

5 Key Findings

Creating a Digital Platform to
Engage Older Adults in Art Activities



Presented by Kathy Smith and Maggie Perquin, on behalf of Direct [Message], a Community Based Inquiry Research Project focused on involving the greater areas of Hamilton, Guelph, and London, in Southwestern Ontario.

1. Through research, we realized the power of the arts to **engage and help to reduce isolation and loneliness** in the older adult demographic.

How can technology facilitate engagement in the arts by older adults experiencing barriers to accessing digital services?

2. Seniors wanted interactions that focus on **skill-building and building social connections.**



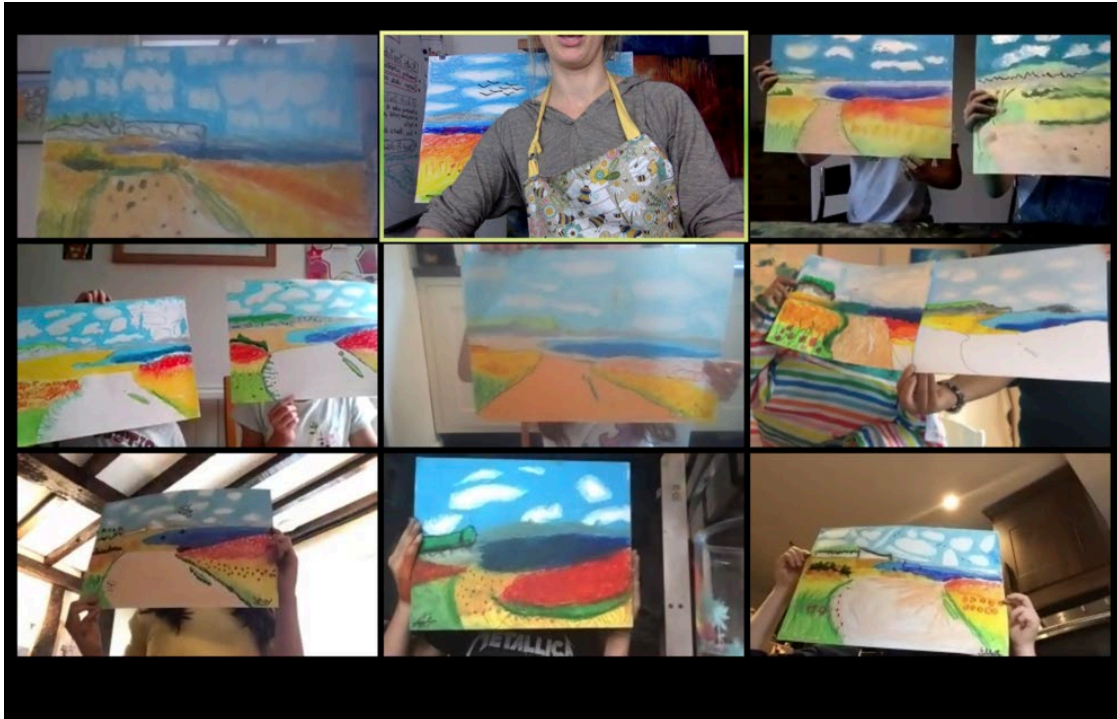
These needs can be met through virtual galleries, user-to-user content sharing, curated resources on skill-building and arts access, and video-based interaction with pared-down set-up and control interfaces.

3. Access to learning arts content needs to be simplified to meet the basic technological skills and equipment. A platform needs to be **low tech, high engagement with ways to speak and connect with others while learning art skills.** Barriers to access need to be removed.

Preliminary Findings: Barriers to Art Engagement

- Low comfort
- Low confidence
- Low skill
- Low comfort in social setting
- Low energy level
- Accessibility barrier due to disability
- Financial barrier
- Geography
- Transportation
- Discrimination (e.g. ageism, racism, sexism, ableism)
- Cultural alienation
- Lack of interesting programs
- Limited program space for enrollment

4. Motivation is high for joining virtual workshops that provide **social interaction and interest in learning arts content.**

