

Seniors Lives Lived Project

Legal Information Society of Nova Scotia



Completed By: Sam Beaton, 4th year Dalhousie University Student

Date of Internship: January 10th, 2022 - April 1st, 2022

Supervisor: Heather de Berdt Romilly

Table of Contents

1. Acknowledgements.....	2
2. Introduction.....	3
a. Overview of Organization.....	3
b. Overview of Project Assigned.....	3-4
c. Project Timeline.....	4-5
3. Project In Detail.....	6
a. Initial Planning Stage.....	6
b. Weekly Project Updates	6-10
c. Initial Findings and Observations.....	10-11
4. Research.....	11
a. Local initiatives and organizations.....	11-13
b. Scholarly findings.....	13-16
5. Outreach to Senior Safety Coordinators.....	17
a. Email.....	17-18
b. Contact List.....	18
c. Survey and Survey Results.....	19-25
6. Analysis.....	26-32
7. Conclusion/Recommendations.....	32-33
8. References.....	34

Acknowledgements

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to my supervisor, Heather de Berdt Romilly, for the endless support and encouragement throughout the duration of the semester. Without your kindness and support, my experience would not have been the same. For that, I thank you. I would also like to thank Makayla Jodrey for her support and eagerness to assist when I needed a helping hand, it really meant a lot. To have someone who had just recently gone through this process was extremely beneficial, so thank you so much for your assistance, Makayla. Although the current pandemic prevented me from meeting and engaging with the rest of the staff at LISNS, I would like to thank you all for the opportunity and I wish you all the best moving forward.

Lastly, I would like to thank my professor, Dr. Margaret Denike, for providing me with this special opportunity. If it weren't for this course, I would not have been able to engage in this insightful and exciting experience. For this, I thank you very much.

Introduction

a. Overview of Organization

For the purposes of this work placement, I was placed with the Legal Information Society of Nova Scotia, with Heather de Berdt Romilly acting as my supervisor. The Legal Information Society of Nova Scotia is a charitable, non-profit organization that provides Nova Scotia residents with the appropriate information necessary in order to navigate through various legal issues. LISNS has been in service since 1982, and is a trusted voice across the province. The mission for LISNS is to empower individuals by providing them with adequate legal information in order to help themselves make informed legal decisions. The key with this particular organization is that legal information is provided, not legal advice, and there is an important difference between these two concepts.

b. Overview of Project Assigned

The Project I was given to work on this semester is called “Seniors Lives Lived” in which I will be collecting stories from older adults who have faced legal problems in their lives - and asking them questions such as how did they manage it, what information they wish they'd had knowledge of before it happened, and what would they tell their '20 year old self' about planning to prevent legal problems. I will also help with developing a podcast series highlighting the knowledge and experience of older adults, picking some key legal challenges – such as family/ relationship breakdowns, consumer issues, fraud/scams, civil disputes - eg. with a neighbour, employment law issues, creditor/debtor, dealing with discrimination. For the podcast series, our aim is to identify and confirm a host who is an older adult (someone who was in radio or communications and is now retired) as well as volunteers who'd tell their stories. I am also involved in creating little fact sheets to go along with each podcast so listeners could get more information on the topic being discussed.

The plan outlined above was looking at a more long-term picture for this project. Throughout the course of this semester, I focused heavily on the necessary background information in order to further develop the idea, and move the project forward. A great emphasis was placed on things such as gathering research and information on similar initiatives, as well as initiatives involving seniors. Additionally, a lot of time was spent on academic research that helped me to understand which approaches would be best to

take when dealing with seniors and their legal experiences. Throughout this report, you will see the developments of this project and how the initial stages helped us get a more clear idea of what we are looking to accomplish.

c. Project Timeline

While my time with LISNS was very limited, a project timeline was established in order to keep myself organized, while ensuring that I worked efficiently and effectively. While the last few weeks of the outline were set out by Heather, I was able to keep myself organized by starting off my work placement with a timeline for the month of January and into early February. Below is the timeline that was used in order to keep track of my work and responsibilities.

Brief Timeline

1) January 10th - January 14th

- Become familiar with the LISNS organization and its initiatives. Take a look at the LISNS website, as well as social media pages to familiarize myself with all materials.
- Go over student report from last year and see if there are any things that you have questions about
- Set up LISNS gmail account

2) January 14th - January 28th

- Start coming up with a plan for how you would like to proceed with the semester and think about the material that you would like to include in your final report.
- Begin researching about various seniors organizations across the province

3) January 28th – February 11th

- **Research – literature review** of academic publications on engaging seniors; does it make a difference that we are focusing on legal experiences? Does that have a negative connotation – versus

Quebec project that requested seniors share vignettes of life stories of interest (more positive focus) – Heather suggested MSVU Centre on Aging may have publications, Government Department of Seniors (NS and Federal)

- **Update on experiences documented in report of 2021** – what happened in Quebec – what did they do with the stories; have they been published and do they have any statistics on access or information about the initiative? Is there any relevant up to date information for any of the other initiatives?

4) February 18th - February 25th

- Prepare to validate project idea with Seniors' Stakeholders in NS
- a. **Develop Senior's database for outreach:**
- i. Review LISNS database for seniors' organizations (connect to Kelly Eagles)
 - ii. Research and gather information for community-based seniors' organizations in Province – prepare excel spreadsheet with email and website link if available
- b. **Develop communications for engaging Seniors' stakeholders**
- i. Investigate use of survey (SurveyMonkey or Google Forms – Makayla or Kelly can assist) linked in email to collect key information
 - ii. Draft email

5) February 25th - March 25th

- **Write email draft/survey questions**
 - Reach out to senior safety coordinators with survey and email
 - Conduct further research
- a) 1 week response request (March 4th)
- b) follow-up after one week to request within one week (March 4th)
- c) conduct follow-up telephone calls as appropriate (March 11th-18th)

6) **Submit Final Report** (April 1st)

Project in Detail

a. Initial Planning Stage

As noted in the previous section 2(c), this project required a lot of strategic planning which is why the project timeline came into place. Given that this idea had not been fully developed yet, it was important to plan carefully and to ensure that we weren't moving too quickly. While the current pandemic placed some constraints on the project as far as going out into the community myself and gathering information, or having the ability to work with other LISNS employees in an in-person setting, I was still able to find very useful information through various websites and initiatives. Furthermore, Heather and I had very productive discussions with respect to how the idea of collecting legal stories from seniors could benefit other individuals throughout the province.

b. Weekly Project Updates

Jan 10th-14th

This week was the first week of my workplace practicum with the Legal Information Society of Nova Scotia (LISNS). My work this week involved becoming familiar with the organization and its objectives. I was able to navigate their website as well as their social media platforms to get a better understanding of how they operate. Given that my project for the semester, "Legal Life Lessons From Adults", I reviewed the materials on the website surrounding seniors, which included things such as podcasts. Under the senior's section, I reviewed the sub-sections of material that were made available including "Seniors' Navigator Project, It's In Your Hands: Legal Information for Seniors and Their Families, Making A Will, Power of Attorney (Property and Finances), Personal Directives (health care treatment and consent), Investor Rights and Protection, and Videos about Estate Planning" (taken from legalinfo.org). Finally, after reviewing materials on the website and social media platforms, I was able to take a look at the google drive from students who had begun this project last winter. While combing through the information on this drive, I was able to see how past students structured their work, with things that included how they reached out to individuals, what their strategies were for conducting the project, and what other tactics were used to help them

lead a successful project.

