Aging Attitudes and Late Life Psychotherapy

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Disappointment



Shame


DON'T
Look At Me,
That Smell
Is Coming From
GRANDPA
Lake George, NY

Defiance



Connection



Mutual Support



What if You are Actually Experiencing an Ageist Stereotype?

Stereotypes about Older People

- Depressed
- Cognitively impaired
- Sick
- Alone/lonely

Clinical Focus of Psychotherapy

- Depression
- Cognitive impairment
- Increasing medical problems
- Social isolation/loneliness

Activation of Ageist Stereotypes

- When exposed to common, negative, subliminal cues about aging, older adults evidence behaviors consistent with the stereotype (Levy, 2009).
- Longer-term adverse health outcome from holding negative aging stereotypes in earlier life (Levy, et al., 2009).
- So, what IS the impact of actually contending with a life problem that is stereotyped as common in older adults? That is, older adults who ARE depressed, or cognitively impaired, or physically ill, or socially isolated, or some combination?

Psychotherapy with Older Adults

- "Psychotherapy belongs to a class of healing practices that involve talk as the medium to address psychological distress."
- "Healing practices generally are embedded in a belief system. The belief system of psychotherapy generically is psychological."
- "[Psychotherapy] is individualized to the client and the client's problems." Wampold, 2019
- Psychotherapy is highly effective in reducing distress in older adults. Scogin & Shah, 2012

Issues that Bring Older Adults to Psychotherapy

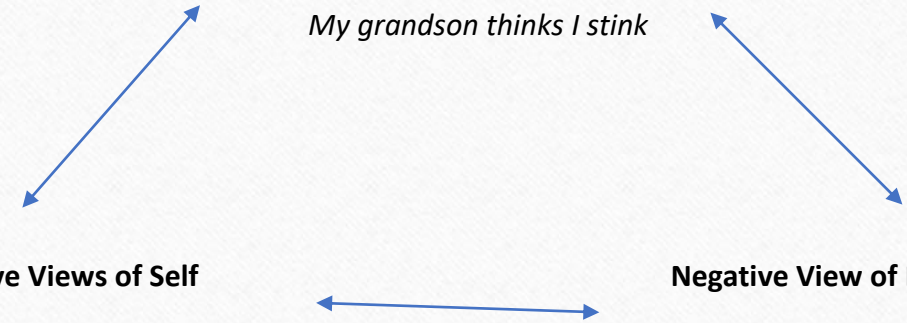
- Mental/Psychological Symptoms: Subjective distress, depression, anxiety, cognitive loss
- Life role transitions: Onset/exacerbation of medical or cognitive problems; care for others; retirement; residential move
- Interpersonal problems: Conflict with spouse/partner, children, friends, institutions
- Grief: Death of important person
- Social Isolation/Loneliness: Longstanding, situational

Beck's Cognitive Triad of Depression

Negative Views about the World

They think I'm just an old man

My grandson thinks I stink



Negative Views of Self

I look like hell

My body's dropping

Negative View of Future

I cannot: pee, poop, see, hear, screw remember

Beck Inventory/Ageist Comments

Beck Inventory

- 1. Sadness
- 2. Pessimism
- 3. Past failure
- 4. Loss of pleasure
- 5. Guilty feelings
- 6. Punishment feelings
- 7. Self-dislike
- 8. Self-criticalness
- 9. Suicidal thoughts

Ageist comments from others/self

- It must be depressing to be old [Colleague]
- What does she have to live for? [Colleague]
- *Can't screw, chew, smell [T-Shirt]*
- *I look like hell [T-Shirt]*
- *What can you expect, I'm a old person [Older friend]*
- *"Old people have a duty to die and get of the way. [CO Governor}*

Beck Inventory/Ageist Comments

Beck Inventory

- 10. Crying
- 11. Agitation
- 12. Loss of interest
- 13. Indecisiveness
- 14. Worthlessness
- 15. Loss of energy
- 16. Changes in sleep pattern

Ageist Remarks

- *My memory shrinks* [T-shirt]
- Game over—You're old. [Greeting card]
- My get up and go, got up and went [joke]
- Of course I can't sleep, I'm old [Patient]

Beck Inventory

- 17. Irritability
- 18. Changes in appetite
- 19. Concentration difficulty
- 20. Tiredness/fatigue
- 21. Loss of interest in sex

Ageist Remarks

- *Kiss my ass [T-Shirt]*
- *I cannot chew, no sense of smell [T-Shirt]*
- *My memory shrinks [T-Shirt]*
- Want energetic employee [work ad]
- *Cannot screw [T-shirt]*

Reflections on Doing Psychotherapy with Older Adults

- Forty years of doing psychotherapy with older adults in urban geriatric outpatient mental health clinic and geriatric medical primary care
- Primary modality I use: Interpersonal Psychotherapy for Depression; time-limited, present focused, collaborative, self-empowerment ethos (“options”)
- In recent years, began to inquire about attitudes toward own aging, and experience of being viewed as an older person.
- Caveat: Clinical populations are not broadly representative (“the clinician’s illusion”); yet some client feels they can speak more forthrightly to therapist than to others to clarify issues for themselvesthat can generate hypotheses (“scientist-practitioner” model)

Feminist Therapy: Addresses Emotional and Functional Impact of Marginalization based on Gender

"[Feminist therapy] uses the tools of psychotherapy to undermine internalized and externalized patriarchal realities that serve as a source of distress and as a brake on growth and personal power for all humans."

"It is an integrative and competency-based paradigm that perceives human beings as responsive to the problems of their lives, capable of solving those problems, and desirous of change…"

Brown, 2018

Might this therapy inform efforts to "undermine internalized and externalized" ageism?

Some Thoughts about Integration of Ageism into Therapeutic Discussions

- Multicultural Approaches: "All individuals exist in social, political, historical, and economic contexts…" (APA, 2002)
  - Diversity within each and complex "intersectionality among them"—including age. (APA, 2017)
- Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy. Encourage discussion of thoughts (and potentially reveal underlying "schemas") about aging, their impact on mood, and ways to challenge/change.

Some Thoughts…

- Interpersonal Psychotherapy: Think of aging as a "Role transition" to a new role as *old person* for which you may need to acquire new skills to respond to changed behaviors from others (who now see you as old), attend to emotional reactions to your own aging (including mourning 'old role'), and identify options to maximize functioning and well-being in your life as an older person.
- Reminisence Therapy: Review experience of aging of relatives and self over time – and find new ways of giving meaning/purpose to older adulthood.

An International Perspective

- Lena Verdeli, Teachers College, Columbia University: IPT for persons affected by the Syrian Crisis in Lebanon
- IPT has been utilized globally with good results for both younger and older individuals (e.g., Lebanon, Bangladesh, Columbia, Haiti). WHO manual for group IPT.
- Drs. Harrison and Patricia Bloom: IPT for depressed older adults in Uganda
- Cultural attitudes about aging

Some Questions for Clients

- Is your old age what you thought it would be? {Unexamined assumptions about aging that may be "triggered" now}
- What do you think generally of older people? {Prejudice against aged self/other aged}
- What do you see when you look in the mirror? {Negative views of own physical aging}
- What do you like most/least about being an older person? What might the future bring? {Pervasive negative assumptions about being old}
- Do you think you are treated differently because you are old/older? {Perception of age-differentiated behavior}

