



Confronting Ageism in Care

Ageism is a form of prejudice and discrimination based on a person's age, often leading to negative stereotypes and harmful consequences.

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Gerontology vs. Geriatrics

Geriatrics:

- Branch of specialized medicine (health care)
- Deals with medical care and treatment of elderly

Geriatricians: Primarily concerned with the health, care, diseases, and treatment of older adults.

Gerontology:

- Is a branch of science
- Deals directly with the study of aging & older adults
- Usually is from the onset of maturity to death
- Is an Interdisciplinary field

Gerontologists: Study the normal age-related changes that occur as one ages.

Types of Aging

Chronological: number of years since birth



Biological: changes reducing the efficiency of organ systems



Psychological: changes in memory, learning, adaptive capacity, personality, and mental functioning



Social: changes in social roles, relationships, and social context

Aging-Basic Principle

- All aspects of aging (biological, psychological, and social aging) are equally important in the aging process of an individual
- Each process would impact on the others and would collectively shape an individual's aging process
- Aging is unique to each individual



Ageism

Term coined by
Robert N. Butler,
MD in 1968

Wrote *Why
Survive? Being
Old in America*
(1975)

Prevalence of Ageism

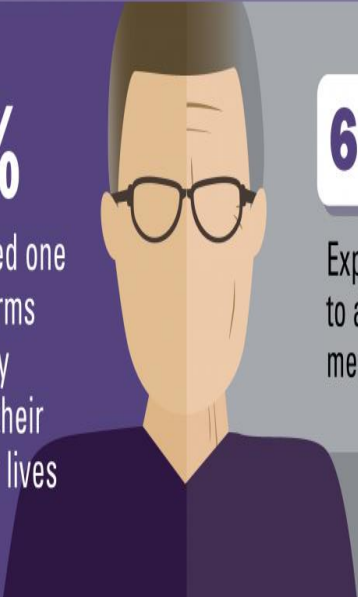
Ageism is widespread, affecting individuals of all ages. It can be found in various settings, including the workplace, healthcare system, and social interactions.

Experiences with everyday ageism

AMONG ADULTS AGE 50-80

82%

Experienced one or more forms of everyday ageism in their day-to-day lives



65%

Exposure to ageist messages

45%

Ageism in interpersonal interactions

36%

Internalized ageism

*Note: Percentages reflect responses of either often/sometimes or strongly agree/agree to forms of ageism.

1

Workplace

Older workers may face hiring bias, limited opportunities for advancement, and unfair treatment.

2

Healthcare

Older adults may experience age-based assumptions about their health, leading to inadequate medical care and limited access to services.

3

Social Interactions

Ageist attitudes can manifest as stereotypes, jokes, or disrespectful behavior, often reinforced by media portrayals and cultural norms.

Causes of Ageism

Ageism stems from a complex interplay of societal factors, including cultural beliefs, media representations, and personal biases.

Stereotypes

Negative stereotypes about aging, such as declining cognitive abilities or decreased productivity, contribute to ageist attitudes and discriminatory practices.

Economic Concerns

Economic anxieties about aging populations and healthcare costs can fuel ageist sentiment, leading to policies that disadvantage older adults.

Social Values

Cultural values that prioritize youth and physical appearance can contribute to ageism, marginalizing older adults and perpetuating stereotypes.

Impacts of Ageism

Ageism can have profound negative impacts on individuals and society as a whole, leading to social isolation, economic hardship, and decreased well-being.

1

Mental Health

Ageism can contribute to feelings of isolation, anxiety, and depression in older adults.

2

Physical Health

Studies show that ageism can negatively impact physical health, leading to increased rates of chronic diseases and mortality.