Jan 17th - 21st

This week I had looked further into the research done by the students last year, as well as the material that Heather and other members of the LISNS team had added to the google drive. After getting a better idea of the task at hand, I was left with a few questions pertaining to what the best approach would be when approaching organizations who are directly involved with seniors. During our meeting on Friday the 21st, Heather and I did lots of brainstorming and more “reality checking” as far as what things may work, and what things may not work. We also discussed whether or not this project would flourish now or in a post-Covid world considering in-person storytelling/podcasts may be more personal/received well for seniors. Moreover, I did some more research on organizations and individuals who might be helpful to get involved with this project. On the other hand, I did some additional research that looked at the correlation between seniors and legal issues. When doing the research, there weren't many articles discussing what seniors wish they would have known in their younger years pertaining to legal issues, but more broadly, life lessons in general (job opportunities, relationships, etc). Lastly, during the meeting Heather and I discussed the future of this project and what things it might entail in order to be successful. There are many moving parts that I am going to continue to investigate next week.

Jan 24th - 28th

This week I started off by reaching out to Makayla to set up a meeting for a day sometime between the 24th-28th. Makayla and I met for a very productive meeting on Wednesday, January 26th, where Makayla gave very helpful tips and suggestions for when the time came to reach out to individuals or organizations on behalf of LISNS. Having Makayla's feedback was extremely helpful as she had just gone through this work placement process not too long ago. On top of this meeting, I began to do some research into topics discussed during the meeting with Heather. These things included the willingness for individuals to participate in a study, if individuals in different age cohorts would be interested, what we could do to ensure that asking for legal stories isn't a negative issue (bringing back any trauma/negative life experiences for individuals) but instead make it a positive experience. Additionally, I looked at what options are best for gathering stories. Would seniors have a better experience participating in person rather than over the phone/through letter writing? What would our capacity be to read through

those letters? How do we manage expectations in terms of how seniors decide to participate? These are some of the questions that I set out to answer which will be discussed in the analysis section of this report.

Jan 31st - Feb 4th

This week I focused on following up with some of the initiatives that the students from last year had identified in their report. One of these initiatives being the “Ecrire sa vie!” which was started by Janette Bertrand in Quebec. While my background in the French language isn’t exactly strong, I was able to translate a few things in order to find any new developments in the initiative. Among the things I found interesting, the submissions sent to Joanne Bertrand had been developed into animated Youtube videos. The purpose of these animations was to illustrate the story that was being told, which I found to be very interesting. While I was not able to contact anyone directly with respect to this initiative, I was able to locate the appropriate website, Youtube channel, and contact information, which can be found later in the ‘Research’ section of the report.

Feb 7th - Feb 11th

This week I took the time to do some more research pertaining to academic publications that discuss the psychological aspect of storytelling, notably in older populations. The one question that I focused on this week was whether or not asking for legal stories can bring about a negative connotation to the initiative. Will this steer individuals away from participating in the initiative? Should we only be focusing on legal stories that fall under a certain area of law? This is a very important question that I wanted to research, but also include in the survey. As you will see in the survey and survey results section, 5(c), the responses varied quite a bit. This week included a lot of reality checking in terms of whether or not this topic was appropriate to pursue and overall, I believe that giving seniors the opportunity to tell a story pertaining to a legal experience can be beneficial for all parties involved.

Feb 14th - Feb 18th

This week was the first week that I started preparing for an outreach message to the Senior Safety Coordinators. I began by coming up with 9 survey questions along with answers, that I then verified with Heather and Makayla. My initial plan was to use the SurveyMonkey platform, however, after a brief discussion, we felt as though using

Google Forms would be the easiest route for everyone. After getting the survey checked by Heather and Makayla, I began to enter everything into the Google Form. After getting the first draft of this survey completed, I then focused on the email that was going to be sent out. Within this email, I identified myself and what my role was with LISNS. I then gave a brief overview of the Seniors Lives Lived initiative and discussed what I was looking for in terms of the survey.

Feb 28th - March 4th

After having the previous week off for reading week, I was able to finalize both the email and survey and prepare for everything to be sent out. On February 25th, I sent out the email and survey to all contacts listed on the form in section 5(b). After sending out the initial email, I was provided feedback and realized that the survey had not been permitting individuals to enter and answer any questions (I am still very sorry about this). After getting some assistance from Kelly Eagles (thank you so much Kelly), I was able to correct the mistake that was made and sent the survey back out later in the day. While I was concerned that this silly mistake might create limitations in terms of responses for the survey, I was very surprised and encouraged to see that 34 individuals had taken the survey. This was a big step in terms of moving the idea forward as it gave us an opportunity to see what other individuals across the province thought of this idea. It was a very encouraging result, as most of these individuals work very closely with seniors across the province.

March 7th - 11th

While the last couple of weeks for this project had been very busy getting everything together for the outreach, I was able to closely monitor survey results and make some initial interpretations from the data. While these results will be discussed in section 5(c), there were some very interesting results that helped me understand which approach may be the most effective when dealing with seniors. Given that these individuals work closely with seniors on a daily basis, it was encouraging to see most of them approve of the idea. My other time spent during this week was responding to any questions or concerns that any of the recipients had via email. On a couple of occasions, I was asked if it would be possible to share the survey amongst a given community, which I believe increased the number of participants who took the survey.

March 14th - 18th

This week was spent tying up “loose ends” and getting everything organized in preparation for the final report. While the amount of individuals taking part in the

survey continued to increase, I spent a lot of time doing some more research on things that would help me answer any outstanding questions that I had. I was also looking to follow up on any new developments with any existing initiatives, as well as any new initiatives, if any were available. My main focus during this week was to make sure that I came up with conclusions from my research, as well as the survey results, in order to shape the next steps for this project.

