



Poster # 35

Title of poster: Re•Visioning Aging: Using digital storytelling to understand the experience of aging with serious illness

Abstract

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WHAT: Re•Visioning Aging: Using digital storytelling to understand the experience of aging with serious illness

- o This project focuses on the creation of digital stories by older adults with mental illness and dementia and the impact of these stories on healthcare providers.

WHY: Ageism and stigma of growing old with mental illness continue to permeate society and the healthcare experience.

- o Dominant (mis)conceptions about the abilities of older adults, in particular those living with mental illness and dementia, shape the experience of aging with mental illness.

- o Digital storytelling is a person-centred process that builds on the values of maintaining personhood and preserving dignity, key tenets in the culture of person-centred care for older adults.

- o Use of social-contact based interventions has been identified as key ingredient in reducing stigma.

- o Empowering older adults with serious mental illness, particularly older adults with dementia, to engage with technology and develop digital stories also challenges dominant concepts of ageism and stigma as it relates to aging with mental illness.

HOW: Project Re•Vision is a mobile multi-media lab and expressive arts institute led by Dr. Carla Rice at the University of Guelph, dedicated to exploring ways that arts-informed research can work with communities to advance social inclusion and justice by challenging stereotypes. Project Re•Vision has successfully developed methodologies for accommodating people with diverse disabilities and difference including physical, mental and intellectual difference, enabling them to tell their stories and impact others through digital media. Re•Visioning Aging builds on the success of Project Re•Vision by bringing arts based research to seriously ill older adults and their families.

This research will explore the value of digital stories developed by older adults with mental illness/dementia and understanding how they influence healthcare providers and trainees.

Specifically we seek to answer the following questions:

1. Does engagement with the digital storytelling process change older adults and provider perspectives on growing older with mental illness?
2. Do changed perceptions influence clinical practice by enhancing the capacity of providers to communicate and share decision making with older adults?

3. What is the potential of health providers' engagement with digital stories to inform and enhance their attitudes, responses, and clinical competencies in interactions with those aging with mental illness?
 - a. Is there a relationship between ageism and stigma?
 - b. Can original arts-based digital stories be used to complement the education and training of providers and trainees working with older adults with mental illness?
 - c. Can original arts-based digital change providers' feelings towards the elderly or beliefs/attitudes about mental illness?

