



American
Society
on Aging

Ageism

An Often-Forgotten Element of
Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

American Society on Aging

ASA Unites, Empowers, & Champions everyone striving to improve aging.

UNITES.

ASA offers everyone in aging a platform to **network**, share ideas & innovate together.

EMPOWERS.

ASA is a trusted **educational** resource in aging that offers year-round programming.

CHAMPIONS.

ASA **advocates** for 21st-century aging policies at the state and federal level.

Today's Goals

- Test our Assumptions
- Define Ageism
- Impacts of Ageism
- Tactics to Challenge Ageism
- Resources

**Aging = We are all doing it,
but how do we feel about it?**

What do you think it means to be older?



What do you think it means to be younger?





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How do you feel about yourself aging?



How do you talk about growing older?



Looking at your responses,
what do you notice?





Ageism:

- Ageism refers to the stereotypes (how we think), prejudice (how we feel) and discrimination (how we act) toward others or oneself based upon [age](#).
- Ageism is the notion that people become inferior because they have lived a specified number of years.
(Maggie Kuhn, Co-Founder of the Gray Panthers)
- Ageism is one of the most widespread and socially accepted form of [prejudice](#).





Ageism:

Internalized ageism: How we feel about ourselves as aging people; and ageism in which older adults marginalize and discriminate against other older [people](#).

Cultural ageism: The everyday, invisible, profoundly ingrained and normalized negative messages about aging and old people embedded in movies, TV, songs, jokes, [etc.](#)

Implicit ageism: The unconscious bias that includes attitudes, feelings and behaviors toward people of other age groups that operates without conscious awareness or [intention](#).

Benevolent ageism: Patronizing, paternalistic beliefs or behaviors that older people need to be protected and taken care of by younger people, because they are no longer able to make decisions for [themselves](#).



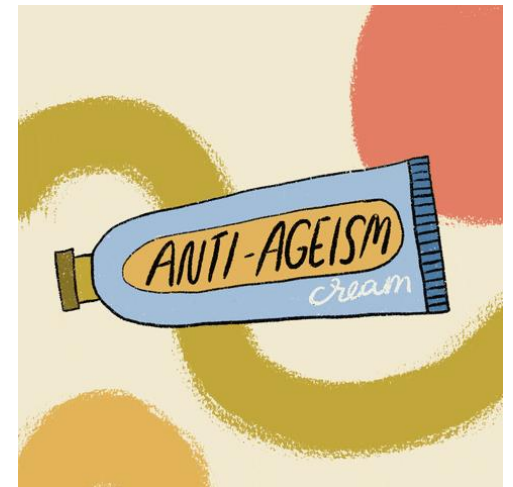
Truths About Aging:

- Older adults are the most diverse group of people on the planet.
- Chronological age is an extremely limited way of categorizing.
- 50+ contributed \$8.3 trillion to the US economy in 2018. *(AARP)*
- Aging is not a time only of decline – we can make gains in happiness, resilience, education, passion, income, etc.



Truths About Aging:

- By 2034, there will be more older people than children alive. ([Census](#))
- “Othering” dehumanizes.
- Inequalities across lifetimes are not random. Disadvantages (and advantages) accumulate.
- Workplace productivity does not singularly go down, and costs do not go up with an older workforce.
- Anti-aging is a \$62.6 billion industry globally. ([Statista](#))



Ageism Impacts on Health & Wellness

INDIVIDUAL

- Impaired memory function
- Increased anxiety, suicidal ideations, PTSD
- Increased cardiac events
- Loneliness
- Learned helplessness
- Less engagement with health care providers

STRUCTURAL

- Denial of treatment options
- Pain mismanagement
- Underdiagnosis of depression, substance abuse
- Undesired overtreatment
- Shortage of geriatricians
- Exclusion from randomized controlled trials

