

AGEISM AWARENESS & ACTION TOOLKIT

What is Ageism?

Ageism refers to how we think (stereotypes), feel (prejudice) and act (discrimination) towards others or ourselves based on age.

- Half of people worldwide are ageist against older people
- Ageism affects us throughout life and exists in our institutions, our relationships and ourselves
- Ageism intersects and exacerbates other forms of discrimination including those related to gender, sexual orientation, race and disability

Why does this matter?

Ageism harms our economic security, physical and mental health, and memory, and shortens our life span. It also has significant costs for our health care system, and our economy overall.

What can we do to Increase awareness & prevent ageism?

1. Consider your own language and internalized ageism

- Do you have negative thoughts about yourself based on your age?
- How do you talk about people who are younger and older than you?
- Learn more about **internalized ageism**
- Discover your own biases. Take the **Harvard Implicit Bias test** or the **Age Without Limits Quiz**
- Read our **Guidelines for Age-Inclusive Communication**

2. Be a positive example

- Share stories on your social media and in person that promote positive examples of aging.
- Send **birthday cards that aren't ageist and celebrate age**. Check out **Positive Aging Birthday Cards**.
- Support equitable causes and efforts
- Start your own **intergenerational conversation**.
- Don't denigrate yourself based on age – or anyone else.

3. Question It

- When we question ageism, we start to change it. Ask:
 - Why do workplaces assume “young blood” equals better or more innovative ideas?
 - Why do we say, “You look good for your age”? Why not just “you look good”?
 - Why do we judge people by what generation they're a part of?
 - Where does the idea that we can't learn new things later in life come from?
- Read this infographic on **Responding to Ageism** and from this **guide from FrameWorks**.

4. Host conversations about ageism, using these resources:

- A **Book Club discussion about Becca Levy's groundbreaking book** about how our beliefs about aging affect our health, lifespan, likelihood of developing dementia, and more.
- Use a **Discussion Guide** on ageism in Canada the Edmonton Age-Friendly **Let's Talk About Ageism!** toolkit
- A **fact sheet** about perceptions of aging and older adults in Alberta.
- A **short film and conversation** on ageism in health care and what to do about it.
- Watch and reflect on **this short film** by the World Health Organization.
- A **Kids Book** about ageism and discussion guide. **Growing up and Growing Older: Books for Kids**
- Check out **Old School Clearinghouse**, a compilation of free, vetted resources to educate people about ageism and to help dismantle it.

5. Get involved in Ageism Awareness Day, everyday

- Check out the **Ageism Activism Centre** that has a lot of ideas on how you can spread the word.
- **Join the letter writing Campaign with the Canadian Coalition Against Ageism (CCAA)** to get updates of upcoming events, resources, etc.

6. Try some of these everyday practices:

- Don't exclude people based on age or assumptions about ability.
- Partner senior centers with high schools to host intergenerational events.
- Bring volunteers together to reach out to older adults who are isolated.
- Connect older and younger people for reciprocal mentoring.
- Partner senior centers with schools or community groups to create art projects that involve older adults.
- Interview older adults to tell their stories about how they are involved in their communities. Recognize older adults for their contribution in community.
- Lastly, keep learning and be willing to consider making changes.

Thank you for committing to address ageism in your community.

We all have something to offer, no matter our age.