3

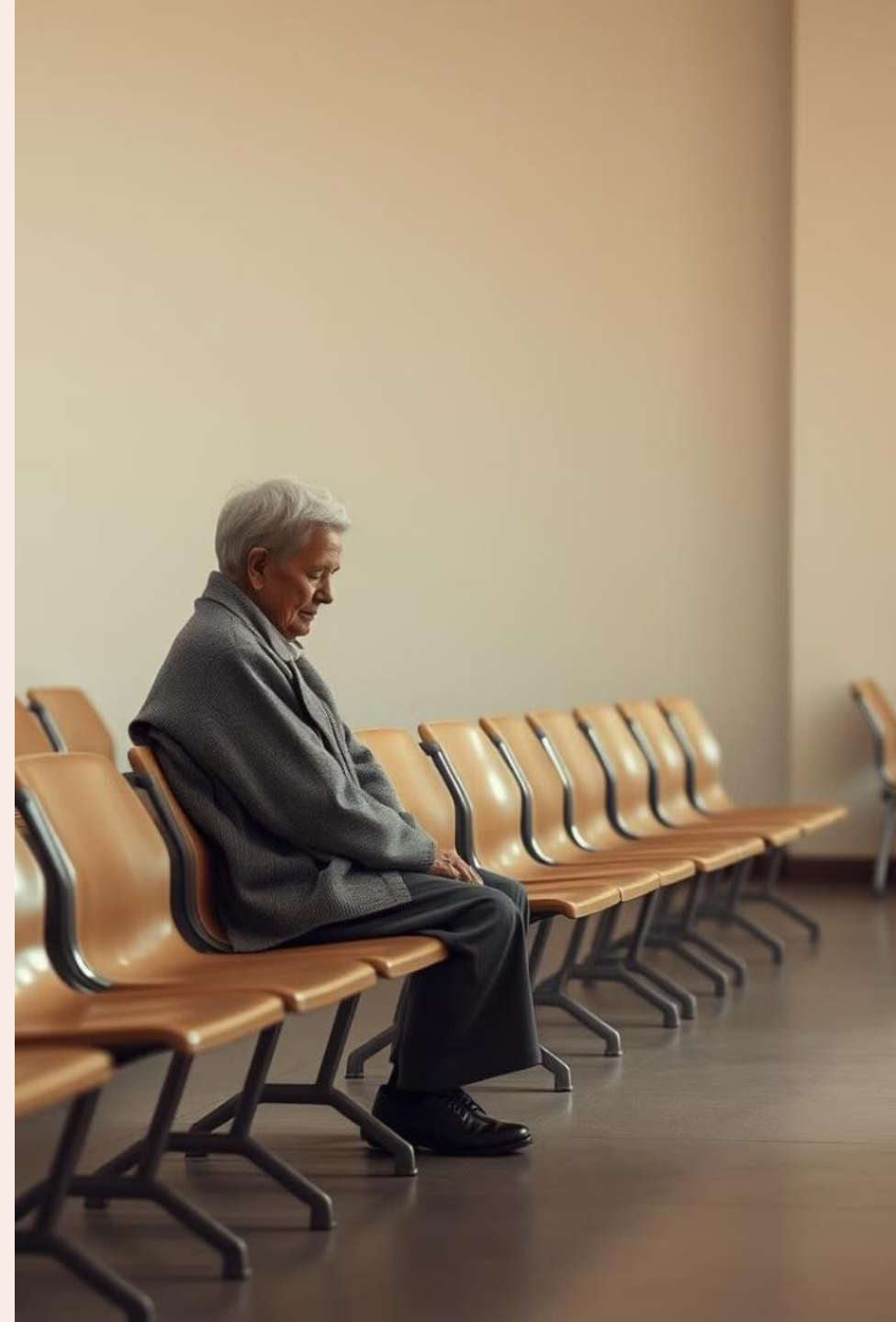
Economic Disadvantage

Older workers facing discrimination may experience job losses, reduced income, and financial instability.

4

Social Exclusion

Ageism can lead to social isolation, limiting opportunities for participation in community activities and social connections.





Combating Ageism in the Workplace

Creating an age-inclusive workplace requires a multifaceted approach, promoting diversity and inclusion, and challenging ageist stereotypes.