March 21st - 25th

The final week of my work placement was spent working on my final report. Given that there was a lot of information to include, I took a strategic approach and made sure that I organized everything to ensure that the report itself was easy to follow and organized. A lot of time was spent making sure that the research conducted was appropriate and relevant to the project, and making sure that any questions that Heather had throughout the semester were answered. I also made sure that any outstanding emails or questions from any survey recipients were answered. Additionally, I was able to evaluate the survey results very closely as the number of participants remained at 34 for several days. With this in mind, I was provided with a relatively strong sample size that allowed me to reach conclusions and make inferences about the future of the project. While the survey played a big part in moving the project forward, I believe that I have pieces of research that will also benefit LISNS as they continue to work with this idea. Overall, I felt as though my experience was very beneficial as I learned many things not only from Heather and Makayla, but through research and contact with other individuals from various organizations. Seniors are often a demographic that are left behind in society and with the current pandemic still going on, it is important now more than ever to include seniors in our society and continue to advocate for them.

c. Initial Findings and Observations

When I first began my research on other organizations and initiatives happening around the province involving seniors, I was very surprised to learn that not many organizations have focused on seniors and legal issues. With the exception of LISNS, and Dalhousie Legal Aid, there has not been an initiative catered specifically towards discussing legal experiences with seniors and sharing them for educational purposes. I

believe that because of this, the idea behind the Seniors Lives' Lived project was slowly starting to become a reality rather than a wishful idea. After many productive meetings with Heather, the best course of action was to advertise this idea to a group of individuals who work closely with seniors. Given the results of the survey, it was evident that most participants approved of the idea and thought it would be worth pursuing. Additionally, the survey informed us of how realistic the idea was, and whether or not participants felt it would be unnecessary to pursue. After receiving the survey results and doing further research into organizations across the province, and across the country, this project became more realistic as the semester progressed.

Research

a. Local Initiatives and Organizations

After doing some research into local organizations and initiatives that deal with seniors, I was able to find a few organizations that provide services related to our project.

- Spencer House Senior Centre - Halifax NS
 - Offers various activities and events including 'Coffee and Conversation', and 'Storytellers Circle'
 - Contact information:
 - ed@spencerhouse.ca
 - 902-421-6131
- Seniors' Home Safety Program - Halifax Regional Police - Halifax NS
 - Offers support and advice to seniors pertaining to safety in their home. They discuss topics such as frauds/scams, elder abuse, insurance.
 - Contact information:
 - seniorssafety@halifax.ca
 - 902-490-2554

- New Brunswick Senior Citizens Federation
 - Enhance the well-being of seniors 55+ by providing them with information on various topics such as regulations, legislation, policies, programs, etc.
 - Contact information:
 - NBSCF-FCANB@outlook.com
 - 506-857-8242

- PEI Senior Citizens Federation
 - Advocate service for seniors and also connects seniors to various organizations, services, programs, etc.
 - Contact information:
 - peiscf@pei.albn.com
 - 902-368-9008

- YMCA Halifax
 - Provide various services and programs for seniors. Not many programs being offered during the pandemic, but they would be a good contact post-pandemic.
 - Contact information:
 - kailee.hominick@halifax.ymca.ca
 - 902-222-7279

- Halifax Public Library
 - Offer workshops and educational resources for seniors. Like the YMCA, not many programs were being offered during the pandemic, but they would also be a useful resource for programs being offered once permitted.
 - Contact information:
 - AskLib@halifax.ca
 - 902-490-5753

- Mount Saint Vincent University - Halifax NS
 - Past projects involving seniors. One interesting project that was done was called “Elder Abuse - Lessons Learned from Family Violence (2008). The link for the final report can be found here: [View final report](#). This could be a helpful resource when figuring out how to approach seniors for legal experiences. In this particular case, it appears that information forms were sent out to participants, followed by consent forms if they were interested in following up with an experience (p.13 in final report).
 - Link to other past projects:
<https://www.msvu.ca/research-at-the-mount/research-chairs/centres-and-institutes/nova-scotia-centre-on-aging/projects/past-projects/>

- Ecrire Sa Vie! - Quebec
 - This initiative involved Joanne Bertrand, a well-known individual in Quebec. I followed up on this initiative from last year’s report where the previous students had identified it. Stories were collected from seniors and later developed into YouTube videos. While I was not able to get in contact with the project supervisors due to language barriers, I have provided the contact information below. It would be helpful to reach out to these individuals to get a sense of a) how they sorted through the stories once they were submitted, b) what resources, manpower was required to create the YouTube videos, and c) having completed the initiative, are there things that they would change? As mentioned above, due to the language barrier, finding updates on this initiative was a bit challenging. However, I found an interesting piece that discussed how “Joanne Bertrand offered writing lessons to more than 500 seniors during the first wave lockdown” --
<https://www.selectionretraite.com/en/blogue/writing-therapy-seniors>
 - Contact information:
 - Youtube Channel:
<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC8fft2XXTkOfQbzu1d6rKhg>
 - Initiative Website: <http://centreavantage.ca/ecrire-sa-vie/>
 - Phone Number: 514-340-2800; poste 3139
 - Email: avantage.ccsmtl@ssss.gouv.qc.ca

b. Scholarly Findings

Throughout the course of the semester, I conducted academic research that helped inform my ideas and strategies for moving this project forward. A lot of these findings will be very beneficial in terms of deciding which approaches would work best when interacting with seniors.

- SAGE members online survey experience

This study looked at the experiences of 113 members after the COVID-19 pandemic forced the centre that they were attending to close. This meant that this group of seniors had to adapt to online programming. Following the conclusion of the study, the senior members reported “a relatively easy transition” from in-person to online activities (Marmo et al., 2021). Additionally, there was a consistent attendance rate for online programs and other services, a high satisfaction rate with the centre and how they were operating the online programs, as well as high rates of engagement with fellow members (Marmo et al., 2021). The most important aspect was that levels of engagement depended on the support offered to the seniors during this transition period. Given that the support systems were strong, the level of engagement in these activities was very high (Marmo et al., 2021). This case study was important because it gives an idea of how seniors are able to adapt from in-person interactions to online interactions. Given that the rate of participation was high based on the levels of support that the seniors were receiving, it is important to consider that strong support systems will need to be put in place when engaging seniors with our initiative to ensure high rates of satisfaction and participation.

