

**Ageism**

**An Older Adult Lens**

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**Ageism, An Older Adult Lens**

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Ageism: An Older Adult Lens

**Aging is universal**

*Growing Up*  
Sounds positive and anticipates the future

*Growing Old*  
Sounds negative and elicits fear of the future

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Ageism: An Older Adult Lens

### What Is Ageism?

- The term “Ageism” was coined by Dr. Robert Butler in 1969. He became the first director of the US National Institute on Ageing.
- He defined it as Stereotyping and Discrimination based on age

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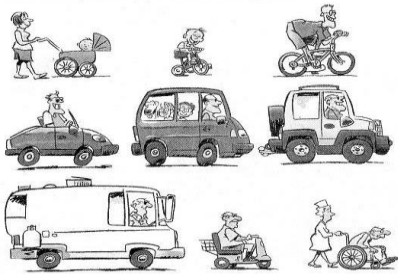
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### Reality for some, but not for all

#### The Wheels of Life



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### Let's Talk about Ageism



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Ageism happens when you make up your mind about what a group of people are like because of their age.

We all have ageist attitudes.



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### What Is Ageism?

Ageism is a factor in abuse.

It is **discrimination** against older adults because they are older.



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### Attitudes & Beliefs = Stereotypes

- Older adults are slow and boring
- They are mentally incompetent
- Older adults think they know everything
- They don't have sexual feelings
- Older adults burden the healthcare system
- They live in old age homes
- Older adults are cranky
- They are wise
- They are angels
- They are bad drivers



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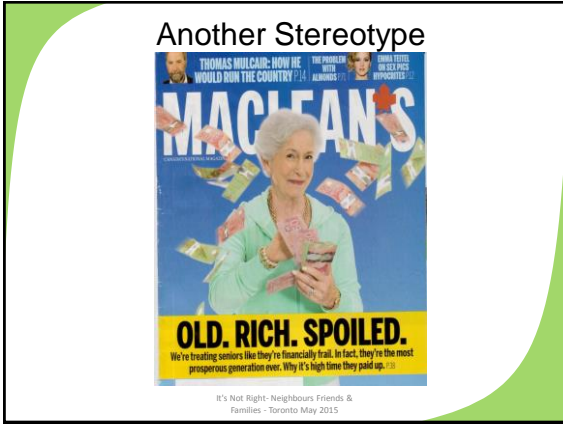
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### Ageist Behaviours

- Treating older people like children
- Feeling entitled to older parents time, money, assets
- Not including them because “they wouldn’t understand”, or are “too old to learn”
- Labelling older adults as “the aged” or “the elderly” as if they are all the same
- Calling strangers “sweetie” and “dear” because they are older

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### Ageism: An Older Adult Lens

- Insert INR NFF animation

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## The puzzle of Ageism

If getting older is something we do everyday...  
and there are no exceptions...

Why do we discriminate against older people  
when we will one day be the older ones????

It is a puzzle, with many pieces...



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## Ageism: An Older Adult Lens

- Insert INR NFF scenario - Family Table

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### Ageism: An Older Adult Lens

## The Effects of Ageism on Older Adults

- Did anything make you uncomfortable in *Family Table*?
- Did you see any evidence of ageism?
- What were the effects on Dad?

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### Ageism is everywhere and its effects profound



A brief look at what research tells us about

- the negative effects of stereotypes
- the positive effects of positive beliefs about aging

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### Some older adults are hit harder by ageism

Those who have experienced discrimination because of

Gender	Disability
Sexual orientation	Race
Colour	Ethnicity
Religion	Culture
Language	

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### The far reach of ageism

Policies and practices that

- Are based on ageist stereotypes
- Perpetuate stereotypes about older people
- Discriminate
- Reduce life satisfaction
- Undermine human dignity

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## An Important Aspect of Ageism

A tendency to structure society based on an assumption that everyone is young, thereby failing to respond appropriately to the real needs of older persons.

Ontario Human Rights Commission

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## What does structuring society on an assumption everyone is young look like?

- Physical barriers
  - Inaccessible public buildings
  - Traffic lights timed for young persons
- Social barriers
  - Attitudes older adults are a burden to the taxpayer
- Systemic barriers
  - One clinical pathway for all patients
  - One problem, one appointment policy

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## Ageism: An Older Adult Lens

The barriers faced by older persons are often “socially constructed”,... they are not a direct result of the aging process but rather the result of society’s response to aging.

*Time For Action: Advancing the Rights of Older Persons in Ontario*

*We can break down the barriers!  
We can counter ageism!*

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## Ageism: An Older Adult Lens

- *“Old age is not a status we choose to become; it is a status that we inherit simply by virtue of living, not dying.”*  
Holstein, 2006

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## Questions for Table Discussion

1. How do our attitudes perpetuate ageism?
1. How do our perceptions of aging align with our experience of aging? – correcting false beliefs

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