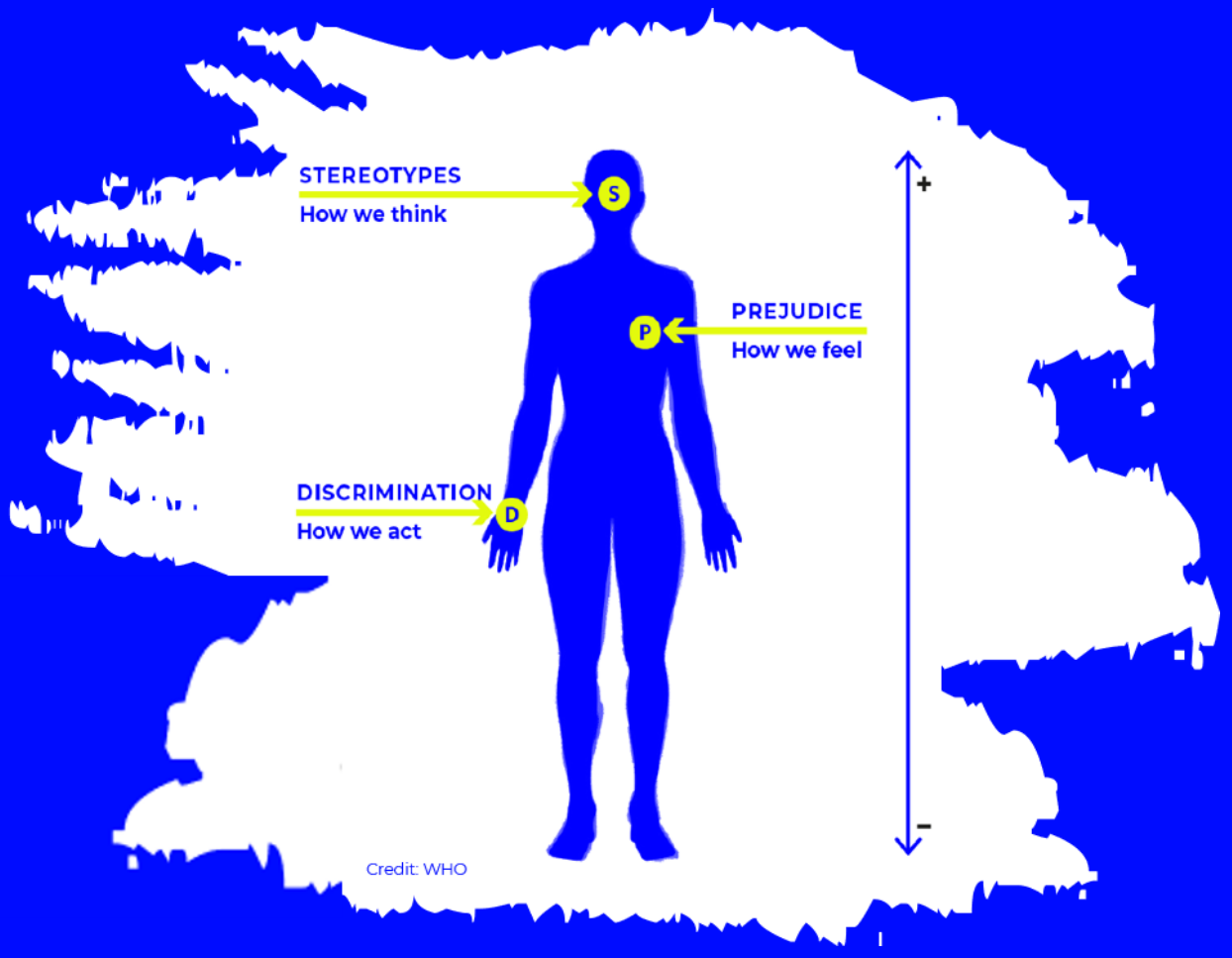
AGEISM

Alana Officer

Unit Head, Demographic Change and Healthy Ageing

World Health Organization

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



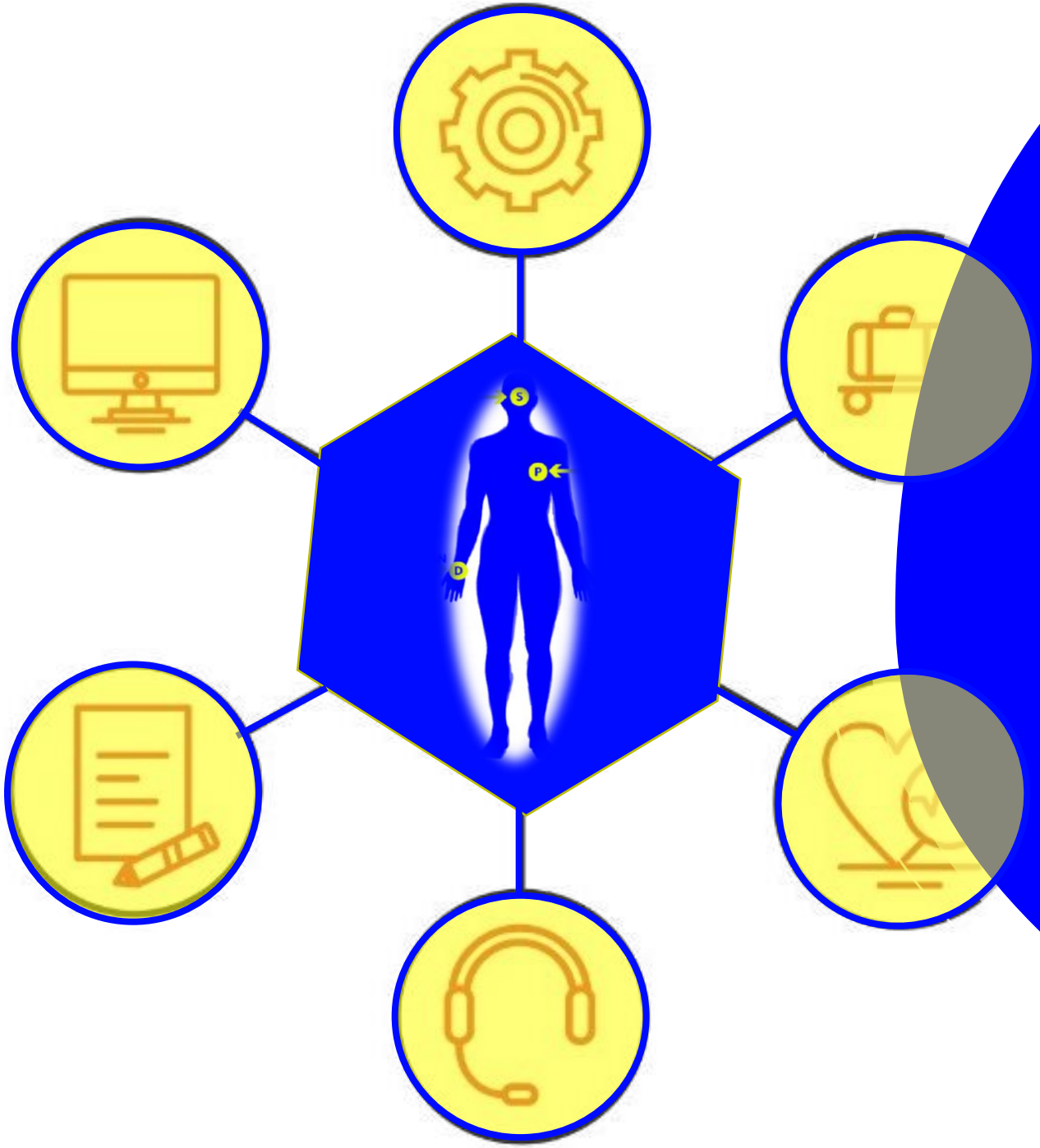
Global report on ageism

Summarizes the **best available evidence** on ageism

Outlines **3 strategies** to address ageism

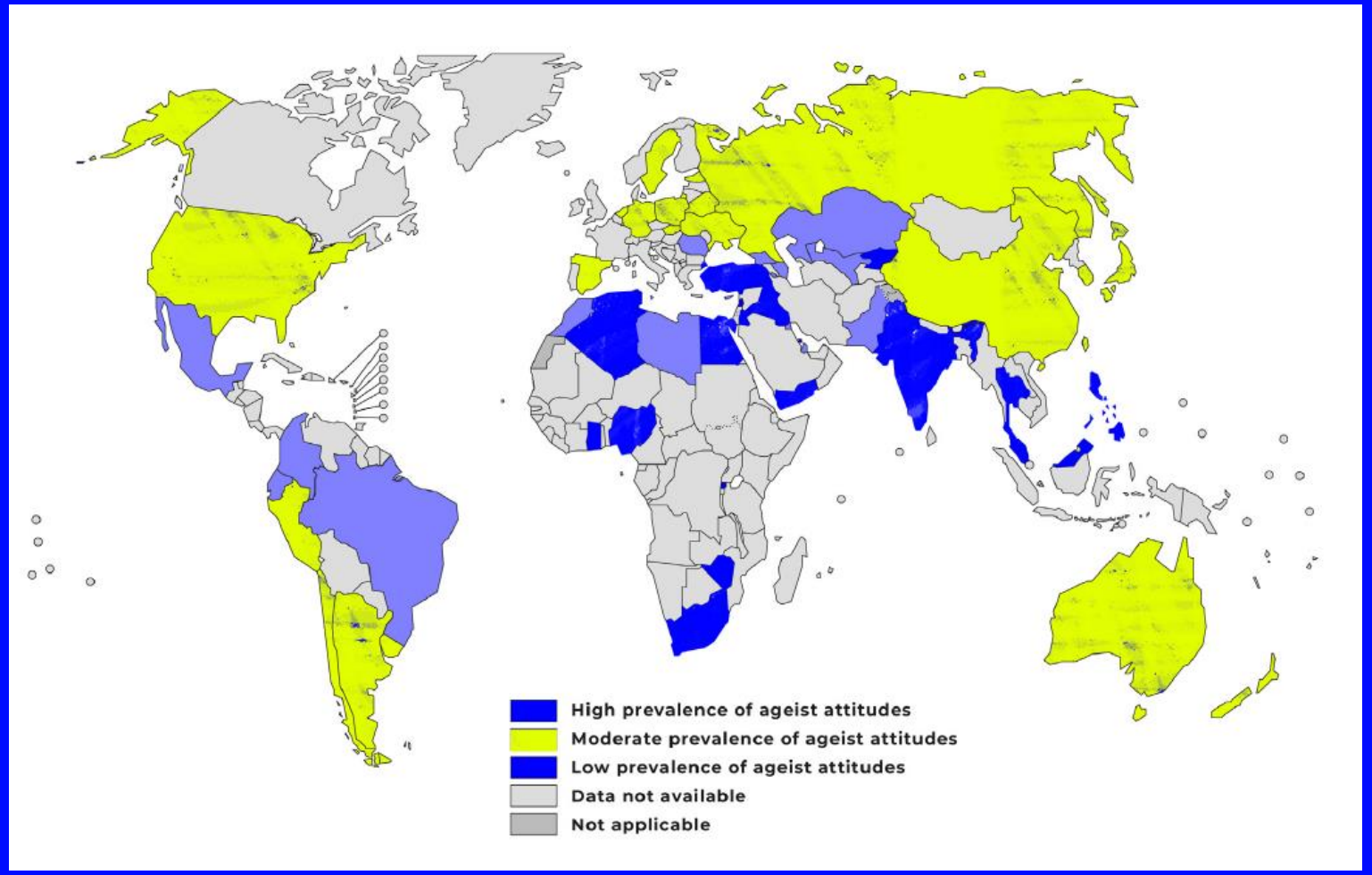