- Seniors in Taiwan - Karaoke experience

The following study conducted in Taiwan looked at senior citizens engaging in karaoke. The purpose of this study was to look at various psychological, emotional, and social factors when partaking in karaoke, and when using traditional karaoke machines versus newer machines (Fang, Huang, 2021). Participants were split into two individual groups, where one group used conventional karaoke equipment, and one used the newer equipment. Additionally, the rest of the participants were split into one big group and they used conventional karaoke equipment (Fang, Huang, 2021). The results showed that “group singing yielded greater effects than individual singing”, whereas the effects were greater among participants who used conventional karaoke equipment than those who used the digital karaoke machines” (Fang, Huang, 2021). Evidently, those who used the conventional karaoke machines “demonstrated enhanced emotions, social interactions, and satisfaction with usability” (Fang, Huang, 2021). In relation to the seniors lives lived

project, it is clear that using familiar resources when gathering information from seniors would give us the best results. For example, having an in-person one on one conversation or talking over the phone would yield better results as opposed to trying to have a virtual meeting over zoom. This study is helpful as it tells us why it's important to ensure that the individual is comfortable and familiar with the resources being used. Lastly, if the individual we are trying to get a story from is not comfortable, it will more than likely affect the outcome of the interview.

- Importance of human social interaction when engaging in storytelling

Human interaction is crucial, especially on a social and emotional level. With respect to the seniors' lives lived project where we are seeking legal experiences, individuals may react differently depending on that particular experience. For instance, (Burns, Masoodian, 2018) share some interesting insights:

“seniors may experience a kind of push and pull in terms of their sense of identity and life stories....they may feel a push to advancing self-knowledge by sharing their experiences, further reflecting on what they have learned and exploring what it might mean. At the same time, they may feel deflated and pulled toward a sense of irrelevance if they have no opportunities or encouragement to engage in and impart the value of their self-expressions and self-reflections” (Burns, Masoodian, 2018).

The importance of understanding seniors and their feelings towards various situations, such as telling a legal experience, is crucial as by doing so, they are displaying a great deal of vulnerability. When the request for legal experiences goes out, this needs to be taken into consideration.

- Some legal stories can be damaging to tell, especially when they involve family members.

An eye-opening statistic taken from (Weissberger, et al., 2020) reads “family members were the most commonly alleged perpetrators” when referring to incoming calls to the National Centre on Elder Abuse Resource Line. Additionally, “32.7% of calls identified a family member as the perpetrator, compared to 23% of calls overall” (Weissberger, et al., 2020). This is another statistic that needs to be taken into account when collecting stories from seniors. Although their legal experience may not involve physical contact, any form of non-physical legal experiences like fraud, theft, or divorce can still be emotionally damaging for the participant especially if it involves a family member.

- “Stories of Change” outreach project

The following project discusses life experiences told by incarcerated women who have been assigned an outreach project involving high school students and teachers. Interacting with others and telling stories can be a “powerful experience with lasting effects on the teller” (Bove, Tyron, 2018). If we can imagine the effect that incarceration can have on individuals from a cognitive standpoint, interacting with others out in the community could be a very rewarding experience. This outreach project was proven to be a very successful experience for these women, as they were able to share personal and meaningful experiences with individuals in the community. This study also showed how important it is to “provide programming to women within the criminal justice system” (Bove, Tyron, 2018). I would add that if we are to take this study and apply it to all individuals who feel this sense of isolation, notably seniors during the ongoing pandemic, opportunities for human interaction are more important now than ever. Through our initiative, reaching out to seniors and having that in-person discussion may be just what one needs to feel a sense of belonging and less isolation. The idea of connecting these inmates with high school students and teachers is also a great idea that could be considered when moving the seniors’ lived lived project forward. Incorporating youth into this project for the purpose of interacting with the seniors could be extremely beneficial.

Outreach to Senior Safety Coordinators

a. Email

Attached below is the email that was sent out to the Senior Safety Coordinators. I have attached the link to the document where the email was constructed as it contains the first draft, along with various edits from Heather and Makayla:

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1YAkOWI-a-UEc3LBS1MPi4ZJXwnvqxuYpivWhoZtja2w/edit?usp=sharing>.

Hello,

My name is Sam Beaton and I'm a volunteer with the Legal Information Society of Nova Scotia. I am writing to you about our *Seniors' Lives Lived Project*.

We want to hear from seniors about their life experiences - things they wish they'd known and could tell their younger self. We believe this represents an opportunity to share collective wisdom with communities in a fun and engaging way.

We're inviting seniors to share their stories either in writing or by telephone. We'll bring these stories to life in a variety of accessible ways including interviews that can be captured through podcasts and an online gallery where stories are curated.

We appreciate it if you can take a moment to complete the attached short survey. Your feedback will help us better understand how we will move forward with this project. The survey is confidential.

The link to our survey can be found by [clicking here](#).

Thank you for supporting our work!

Best,
Sam

The Legal Information Society of Nova Scotia (LISNS) is a charitable, not for profit organization, which connects Nova Scotians with the resources they need to assist with their legal issues. Please visit our website at www.legalinfo.org.

- LISNS is the 2021 [A2J All Star](https://nsrlpe.com/category/a2j-all-stars/) for Atlantic Canada (National Self-Represented Litigants Project East (NSRLP-E) <https://nsrlpe.com/category/a2j-all-stars/>)

b. Contact List

Attached below is a screenshot of the contact list that was used during the outreach process. I have also attached the link so that anyone requiring access to this form in the future can edit when needed:

https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1IEjrHx1nkO43mgeD5LfoEhctKwjLJHpzj_39EZ8Km7w/edit#gid=0

