

# Lessons learned: Informal falls conversations using a world café approach



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# Background



- Falls are the leading cause of injury, injury related hospitalisation and injury related deaths among older adults in the US and Australia.
- Older people have low self perceived risk of falls and low levels of knowledge about falls and falls prevention.

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# Falls prevention in Australia

- A large Australian population survey - nearly 35% of older people surveyed thought that falls programs (such as exercise groups) were better for other adults who are **older** than for themselves.
- Previous studies have found that older people often find falls prevention information **confusing** or perceive that being considered at risk of falls can be a **threat to their identity** and autonomy.

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# Delivering falls prevention advice

- Older persons do not think they are ***personally*** at risk of falls.
- Little is known about how falls prevention information is ***initially*** sought out.
- Scant information on how falls prevention information ***should be presented*** either to older people more broadly.
- This was the focus of the ***world café***.



# The ethos of world café

- User friendly group discussion / consensus forum – cooperative in approach.
- Cross pollination of ideas through successive rounds of conversation.
- Enables larger groups of people to link together as part of a connected conversation.



- Aldred, R. (2011). From community participation to organizational therapy? World Café and Appreciative Inquiry as research methods. *Community Development Journal*, 46(1), 57-71. doi: 10.1093/cdj/bsp039

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# What is world café?



- Community Participatory Research approach
- Collective consensus of opinion technique and is conducted in an informal setting.
- Successive rounds of table discussion garner opinions from participants. The informal setting uses a number of data collection techniques.
- Discussions collated at each table by the table host.
- Final open discussion invites further consensus from

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# Why is it different to other community engagement strategies?



- Informal setting encourages all participants to hold a conversation at each smaller table.
- Enables those who are reluctant to speak in the open forum to give their opinions.
- Use of writing / drawing materials as part of data collection.

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# Why does it work well?



- Immediate answers and responses from attendees.
- Some speak more freely in the informal café style setting. A more relaxed atmosphere is created.
- Small table based informal conversations merge together = a holistic understanding of a topic.
- Validation of responses immediate in final synthesis.

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# Roles in a world cafe

- Café convenor / facilitator.
- Café host.
- Table host.
- Member / participant.



## Table Host Profile

- Background in education or health.
- Worked regularly with older people in a number of contexts.
- Included hosts who were in the age range of participants.

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## Key objectives of the cafe

- To take a step back from evaluating older people's perceptions of falls programs.
- Re-engage the community in a partnership.
- To provide relevant and topical feedback ...

*What do older people in Western Australia think about ways of seeking and receiving falls prevention health related information.*

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# Table questions

Discussion points per table:

- Triggers to seeking falls prevention (FP) information.
- What makes FP information meaningful.
- Preferences for FP information and from whom.
- How to reduce falls.
- Sharing stories to prevent falls in others.

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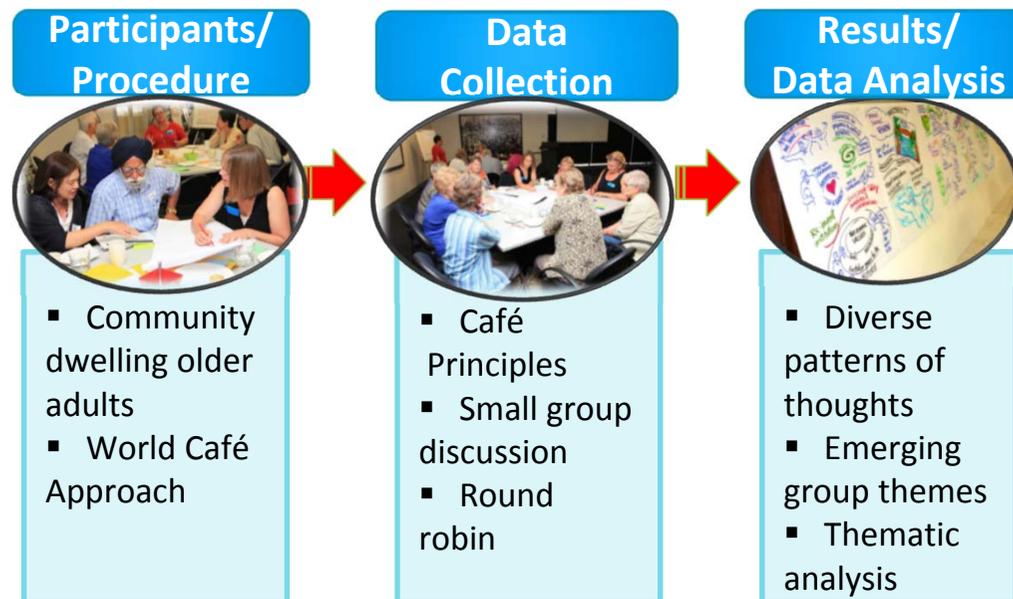
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# Community Engagement World Café Overview



# Evaluating world café on falls prevention

- 72 community dwelling older adult attendees.
- Survey responses completed at the end of the café morning.
- Attendees were invited to give their responses and opinions on participation in the world café setting.