Includes **3 recommendations for action**



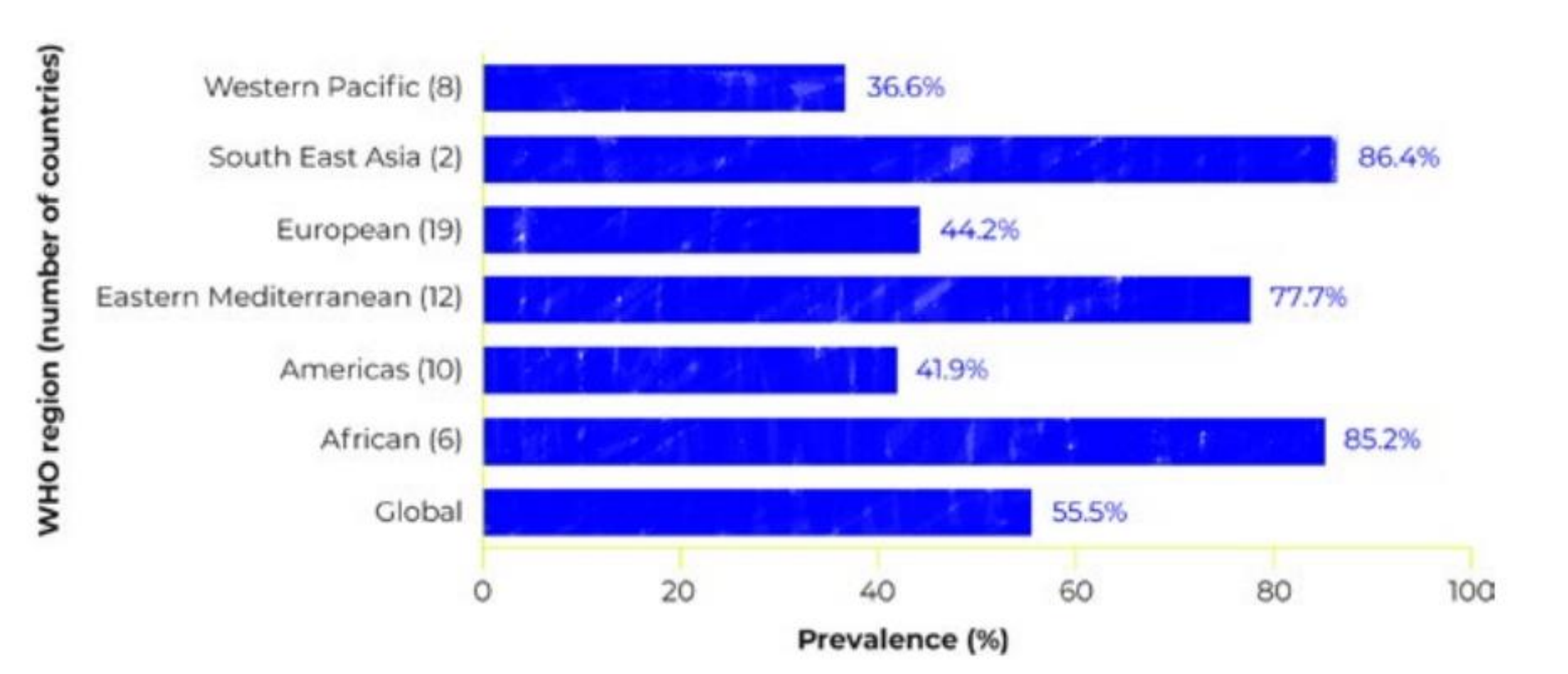


Ageism is pervasive

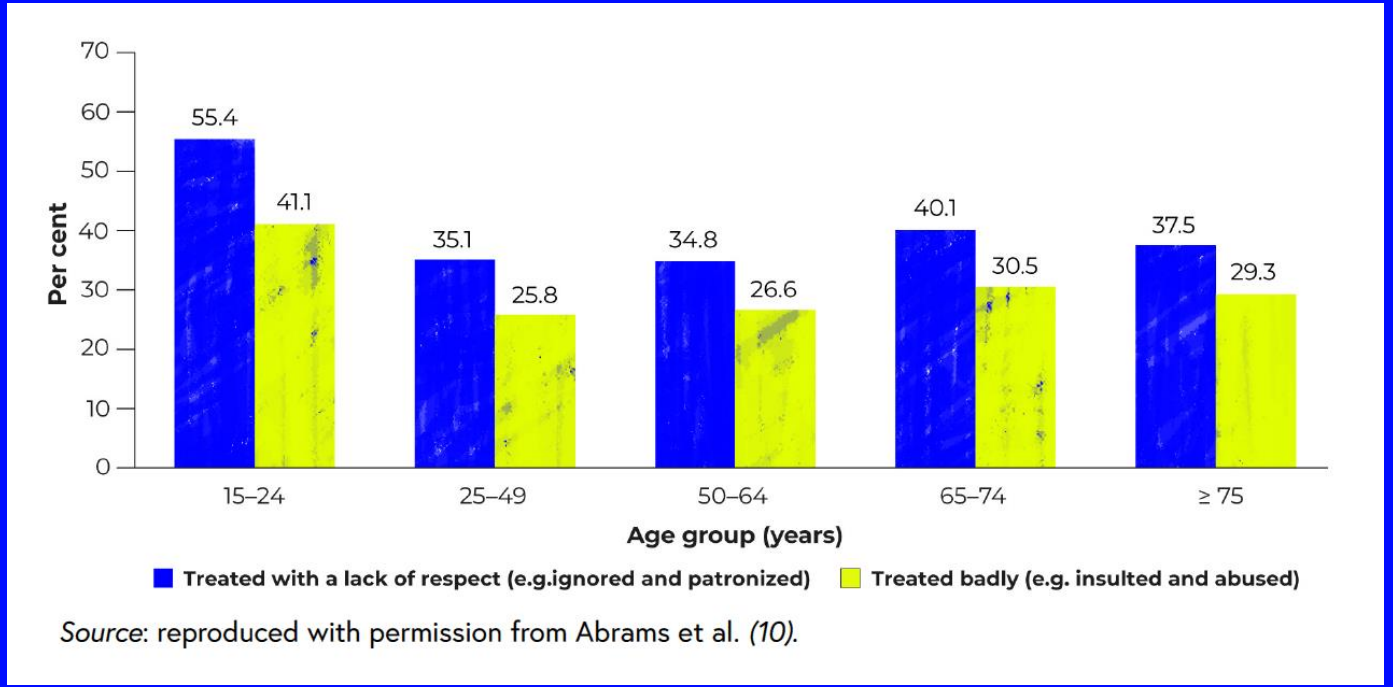
1 in 2 people are ageist towards older people



Regional differences in *ageism*



In Europe, younger people report more ageism than other age groups



Source: reproduced with permission from Abrams et al. *(10)*.