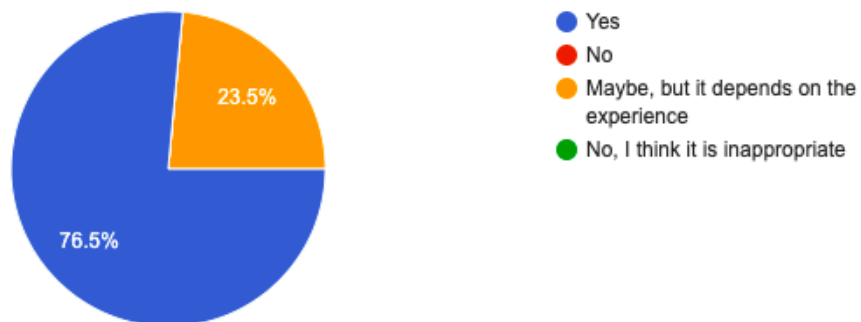
	A	B	C	D
1	First Name	Last Name	Email	Organization
2	Trishe	Colman	cumberlandseniorsafety@gmail.com	Cumberland Seniors' Safety Society
3	Dawn	Thomas	dawn.thomas@rcmp-grc.gc.ca	Digby And Area Seniors' Safety Society
4	Ned	Chase	edward.b.chase@gmail.com	Seniors Safety Coordinator
5	Sharon	Elliott	seniorsafetyannapolis@gmail.com	Seniors Safety Coordinator
6	Carole	Hipwell	carole.hipwell@bridgewaterpolice.ca	Seniors Safety Coordinator
7	Scott	Leier	leierscott@yahoo.ca	Seniors Safety Coordinator
8	Debra	Leigh	dleigh41@gmail.com	Seniors Safety Coordinator
9	Charlotte	MacDonald	charlotte.macdonald@invernesscounty.ca	Seniors Safety Coordinator
10	Michele	MacPhee	seniorsafetycoordinator.dkmchc@gmail.com	Seniors Safety Coordinator
11	Xhenata	Mehmeti	Xhenata.mehmeti@smu.ca	Seniors Safety Coordinator
12	Ashley	Rhyno	ashley@district.yarmouth.ns.ca	Seniors Safety Coordinator
13	Shawna	Symonds	seniorservices@eastlink.ca	Seniors Safety Coordinator
14	Dawn	Thomas	seniorsafety@digby.ca	Seniors Safety Coordinator
15	Shelley	Walker	qcssa19@gmail.com	Seniors Safety Coordinator
16	?	?	clareseniorsafety@gmail.com	Seniors Safety Coordinator
17	Peggy	Boudreau	peggy.boudreau@rcmp-grc.gc.ca	Yarmouth County Seniors' Safety Program - District of Argyle
18	Ashley	Rhyno	ashley.rhyno@rcmp-grc.gc.ca	Yarmouth County Seniors' Safety Program - District of Yarmouth

c. Survey and Survey Results

Attached below is the survey that was distributed to the contacts that are discussed in the previous section, 5(b). The survey was sent out to 17 individuals and received 34 responses in total. While the questions and results will be posted below, I have attached the link to the survey so that it can be accessed in any future circumstances:

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSceqVq8AEzyZxNaK8W7MgRVhTWT2scPC0oD1N3g_bqn1IheCg/viewform

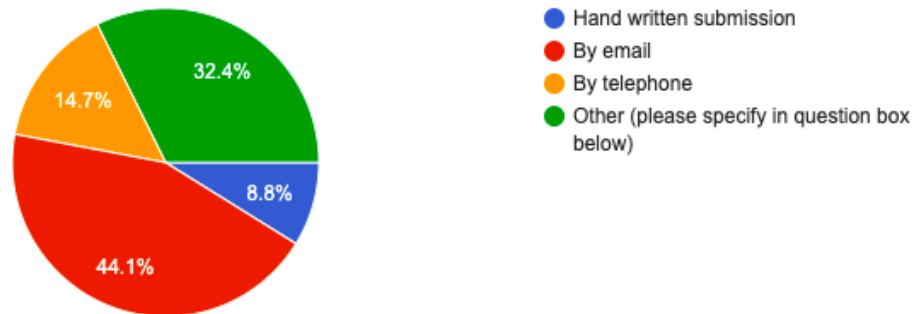
1. Do you think it's a good idea to capture stories from seniors regarding their life experiences that they feel are worth sharing?



Out of the 34 individuals that responded to this question:

- 26 chose 'yes'
- 8 chose 'maybe, but it depends on the experience'
- 0 chose 'no'
- 0 chose 'no, i think it is inappropriate'

2. In your opinion, what would be the most effective method for seniors to use when sharing their stories?



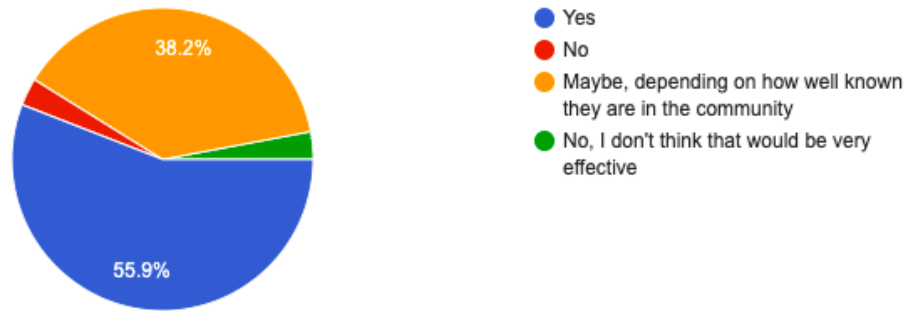
Out of the 34 individuals that responded to this question:

- 3 chose 'hand written submission'
- 15 chose 'by email'
- 5 chose 'by telephone'
- 11 chose 'other' (see q3 for more information)

3. If you specified 'other' above, explain below:

- a. Video
- b. All of the above including tape messages or videos
- c. A variety of formats would be best.
- d. Personal interview. More engaging to sit and discuss in person, especially for seniors.
- e. It really depends on the senior. All of the suggestions listed above are great and being flexible in terms of the format they are most comfortable communicating in is key.
- f. I think both hand written and telephone would be helpful but I also think that an in person interview style would be helpful. Seniors sometimes have a hard time talking on the phone and writing. So having them share there stories interview style with someone recording it back to them may be helpful.
- g. By phone would be nice, hoot would be great if it was edited/ proofed first

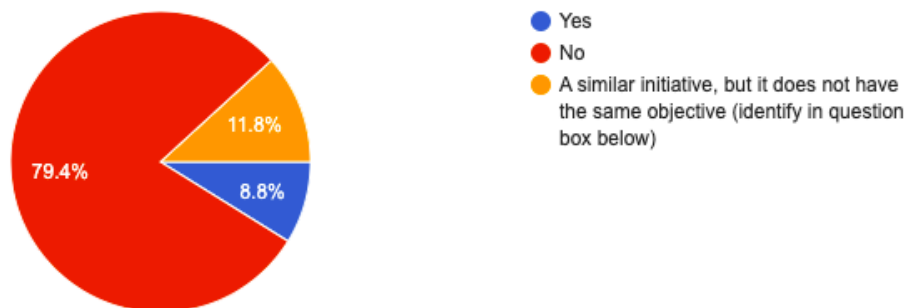
- h. One on one interview and tape or video sessions
 - i. Computers
 - j. Digital audio link such as Zoom, where possible
 - k. Everyone is different. What might be most effective for one, may be inaccessible for others. So I recommend a variety of methods.
4. Do you have any suggestions in terms of organizations that would be well suited to help collect these stories from seniors? If yes, please specify.
- a. Historical society, senior safety programs, community organizations (halls, suppers, tea parties)
 - b. SCANS, Community Health
 - c. NS Retired Teachers Organization, Churches, active Senior Social Groups (ex. Spencer House)
 - d. All seniors organizations across the province of Nova Scotia as well as individuals who work closely with seniors
 - e. Retiree organizations
 - f. People trained for interviewing; they are empathetic, and non-judgmental
 - g. Provincial Seniors Safety Programs, Federation of Seniors, CARP, Community Links, Long-Term Care Facilities, Regional Seniors Clubs
 - h. Seniors Clubs, especially those listed with NS211
 - i. RTO
 - j. Community Seniors Clubs, many are registered with NS Registry of Joint Stocks
 - k. Schools
 - l. CARP
 - m. Many volunteer theatre groups across the Province have large number of active, vocal, confident seniors in their groups
5. Do you think a senior radio host would be an appropriate figure to conduct interviews with seniors whose stories are chosen?



