RESULT 5 · ACTIVITIES FOR SENIOR & INTERGENERATIONAL GROUPS

Memory Lane Interviews



Older and younger people interview each other about how life worked "then" and "now", turn the best stories into a one-sheet folded zine, and swap the zines at a mini book launch.

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ACTIVITY 13 · STORY · INTERVIEWS · ZINE · INTERGENERATIONAL

13



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FORMAT	TIME	GROUP
Story · interviews · zine · intergenerational	75–90 min (or two sessions of 45 min)	6–30 · pairs of one older and one younger person
LETTERS	**YOU NEED**	
O · R	Interview question cards and zine template (Printable L), A4 or A3 paper, scissors, glue, coloured pens, old magazines or newspapers, a phone for recording (optional, only with permission)	

THE ACTIVITY IN PLAIN WORDS

Before supermarkets, smartphones and fast fashion, people lived with fewer things and made them last. Many of those habits are exactly what sustainability experts recommend today. In this activity, an older and a younger person sit together as reporters. Each interviews the other with question cards: "How did your family keep food fresh without a fridge?", "What is the oldest thing you own?", "What do your friends do with clothes they no longer wear?". Then each pair turns the best answers into a small eight-page zine, folded from a single sheet of paper. The session ends with a "book launch" where everyone swaps zines and reads one story aloud. It is about listening, laughing and noticing that good ideas travel in both directions.

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You will need

- Interview question cards (Printable L), one set per pair
- The zine template (Printable L) and one blank A4 or A3 sheet per pair for the final zine
- Scissors, glue sticks, coloured pens, old magazines, newspapers and seed catalogues for collage
- Photocopies of family photos (optional, brought by participants, only if they wish)
- A table set up as a "newsroom", with tea and coffee nearby
- Optional: a phone to record the interview, only with the agreement of both people

Before the session

- Pair people in advance if you can, mixing ages: a grandparent with a grandchild, a senior with a student volunteer, or neighbours who have never met.
- Print and cut the question cards. Fold one example zine yourself so you can show how it works. It takes about three minutes the first time.
- Prepare a short "permission" moment: no story is shared, recorded or photographed without the agreement of the person who told it.
- Set up the book launch corner: a table, a little bell, perhaps a vase of flowers.

OPENING LINES · READ ALOUD

"Welcome to our newsroom. Today every one of you is a reporter, and every one of you is also a story. Older people here carry decades of clever habits: mending, preserving, sharing, making do. Younger people carry new ideas: apps for second-hand clothes, repair videos, new ways of sharing. We are going to interview each other, collect the best stories, and print our own tiny magazine, called a zine. There is one rule for good reporters: listen more than you talk, and always ask, 'Can you tell me more?'"

How to run it

1 The reporter's warm-up — 5 min

In pairs, each person has one minute to tell the other the story of their name, or of the object they carry most often. The listener must not interrupt. Then swap. Ask: "How did it feel to be listened to for a whole minute?"

2 Draw the questions — 5 min

Each pair shuffles the question cards and draws six: three "Then" cards, three "Now" cards. Each person may swap one card if they prefer not to answer it. Nobody has to share anything private.

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3 Interview one — 12 min

The younger person interviews the older person with the "Then" cards. They take notes, write down one exact quote, and ask at least two follow-up questions: "Who taught you that?", "Do you still do it?", "Why did people stop?"

4 Interview two — 12 min

The older person interviews the younger person with the "Now" cards: second-hand apps, repair videos, food sharing, what friends do with old phones. Same rules: notes, one exact quote, two follow-up questions.

5 The bridge — 5 min

Together, the pair looks for one "bridge": an old habit that has a new version today. For example, the rag-and-bone man and today's second-hand apps, or grandmother's jars of preserves and today's batch cooking. Write it in large letters.

6 Make the zine — 20 min

Fold and cut the A4 sheet into an eight-page booklet following the template. Fill the pages: a cover with a title, the "Then" story, the "Now" story, the bridge, a quote, a drawing or collage, a top tip, and a back page with the names of the reporters (first names only, or pen names). Collage, drawings and sticky tape are all welcome.

7 The book launch — 10 min

Pairs put their zines on the launch table. Ring the bell. Each pair reads one page aloud. Then everyone walks or passes zines around and takes a different one home, or the group photocopies them into a collection.

EXAMPLE

In a community hall in Pärnu, Ilmar (79) and Kertu (19), a student, draw the card "How did your family keep food through the winter?". Ilmar describes the cellar under his parents' farmhouse: potatoes in sand, sauerkraut in a barrel, berries boiled with sugar into jam. Kertu asks, "Who taught you?" and gets a story about his aunt and her very strict rules. Then Ilmar interviews Kertu about the "Now" card on clothes: she buys most of her clothes on a second-hand app and once mended her jacket with a video. Their bridge: "Cellar then, freezer and food-sharing app now: the idea is the same, don't waste the harvest." Their zine is called *Nothing Wasted* and has a drawing of a sauerkraut barrel on the cover.

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KEY IDEA

Many traditional habits (repairing, reusing, preserving, sharing) are what the EU now calls the circular economy: keeping products and materials in use for as long as possible and cutting waste. Learning across generations also matters for wellbeing. The World Health Organization names intergenerational contact as one of three strategies that work to reduce ageism, and recognises social isolation and loneliness as serious risks to older people's health. Sources: European Commission, Circular Economy Action Plan (2020); World Health Organization, Global report on ageism (2021) and its work on social isolation and loneliness.

Debrief

1

What happened?

What surprised you about your partner's life? What did you have in common that you did not expect?

2

So what?

Which "old" habits are actually modern solutions? Which new ideas would have helped people in the past? Why do we stop doing useful things?

3

Now what?

Which one habit from your partner will you try? Who else in your family or street would you like to interview?

Make it work for your group

- **Limited mobility, sight or hearing:** Use large-print question cards (at least 14 pt) and A3 paper for the zine. A younger partner can do the cutting and folding while the older partner directs. Seat pairs in a quiet corner, away from noise, and face each other for lip reading.
- **Mixed-age (intergenerational) version:** This is the core version. If you have more seniors than young people, form trios. If no young people are available, pair people of different ages within the senior group (a 58-year-old and an 85-year-old often have very different stories).
- **No-device version:** This activity needs no device. Notes on paper are best.
- **Online or hybrid version:** Pairs meet in breakout rooms for the interviews. Each person makes their half of the zine at home, then shows it on camera at the book launch. The facilitator can collect photographs and compile one digital zine, with permission.
- **Short (20-min) version:** One interview each way with two cards only, then make a single "bridge" postcard instead of a zine.

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WATCH OUT

Memories can bring up loss, war, poverty or illness. Let people pass on any question, and give a gentle way out: "Shall we try another card?". Never push for private details. Before recording, photographing or sharing any zine outside the room, ask both people for permission, and use first names only. If you want to publish zines online or in a newsletter, collect written consent in line with your organisation's data protection rules. Scissors: offer rounded ones and let people choose whether to cut.

OWN IT

Choose one habit your partner described and try it within the next two weeks. Or interview one more person. For example: "Next Sunday I will ask my grandmother how she made blackcurrant jam and we will make one jar together, using fruit from the market."

Related: Living well and staying connected · G-PRO cards: W-17 Ask the Eldest, KS-08 Food from the Past, KR-10 Circular Economy: Old Habit, New Name, KN-07 Plant Knowledge You Carry, KW-06 A River You Have Watched Change

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