The determinants of ageism

↑ risk of **perpetrating** ageism against older people: being younger, **male**, anxious about death and less educated.

↓ risk of **perpetrating** ageism against both younger and older people are having certain personality traits and more intergenerational contact.

↑ risk of being a **target of ageism in older age:** older, being care-dependent, having a lower healthy life expectancy in the country and working in certain professions or occupational sectors, such as high-tech or the hospitality sector.

risk factor for being a target of ageism against **younger people** is being **female**.

Ageism is harmful and costly

- Ageism has **far-reaching impacts on all aspects of people's health** - their physical health, their mental health and their social well-being.
- Ageism intersects and **exacerbates other forms of disadvantage** including those related to sex, race and disability
- Ageism takes a **heavy economic toll** on individuals and society



Ageism can be combatted

3 strategies work in addressing ageism:

1. **Policy and law**
2. **Educational activities**
3. **Intergenerational interventions**

3 recommendations for action

1. Invest in the **3 evidence-based strategies** to address ageism
2. Improve **data and research** to gain a better understanding of ageism and how to reduce it
3. Build **a movement to change the narrative** around age and ageing

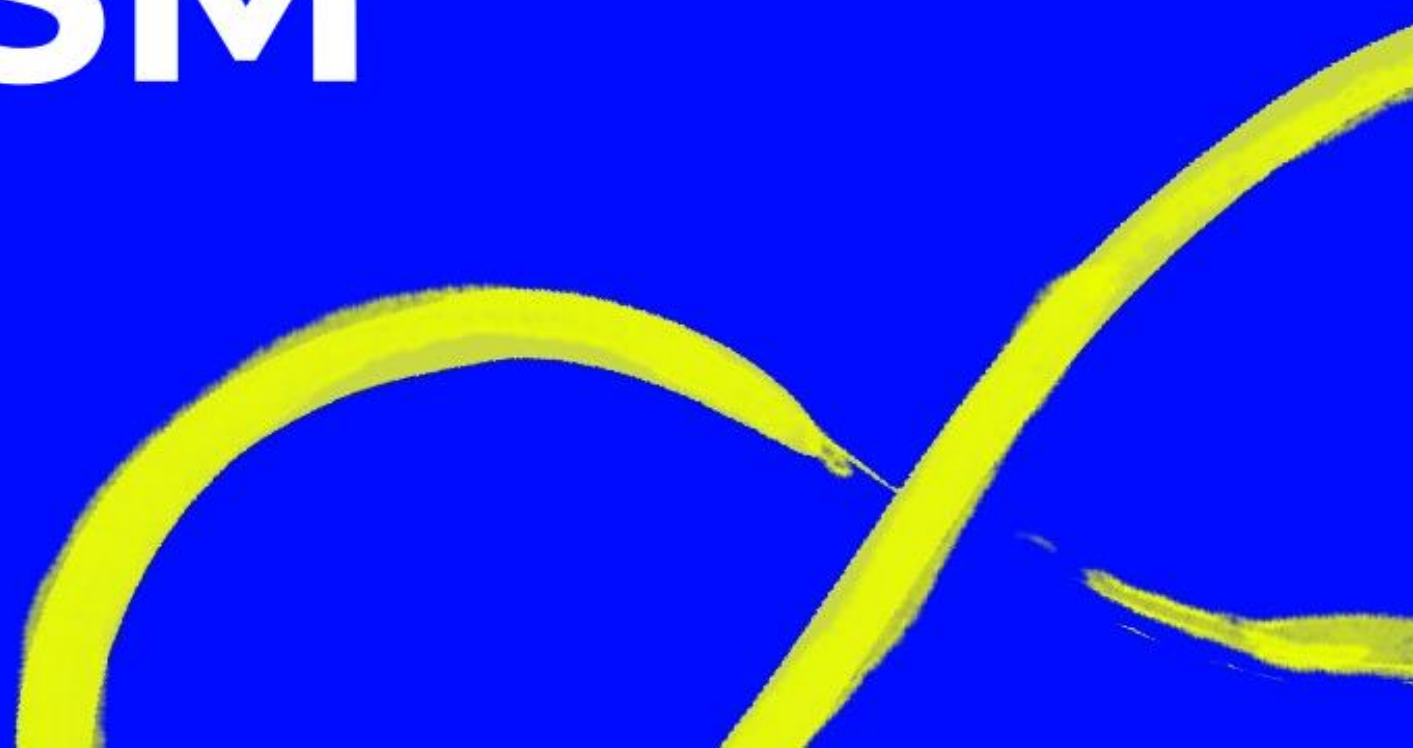


Resources

GLOBAL CAMPAIGN TO COMBAT

AGEISM

Toolkit



Generating a conversation

- A conversation about ageism can happen at any time. You might bring the topic up after experiencing ageism yourself or being a witness to the experiences of others. The topic might come up spontaneously after you hear an ageist remark or receive a birthday card that makes fun of your age.

- Whatever the context, the guide below is intended to help you start a conversation about ageism at home, at work, in the classroom or in the policy-making space.



Download the conversation guide **here**

Preparing an event



01

Identify your purpose

Planning a successful event on ageism starts by deciding on its purpose: why does this event need to happen? Do you want to raise awareness about what ageism is and why it matters? Is your goal to celebrate a milestone (e.g., new law passed in the country to eliminate age-based discrimination)? Is it to build capacity on tackling ageism? To create new approaches to ageism or offer a networking space in this area?

02

Ideate

Now that your purpose is clear, get creative and come up with ways to organize an event that will achieve your purpose. Who are you doing this event for? It is important that you understand who your target audience is (i.e., define their demographic - age, gender - where they live, work, etc.). This will help you figure out what they will value in an event and keep your ideas focused in terms of the event programme, speakers, format (online versus face to face), venue, date, etc.

Download your PowerPoint **here**

Access a Q&A on ageism **here**

Getting the word out

- The hashtag of the Global campaign to combat ageism is **#AWorld4AllAges**.
- A series of emotion-based and fact-based social media tiles and messages are available for you to use.
- Browse and select those social media assets that can help you better reach your audience through your selected media channel.

Getting the word out

Social media assets (emotion-based social media tiles)



(click to download static image)

Policies and laws can address age-related discrimination and inequality and protect the human rights of everyone, everywhere. Join the movement: bit.ly/combatageism. Institutions can help create #AWorld4AllAges



(click to download animated video)

We can fight ageism through education. By teaching the right skills and transferring knowledge, we can encourage more empathic societies. Join the movement: bit.ly/combatageism, create #AWorld4AllAges



(click to download carousel image)

Ageism can be prevented by spending more time with, and learning from, people of different ages and generations. Join the movement, create #AWorld4AllAges, bit.ly/combatageism

Getting the word out

Social media assets (fact based social media tiles)



(click to download static image)

Ageism is the word used to describe the stereotypes, prejudice and discrimination against ourselves or other people, based on age. Join the movement to combat ageism: bit.ly/combatageism. Create #AWorld4AllAges



(click to download static image)

Ageism is not directed only at younger people or only at older people, it will affect most of us at some point in our lives. Join the movement to combat ageism and create #AWorld4AllAges, bit.ly/combatageism



(click to download static image)

Ageism comes at a very real cost. Apart from the personal damage, it takes a heavy economic toll on society. Let's create a #AWorld4AllAges. Stop ageism, bit.ly/combatageism



(click to download static image)

Three strategies to reduce ageism have been shown to work. It is time to say no to ageism. It is time to create #AWorld4AllAges, bit.ly/combatageism

Getting the word out

Social media assets (Film)



(click to view full film)



(click to view short film)

New Resources



A pervasive ethical challenge for the use of AI for health is bias
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AI is revolutionizing many fields, including public health & medicine.

