



Creative Aging

A Cross-Sector Working Session

PRESENTED BY

Welcome to the Table

THE OPPORTUNITY

Creative aging is reshaping later life to be healthier, more connected and more engaged.

COALITION BUILDING

Every stakeholder here influences aging in our communities — through policy, programs, access, space or resources.

SESSION PURPOSE

Define shared direction and practical, actionable next steps.

Session Map



A NEW DEMOGRAPHIC REALITY



A PROVEN WAY FORWARD



WORKING WITHIN A SYSTEM



FINDING ALIGNMENT



MOVING FORWARD, TOGETHER



A NEW DEMOGRAPHIC REALITY

America is aging, *fast*.



10,000

Americans turn 65 every day.



The Opportunity is Now

- **BY 2030** – 1 in 5 Americans will be over the age of 65
- **BY 2034** – older adults will outnumber children under 18 for the first time in the US
- **BY 2040** – adults 85+ will double, making it the fastest-growing age group



What changes when a population ages?

“Things that worked 20 years ago don’t work now. We need to evolve to meet new realities and engage this new generation where they are.”

-DIRECTOR, AREA AGENCY ON AGING



Impacts Already at Play

- **Caregiving & the Workforce**

More adults are stepping away from work — temporarily and permanently — to care for aging parents and relatives.

- **Health & Social Isolation**

Chronic loneliness in older adults has health risks comparable to smoking 15 cigarettes a day.

- **Community Participation**

As people age, opportunities to learn, create and participate meaningfully often narrow rather than expand.



Downstream Effects

Older adults account for **\$1.4 trillion** in annual US healthcare spending, a figure projected to rise rapidly as the population ages.

What's behind much of this spending?

- Social isolation and inactivity
- Falls, injury and chronic disease progression
- Depression and cognitive decline



A Better Way – Creative Aging

Creative aging opens real opportunities to:

- Reach a growing population
- Expand participation in programs, spaces and services
- Build new cross-sector partnerships
- Increase relevance as community needs evolve

Creative aging isn't just good for people, it's good policy. It's a positive redirection of system resources. It's prevention, participation and purpose all in one.





A PROVEN WAY FORWARD

What if we reframed the narrative?

WHAT IF...

- Instead of reacting to an aging population, we designed for it?
- We intentionally built programming and systems – like creative aging – to support health, connection and purpose earlier, not later?
- We celebrated later life as a stage of continued growth and meaningful connections?

What is real creative aging?

High-quality, professionally led arts learning to support well-being in later life.

- Music
- Movement
- Storytelling
- Design
- Visual art
- Other culturally relevant creative practices



What is real creative aging?



CREATIVE AGING IS:

- Skill-based arts learning
- Led by trained teaching artists
- Designed for older adults as active learners and contributors



CREATIVE AGING ISN'T:

