

Shattering Ageism

Creating Communities That Embrace All Ages

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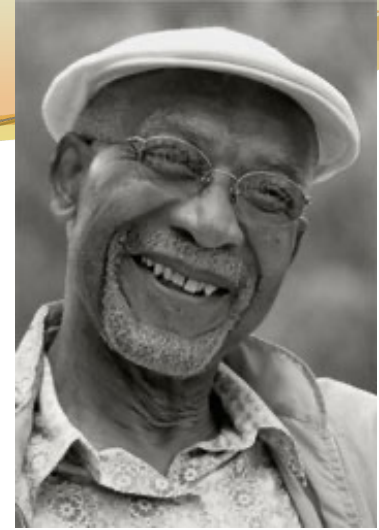
Michigan State University
College of Osteopathic Medicine

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Session Objectives



- ❑ Define ageism
- ❑ Identify examples of ageism, myths and stereotypes
- ❑ Recognize ageism's influence within
 - ✓ Ourselves
 - ✓ Our relationships
 - ✓ Institutions
 - ✓ Society
- ❑ List strategies for reducing ageism

What is Ageism?

- ❑ Another form of bigotry similar to racism and sexism – a process of systematic stereotyping and discrimination against people because they are old
~ Robert Butler
- ❑ Prejudice and discrimination against a particular age group, particularly the elderly
~ Webster's Dictionary
- ❑ Any prejudice or discrimination against, or in favor of any age group
~ Erdman Ballagh Palmore



Ageism at All Levels

- ❑ Individual
- ❑ Interpersonal
- ❑ Institutional
 - Workplace
 - Education
 - Healthcare
- ❑ Societal
 - Media and Marketing
 - Social Policies
 - Economic Policies



A Conundrum: What does one call an old(er) person?

- ❑ Old Person versus Older Person versus Older Adult?
- ❑ Elderly versus Elder?
- ❑ Senior versus Senior Citizen?
- ❑ Was popular but not now? Silver Tsunami, Golden Years, Geriatrics
- ❑ Never OK – Geezer, GOMER, Dirty Old Man, Old Biddy

Defies Labels and Categorizing for Good Reason!

Common Myths & Stereotypes

- ❑ Can't teach an old dog new tricks
- ❑ Old people are cranky
- ❑ All older people are senile
- ❑ Older people do not like or want sex
- ❑ There are negative attitudes toward older adults
- ❑ Old people are a drain on the economy
- ❑ Old people are a burden



Ageist or Discriminating Policies?

- ❑ Mandatory retirement
- ❑ Senior Citizen discounts
- ❑ Medicare
- ❑ Using age to calculate cost/benefits of life insurance
- ❑ Grouping athletes into age categories
- ❑ Driver's license testing for older adults
- ❑ Medicaid bias toward nursing homes

Compassionate Ageism

- ❑ Portray older adults in terms of the least capable, the least healthy, to secure resources
- ❑ Advocates for development of services that may have unintended consequences
- ❑ Reinforces stereotypes



How Do We *SHATTER* Ageism?

Individually

- ❑ Be aware; Stop self; Confront others
- ❑ Learn the Facts & Engage in/Support Lifelong Learning
- ❑ Organize – Advocate – Report - Start a Movement
- ❑ Intergenerational Relationships - Get to know one another

In Society

- ❑ Increase Awareness & Public education
- ❑ Political action & Legislation
- ❑ Social activism
- ❑ Research
- ❑ Promote Age-Friendly, Inclusive Communities

Make it Personal

- ❑ Remember what is good about growing older
- ❑ Remember what is good about Life
- ❑ Attitude and Gratitude
- ❑ Cultivate the common threads of optimal living
- ❑ Fight Ageism



What's Good about Getting Old??

