

Ageism

An Often-Forgotten Element of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

American Society on Aging



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

UNITES.

EMPOWERS.

CHAMPIONS.

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

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

ASA **advocates** for 21stcentury aging policies at the state and federal level.



American Society on Aging

- 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?





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 <u>prejudice</u>.







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 <u>intention</u>.

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 <u>themselves</u>.





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.



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

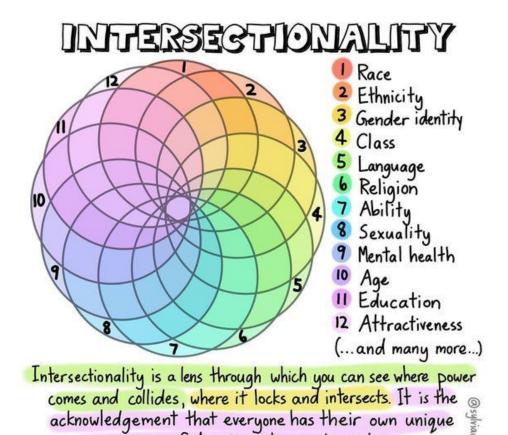






What is intersectionality?

- 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.



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.



Challenging Ageism:

Ageism Awareness Day is October 7th!

Advocates in over 30 states and 5 countries are participating!

Resources are available through ASA







Congressional Record

Proceedings and debates of the 118^{th} congress, first session

WASHINGTON, THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 21, 2023

House of Representatives

RECOGNIZING AGEISM AWARENESS DAY

HON. DINA TITUS OF NEVADA IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES Thursday, September 21, 2023

Ms. TITUS of Nevada. I rise today to recognize Saturday, October 7th, as Ageism Awareness Day.

Ageism Awareness Day provides us all with an opportunity to recognize the existence and impact of ageism in our country.

We are fortunate to live in a time in which medicine and technology can allow individuals to live long and full lives. As society begins to grow older, however, too many individuals experience ageism, or stereotypes, prejudice, and discrimination based on age.

Ageism is the most widespread and socially accepted form of prejudice. It can be found throughout society, from our workplaces to our health systems to stereotypes broadcast in the media. Not only is ageism harmful in and of itself, but it also exacerbates many of the other "isms", including racism, sexism, and ableism, which compound and worsen mental and physical health outcomes for affected individuals.

I am proud to represent Southern Nevada, a place that has long been a welcoming home to nearly 375,000 seniors. They enrich our community tremendously, and their value should not be diminished by undue prejudice and discrimination. Organizations such as Nevada Senior Services provide essential services to individuals across Southern Nevada as they age and ensure that aging is not viewed with fear or hostility. Nevada Senior Services not only operates the Adult Day Care Centers of Las Vegas and Henderson, but also Caregiver Support Programs, Respite and Personal Care, RAMP Home Modifications, Hospital 2 Home Assistance, and the Care Partner Institute.

I applaud and support the goals and ideals of Ageism Awareness Day which sheds light on the plight of many individuals and brings the Nation together to promote acceptance and appreciation of the gifts of aging persons. I thank all the family members, professionals, and volunteers who assist aging individuals every day and help fight the stigma of ageism.

To continue your anti-ageism journey...



- 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



Thank you!

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