

Ageism Awareness

Having a positive attitude can improve how you age.

What is Ageism?

Ageism is the **systematic stereotyping and discrimination against people because of their age.** Anyone can experience ageism.

Ageism manifests on all levels

Institutional

Perpetuating ageism through organizational actions or policies.



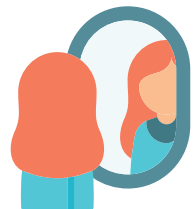
Interpersonal

Ageist beliefs, ideas and stereotypes shared in social interactions.



Internalized

Applying ageist beliefs, ideas and stereotypes to yourself.



Ageism is pervasive

but often not taken as seriously as other forms of inequity even though ageism has been shown to negatively impact physical and mental health, and contribute to earlier death.

The Impact of Ageism

According to the 2020 National Poll on Healthy Aging:

82%

of Americans age 50+ reported experiencing ageism regularly.

65%

were exposed to ageist messaging from the media.

45%

experienced interpersonal ageism.

36%

had internalized ageism.

Ageist beliefs are associated with **higher rates of cardiovascular disease, memory impairment and a lower will to live** in older age.

People who hold more positive views of aging increase their life span up to **7.5 years!**



Identifying Ageism

Implicit Ageism

Thoughts, feelings and behaviors toward people based on age that exist and operate **without conscious awareness**.

Explicit Ageism

Conscious awareness and control over the thoughts, feelings and behaviors expressed about and towards people based on age.

What are some examples of ageism?

- Sharing or laughing at ageist jokes.
- Using patronizing language, like infantilizing older adults.
- Refusing to hire people over or under a certain age.
- Making generalizations about a specific generation.
- Disregarding someone's concerns or wishes due to their age.
- Dismissing treatable conditions as a feature of old age.

Ageism Awareness helps draw attention to the impact of ageism and ways to combat it.



**Age-Friendly
Howard County**

agefriendly@howardcountymd.gov
410-313-1234

Combating Ageism

The World Health Organization recommends **3 Strategies to Combat Ageism**

- 1** **Education** to dispel myths and stereotypes, and raise ageism awareness.
- 2** Increase **intergenerational interventions** which create cooperation and empathy between age groups.
- 3** Law and **policy changes** to reduce inequity and discrimination.

What can YOU do?

Become Aware

Reflect on how ageism shapes your own thoughts, feelings and life experiences.

Practice positive aging self-talk.

Learn More

Listen to personal stories, read books, and conduct research about ageism.

Advocate

Develop advocacy skills to know when to speak up and when to step back.

Take Action

Try correcting stereotypes, challenge ageist jokes, or speak out against age discrimination.