




You are waiting behind an old man at the ATM machine.
 Within a few seconds, he does his thing, gets the money and
 went away.

Are you surprised? Why? Old=slow?

Couto & Wentura,
 2017

1

1




***Ageism:
 An Important Barrier to
 Age-Appropriate Care.***

Dr. Leo Marchini, DDS, MSD, PhD
 Associate Professor

2

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Conflict of Interest

**I declare NO
 conflict of interest**

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There are 3 basic categories that we all automatically activate when we think about, or perceive another

person:

- ✓ Race
- ✓ Age
- ✓ Sex

Nelson, 2017

4

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Pixabay

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Pixabay

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6



- ✓ Human aging is not only the biological process of senescence
- ✓ Human aging is embedded in social contexts and we have implicit and explicit assumptions about older people, about growing old, and about being old
- ✓ We think about those three things in general, and not about the multiple, different forms they can assume
- ✓ As soon as we neglect the differences between individuals, we over-generalize and treat it in a stereotypical manner
- ✓ This stereotypical construction of older people, aging and old age is called ageism (Butler, 1969)

Ayalon & Tesch-Romer, 2018

7

7



- ✓ Ageism is ubiquitous: It is in our perception of older people and in our actions towards older adults. It happens at work, in families, in public spaces, and of course at the doctors' offices
- ✓ We even look at ourselves as ageing persons in an ageist way
- ✓ Most of times, it is unintentional

Ayalon & Tesch-Romer, 2018

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Even small children are susceptible to the manner older adults are depicted in the media

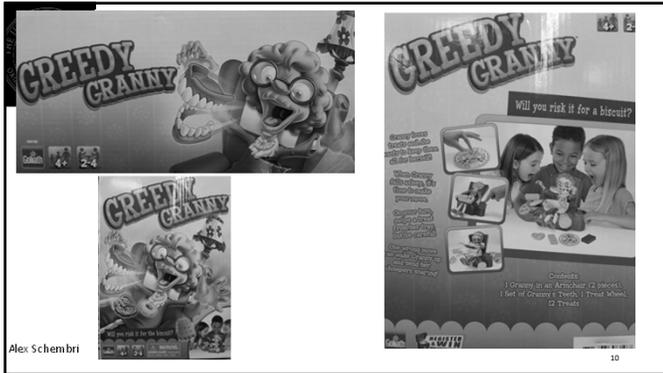


Bergman, 2017

Snow White's Evil Queen

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10



Implicit ageism is an associative process and do not depend on the subjective assessment of truth values. The memory associations will occur whether or not the person believes them to be accurate
(Our ATM machine first reaction)

Explicit ageism are marked by controlled processes that allow people to edit negative associations and feelings towards older persons either to establish more elaborated believes or to withhold negative responses in situations in which it would not be appropriate to express them
(Response to the item "slow" as associated to "old people" in a survey)

Couto & Wentura, 2017 11

11



AGEISM IS THE MOST TOLERATED FORM OF SOCIAL PREJUDICE

17% of people
20% of people
21% of people
42% of people

1 in 4 people admit they have treated someone differently because of their age.

SOCIETY HAS CREATED STEREOTYPES & PREJUDICES ABOUT OLDER PEOPLE

It's NOT okay for age:
-Can't think or act fast enough
-Overweight
-Change in appearance
-Change in speech
-Change in movement

It's OK because:
-Older people
-Change in appearance
-Change in speech
-Change in movement

NOT ALL AGEISM IS INTENTIONAL

26% of people
51% of people

Over 60% of people report that, because of their age, people have changed or stopped talking to them.

Over 60% of people report that, because of their age, people have changed or stopped talking to them.

AGEISM WORKS BOTH WAYS

Don't accept self-limiting beliefs. They negatively contribute to quality of life.

Celebrate aging!

12

12

 There are three areas of stereotypes for older adults, portraying views about what older adults are like:

- ✓ **Illness:** stereotypes representing infirmity and mortality
- ✓ **Irrelevance:** stereotyping older adults as invisible and useless
- ✓ **Incompetence:** portrays older adults as nice but incompetent.

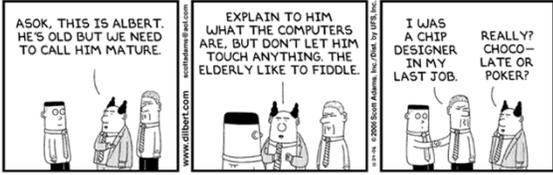
 



North & Fiske, 2017 13

13





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14

 **Some important consequences of ageism:**

- ✓ **Mistreatment of older adults**
- ✓ **Loneliness**
- ✓ **Patronizing speech**
- ✓ **Discrimination in the work place**
- ✓ **Discrimination in the health care system**

15

15

Mistreatment of older adults

- ✓ Psychological, physical, sexual, financial abuse and neglect
- ✓ Aggregated prevalence of all five types is 7.1% globally



92-year old, living at the backyard

McDonald, 2017

16

16

Loneliness

Ageism leads to :

- ✓ Progressive withdrawal from social participation
- ✓ Stereotype absorption, given rise to negative self-definitions
- ✓ Social exclusion and discriminatory norms and practices



Shiovitz-Ezra et al., 2018

17

17

Patronizing speech (Elderspeak)

You should be living in a nursing home [spoken very loudly]. At your age, you can't take care of yourself.