Out of the 34 individuals who responded to this question:

- 19 chose 'yes'
- 1 chose 'no'
- 13 chose 'maybe, depending on how well known they are in the community'
- 1 chose 'no, I don't think that would be very effective'

6. Are you aware of any initiatives that are similar to this one in Nova Scotia (collecting life stories from seniors)?



Out of the 34 individuals who responded to this question:

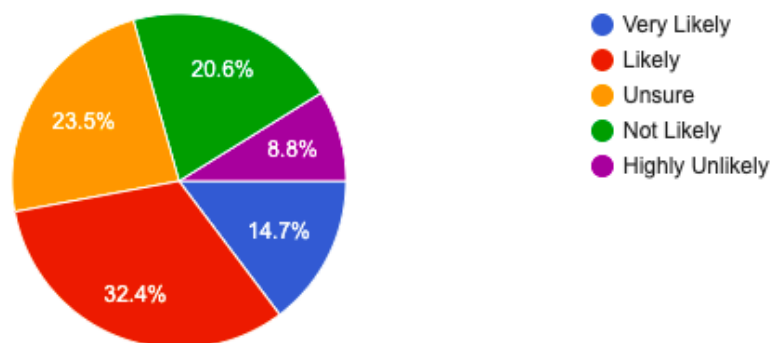
- 3 chose 'yes'
- 27 chose 'no'

- 4 chose 'a similar initiative, but it does not have the same objective (look for similar initiatives in question below)

7. If you chose 'similar initiative' above, please specify below:

- Collecting songs or experiences from the Holocaust
- East Preston Seniors Club did something similar a few years ago
- Jennifer Hollington, Assistant Deputy Minister of Communications for Health Canada (recently retired). Jennifer has started a blog related to Cancer. She collected notes from her readers about Cancer and the effects it has on families and friends. You can contact Jennifer at: jenesis.potasch.io or by email: jenhollington@gmail.com.
- Zoomer magazine had done something similar
- Historical Societies
- 'Spoken Word' project

8. How likely are you to share a life experience of your own?



Out of the 34 individuals who responded to this question:

- 5 chose 'very likely'
- 11 chose 'likely'
- 8 chose 'unsure'

- 7 chose 'not sure'
- 3 chose 'highly unlikely'

9. What's something you wish you had known when you were younger particularly with regard to a legal issue that you faced?

- Wills, POA, Personal Directives for aging parents/dying siblings before a "crisis"; shared deeds on property
- Finding an appropriate lawyer and what rights one has in certain circumstances
- Procedures that needed to be followed when removing underground oil tanks when selling residential properties. Wish oil companies were more forthcoming with changing NS environmental regulations.
- Co-signing
- Necessary paperwork for health issue coverage
- Marriage Contracts/Divorce
- Common law
- Understanding POA/SDM/Wills; not as scary as one may think
- Various unions and where teachers/principals fall with respect to School Board
- How to handle money properly
- Wish I paid more attention to future income, steps to ensure pension security
- Loaning money to friends/family members
- Paying off a mortgage
- How to use Small Claims Court effectively (ex. Car, home repairs gone wrong)
- Wish I had knowledge of NS Legal Aid
- Clearer understanding of capital gains tax in terms of property ownership; passing land on to future generations; land disputes/land ownership
- Individual protections during divorce process
- Better investment practices
- Real Estate
- Importance of Wills/DNR certificates

10. Would you like to be directly involved if this project proceeds? If so, provide your contact information below (email or telephone). This information will not be shared outside of the project.

- dollywilliams6@gmail.com or 902-462-0344(R)

- b. janisis@eastlink.ca (maybe)
- c. 902-800-2745 or pmurphy0619@gmail.com
- d. nancy0001@eastlink.ca or 902-375-2004
- e. anne.rogal@gmail.com
- f. bobhunsley@gmail.com
- g. kathleen46@gmail.com
- h. pambouchard863@gmail.com
- i. davegarroway13@gmail.com (maybe)
- j. dantonner@hotmail.com (maybe)
- k. dawegail@gmail.com (maybe)
- l. victoriajjeans@gmail.com (maybe)

11. Do you know anyone who is interested in being involved with this initiative? If yes, please specify. This information will not be shared outside of the project.

- a. Oxford Pioneer Heritage Club, 31 Ellis St., Oxford, NS. B0M 1P0
- b. Theatre Arts Guild, Canada's oldest continually operating volunteer theatre group (contact vangorder@carp.ca)

Survey Limitations

- The survey represented a relatively small sample size of individuals
- Some participants did not answer every question, which is something to keep in mind when assessing the results
- Some survey recipients did not complete the survey at all

Analysis

After spending the semester working on the Seniors' Lives Lived project, I am now going to provide an analysis of my findings during this time. The goal of this project is to capture stories from seniors who have lived through legal experiences. We are confident that there is value in capturing these experiences from seniors, as they can shed light on legal topics and inform other Nova Scotians about their experience. The end goal with these stories is to provide this information to Nova Scotians so that if they find themselves in a similar situation, they have an idea of how to navigate this legal issue.

