?

How will I travel – car or bus?

Which one causes the least fuss?

Should I swot up in advance?

Or open-minded, take a chance?

Will I understand each word?

Or will it all seem too absurd?

Play by ear or make a list

All the things that must not be missed?

Hearing aid, glasses, medication,

In the bar, some lubrication?

Shall I chatter in the break?

Or keep quiet for safety's sake?

Will there be some more old-stagers?

Or will they all be cute teenagers?

Time to go at last I think

Do I want to change my mind?

No! What have I got to lose?
I can always have a lengthy snooze.

Rules For Age Friendly Culture, by Pete

Look for the detail
Look to the horizon and beyond
Look in the mirror
Look out

Listen to yourself
Listen to others
Listen to the band
Listen to the noises

Touch the cold and the hot
Touch the painful and the pleasurable
Touch the rough and the smooth

Taste the bitter and the sweet
Taste something new and strange
Taste the difference

Smell the coffee
Smell a baby's skin
Smell a lover's kiss
Smell food cooking on a hot summer's day
Smell the memories

Some Rules for Age-Friendly Cultural Experiences for Directors and Policy Makers, by Brian

Don't make assumptions. You'll only get it wrong and piss us off.

Don't try to be too clever. We'll see through it. You get smarter with age and spot bullshit a mile off.

And please don't try to be too politically correct. Get things wrong and give us a laugh. But don't offend anyone either – see what I mean, you can't win!

Be inclusive. Recognise, celebrate and value our diversity. We're as different as any other group that it might be tempting to homogenise. And we don't want pasteurising or sterilising while you're at it.

Give us a laugh. Challenge us. Let us see things from another place, a different perspective.

Oh, and throw in a bit of sex. It's not like we don't still do it – or at least want to.