Using AI has the potential to improve older people's health & well-being, but only by **avoiding ageism in its design, implementation & use.**

Risks of ageism in AI for older people

Weak governance of AI could **harm older people's rights**

The data used by AI can **perpetuate existing ageism**

The design, testing & implementation of AI may **exclude older people**



AI may deepen older people's existing **barriers to digital access & representation**

Automated AI could **reduce intergenerational contact**

8 ways to maximize the benefits of AI



Enable older people to **participate** in the design of AI



Employ **age-diverse** data science teams



Ensure **age-inclusive** data collection



Invest in older people's **digital access and literacy**



Support strong **governance and regulations** (e.g. audits)



Uphold older people's right to **consent and contest**



Conduct **more research** on new uses of AI and how to avoid bias



Use **robust ethics processes** in the development and application of AI

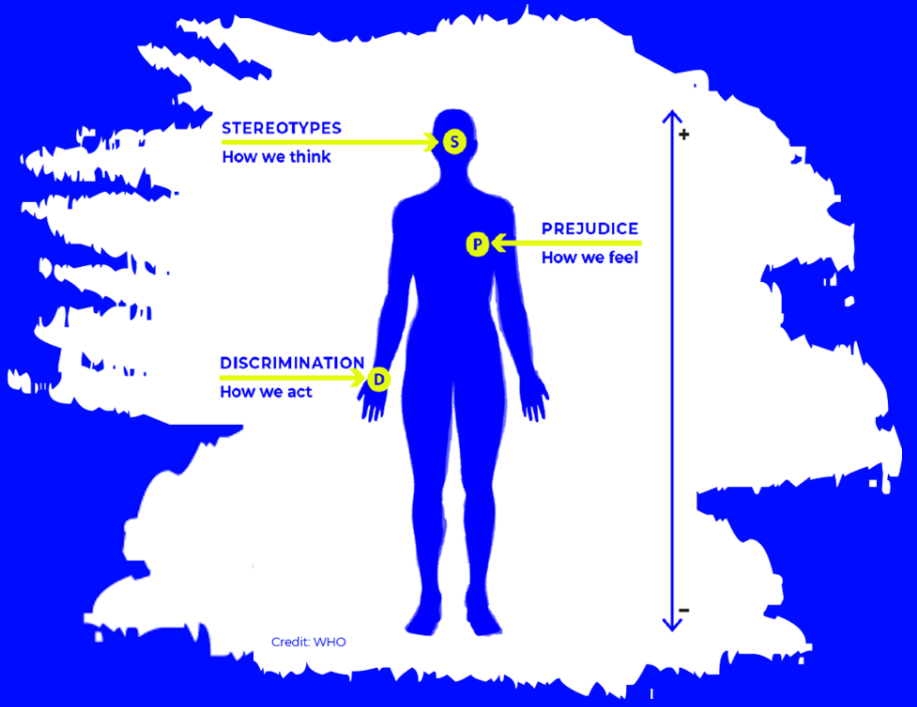
3 recommendations for action

1. Invest in the **3 evidence-based strategies** to address ageism
2. Improve **data and research** to gain a better understanding of ageism and how to reduce it
3. Build **a movement to change the narrative** around age and ageing



Resources under development

- Series of **how to guides**
- **Data module** to measure three aspects of ageism across age groups
- Expand **movement to change the narrative**



Decade of healthy ageing

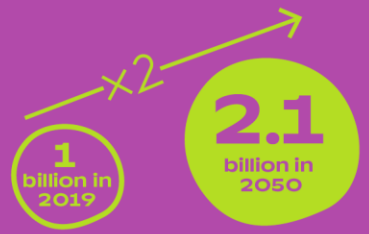
Abuse of older people: a hidden problem

Every year, 1 in 6 people aged 60 years & older experience some form of abuse.

2 in 3 staff in institutions such as nursing homes have committed abuse in the past year.

RATES OF ABUSE have increased during the COVID-19 pandemic.

ABUSE leads to severe physical & mental health, financial & social consequences.



Abuse of older people is expected TO INCREASE given the rapidly ageing population of people aged 60 years & older.

5 Priorities to tackle abuse of older people

- **Combat ageism** as it is a major reason why the abuse of older people receives so little attention.
- **Generate more and better data** to raise awareness of the problem.
- **Develop and scale up cost–effective solutions** to stop abuse of older people.
- **Make an investment case** focusing on how addressing the problem is money well spent.
- **Raise funds** as more resources are needed to tackle the problem.

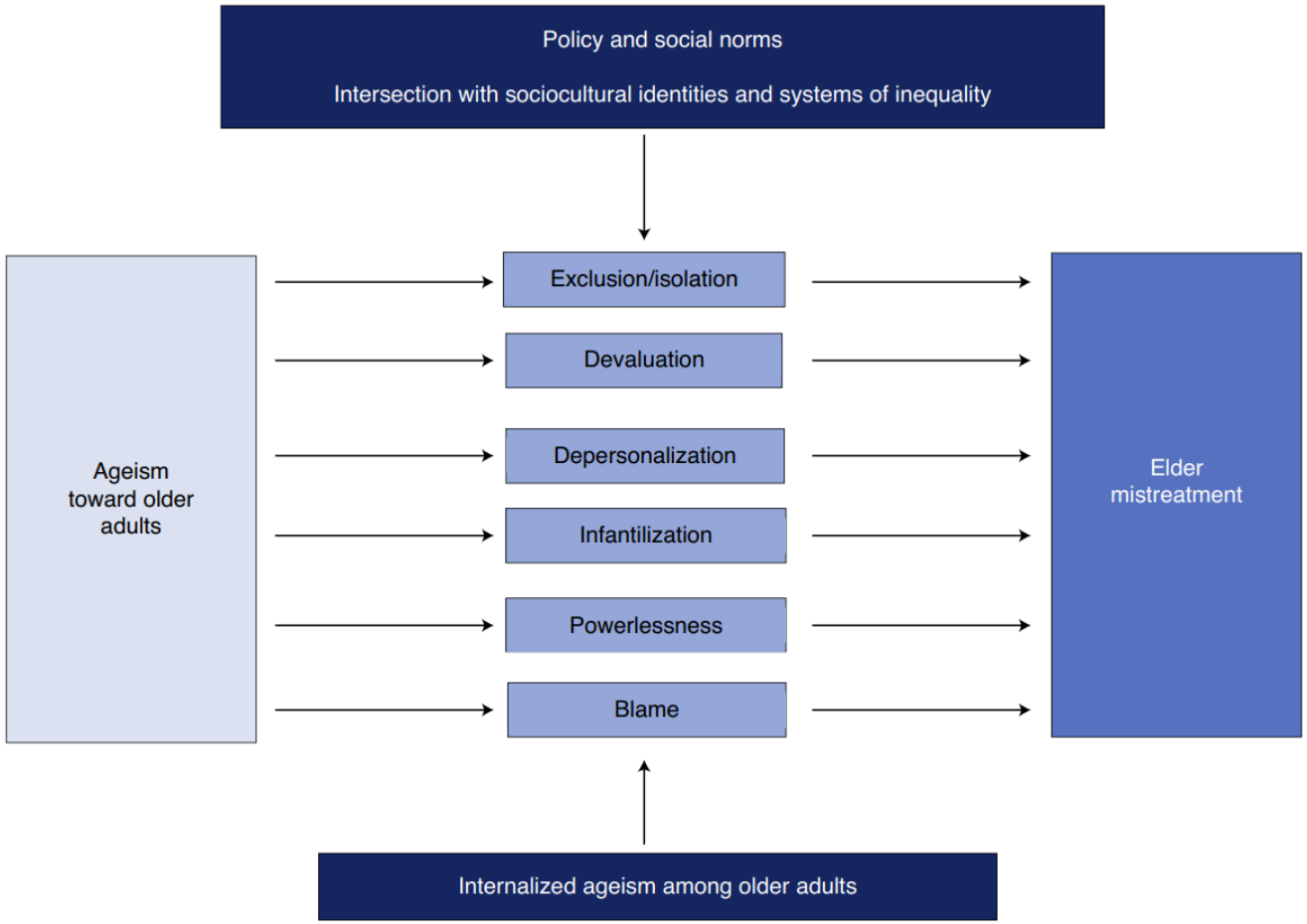


Fig. 2 | Conceptual model illustrating pathways through which ageism leads to elder mistreatment. A conceptual model to guide future research on the relationship between ageism and elder mistreatment.