Practicalities

Based on the survey results, I am confident that collecting legal experiences from seniors would be a great idea to pursue. Additionally, I believe that it should be someone who is well known and respected across the province or community that is being focused on. Having an individual with an impact or positive reputation would most likely attract the most participants possible. If we look at the "Ecrire Sa Vie" initiative in Quebec where Janette Bertrand was the face of the initiative, Bertrand attracted many seniors based on her respectable character and reputation across the province. I think that having this personality is extremely important in order to maximize the potential that this project has. Another benefit to having this individual(s), is that seniors would be able to have that human interaction with them, which creates a more productive, and meaningful experience. As we saw in the research portion, ensuring that seniors are comfortable and participating while in familiar environments is crucial. Aside from having an individual as the project representative, they should also be assisted by a team of volunteers or employees at LISNS, for marketing purposes. As Heather and I discussed during one meeting, a 'road show' or traveling information sessions across the province might be helpful in order to ensure the best marketing practices possible. This could be an opportunity for the idea to be presented, the project representative to be present, as well as the team of volunteers or LISNS employees being on hand to assist. The only limitation here is that there would need to be funding in place to support this idea, as there would be lots of financial barriers. It would also be worth exploring whether a project representative would be more effective, or if having trusted sources from other organizations presenting the idea would be more beneficial. While this wasn't something I was able to explore, I would lean more towards having that project representative, plus a team of volunteers in order to maximize the amount of marketing that can be done. Given that the idea was developed within LISNS, I would suggest advertising it

exclusively from LISNS so that other individuals can see the work that has been done by many people within the organization, who have a passion for the idea to move forward. If there are limitations presented to us where we are unable to provide compensation for a brand ambassador, maybe think of things like a point system where a certain amount of points equals a reward of some nature. Or, there may be an option to look into sponsorships from local companies or programs that would be willing to donate to the project.

Similar to the recent workplace sexual harassment initiative that LISNS released, media attention whether on social media or commercials would be beneficial as well. Commercials would be something that would require funding, however, I don't think it would be unreasonable to have social media coverage, as well as volunteers who are eager to present the idea.

When choosing a project representative or ambassador, I believe it is important to consider how passionate they are about seniors and the idea that is presented. I would avoid getting anyone to represent the project who may not enjoy the idea or brings a negative connotation towards it. You need someone who is passionate and enjoys that human interaction and experience that is gained from having a conversation with someone. Another idea that could be beneficial is thinking about whether you could get various government officials or local MLAs involved, and have a 'friendly competition' with it. By friendly competition, I foresee these individuals trying to:

- See who can engage with the most seniors and collect the most stories
- Advertising this over their social media pages in an effort to gain traction
- In a non-Covid era, visiting seniors programs, organizations, long-term care homes, etc.

I think this is an idea that could be achievable if other limitations were to steer us away from having one project representative with a group of volunteers.

Suggested Project Representatives

Throughout the semester, there have been many names that I have thrown around in an attempt to figure out who would represent this project and idea. Most of whom are a long stretch, but I figured it would be a good idea to include them anyway! As I had mentioned to Heather a few weeks ago, I believe it will be absolutely critical to include English, French, and Indigenous backgrounds to this project. Given that Nova Scotia is a diverse province, I believe that by incorporating and celebrating our various cultures, the success of this project could increase significantly.

- Anne Murray - Anne is a retired, well-known singer who was born in Springhill, NS. Heather had mentioned Anne's name quite a few times throughout the semester, and while I don't have her contact information, I think it would be very beneficial to reach out to her with respect to this initiative.
- Jimmy and/or Heather Rankin (The Rankin Family) - A well-known Canadian musical group who all grew up in Mabou, NS. Despite a few members leaving the band a while ago, I think reaching out to Jimmy or Heather Rankin could be a very cool opportunity, especially to reach the senior demographic in Cape Breton!
- Louise Delisle - Louise resides in Shelburne, NS and is well-known for her appearance in "There's Something in the Water". This film, produced by Nova Scotia's own, Elliot Page, features the effects of environmental racism in various African Nova Scotian, and Indigenous communities across the province. Louise is a very well-respected figure in the Black community and is an advocate for many. Louise would also be a great individual to approach, if she could be contacted
- Dorene Bernard - Dorene was also featured in the film, "There's Something in the Water", and had discussed the environmental racism that had taken place in her home community of Shubenacadie, NS. Dorene is an advocate and well-known figure across the province, especially in the many Indigenous communities in our province.

While these are just some of the individuals that I had in mind for this initiative, they may or may not be what LISNS has in mind. However, I believe that whichever route is chosen, it will be important to incorporate a diverse group of individuals who act as either a) volunteers if they were willing or b) a collective group of project representatives. This would obviously have to be discussed amongst the group, and would depend on who we are able to contact as there will be limitations to this as well. Having a diverse group of people involved in this initiative, could open up an opportunity for stories to be released in different languages and catered towards various cultural norms as well. We may also look to broadcasting companies such as CBC, who often host elders from Indigenous communities for storytelling segments.

Volunteers

When constructing a group of volunteers, it is of the utmost importance that we consider implementing a pre-screening process, in order to ensure that there is no breach of trust or confidentiality with seniors. Seniors are a vulnerable population, and if we are to interact with them, it needs to be as safe as possible. Once the project has progressed, it may also be beneficial to incorporate youth volunteers. Similar to the research that was discussed earlier with the incarcerated women and interactions with high school students, it may be worth exploring opportunities for schools to interact with seniors. If road shows or traveling information sessions came to fruition, we would need a dedicated, passionate group of volunteers that may vary in age. Interactions amongst seniors with youth, young adult, adult, and senior volunteers could be a benefit, as the experience may be told in different ways depending on the age cohort. If this can be achieved, I believe a team of volunteers would be a great support system for a project representative. There would need to be some thought put into how we keep the volunteers engaged, or things LISNS could do to ensure that volunteers feel comfortable and are enjoying their experience. Aside from a team of volunteers helping the project representative, you would need to allocate some of them to IT work, in terms of creating the podcasts/videos, uploading them, etc. Volunteers would also be required to collect the stories, and it would need to be decided prior to the project commencing, what capacity we have for collecting the stories and processing them so that there is no burnout phase. Overall, volunteers would be the backbone of this initiative, as there would need to be individuals advocating for the cause and ensuring that it runs smoothly. Individuals who have had a legal experience of their own may have a passion for participating as a volunteer. A question during the pre-screening process could entail something like ‘what made you want to volunteer for this initiative? Are you passionate about legal issues and providing others with helpful information in case they ever run into the same problem?’. I think including a few questions of that nature would be helpful when evaluating volunteers.