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### Empowering

- Being given a voice.
- Interaction and sharing of ideas. Gaining knowledge

*"This was a wonderful experience. Knowledgeable, committed people. Great passion and enthusiasm in the room."*

*"It was very informative. I was amazed at the statistics about falls."*

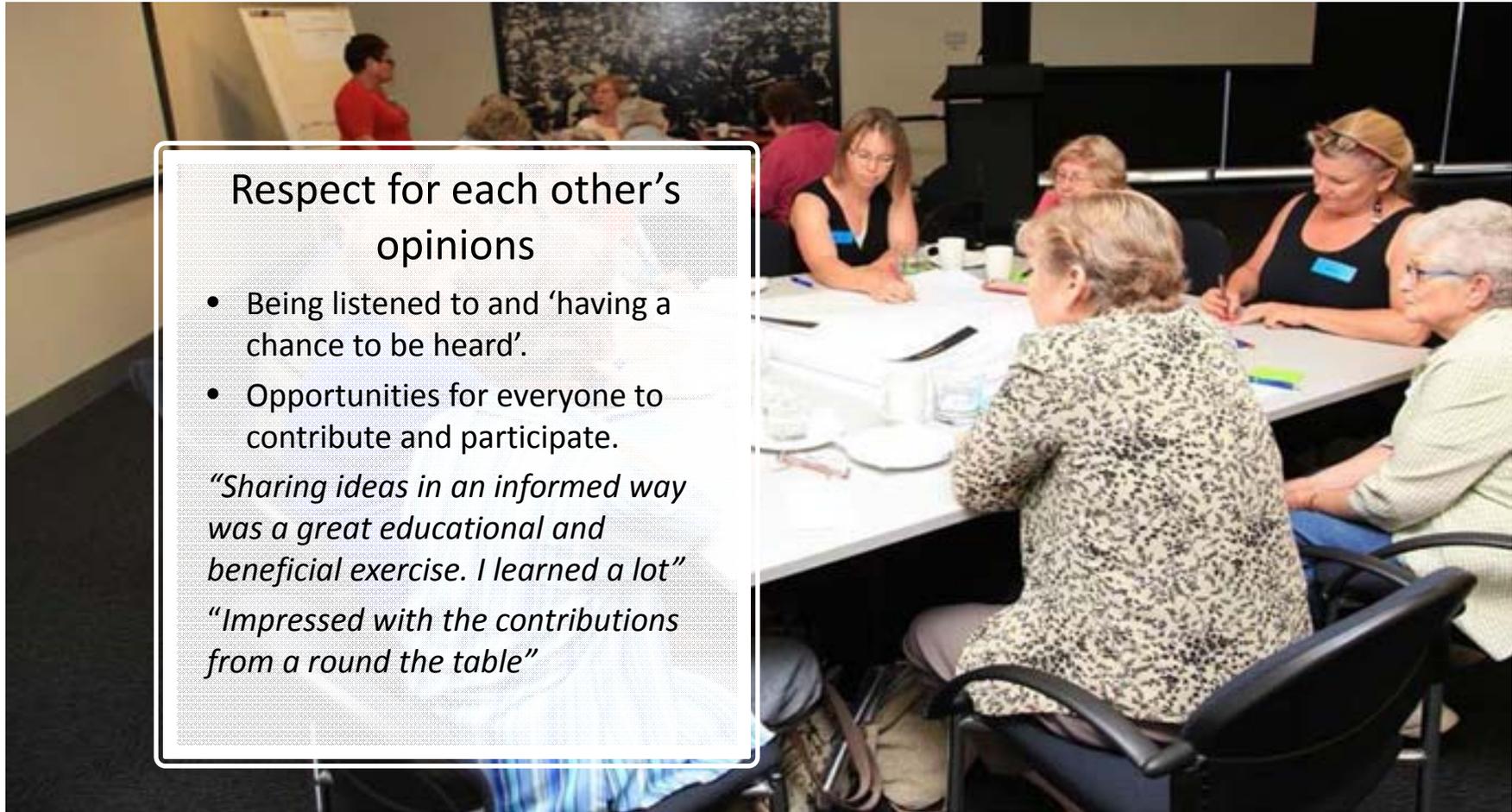
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## Respect for each other's opinions

- Being listened to and 'having a chance to be heard'.
- Opportunities for everyone to contribute and participate.

*"Sharing ideas in an informed way was a great educational and beneficial exercise. I learned a lot"*