- ❑ Senior discounts
- ❑ More time with family
- ❑ More time for hobbies and volunteer work
- ❑ Medicare and social security benefits
- ❑ Freedom to be eccentric
- ❑ More secure about “self”
- ❑ Beats the alternative



Learn the Facts about Aging

- ❑ What's normal and what's not
- ❑ Early recognition of red flags
- ❑ Get the help you need – physical, mental, spiritual, environmental, etc. ASAP
- ❑ Have a plan for your LTC
- ❑ Get financial and legal affairs in order
- ❑ Prevention and Agency – cultivate engagement with community, meaningful activity, a sense of purpose



***SHATTERING* Ageism** Gray Panthers & Robert Butler

- ❑ Quit complimenting people on how young they look.
- ❑ Promote intergenerational job sharing, part-time hours, and no hiring or retirement based on chronological age.
- ❑ Don't blame old age for fatigue, disorganization or forgetfulness. In youth, we blame poor planning, lack of sleep, and a bad memory.
- ❑ Criticize local news media for offensive headlines or cartoons.
- ❑ Fight with knowledge and a willingness to approach every person, regardless of age, as an individual with unique strengths, weaknesses, options, and opportunities.

Education and Training

- Start young [in K-12] on respect & ageism
- Educate **everyone** with public awareness campaigns
- Educate anyone involved in the lives of older adults
 - ✓ Police
 - ✓ Health care providers and agencies
 - ✓ Family
 - ✓ Mail carriers
 - ✓ Attorneys
 - ✓ Churches
 - ✓ Victims and potential victims
 - ✓ Legislators



Education and Training Programs

- ❑ Start, support, promote intergenerational programs such as the AgeAlive Senior Ambassador Program
www.seniorambassadorsprogram.org
- ❑ The Age Strong Intergenerational Project
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xdhkh1XE-LM>
- ❑ Aging 101 Classes in Colleges, K-12
- ❑ Intergenerational Classes
- ❑ Programs that encourage young people to pursue a career in aging
- ❑ Lifelong Education Programs



Community Action Education Approaches

- ❑ Summits and rallies
- ❑ PSAs, radio/TV coverage
- ❑ Speaker bureaus/guest lectures
- ❑ Coalitions, Councils, and Networks
- ❑ White papers/legislative briefs
- ❑ University-community partnerships
- ❑ Volunteer Programs
- ❑ Media blitzes



Advocacy

- ❑ Press releases
- ❑ Media tips
- ❑ Anti-ageism kits
- ❑ Proclamations
- ❑ Petitions
- ❑ Letters to the editor
- ❑ Letters/calls to offenders
- ❑ Community events – cross-generational



Research

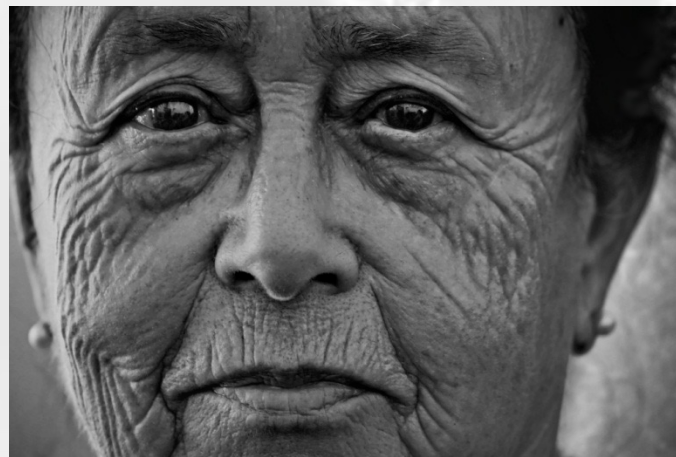
- ❑ Little has been done on nature, prevalence, direct impact of ageism
- ❑ Intervention research
- ❑ Evidence to catalyze
 - ❑ Public attention and funding
 - ❑ Policy change
 - ❑ Targeted interventions



What can YOU do?

What can WE do to

SHATTER Ageism?





Videos to Challenge & Inspire You

And many more.....

1. Millennials Show Us What ‘Old’ Looks Like | Disrupt Aging – AARP <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1YdNjrUs4NM>
2. Project Unites Teens and Seniors in Fight Against Elder Abuse <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xdhkh1XE-LM>
3. Age Discrimination Food Truck Experiment | AARP Disrupt Aging <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UYCxAlqjyCA>
4. Real Possibilities with AARP Michigan – Disrupt Aging [AARP SHOW 614 Disrupt Aging - YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UYCxAlqjyCA)
5. Two older adults clearly enjoying life in the lobby of Mayo Clinic <https://youtu.be/RI-10tK8Ok0>





Thank you!

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