Pillemer, K., Burnes, D. & MacNeil, A. Investigating the connection between ageism and elder mistreatment. *Nat Aging* **1,** 159–164 (2021). https://doi.org/10.1038/s43587-021-00032-8







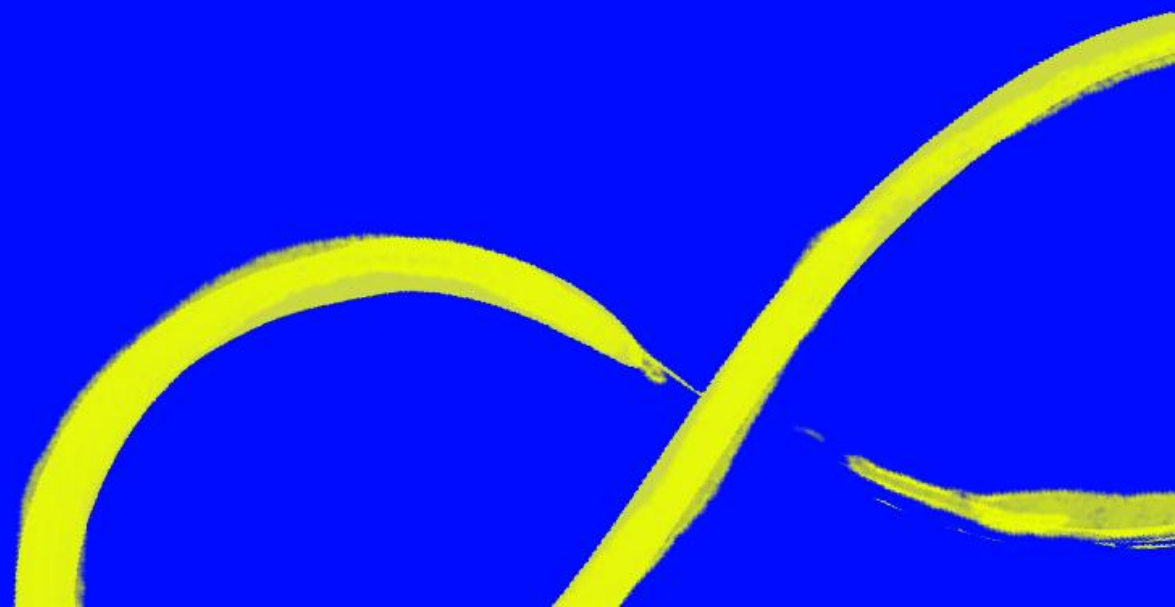
For more information:

https://www.who.int/health-topics/ageism#tab=tab_1

1. Read the **Report** and use the **tools –** start a conversation today.
2. Invest in the **3 evidence-based strategies** to address ageism
3. Improve **data and research** to gain a better understanding of ageism and how to reduce it e.g., on intersection between ageism and abuse of older people, testing of the new ageism module when approved, interventions to reduce self directed ageism.
4. Help to build **a movement to change the narrative** around age and ageing

JOIN THE MOVEMENT

Help create a #World4AllAges



Reframing Aging



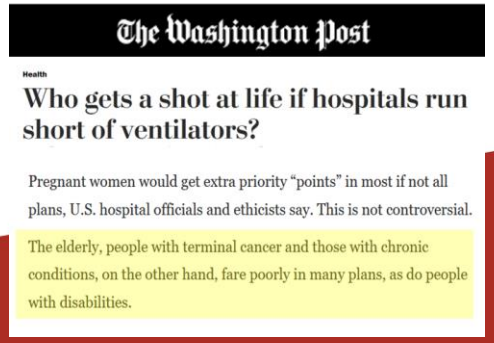
A Social Change Endeavor designed to improve the public's understanding of aging

@ReframingAging

Original research conducted by the FrameWorks Institute and sponsored by the Leaders of Aging Organizations



Why Framing Matters


The Washington Post

Health

Who gets a shot at life if hospitals run short of ventilators?

Pregnant women would get extra priority "points" in most if not all plans, U.S. hospital officials and ethicists say. This is not controversial.

The elderly, people with terminal cancer and those with chronic conditions, on the other hand, fare poorly in many plans, as do people with disabilities.


USA TODAY

COVID-19 Comparing vaccines

HERE COME THE CICADAS Tracking Brood X

COVID-19 BY STATE Track vaccinations

[News] Sports Entertainment Life Money Tech Travel Opinion

NATION

Texas' lieutenant governor suggests grandparents are willing to die for US economy

Adrianna Rodriguez USA TODAY

Published 9:14 a.m. ET Mar. 24, 2020 | Updated 11:50 a.m. ET Mar. 24, 2020


The New York Times

ADVERTISING

Older People Are Ignored and Distorted in Ageist Marketing, Report Finds


The Journals of GERONTOLOGY® SERIES b

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Article Contents

Abstract

ACCEPTED MANUSCRIPT

Culture Linked to Increasing Ageism during Covid-19: Evidence from a 10-billion-word Corpus across 20 Countries

Reuben Ng, PhD ✉, Ting Yu Joanne Chow, BA (Hons. First Class), Wenshu Yang, MSc


Forbes

Ageism Strikes Hard In The Age Of Covid-19

Sara Zeff Geber

Do you have a parent or other loved one in a skilled nursing facility or a senior housing community (independent living, assisted living, memory care, and continuing care retirement communities)? If so, it's a challenging and even frustrating time, isn't it? The facility where your loved one resides is probably on "lockdown" because of Covid-19, which means you are not allowed to visit them and your only ability to "see" them is through an internet-based video service like Zoomor Skype.


nj.com True Jersey.

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OPINION

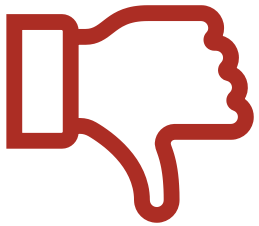
The Silver Tsunami is here! Who will care for these aging Baby Boomers?

Why We Need a New Story

Multiple Models Available



Choose the Cues that Activate Productive Models



Strategies to Avoid

Communication Traps

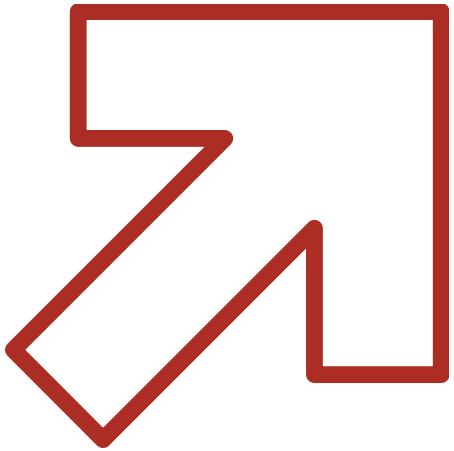
To help your messages be understood as you intend, **avoid** these communication traps.

- ✗ Cueing individualism
- ✗ Using crisis language
- ✗ Activating "Us" versus "Them" thinking
- ✗ Telling the "Super Senior" story without context



Framing Strategies to Advance

To Spark More Accurate and Complete Conversations about Aging



- Talk about the process of aging as building momentum
- Explain the supports we need to live meaningful lives as we age
- Talk about frailty without paternalism
- Highlight innovative and creative solutions

Building Momentum

The story you are telling

As we get older, we gather momentum, which powers us to take up new ideas and advance toward common goals. This energy helps move our communities forward.

