

passive and unproductive yet they are productive



*Older people continue to contribute to the livelihoods of their households*

- Attitudes in the health care system can impact on the level or quality of service available to older persons.
- Ageism robs older people of choice and independence
- Ageism by employers, financial institutions and other service providers leads to older people losing out on potential income
- Negative stereo types such as association of ageing with witchcraft may result in psychological problems

### How to fight Ageism

- Educate yourself and others about the aging process.
- Get the facts on aging to combat stereotypes and myths about aging.
- Teach children and youths the concept of the life cycle with positive images of old age.
- Accept aging as a natural part of life.
- Respect older people's right to make decisions regardless of functional limitations. Actively involve them in the process of designing and managing their lives.

- Recognize ageist jokes and language and avoid using them.
- Be an advocate in your field. Advocate for increased research to examine individual-difference in aging and ways to optimize health and social functioning.

*“Do not resent growing old. Many are denied the privilege.”*

### Age Demands Action (ADA)

Age Demands Action is a global grassroots movement campaigning against age discrimination and for the promotion of older people's rights.

### The United Nations International Day of Older Persons

On December 14 1990, the UN General Assembly designated October 1 as the International Day of Older Persons in recognition of the important contributions that older people make to our world, while raising awareness towards issues of ageing.



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# AGEISM



**Take A Stand Against Ageism**

## What is ageism

Ageism is *stereotyping and discrimination against individuals or groups on the basis of their age* (World Health Organization). *Ageism can take many forms, including denial of services such as health, education or access to employment on the basis of age.* While this can include those who are young or old, ageism appears to be a more significant issue for older people.

## Recognise Ageism

Ageism can be manifested in many different forms in people's lives.

### In the media:

- Portraying ageing as a bad thing e.g. when cosmetics, food and nutritional supplements are marketed as good for reversing ageing.
- When older people are portrayed as uniformly poor or as a uniformly well off group
- Emphasis on youth and physical beauty to sell products.
- Low representation of older people in commercials for clothing, cars, dining and entertainment.
- Blaming many of society's economic worries on older people portraying them as an expensive burden.

### In language use:

- use of terms like “the old” and “the aged” or “the elderly” these terms portray older people as weak

## In communication with older people

- Talking in extremely simple sentences
- Talking in “baby talk” and slowly to all older persons
- Speaking loudly to all older persons
- Repeatedly saying the same sentence implying the older person did not understand

## In education systems

- When education is structured and delivered in a one size fits all manner.
- Little attention paid to ageing and older people by educational institutions.

## Within the policy systems

- Laws and policies made without regard to the needs of older people, or services may have a disproportionate impact on older adults
- Treating older people as the same and therefore requiring the same services in the same manner

## In service provision

- Unwillingness to serve an older assuming they may take more time
- Paying less attention to conditions largely affecting older people (e.g. dementia, osteoarthritis, osteoporosis or incontinence) than those equally common in mid-life.
- When a person's age, rather than their overall status, influence our decisions to conduct a test or provide a treatment.
- Failure to recognise and respect older people thereby prioritising serving them

## In our beliefs:

Having the attitude that

- Older people are “stuck in their ways” and will not change
- Older people do not want to learn new things
- Older people do not have fun
- Equating aging with being frail, unhealthy, filthy and dying and equating youth with health and beauty
- That someone with a physical impairment also has a mental impairment.
- All older people are demented and senile
- Older people practice witchcraft

## In decision making

- Assuming entitlement to older people' assets or resources with the assumption that they cannot manage
- Older people have no meaningful contributions to make



Older people discussing health issues

- Concluding that all older people consume without contributing

## How ageism affects older people?

- Negative societal stereotypes can cause older people to view themselves as weak and