

# Connecting Reflections: Narratives of Older Adults' Participation in Pandemic-Era Photovoice

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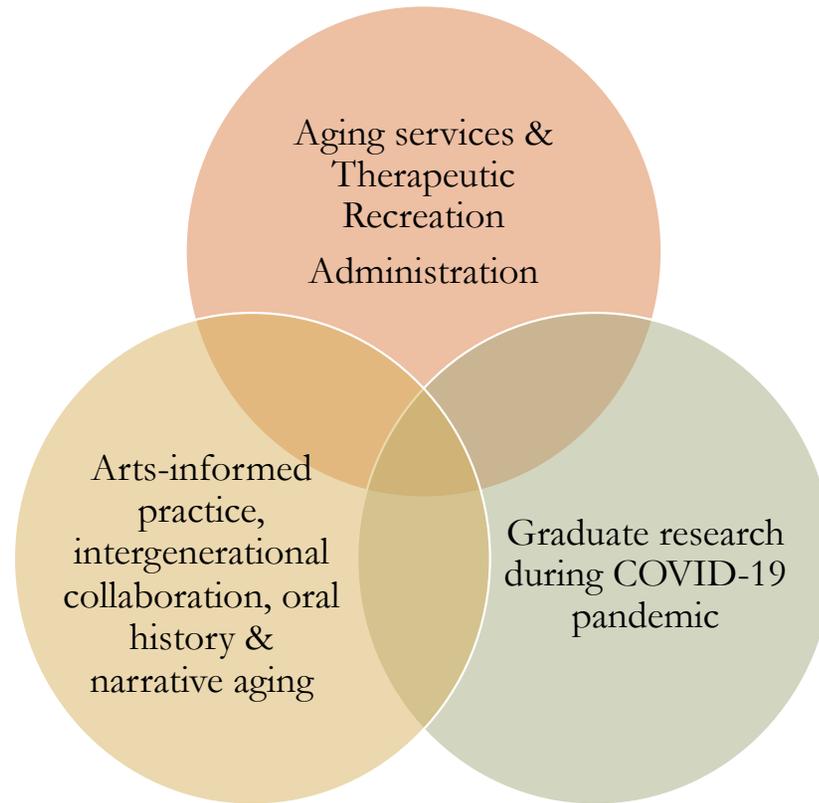
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University of New Hampshire



GRADUATE  
RESEARCHER  
BACKGROUND



RESEARCH  
CONTEXT

Pandemic-era research participation

Qualitative researchers have begun to collect **narratives of lived experience** during COVID-19 pandemic

Participatory Action Research approaches aim to **center voices of vulnerable groups**

Adults age 65+ experienced **high death rates & deficits-based master narratives** during pandemic

SETTING:  
1:1 EVALUATION  
INTERVIEWS

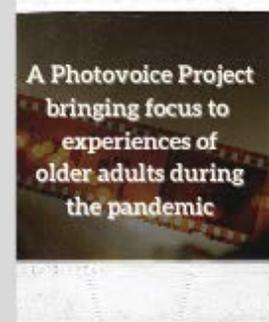


THE UNIVERSITY OF NEW HAMPSHIRE  
& BROCK UNIVERSITY ARE SEEKING VOICES  
FOR A PROJECT ON

### Older People's Perspectives of Leisure & Well-being During COVID-19

Photovoice is a hands-on research approach that uses photography and group discussions to share visual life stories, address community issues & inspire positive change. Participants will take photos and write captions illustrating important aspects of their well-being.

Participants will meet online in small focus groups to share these visual life stories and identify challenges and solutions related to their well-being during the pandemic. Participants will attend a one-hour pre-screening session, six focus group meetings, and a one-hour post-project individual interview.



#### To Participate in this project you should:

- be 65 years of age or over
- serve as your own legal guardian
- live in the community
- be able to communicate and understand basic English
- own or have regular access to a cellphone, camera, tablet, or other device with camera function for photo-taking
- Own or have regular access to a device that can join virtual meetings with camera function

For more information please contact our research assistant:  
Madelyn Gates-Milardo by email: [mgg1034@wildcats.unh.edu](mailto:mgg1034@wildcats.unh.edu)

Research led by Dr. Allison Wilder (Associate Professor, UNH) and Dr. Pei-Chun Hsieh  
(Assistant Professor, Brock University, Ontario, Canada)

For more information about research at the University of New Hampshire, contact  
Julie Simpson at Research Integrity Services | 603-862-2003 | [julie.simpson@unh.edu](mailto:julie.simpson@unh.edu)

