



AMERICAN
PSYCHOLOGICAL
ASSOCIATION

EXPLORING CAREERS IN AGING

High School and Early Undergraduate (1st and 2nd year students) Activities

The purpose of these activities is to help students at varying levels of knowledge, skill, and development gain an understanding of and have tools to pursue careers in aging.

The activities are separated by student developmental level, and they are further divided by area of interest at the advanced levels (e.g., practice, research).

They are designed to be used in conjunction with the Exploring Careers in Aging Roadmaps, developed by the American Psychological Association's Committee on Aging.

Please refer to the website: www.apa.org/pi/aging/resources/careers

ACTIVITY 1.1

INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEW WITH AN EXPERT IN AGING

Developed by Maggie Syme, PhD, MPH, Assistant Professor of Psychology and Associate Director, Research Center on Aging, Kansas State University

CONCEPT

This activity is designed to engage high school and undergraduate students in the early processes of exploring careers in aging. The students will identify a professional in an aging career and conduct an informational interview. It can be used in a class of any size or modality (e.g., in-person, online), and the time required is variable. It will require lead-in instruction time, out-of-class activity time, and post-activity time that can be conducted in-person or online via reflection and/or group discussion. The format of the interview is at the discretion of the instructor and should take into account the resources available to the instructor and/or students. The example provided is an edited video constructed by an undergraduate gerontology student with video editing experience. Examples of videos, essays, or other creative representations will help students prepare for the assignment.

MATERIALS

1. Careers in Aging: Guide for Undergraduate Students
www.apa.org/pi/aging/resources/careers/undergraduate
2. Resources for Interdisciplinary Career Possibilities
www.apa.org/pi/aging/resources/careers/interdisciplinary
3. Sample Interview Questions
 - a. What drew you to your work in aging?
 - b. Could you describe your career path? How did you choose a career in aging or your specific job?
 - c. People often change direction in their careers. What keeps you in this one?
 - d. What do you love most about research with older adults? (or working with older adults for those in service-oriented professions)
 - e. What are some challenges?
 - f. What do you see as the biggest needs for older adults in the future?
4. Sample video is available via the Exploring Careers in Aging Roadmaps website:
“Discover Your Dream Career in Aging” www.apa.org/pi/aging/resources/careers

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Explore the Psychology and Careers Profiles (www.apa.org/pi/aging/resources/careers/profiles) and the Interdisciplinary Career (www.apa.org/pi/aging/resources/careers/interdisciplinary) pages with your students. Perhaps assign students to review a section of these webpages and report back to the class on their impressions.
2. Discuss with your students the broad range of careers in aging available to them.
3. Introduce the idea of an informational interview, which allows them to take a deep dive into one professional's journey. Show/provide examples for the class and explain the parameters (i.e., 5-7 minute video, short essay, etc.).
4. You may want to provide a list of potential interviewees for students to contact that includes a range of careers.
5. You may choose to have students present in class and/or post creative products on a discussion board, wiki, or other online, interactive space for students.
6. You can incorporate a formalized peer review and discussion component among the students in your rubric/grading, or have them informally review and discuss their projects together.
7. Formalize a discussion on the impact of the activity in the next class session, including what the students learned about aging careers and aspects of the experience of interviewing an expert.