

Reimagining Aging (outdoors)

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Research interests

- Background Leisure Management & Sports Science
- Lecturer at AIT
- Focus on inclusivity in recreation, sport & physical activity
- PhD research – older outdoor adventurers
- Passionate about outdoor activity and its beneficial effects



To quote *George Bernard Shaw*

***“We don’t stop playing because we grow old,
we grow old because we stop playing.”***



Ageing and imagery

Question Time

1. Are they typical images?
2. What thoughts do they invoke?
3. Are they motivational & how?



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Cocooning





Attitude



Continuity, learning, challenge



Geale, a keen scuba diver with an interest in the natural environment, snorkeling and learning about his sport. Geale commenced his PADI scuba training at 70, six years on, and many adventurers he is looking forward to completing his Advanced Scuba Diving certification.

Keepers of the Wall



Broad emergent themes

- Participation not driven by an interest in physical fitness
- However, recognise that to continue to participate some level fitness is required
- A keen attraction to the natural environment & being outdoors
- The social aspect and banter across all groups is integral
- The concepts of self efficacy - competence, confidence and autonomy while present are not always recognised by participants
- Leadership evolves - the style is democratic and inclusive



Broad emergent themes condct.

- Participants are empowered, encouraged and facilitated by the group & leaders
- There are opportunities for learning across all three activities
- Skills/learning occurs in a number of ways
 - Specific training – particularly with Scuba Divers & Hill Walkers
 - Sharing of information – (all groups, but swimmers in particular)
 - Encouragement from others



Broad emergent themes condct.

- Attitude – there is a can do attitude
- While not specifically recognised by all participants, elements of Selective Optimisation With Compensation (Baltes & Baltes, 1990) are applied
- Passion for activity, people and the natural environment - almost like an addiction
- All recognise the positive impact on their quality of life



Broad emergent themes condct.

- Recognition that acceptance of sedentary behaviour as we age needs to change
- Mindfulness – participants describe this as immersing themselves in the environment (connectedness)
- Covid has increased awareness and participation in outdoor activity (particularly sea swimming)
- Resilience – physical and mental (SOC)



Final thoughts

EMPOWERMENT

- Autonomy
- Connectedness
- Relatedness
- Selective
- Optimisation
- Compensation



Great Outdoors

A guide for accessibility

Thank You

Questions?



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