Timing

Timing was another important factor in determining whether this idea would proceed or not. The pandemic has been tough on a lot of people, especially seniors. There is no question that the inability to interact in-person has been challenging. However, looking at the survey results, many individuals felt that stories could be submitted in other ways. I think that while submitting stories via email or telephone would be easy for processing purposes on our end, the real benefit of telling someone their experience would come from having an in-person interview. While this may not be true for all, I

believe that most seniors would benefit from having an in-person discussion. Also, there are certain limitations that come with submitting stories through technological avenues, such as privacy. When we receive the story and wish to make it shareable on the website or through social media, we would not be permitted to show the seniors face as this could cause many issues. Of course if it is the wish of the participant to discuss their experience online, we could provide a consent/media release form before releasing anything that attaches their identity to their shared experience. While I believe that a lot of these shared experiences could in theory be shared from a distance, it would be more beneficial to have those in-person discussions and allow the seniors to have a traditional experience. This would mean that pending any COVID-19 restrictions, it may be worth waiting until volunteers are permitted to talk to seniors in-person. I also believe that if we were to get a project representative that was well-known and respected, the seniors would most likely want to have the chance to meet this person and have an enjoyable face to face discussion with them. In turn, this would increase the likelihood of more seniors participating in the project, and the content that we get from them would be better quality.

Success Rate

The success is going to be measured by the willingness to participate from seniors. Obviously if the willingness to participate is not there, this project will have a hard time proceeding. This is why it is crucial that we use the best marketing strategies possible, by getting the word out, having individuals represent the project who are passionate about the subject and passionate about seniors. Without the passion from LISNS, it will be hard for others to be passionate about it for you. You will need to have people that feel strongly about it before proceeding. I think that if we can get seniors to participate, this is an idea that I can see a lot of people being interested in. If we look at the survey results, it shows a very strong majority of people having an interest in the idea. I think this is a very positive outcome given the fact that the survey was one of the first times this idea was presented to members of the public. Another thing that I believe is important is ensuring that this is a positive experience and that we are not looking for people to tell us experiences that will be emotionally distressing for them. We don't want to attach a negative connotation to legal stories, as they are meant to be collected for educational purposes. This needs to be made clear at the outset of the project. As long as the negative connotation surrounding legal stories is eliminated, I can't foresee any situation where individuals would be steered away from participating. Additionally, to have success and get people excited about it, we need volunteers and possibly the help of

other organizations to present this information in a way that gets people talking about it. I think that with the survey being released the other day and individuals requesting to send it to seniors, was a good indicator that this kind of idea can spread quickly and that is important.

Advancing the Project

As we saw with the ‘Ecrire Sa Vie’ initiative in Quebec, it appeared as though a local hospital had been involved which is helpful in terms of funding and resources. While I can’t confirm whether or not the hospital got involved because Janette Bertrand was representing the project, it may be that if we can get solid traction with the idea, more people will want to get involved. This is why it is important to advocate for the idea and have a passion for what the result will be. I believe that a lot of individuals would enjoy helping each other, and in this case, providing others with information that may help them in the future. Evidently, with more funding and resources available, the ‘Ecrire Sa Vie’ initiative was successful because it allowed the project to progress over an extended period of time and I also think the timing was perfect as well. Given that it happened right after the start of the pandemic, many individuals were stuck at home with not many things to do. This gave individuals something to do that they enjoyed and it distracted them from anxious thoughts with respect to the pandemic. In our case, timing will be a big factor in advancing this project effectively and efficiently. With the pandemic restrictions beginning to lift, it may be a good opportunity to start exploring in-person options with seniors, as long as they would be comfortable to do so. It would also be useful to start planning in the event that any senior conventions take place where this idea could be presented in a room surrounded by seniors and other seniors organizations. It may also be useful to take these survey results and follow up with any individuals who were interested in participating. While time did not permit me to do so, I think this would be a beneficial step, and it could begin the volunteer recruiting process. Another way of advertising this project could be reaching out to fitness facilities, bingo halls, recreational facilities, churches, or any other facilities where seniors go for programming, to provide brochures or posters of some nature that explains the project idea. This may get a lot of individuals interested in the initiative that didn’t have access to the survey, or hear about it through other peers.

Cons / Reasons Why You Won’t Proceed

- If you’re unable to secure funding for the project
- If interests from volunteers or partnered organizations are not shown in a

sufficient manner

- If seniors are not willing to tell their stories or if the idea of legal issues carries a negative connotation with it
- If volunteers, project representative, or organization believes that the idea may be more unrealistic than originally thought

Conclusion/Recommendations

In conclusion, my experience with LISNS has been amazing and I want to thank both Heather and Makayla once again for their support throughout the semester. As you can see throughout this report, I believe that this idea should be carried forward and developed into a community outreach initiative. The pros most certainly outweigh the cons and while I believe that I was able to contribute a little bit to the foundation of this idea, it still requires a little more work before it gets up and running. The survey results are an initial indication of interest, and that this idea is now realistic and should be pursued, until we are told otherwise. With the number of seniors in Nova Scotia that deal with legal issues on a regular basis, it would be very surprising to see this idea go without any interest.

Recommendations

- Ensuring that the idea is presented with passion and individuals who are involved are passionate about the topic
- Looking into well-respected figures to see who would be interested in getting involved with the initiative, as this would likely increase participation
- Following up with individuals who expressed interest after taking the survey
- Ensuring that the project is well thought out and planned before presenting it to individuals or organizations that are interested
- Recruiting a group of volunteers that are willing to work hard on this project and enjoy themselves at the same time
- Emphasizing the importance of inclusivity with the initiative, being open to the

possibility of experiences being told in different languages, etc

- Securing funding or other incentives that would help move the project forward and get more individuals involved
- It is a great idea that I can see making a difference for not only seniors but other individuals around the province who are likely to have a legal experience during their lifetime

REFERENCES

- Bove, A., & Tryon, R. (2018). The Power of Storytelling: The Experiences of Incarcerated Women Sharing Their Stories. *International Journal of Offender Therapy and Comparative Criminology*, 62(15), 4814–4833.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0306624X18785100>
- Burns, L., & Masoodian, M. (2018). Storytelling: A Medium for Co-design of Health and Well-Being Services for Seniors. *Entertainment Computing – ICEC 2018*, 349-354.
- Fang, Y., & Huang, S. (2021). Comparison of Digital Applications and Conventional Equipment in Group and Individual Recreational Activities: Social Psychology, Social Interactions, Emotional Reaction, and Perceived Usability in Middle-Aged and Senior Citizens. *SAGE Open*, 11(4), 215824402110657.
- Marmo, S., Pardasani, M., & Vincent, D. (2021). Senior Centers and LGBTQ Participants: Engaging older adults virtually in a pandemic. *Journal of Gerontological Social Work*, 64(8), 864-884.)
- Weissberger, Gali H., et al. “Elder Abuse Characteristics Based on Calls to the National Center on Elder Abuse Resource Line.” *Journal of Applied Gerontology*, vol. 39, no. 10, Oct. 2020, pp. 1078–1087, doi:[10.1177/0733464819865685](https://doi.org/10.1177/0733464819865685).