



HOW TO CREATE AN INTERACTIVE (AGING IS) LIVING TREE" THAT RAISES AWARENESS OF AGEISM

WHY A TREE?

Art Against Ageism is about creating artistic endeavors that confront and combat ageism, as well as advance age positivity. With this in mind, we found inspiration in Yoko Ono's Wish Trees, which have been installed all over the world. Our version of this is the "(Aging is) Living Tree," an interactive exhibit that is adorned with tags bearing participants' thoughts and experiences about age, aging, and ageism. When the tags are hung, it causes the tree to "bloom" and bear witness to how ageism affects all of us.

FIND THE RIGHT "TREE"



Find a small tree or large plant (we used a ficus plant) that can stay indoors in case of inclement weather. You can also use an artificial tree that has no branches (we found some on Wayfair and Amazon that have no leaves but with twinkle lights, as the photos to the left illustrate). Make sure the plant or tree has enough branches to hold plenty of tags on them. You can be placed outdoors on the grounds of your community or it can be artificial or handmade and displayed on an interior or exterior wall. Use your imagination! But remember that you will want the tags to stay on the branches, so exposure to wind and rain may not be ideal for them.



SCOUT A LOCATION



Find a well-trafficked, public area in your community (such as the lobby) to place the plant or tree. This is a very important aspect to ensuring the installation gets attention and that everyone who comes into the community feels they can interact with it. If you're putting the tree in a nursing home, please be sure to make it accessible to residents, even if you have to move it up to their rooms or lounge areas temporarily. Including EVERYONE in this endeavor is key to the success of the project.

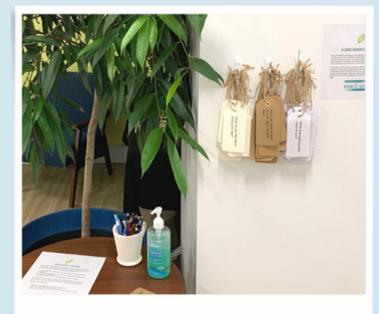


CREATE & SET UP THE TAGS



Purchase some tags (we found ours at Michaels but they are also available on Amazon). It's easier to get ones with strings attached. Be sure they are large enough for people to write on them. The next step is to add the questions to them. You can write directly on the tags or print clear labels with the three questions below, divided equally among them (we made 30 of each to start):

- HAVE YOU BEEN JUDGED BY YOUR AGE? IF SO, IN WHAT WAY?
- WHAT DOES AGING MEAN TO YOU?
- WHAT DOES BEING __ YEARS OLD MEAN TO YOU?



Feel free to add or change your questions, but please be mindful of the wording. Here are some suggestions:

- What does an elder care community freed from ageism look like to you?
- What does being older or younger mean to you?
- Do you feel positive or negative about being older? How so?

NOTES & SUGGESTIONS

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE QUESTIONS

We took some time to carefully craft the questions for this project, as we wanted people of all ages to feel like they can answer them, since ageism affects people of all ages. We consulted several resources to find the right questions and the most helpful guidance from the following: the Old School Anti-Ageism Clearinghouse's [Consciousness Raising Guide](#) and [Timeslip's Beautiful Questions](#).



A WORD ABOUT THE TAGS



The senior living community we worked with had a skilled nursing component where regulations called for the tags to be fire retardant. Therefore, we purchased a spray and treated each tag with it. It was an added layer of work but didn't seem to adversely affect the tags.



ENCOURAGE PARTICIPATION & INTERACTION

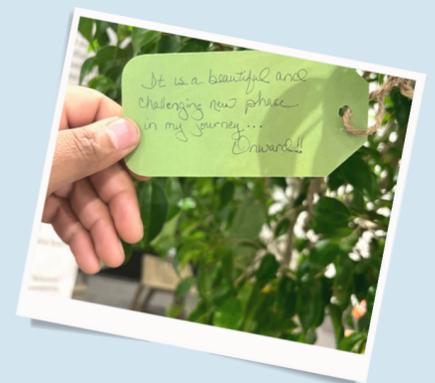
Set up the tags along with instructions, and pens or pencils. Make sure everything is easily accessible for people of all abilities. Print the questions as large as possible. Use your staff and family/resident newsletters and other communications vehicles, such as your website, to encourage participation in the installation. You can also offer an option for people to complete the tags via your social media.



CONTINUE THE CONVERSATION

The goal of this art project is to raise awareness of ageism among everyone who visits, lives or works in your community. Therefore, the answers on the tags should be recorded and used for additional activities around ageism, such as a panel discussion, messaging for a mural, or other creative endeavor that continues the discussion.

Please send us photos of your tags so we can record them! Also, document your activities around the process of creating the exhibit via photos and video so we can share it on our website and promote your work via our social media channels. We would appreciate you sharing the tag responses with us once you have recorded them via an Excel file. Send your photos and video files to Meg@ArtAgainstAgeism.org.



Questions or Need Assistance? Contact Meg LaPorte at Meg@ArtAgainstAgeism.org or Jordan Evans at Jordan@ArtAgainstAgeism.org.

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