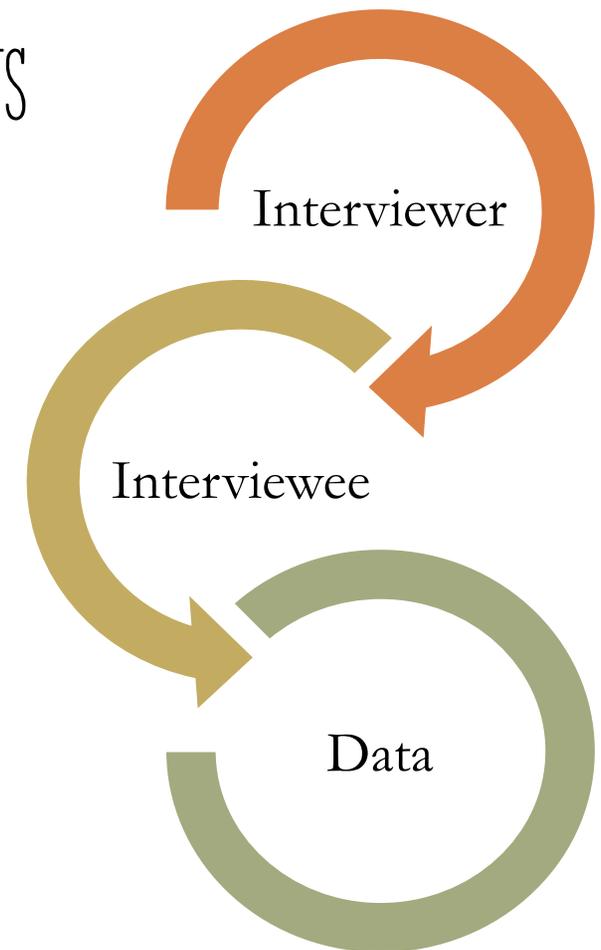
This study has been reviewed and received ethics clearance from the Brock University  
Research Ethics Board (file #20-282) and the University of New Hampshire Institutional  
Review Board (file #8507)

# NARRATIVE ANALYSIS OF EVALUATION INTERVIEWS

How can evaluation interviews be a site for **collaborative, therapeutic reflection?** (Kvale, 2001)

How can data from evaluation interviews support participant narratives?

Can the interviews themselves support participants?



# TO LEARN SOMETHING NEW



At first,



But then,

STORY ARC FORMAT

Look for phrasing that sets the stage...conveys past, present, and future selves



And so

# DATA ANALYSIS PROCESS

Step	Method	Result
1	Verbatim transcription	Transcripts with "quotations", [notes about non-verbal communication]
2	Close-reading to develop logic for inquiry	What did participants <b>want to share</b> ? - questions that inspired, long narrative passages, anecdotes, illustrations, animation!
3	Narrative analysis to find "engagement strategies" (Seaman et al. forthcoming; Tannen, 2008)	Metaphor Constructed dialogue Storying formats
4	How are strategies being used to convey meaning? <i>What <b>was it like</b> to participate in this project?</i>	Establishing themes of meaningful feedback
5	How do these meanings relate <u>across experiences</u> ?	Five emerging themes of meaningful participation

## NARRATIVE ANALYSIS

- In conversations, people share stories for a reason
  - Stories convey meaning
  - We can find themes within stories to look for similar experiences

# WHAT WAS MEANINGFUL ABOUT THIS EXPERIENCE?

- Surprise & embodiment
- Introspection
- Perspective
- Relating to others
- Change, learning, growth
- Instrumental reminiscence



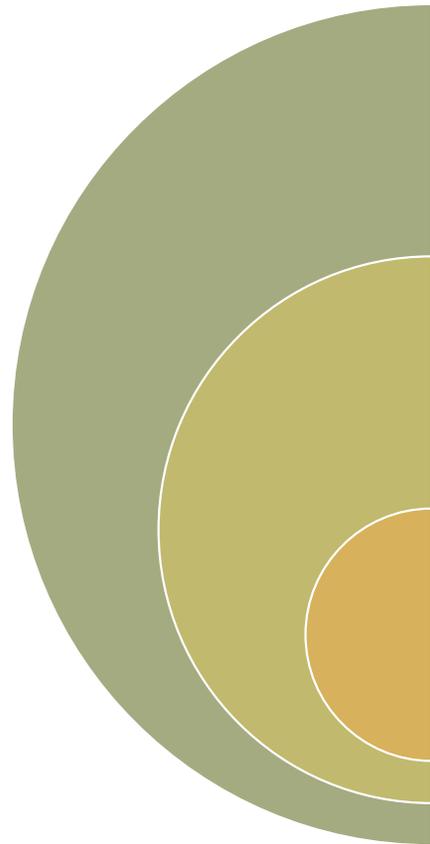
## TO SEE A DIFFERENT POINT OF VIEW

The whole process of doing that was sort of an exercise in self-awareness. Becoming aware of my own spiritual well-being: "what am I doing about that? My own emotional well-being?" "What does that really mean to me?" ... And so, it was...what looked every week, like, "Uh oh, I got something to do that's going to be difficult and I don't know how to do it" ended up every week being something like "wow, that was really interesting to do," I, I found that helpful...I found that that was worthwhile effort.

To illustrate their definition of "whole process" as an "exercise in self awareness" they use a familiar story format signified by "And so, " and constructed dialogue [signaled with quotes] to give voice to a past self.

CONSTRUCTED DIALOGUE

# IMPLICATIONS



## NARRATIVE AGING

- Therapeutic facilitation of reminiscence can support developmental tasks in older adulthood
- Sharing alternative narratives of aging may counter deficits-based master narratives

## PRACTICE

- Group and 1:1 reminiscence can be a site of therapeutic growth
- Strengths-based approaches support *collaboration with* instead of *service to* older adults

## RESEARCH

- Engaging with older adult participants in PAR-based methods can support purposeful reflection, collaborative learning, and mutual benefits
- Purposeful, collaborative reflection between researchers and participants during evaluation interviews can support therapeutic outcomes

## IMPLICATIONS

Center participant voices

Learn alongside them

Support valuable roles for participants  
across the lifespan

