Re-Centering Our Stories, Creating Together

Community-Engaged Intergenerational Storytelling with Black and Racialized Older Adults in Scarborough

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"As you focus on clearing your generational trauma, do not forget to claim your generational strengths. Your ancestors gave you more than just wounds."
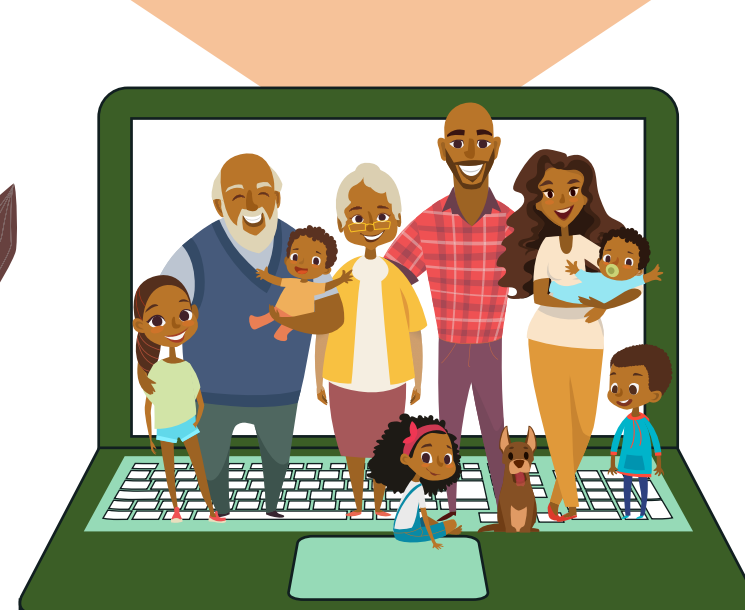
– Xavier Dagba [1]

Age and aging are often problematized as issues of public health resource consumption, economic sustainability and healthcare-provision. This conventional framing contributes to harmful stereotypes that diminish opportunities for older people to age with dignity and respect. Furthermore, Black and racialized people are projected to account for 25% of older adult Canadians by 2032. [2]

25%
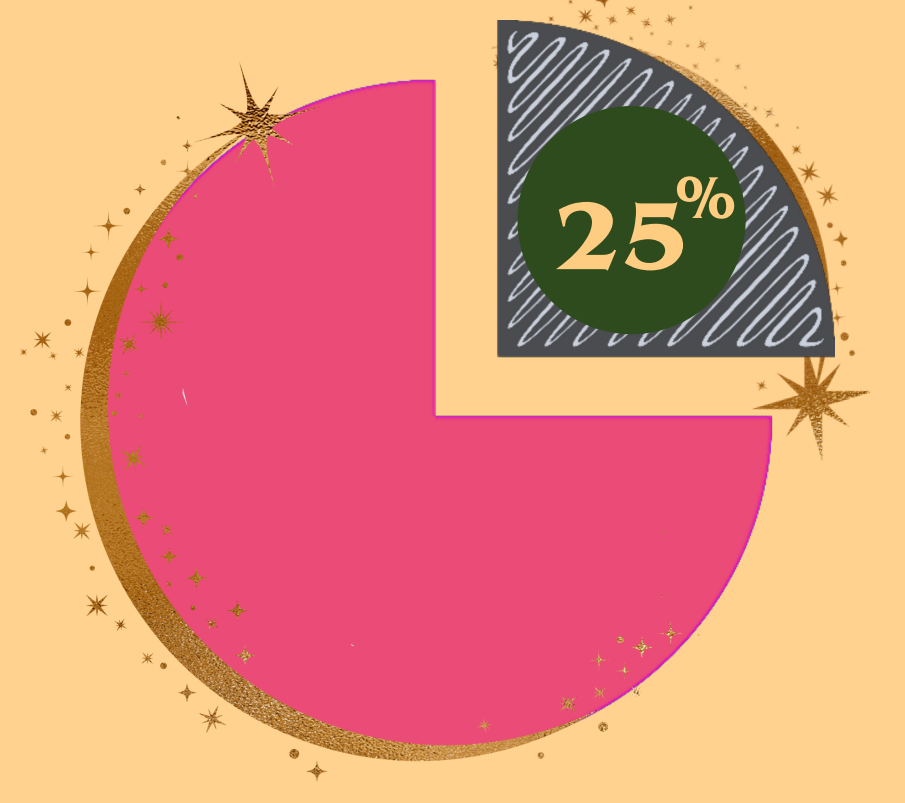
Racialized Older Canadians
Projected Percentage for 2032

Rooted in the African principle of *Sankofa*, meaning '*go back and get*,' intergenerational storytelling facilitates a necessary return to **culturally-embedded arts-based social wellness practices for Black and racialized peoples**, while **Digital Storytelling** offers innovative contemporary possibilities for exploring arts-led approaches to collective wellbeing. [3]

This early stage research adopts **community-based participatory action research** methods. Working with community partner TAIBU Community Health Centre, this research investigates how 4-cohorts of 10 Black/racialized older adults aged ≥ 50 engage with digital storytelling to realise Africentric values. Collected data includes transcribed interviews/focus groups (qualitative), pre- and post-scales (quantitative) and participant generated digital stories. [4]

"High quality arts engagement is itself a method for enhancing self-determination and creativity for Black and racialized older adults, a concept consistent with Africentric cultural values including Kujichagulia (self-determination, the freedom to advocate and create for oneself); Ujimaa (collective work and responsibility); Kuumba (creativity); and Imani (faith in humankind)." – Liben Gebremikael, [5]

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Research Questions

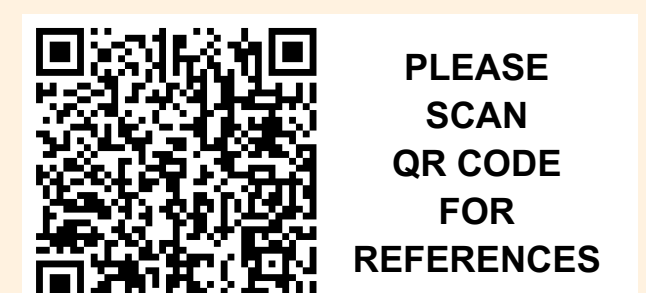| What experiences of aging emerge through digital storytelling methods for Black and racialized older adults?	How might stories of aging by Black and racialized older adults inform/sustain culturally-supportive arts-programming?	How does community-engaged digital storytelling offer insights into Africentric-values of intergenerational knowledge exchange?	How might digital storytelling as an arts engagement method inform emerging social wellness theorizations?

Digital Storytelling Intervention & Research Workflow

Outreach & Recruitment	• Circulate promotional material • Invite respondents to Orientation Session • Refer respondents to Resemblage Project website
Introduction & Orientation	• Welcome participants and establish collective values & group norms • Share Digital Storytelling examples • Engage with generative writing prompts & simple voice recordings
Research Creation Workshops	• Develop scripts & storyboards • Provide creative software training and ongoing capacity building & support • Produce Digital Stories
Gallery Showcase	• Showcase Digital Stories in a community gallery exhibit • Publish Digital Stories & collective transcript on Resemblage Project website • Conduct artist and audience experience interviews
Data Analysis & Knowledge Exchange	• Compile and review pre- and post scales • Segment and analyse transcribed interviews and focus groups • Publish results with a focus on collective knowledge exchange