Ageism Impacts on Financial Security

INDIVIDUAL

- Higher likelihood of longer periods of unemployment
- Higher risk for fraud and scams
- Higher risk of receiving financial advice that doesn't fully meet one's needs, or heightens investment risk
- Threats to income, savings, benefits

STRUCTURAL

- Lower likelihood of active recruitment, lower performance reviews by employers
- Fewer training or upskilling opportunities
- Harassment in the workplace

Ageism Impacts on Society

STRUCTURAL

- \$850 billion lost gains to GDP as a result of involuntary retirement, underemployment, and unemployment ([AARP](#))
- \$63 billion in health care costs due to ageism (\$1 out of every \$7 spent) ([Levy et al., 2020](#))
- Inadequate system of long-term care: expensive, undesirable, high direct care worker turnover

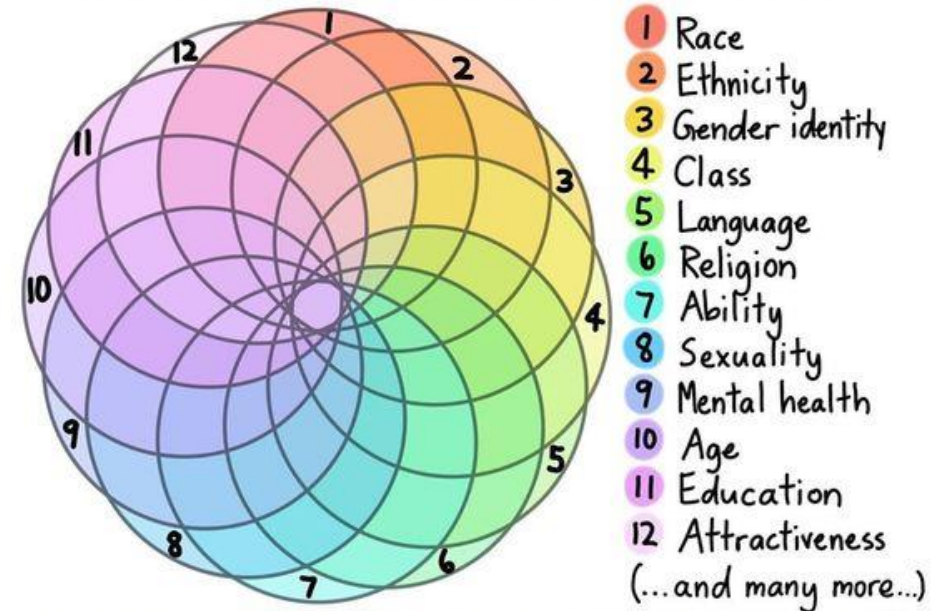


Ageism is Intersectional:

What is intersectionality?

- The interconnected nature of social categorizations such as race, class, and gender as they apply to a given individual or group, regarded as creating overlapping and interdependent systems of discrimination or disadvantage.
- Through an awareness of intersectionality, we can better acknowledge and ground the differences among us.

INTERSECTIONALITY



Intersectionality is a lens through which you can see where power comes and collides, where it locks and intersects. It is the acknowledgement that everyone has their own unique experiences of discrimination and privilege.

- Kimberlé Crenshaw -

Challenging Ageism:

- Drop 'elderly' completely from your vocabulary.
- Avoid patronizing terms like 'young man/young lady,' 'sweetie,' or refer to someone or a couple as 'cute.'
- When an older client is accompanied by another person, (a friend, adult child, or caregiver) remember to talk directly to the client.
- Check for implicit assumptions.
- Critically assess how chronological age is used in your practice. Aside from benefit or program eligibility determination, how else do you track and use age?



Challenging Ageism:

- Ask clients questions to gauge any relevant impairments. Avoid automatically speaking with a loud voice or slowing the pace of your speech.
- Avoid default presumptions that an older person is retired, and even if they are retired, that they have plenty of time on their hands.
- Use graphics and images in marketing, training, and other materials that show whole people. Avoid images that dehumanize, patronize, or suggest dependence.