Hiring Practices

Employing age-neutral hiring practices, such as blind resume screening and focusing on skills and experience rather than age, can help reduce age discrimination.

Training & Education

Providing training on ageism and unconscious bias for managers and employees can promote awareness and help create a more inclusive workplace.

Mentorship Programs

Mentoring programs that pair experienced older workers with younger colleagues can foster knowledge transfer and break down age-based barriers.

Flexible Work Arrangements

Offering flexible work arrangements can help accommodate the needs of older workers, promoting work-life balance and enabling continued contributions.



Combating Ageism in Healthcare

Tackling ageism in healthcare requires addressing bias, promoting patient-centered care, and ensuring equitable access to services.

Training

Providing healthcare professionals with training on ageism and geriatrics can enhance their understanding of the needs and challenges of older adults.

Patient-Centered Care

Promoting patient-centered care models that prioritize patient preferences, goals, and values can empower older adults and address their unique needs.

Access to Services

Ensuring equitable access to healthcare services for older adults, regardless of age or socioeconomic status, is crucial for addressing health disparities and promoting well-being.

Combating Ageism in Society

Addressing ageism requires a societal shift, promoting age-inclusive attitudes, challenging stereotypes, and fostering intergenerational connections.



Education

Raising awareness about ageism through education campaigns, media literacy initiatives, and public discourse can challenge stereotypes and promote understanding.



Media Representation

Promoting diverse and positive representations of older adults in media can challenge ageist stereotypes and create more realistic and inclusive portrayals.



Community Involvement

Encouraging intergenerational programs and initiatives that bring people of different ages together can foster empathy, respect, and positive social interactions.



Policy & Legislation

Implementing anti-age discrimination laws and policies can protect older adults from prejudice and discrimination in various settings.



Facts on Ageism

- **Ageism is a common social attitude in America that allows people to treat older adults in demeaning ways.**
- **Ageism prevents older individuals from reaching or maintaining their full potential. Stereotypes of the elderly are shared by both young and old people.**
- **Ageist behaviors can be hostile or may appear quite positive, but ultimately they prevent elderly people from attaining their goals, for example, through the use of baby talk.**

Ageism vs. other “isms”

- Aging classification is not static. Age classification is characterized by continual change while other classification systems remain constant.
- Unlike sexism and racism, ageism continues to go largely unacknowledged in day-to-day life in the United States.
- The current social climate allows people to say things freely about older people that they would never say about race or gender.
- Ageism is **not** about “*them* and us”
 - - it's “*us* and us.”

Myths about Aging

“To be old is to be sick”

- Facts
 - Only 4-5% of older adults live in nursing homes
 - Only 23% of elderly claim to have disability

Myths about Aging

“You can’t teach an old dog new tricks.”

- Facts
 - The less people are challenged, the less they perform
 - Conditions of successful learning are different for older people than for the young

Myths about Aging

“The horse is out of the barn.”

- Facts
 - Bad habits do not produce irreparable damage.
 - It is never too late to start good lifestyle habits of diet and exercise.

Myths about Aging

“The key to successful aging is to carefully select your parents.”

- Fact
 - Heredity is a factor but environment and behavior strongly influence how well an elderly person functions.

Myths about Aging

“The elderly do not pull their own weight.”

- Facts
 - The belief that the elderly are unproductive is changing.

Myths about Aging

“The prejudice against people based on their age is present in all societies.”

- Facts
 - Many Eastern cultures revere their older adults.

Myths about Aging

“In today's society, many families are unable to provide care for older adults.”

- Facts
 - In the US, 70-80% of the in-home care of older adults is provided by families.

Myths about Aging

“Dementia is a normal part of aging”

- Facts
 - Dementia is a syndrome characterized by pathologic changes in the brain
 - Alzheimer’s Disease accounts for 50-70% of all dementias

follow along

as we **#TalkAboutAgeism**

AGEISM
AWARENESS DAY



learn more: asaging.org/ageism-awareness

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Program**

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