

Stop the Stigma: Ageism

April 21, 2021



Key Learnings

What is Ageism?

Ageism refers to the stereotypes (how we think), prejudice (how we feel) and discrimination (how we act) directed towards people on the basis of their age.¹

Ageism can occur at the personal level (one-on-one interactions that affect one person) or at the policy/regulation level (rules and ways of doing things that affect large numbers of people).

What does ageism look like?

- Media portrayals of older people as a “trope” or “overly-simplistic” character (e.g. the wise but forgetful village elder). This type of ageism happens because of socially-accepted assumptions.²
- Older people having a hard time getting a job, or even a job interview because employers assume they’re “behind the times” or have “old school ways of doing things.” The truth is that older workers are vital and valuable to our economy.³
- Younger people calling older people “cute”, “adorable” or using other patronizing words that attempt to undermine their dignity.

What can I do to help?

Here are a few things you can do to combat ageism:

- Connect with someone from a different generation. Research shows a good way to fight ageism is to spend time or connect with people of different ages.¹
- Learn about age-friendly communities, which are cities and towns that aspire to be inclusive to people of all ages (see <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/health-promotion/aging-seniors/friendly-communities.html> for a place to start learning!)
- Be aware: ageism is so common that it's often hard to notice (even when you're the one being ageist!). Take a moment to reflect on how little things you do might be contributing to the problem, and how you make small changes to be more age-inclusive.

Most importantly, if you catch yourself being accidentally ageist, be kind to yourself! Everyone slips up now and again. The important thing is to notice it, make a mental note, and do better next time.

Next Steps Find these and other useful resources at: CanAge.ca/AgingYourWay



Reach out to an older person in your community who might be isolated or lonely. We've created some greeting cards you can use to brighten someone's day!

Find them at CanAge.ca/LessLonely.



Fight back against ageism with the World Health Organization's resource toolkit

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Educational Speakers Series
**Aging Your Way: Creating an Age-Inclusive
Canada, Together**

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About CanAge

CanAge is Canada's National Seniors' Advocacy organization.

We are a non-partisan non-profit organization that educates, empowers and mobilizes people on the issues that matter most to older Canadians and their caregivers.

We work to advance the rights and well-being of Canadians as we age in order to live vibrant and connected lives.

Visit our website: www.CanAge.ca

Contact us: info@canage.ca

References

1. World Health Organization. (2021, March 18). Global Report on Ageism - Executive Summary. <https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789240020504>
2. Ayalon, L., & Tesch-Römer, C. (2018). Contemporary Perspectives on Ageism (Volume 19.0) (Vol. 19). Springer Open. <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-73820-8>
3. Harris, K., Krygsman, S., Waschenko, J., & Laliberte Rudman, D. (2018). Ageism and the Older Worker: A Scoping Review. *The Gerontologist*, 58(2), e1–e14. <https://doi.org/10.1093/geront/gnw194>

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