When I tell them I play basketball 3x/week, they pat me on the back and say, "oh, good for you" in that fake, singsongy kind of way.

I was trying to figure out what I would like, and the waiter acts like I forgot I have a menu in my hands. Squats down next to me, starts telling me what he likes and how much I "ll like it, the acts like he's going to take my menu away and just place my order for me!

Older adult was told at an ER, where he was at for a short-term medical problem

Older adult at VA Hospital Affairs

Older adult at a restaurant

Bugental & Hehman, 2018

18

18



Discrimination in the work place

Older Workers and Age Discrimination
 The Age Discrimination in Employment Act (ADEA), signed into law in 1967, forbids discrimination in the workplace against anyone 40 or older. A recent survey shows that many workers still believe there are signs of age discrimination on the job today.

1 in 5 workers in the U.S. is age 55 or older

64% of workers say they have seen or experienced age discrimination in the workplace.

58% of adults believe age discrimination begins among workers in their 50s.

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, Shaping Ahead of the Curve 2015: AARP Multigenerational Work and Career Study Perceptions of Age Discrimination in the Workplace — Ages 45-74

GRAPHIC: AARP Digital Design



19

19



Discrimination in the health care system

- ✓ Health care providers are usually more compassionate and less prejudiced. Nevertheless, ageism is pervasive among health care providers
- ✓ Evidence points to persistently limited interest in careers working with older people
- ✓ Discrimination based on age reflects in clinical practice and decision-making among health care providers, as well as health care policies (Brazilian oral health surveys)
- ✓ Age-based disparities happen for diagnostic procedures and types of treatment offered, in various fields of medicine – including cardiology, oncology, and stroke treatment
- ✓ Older persons participate much less in clinical trials

Kagan, 2018
Wyman et al., 2017

20

20



Ageist attitudes among health care professionals

- ✓ Nurses assigned lower status to geriatric nursing
- ✓ Nursing trainees indicated lack of interest in working with older adults
- ✓ Younger patients were more likely to be recommended for breast-conservation therapies
- ✓ Older patients with lung cancer were less likely to be referred for surgery
- ✓ Older patients were less likely to receive standard diagnostic procedures for heart attacks



Kagan, 2018
Wyman et al., 2017

21

21



31

How do we combat ageism?
Individual level approaches

- ✓ Supporting self-awareness (*know yourself*)
- ✓ Encouraging empowerment
- ✓ Encouraging wellness among older persons
- ✓ Providing appropriate caregiver support
- ✓ Being an advocate

Shannonhouse et al., 2017

32

Box 1
Suggestions for communicating with older adults with communication disability

- Know the patient's communication strengths and weaknesses
- Make sure that sensory aids (eg, eye glasses, hearing aids, communication devices, memory aids) are available and used
- Take extra time for communication
- Make sure the environment is communication friendly, that is, quiet, well lit, furniture arranged for face-to-face interactions
- Speak slowly and simplify your sentences
- Supplement verbal descriptions with pictures and writing
- Confirm understanding with teach-back approaches
- Limit the information given in one session
- Provide take-home educational material in the preferred format and at the appropriate reading level

Turkiston MK, Bourgeois RL, Butler CK. Communication and aging. Phys Med Rehabil Clin N Am. 2010;111(2):209-19. doi: 10.1016/j.pmr.2009.12.011. PMID: 20492376; PMCID: PMC2870568.

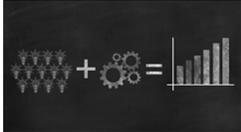
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How do we combat ageism?

Societal level approaches

- ✓ Encouraging ageism research and hunting for best practices
- ✓ Advocating for non-ageist laws and policies
- ✓ Ensuring implementation of best practices (service improvement)



Shannonhouse et al., 2017

34

34




- ✓ Effective messages appeal to a life stage.
- ✓ Effective messages appeal to a need or interest.
- ✓ Age alone is not a reason or need, but it may be a point of entry.
- ✓ The problem is the problem; age is not the problem.
- ✓ There is no such thing as "anti-aging."
- ✓ Avoid cliches.
- ✓ The jargon of a profession is not a communication tool outside of that profession.
- ✓ Perception of age is key.
- ✓ Be careful with humor.

35

35




<p>Words and phrases to avoid:</p> <p>Anti-aging Aged Codger, geezer, and similar Grandmotherly</p> <p>"he looks good for his age" "despite her age...." "even older adults can..." "is active even at that age..."</p>	<p>Preferred words and phrases:</p> <p>Adults ages 60 and older People ages 55 and older People with dementia People in middle age</p> <p>Aging adults Midlife Older adults Older persons Older people Older patients Older population Prime time Experience, experienced Independent Mentor, coach</p>
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36

36



Take 10 Years Off Your Face

"SHE MUST HAVE BEEN BEAUTIFUL WHEN SHE WAS YOUNG"

Don't ask me, I'm having a senior moment!

10 ANTI-AGING SECRETS

Olay AGE DEFYING

EASY WAYS TO DROP A DECADE

"Old people are so cute"

You Look So Young

NATURE • RESEARCH • SCIENCE

"Never ask a woman her age"

37

37



Thank you for your attention!

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38

38