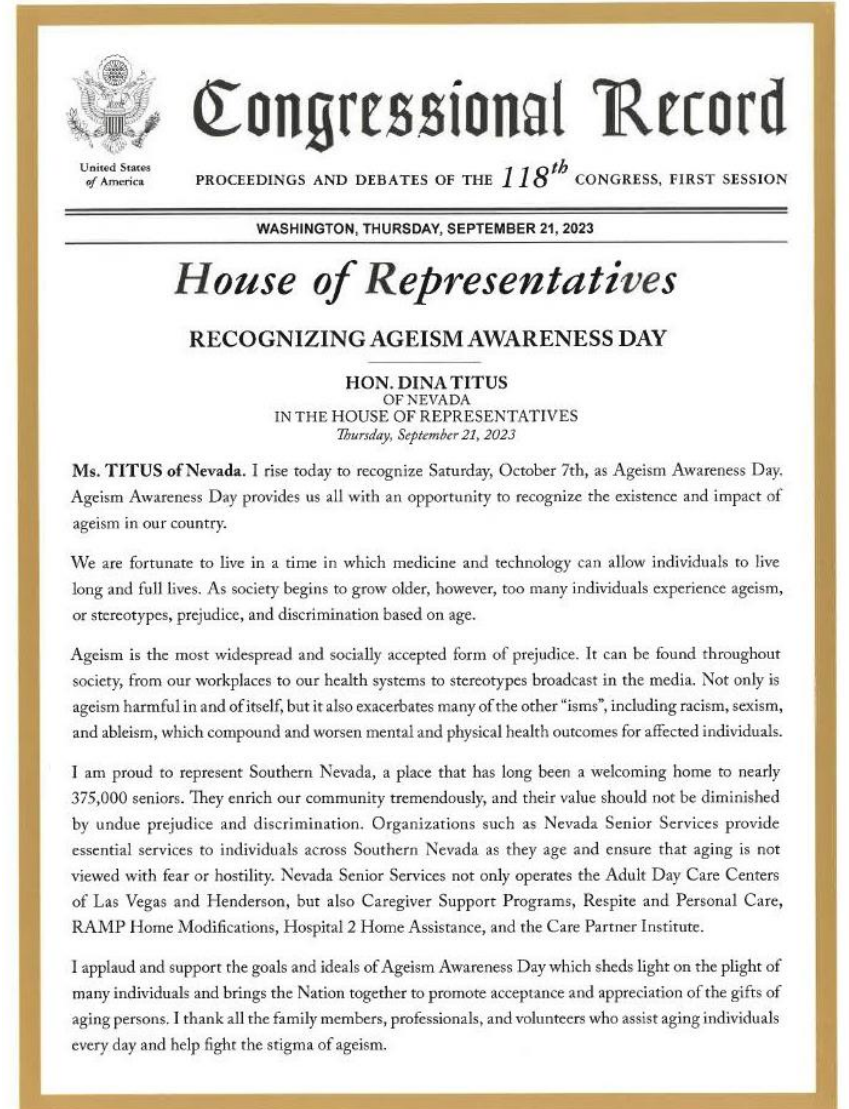
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Challenging Ageism:

Ageism Awareness Day is October 7th!

Advocates in over 30 states and 5 countries are participating!

Resources are available through [ASA](#)



To continue your anti-ageism journey...



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- **Watch** [Let's End Ageism](#). Ashton Applewhite, TED2017
- **Learn** why [generations 'are not a thing.'](#)
- **Read** up on [age discrimination in the workplace](#).
- **Organize** a [consciousness-raising group](#) around the intersection of ageism and racism.
- **Consider** how [media perpetuates ageism in mainstream thought and why this needs to stop](#).
- **Follow** [@gerowhat1](#) [@OldSchool Info](#) [@Jeanette-Leardi](#) [@asaging](#)



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Thank you!

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