- Entertainment
- One-time enrichment
- Passive participation

Creative Aging is Proven

PHYSICAL

30%

Fewer Physician
Visits



27%

Fewer Hospital
Admissions

20%

Less
Medication Use

COGNITIVE + SOCIAL

20%

Less likely to
experience
depression



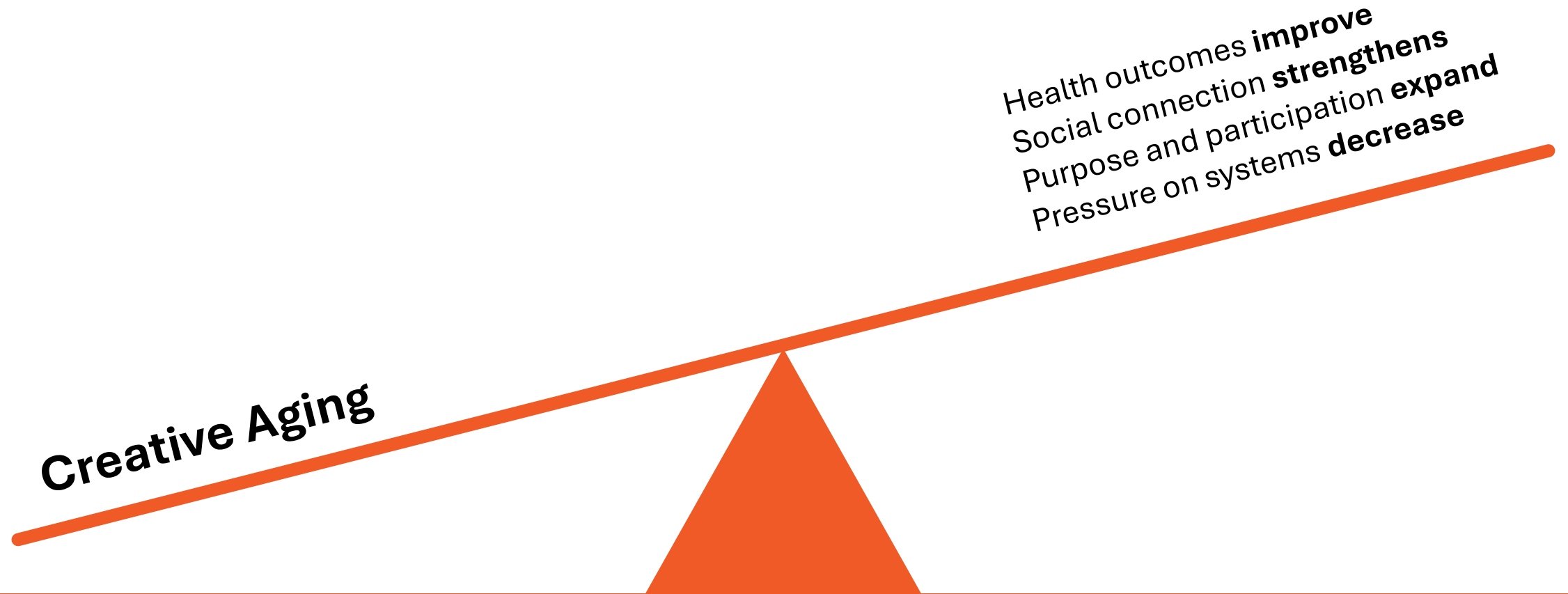
7x

Improved Cognitive
Function

97%

Increased Social
Connection & Confidence

Single Lever, Compounding Impact





WORKING WITHIN A SYSTEM

When Impact Scales, Systems Matter

Health, connection, participation, space, access and care for older adults live across different systems.

To sustain impact at scale, those systems have to move together.

That's where coalitions come in.



Coordinating Strengths



Creative aging builds on what already exists across communities. It doesn't require building an entirely new system.



The Aging Network As a Foundation

STATE UNITS ON AGING (SUAs)

- Lead aging policy and planning at the state level.
- Coordinate funding, priorities and statewide initiatives.

AREA AGENCIES ON AGING (AAAs)

- Deliver and coordinate services regionally.
- Connect older adults to programs, support and resources in their communities.

SENIOR CENTERS & COMMUNITY SITES

- Serve as trusted, local hubs.
- Provide programs, connection and access where people already gather.



Cross-Sector Partners

Arts and community partners strengthen creative aging by providing:

- Teaching artists and creative expertise
- Welcoming and accessible spaces
- Community visibility and trust
- New pathways for participation

Cross-sector partners expand what's possible.





FINDING ALIGNMENT



You're Part of the System



A Local Ecosystem Taking Shape

Connected partners:

- Further individual missions
- Deepen community impact
- Remain relevant as needs and populations shift

**Different roles
with shared
outcomes.**



Observation to Possibility

BASED ON WHO IS AT THIS TABLE NOW:

Where do you see immediate opportunities to connect or collaborate?

What strengths can we better align?

What feels realistic to explore next?



Finding Shared Direction

Many organizations here are already focused on:

- Rural and underserved communities
- Access and equity
- Prevention and early intervention
- Health, well-being and quality of life
- Social connection and reducing isolation
- Community participation and engagement
- Aging in place
- Strengthening local capacity
- Cross-sector collaboration
- Making programs more relevant to changing populations



Starting Small (on Purpose)

Our progress can begin with:

- A small number of pilot programs
- Existing partners and trusted spaces
- Shared learning rather than perfect execution
- Simple measures of participation and experience





MOVING FORWARD, TOGETHER

What We Accomplished Today

- ✓ Built a shared understanding of how aging is reshaping communities and systems
- ✓ Explored creative aging as a credible, evidence-based response
- ✓ Saw how existing systems and partners fit together
- ✓ Identified areas of shared interest and opportunity



What next?

- Continued conversation among interested partners
- Deeper exploration of shared priority areas
- Identification of pilot opportunities
- Ongoing coordination through existing networks



Thank You

Thank you for bringing your time, perspective and experience to this conversation. Your work already shapes how aging is experienced in our communities.

For follow-up or additional resources:

[Name]

[Email]

[Organization]





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