

Guidance on adopting an intersectional approach

Victorian Seniors Festival 2024

OFFICIAL

Intersectionality and the Victorian Seniors Festival

The Victorian Seniors Festival is committed to celebrating the experience and knowledge **all** older people bring to the community. This year the Seniors Festival has a dedicated focus on supporting festival events to be even more inclusive and safer for everyone.

The Department of Families, Fairness and Housing wants to support you to build inclusive and accessible events to help reach a broader and greater number of seniors. We know that seniors can experience various barriers to social and community participation, often due to age discrimination. There are some seniors, such as seniors of LGBTI+ communities, First Nations seniors and seniors with disability, who experience even greater disadvantage and barriers to participation. This is due to their experience of multiple forms of discrimination.

This year, we encourage you to use an intersectional approach to reflect on how you can reach seniors who experience systemic barriers to participation and are therefore often excluded.

What is Intersectionality?

Intersectionality helps us to understand how experiences of discrimination and inequality can intersect, overlap, and be interdependent of one another. These experiences create a compounding effect and result in greater disadvantage and marginalisation. For example, older First Nations people experience ageism and racism and these two forms of discrimination come together to shape their experience and can place barriers on their social participation.

Why is an intersectional approach important?

An intersectional approach is a method, tactic or strategy that can help uncover intersecting forms of discrimination and inequality. Using an intersectional approach to inform your events will help develop more inclusive, responsive, and equitable events. It will help you to think more deeply about who you are wanting to reach and the distinct experiences and needs of individuals and communities.

How can I use an intersectional approach to plan events and engage community?

In the context of planning and delivering Seniors Festival events, an intersectional approach means that people with different lived experiences of discrimination and inequality are included so that their voices are used to inform activities and barriers to participation are addressed.

It is important to get the right people in the room from the beginning to plan events. You might do this by engaging community members through advocacy organisations such as Women with Disabilities Victoria or First Nations Disability Network. You could also engage local community groups.

Safe, accessible, and inclusive spaces are critical to providing meaningful and genuine opportunities for engagement and participation. Considerations include scheduling events with caring responsibilities and culturally significant days in mind and using accessible messaging and communications.

OFFICIAL



Families,
Fairness
and Housing

The following questions encourage you to reflect on strategies to engage community in inclusive and equitable ways. This is by no means an exhaustive list.

| |
|--|
| <p>Some questions to consider when engaging community</p> |
| <p>In planning events, what networks, advocacy groups or grassroots organisations can you contact to engage community members with lived experience? This could include Women with Disabilities Victoria, Inclusive Rainbow Voices or First Nations Disability Network. Local community groups are also an avenue to explore and connect with. These networks could also be used as avenues to promote events.</p> |
| <p>Do you have existing connections with these groups? If not, can you make connections with these groups?</p> |
| <p>Do you always consult with the same people and organisations?</p> <p><i>For example, often the same people and organisations are contacted over and over for consultation, especially if they are from a hard-to-reach community. This can result in fatigue and burnout. You could consider creating a Living Expertise Panel or taskforce with ongoing responsibility to feed into different events or engagement over time.</i></p> |
| <p>Some questions to consider when delivering inclusive and accessible events</p> |
| <p>Have you considered the timing of your event/s? Consider religious/cultural days and parenting or caring responsibilities (school pick up/drop off times, etc) when scheduling event/s.</p> |
| <p>Have you considered a model that supports people to participate in event/s in a range of ways?</p> <p><i>For example, in-person and online.</i></p> |
| <p>Have you considered and ensured physical access to the venue?</p> <p><i>The venue location easily accessible by public transport, has no physical access barriers e.g. lift access, has adequate and accessible carparking.</i></p> |
| <p>Does your event/s incorporate different types of knowledge and expertise through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - First Nations knowledge such as oral histories, knowledge encoded in artwork and other non-written forms, practices and information passed on by elders. - Community-based expertise: Working with community groups to share their lived experience - Living expertise: This kind of knowledge comes from ‘lived experience’, where decisions, behaviours and understandings are informed by personal familiarity with the issue. |
| <p>Has your event/s considered cultural safety and trauma-informed practice for marginalised groups especially for First Nations peoples and LGBTI+ community members?</p> <p><i>Engage with community and advocacy organisations to determine how to ensure spaces and events are culturally safe and trauma-informed.</i></p> |
| <p>Have you considered accessible communications for your event/s?</p> <p><i>For example, do you have Auslan interpreters and live captioning to allow all Deaf and hard-of-hearing stakeholders to participate, are you avoiding technical language or jargon, have you asked the community what they need to participate?</i></p> |
| <p>Have you considered if there are any power imbalances between the facilitator and community members? Does the person or organisation facilitating have lived experience or can they be supported by someone with lived experience?</p> <p><i>There are a range of dynamics that can reinforce privilege or perpetuate exclusion and inequality. Some people have had negative interactions with government (at various levels) and may have a level of distrust. Events led by a person representing a form of government may exclude some people from engaging,</i></p> |