Moves thinking toward

- Aging as opportunity
- Policies support well-being as we age
- Collective benefits accrue when older people can contribute

Building Momentum in Practice



Talking about Frailty Using the Building Momentum Metaphor

Examples

- Even when faced with challenges, people can still contribute to collective well-being.
- Living up to one's potential and contributing in a meaningful way is still possible for people when they are physically frail or in a difficult situation.

Ingenuity

Use the value of *Ingenuity*

Examples

- Replacing outdated practices with new, smarter ways of doing things is the key to our nation's ingenuity.
- Let's try out new ideas and innovative approaches to improve how our society supports older people and responds to aging.



Talking about Frailty Using the Social Supports Metaphor

BEFORE

Many people who are older are frail, vulnerable, cannot help themselves, and depend on others to meet their most basic needs. This leaves them at risk for all kinds of challenges and potential harms.



Talking about Frailty Using the Social Supports Metaphor

Reframing Aging

BEFORE

Many people who are older are frail, vulnerable, cannot help themselves and depend on others to meet their most basic needs. This leaves them at risk for all kinds of challenges and potential harms.

REFRAMED

When community bonds are weak, older people who are frail are more at risk of experiencing harm. We need to build solid connections and strengthen our social structure to better support older people, families, caregivers, and our entire community.

Ingenuity

The story you're telling

We are resourceful and can find new and creative solutions for the challenges that come as we get older.

Moves thinking toward

- Find ideas that work
- Focus on implementing solutions
- Collective benefits when we focus on the needs of older people

Ingenuity

Use the value of *Ingenuity*

Examples

- Replacing outdated practices with new, smarter ways of doing things is the key to our nation's ingenuity.
- Let's try out new ideas and innovative approaches to improve how our society supports older people and responds to aging.

Justice

Ageism matters because

We are marginalizing older people's participation and minimizing their contributions.

To live up to our ideals, we must confront the injustice of ageism.

Moves thinking toward

- Aging as opportunity
- Contexts and environments matter
- Ageism as a problem we can address



Justice in Practice

"The time for age justice in the workplace has come. Older New Yorkers are part of the future, too. We are the fastest growing sector of the city's population and workforce. New York City has an opportunity to be a national leader by saying this is not how we do business."

Bobbie Sackman

Justice

Framed with *Paternalism*

Our core values guide our work and are ageist-free. They involve respect for older adults, a concern for keeping older adults safe and free from harm and support a person-centered approach to service.

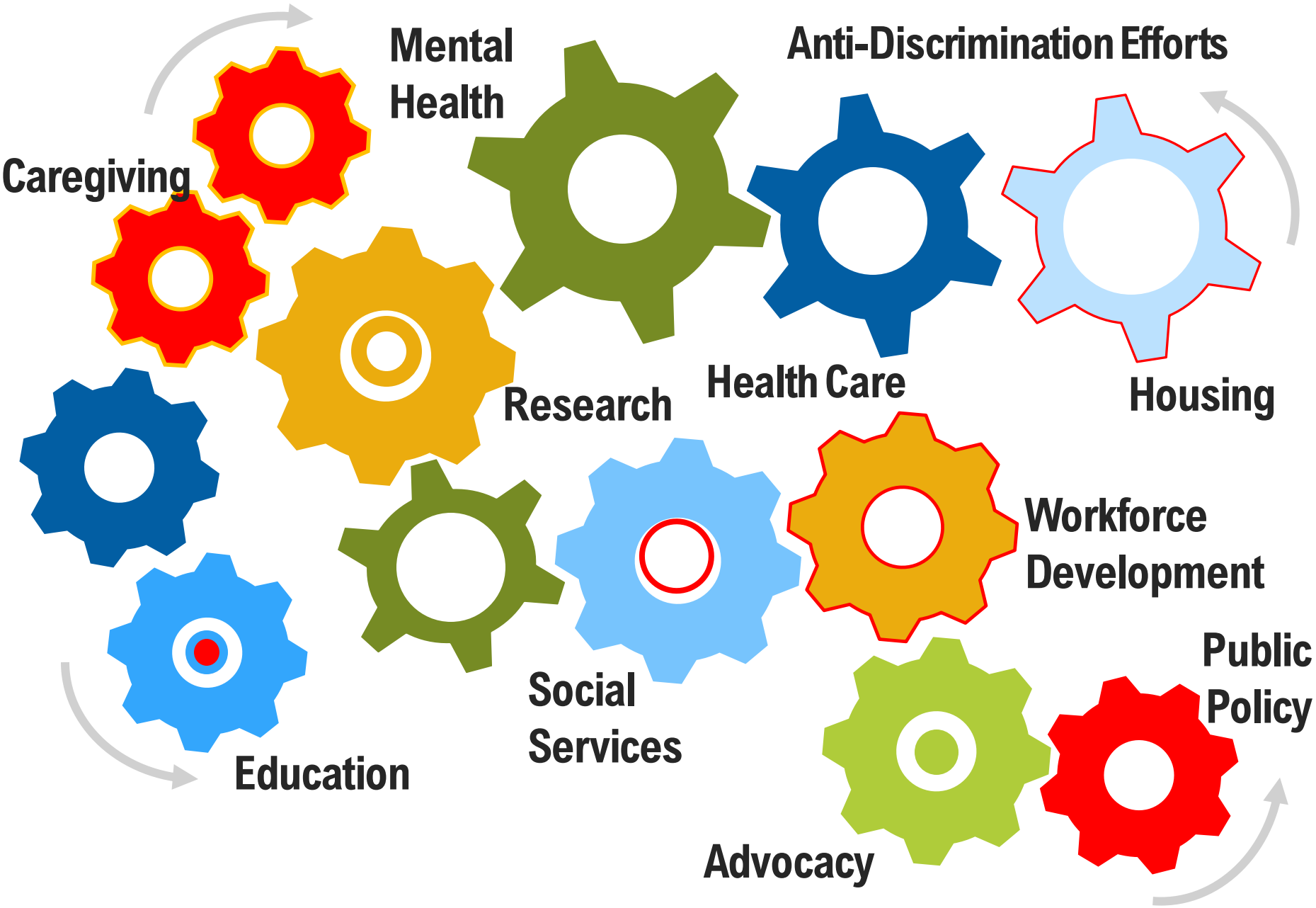
Reframed with *Justice*

Creating a just society that is ageist free is at the center of our work. This means ensuring that older adults have everything they need to flourish, which includes reducing harm. A commitment to justice supports our person-centered approach to service.

Reframing Aging

Quick Start Guide

Instead of these words and cues:	Try:
"Tidal wave," "tsunami," and similarly catastrophic terms for the growing population of older people	Talking affirmatively about changing demographics: "As Americans live longer and healthier lives . . ."
"Choice," "planning," "control," and other individual determinants of aging outcomes	Emphasizing how to improve social contexts: "Let's find creative solutions to ensure we can all thrive as we age."
"Seniors," "elderly," "aging dependents," and similar "other-ing" terms that stoke stereotypes	Using more neutral ("older people/Americans") and inclusive ("we" and "us") terms
"Struggle," "battle," "fight," and similar conflict-oriented words to describe aging experiences	The Building Momentum metaphor: "Aging is a dynamic process that leads to new abilities and knowledge we can share with our communities."
Using the word "ageism" without explanation	Defining ageism: "Ageism is discrimination against older people due to negative and inaccurate stereotypes."
Making generic appeals to the need to "do something" about aging	Using concrete examples like intergenerational community centers to illustrate inventive solutions



Situate yourself in the field of aging and aging-related services.

How does your work help to turn the gears of older people's wellbeing or of aging-related outcomes?