*"Impressed with the contributions from a round the table"*

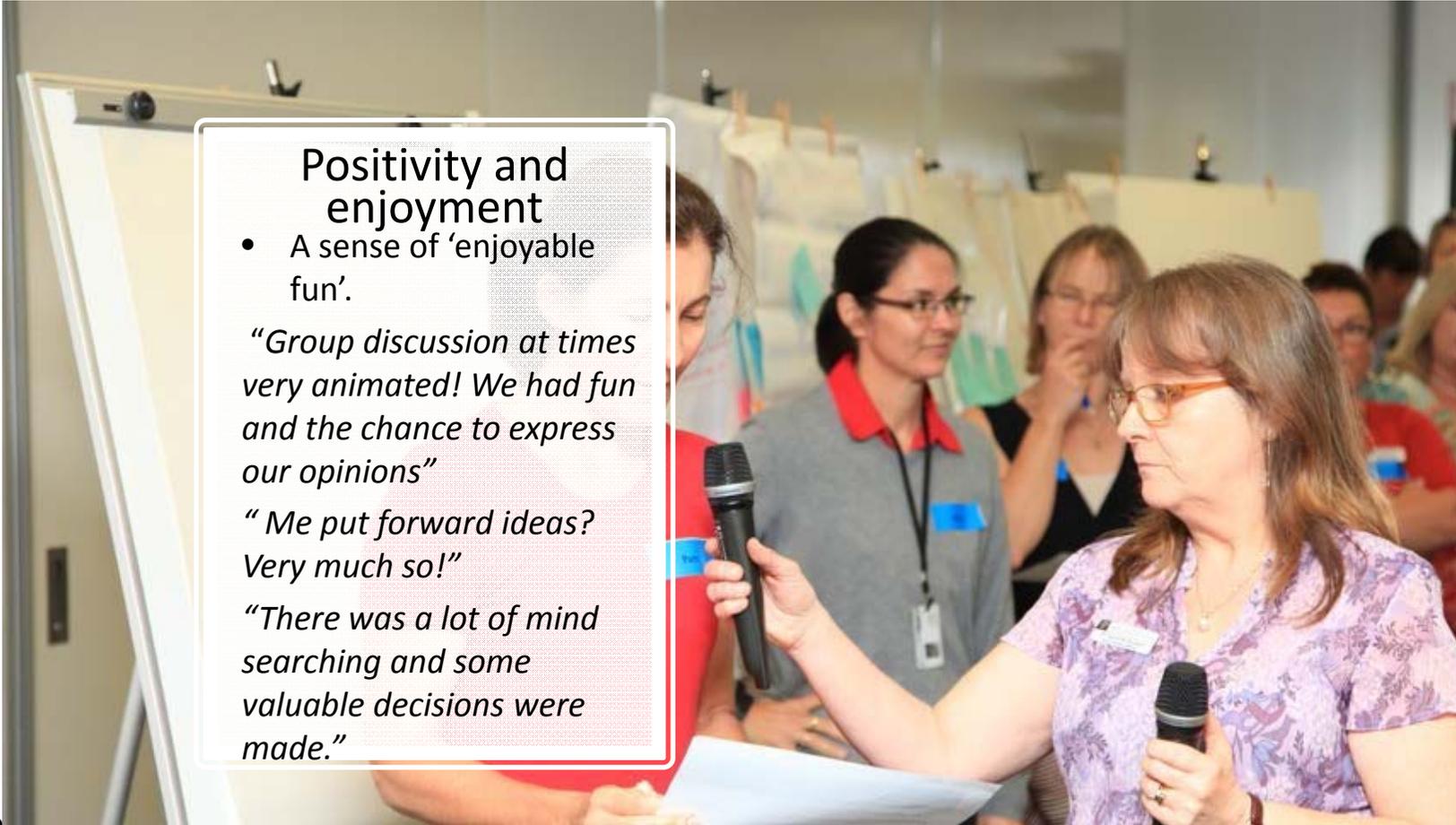
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## Positivity and enjoyment

- A sense of 'enjoyable fun'.

*"Group discussion at times very animated! We had fun and the chance to express our opinions"*

*"Me put forward ideas? Very much so!"*

*"There was a lot of mind searching and some valuable decisions were made."*

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# Cross pollination and emerging ideas

*"I would like more days like this – Convey my sincere thanks for a wonderful time – knowledge and info much appreciated."*

- Engaging older adults to seek solutions directly.
- How to present falls information to the wider community.
- Collective group intelligence.
- Feedback on community information about FP.



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# The unanticipated benefits of the world café forum

- *We experienced so much more!*
- Participants enjoyed connecting with other attendees. Altruistic concept of 'solving a problem together'.
- Reduced sense of isolation.
- Viewed the café as a 'learning experience' as much as sharing their own thoughts. 2<sup>nd</sup> café planned.
- Attendees said that they had learned 'many things' about falls prevention by listening and sharing with others.

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# What made it a success?

- The social and physical environment was conducive to participation and learning by older people.
- Conversational process led to feasible, practical and accessible client-oriented solutions.
- Involving community members in information design ensures that the community as a whole are empowered to seek solutions.

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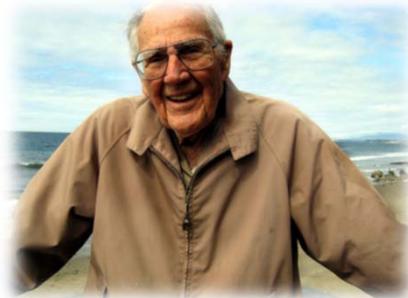
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*“What we want is to **stay out of hospitals and residential care**. What we want is to stay in the community.”*



*“It is good to see you focus on **listening** to older adults rather than **talking at them**. I hope this information is disseminated to allied health professionals.”*

*Falls Prevention-World Café Forum 2014, Perth*

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