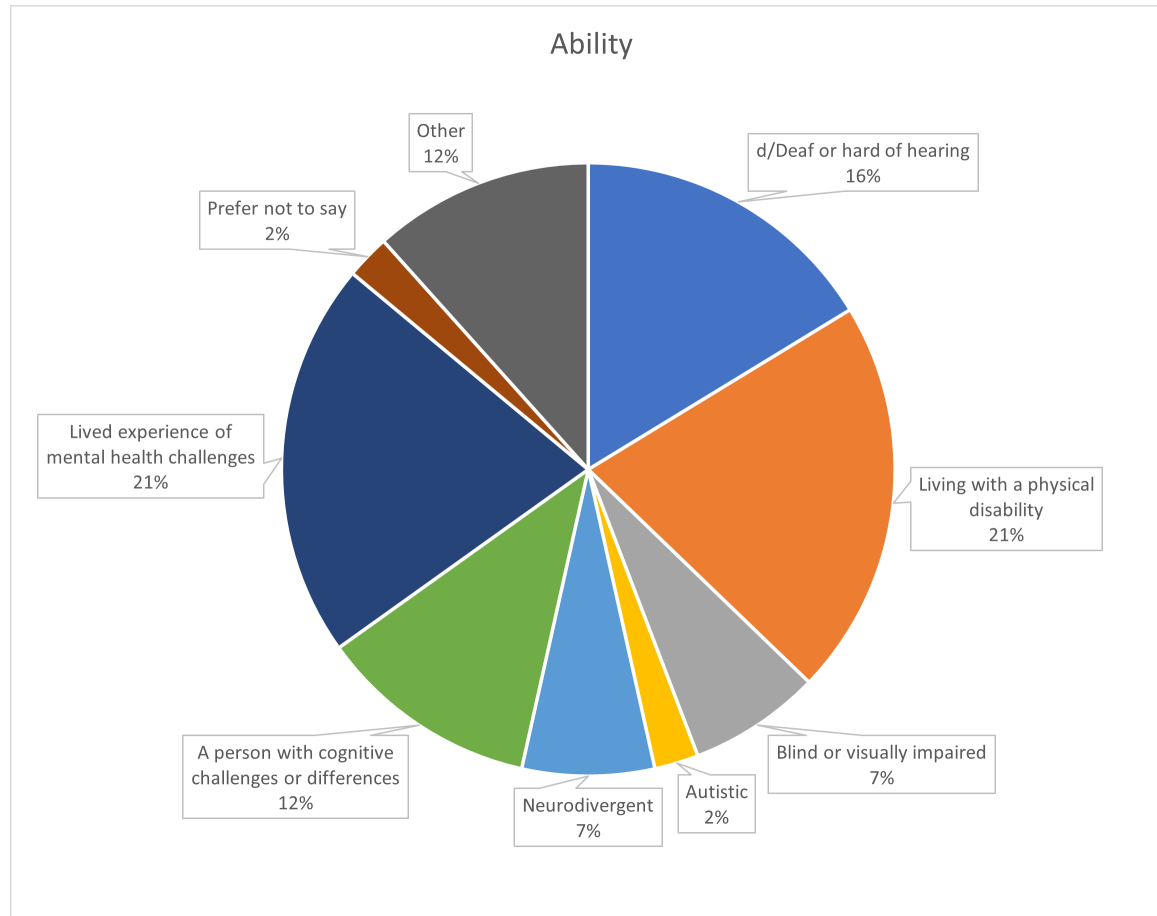


5. Seniors look to the arts as ways of maintaining their **well being** with **social contacts and learning** that is fun and meaningful.



How can we work together with arts and culture organizations to house the content created and share it with service providers and have it accessible to agencies across the region?

Acknowledging Barriers



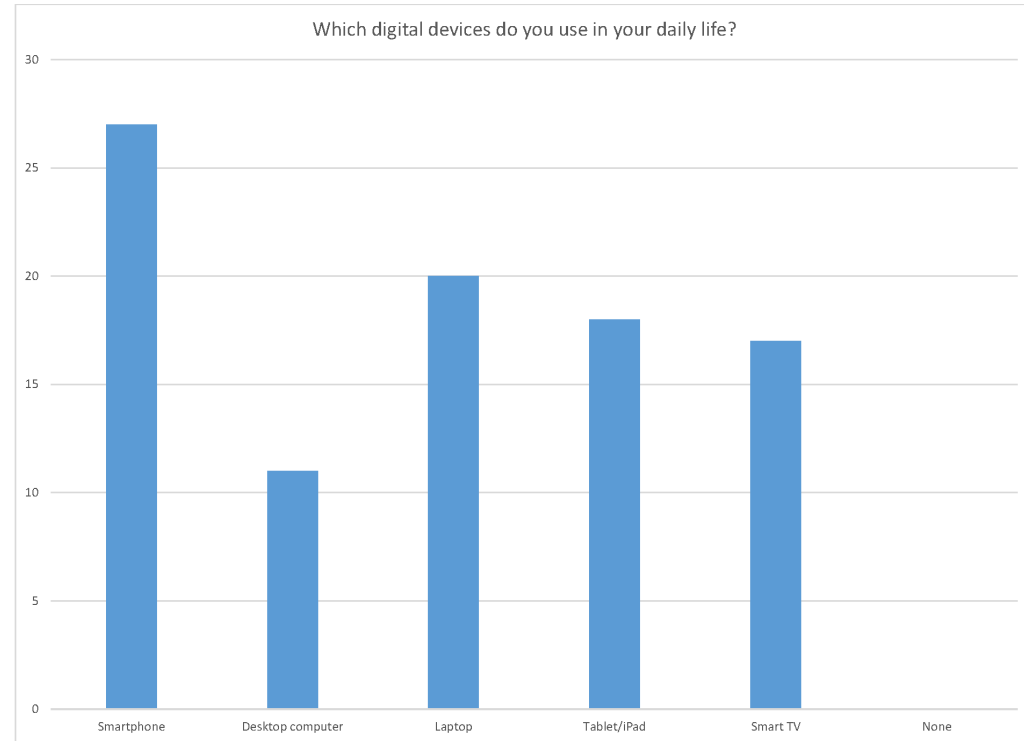
Insights gleaned from this project made it obvious that there is a vital need among older community members for more digital creative programming, that is accessible and inclusive.

General Summary of Findings

Based on our preliminary findings, older adults in Southwestern Ontario overwhelmingly need/want digital options to participate in the arts.

Their motivation to join these activities spurs them to learn the technology necessary to join and create art.

Existing digital opportunities are limited, disappearing, and/or absent. Many older adults remain hesitant to be indoors in group settings.



Why Seniors Art Link?

We have created a website for agencies and groups who provide programming for older adults, to access meaningful art activities that provide social connections as well as skill building opportunities.

- ✓ It is a resource location to store the documents and reports of this research project.
- ✓ Will store the pre-recorded workshop videos, tutorials, artist talks, gallery walk, art crawl videos in full length
- ✓ It will house a list of agencies and businesses that offer free programming in the arts for seniors.
- ✓ Our desire for the future is to focus on developing sustainable virtual options that can promote older adults' engagement with the arts and increase social interactions.

Feedback and Q & A

- ▶ Would this be a platform your organization would find beneficial?
- ▶ Do you see yourself contributing content to the platform for others to use and share?
- ▶ What are you looking for in the future to boost your digital programming?

Feedback

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