Changing American Culture



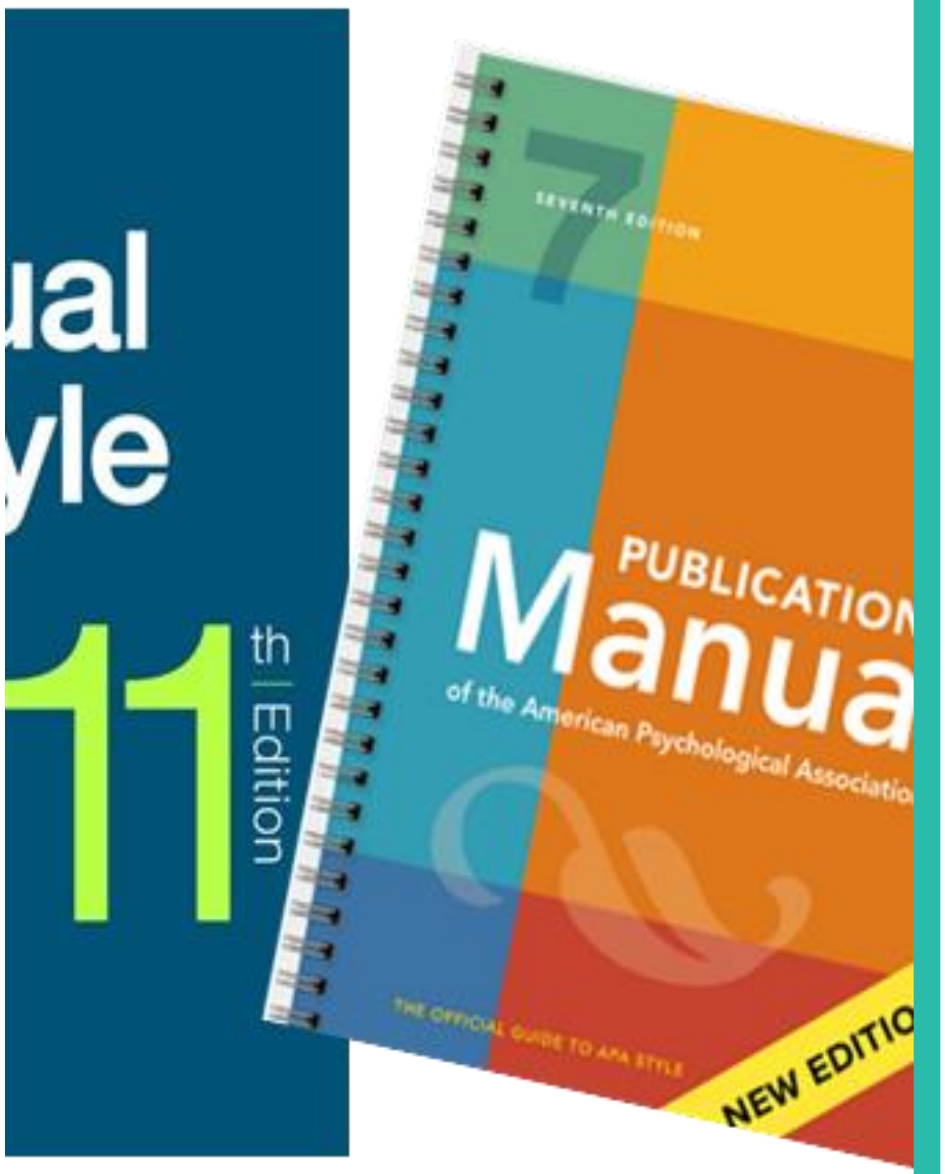
Changing American culture is challenging and changing attitudes and behaviors around the universal experience of aging especially so.

- A generational change
- Ongoing impact
- Positive perceptions of aging: Priceless

APA 2022 Meeting
Reframing Aging: A Way Forward to Challenge Ageism and Improve Attitudes About Aging

Joanne Montepare and Trish D'Antonio

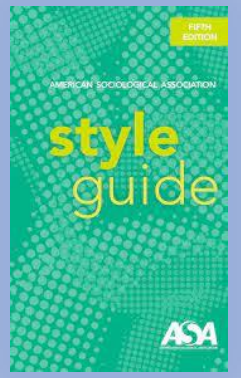
Resources and Tools



Leveraging Style Guide Changes to Reframe Aging

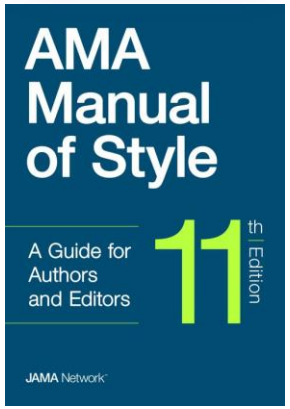


MODERN LANGUAGE ASSOCIATION

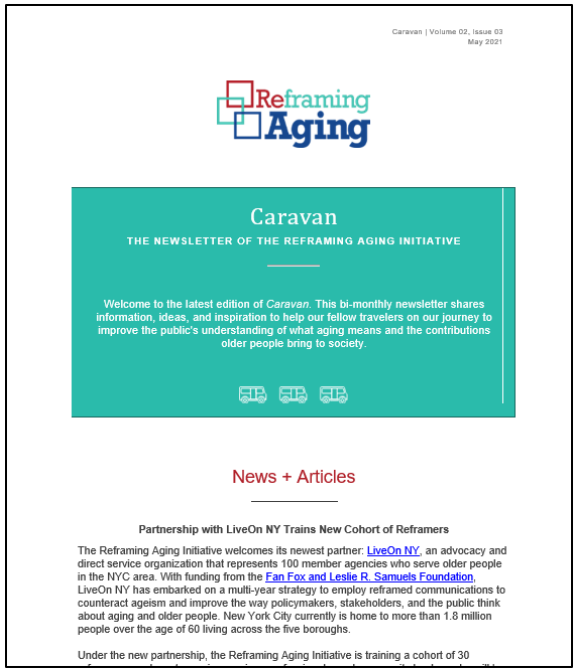


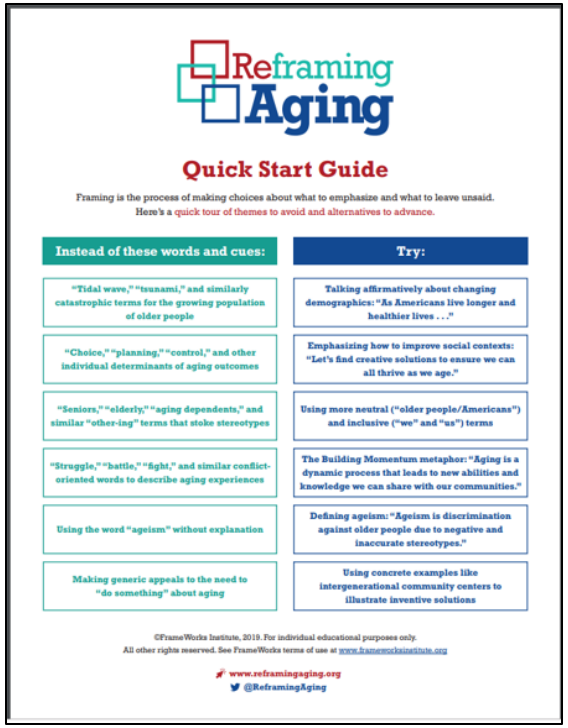
APA STYLE

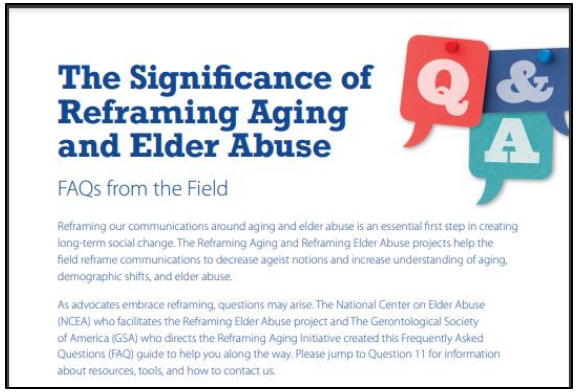
AP











Tools to Support Good Framing

reframingaging.org

Check out www.reframingaging.org



Leaders of Aging Organizations (LAO)

Reframing Aging

AARP

afar american federation for aging research

AGS Geriatrics Healthcare Professionals

American Society on Aging

THE GERONTOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF AMERICA

GRANTMAKERS IN AGING

LeadingAge

nco national council on aging

NHCOA NATIONAL HISPANIC COUNCIL ON AGING

USAging

Reframing Aging

FRAME WORKS

Nonprofit think tank with the mission to advance the nonprofit sector's capacity to reframe social issues

Conducts original, scholarly research on the communications aspects of social and scientific issues

Recognized in 2015 with the MacArthur Award for Creative and Effective Institutions

Concepts presented today w/ permission, courtesy of the Reframing Aging Initiative and the FrameWorks Institute

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A Social Change Endeavor designed to improve the public's understanding of aging

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Original research conducted by the FrameWorks Institute and sponsored by the Leaders of Aging Organizations

