

Ageism Fact Sheet

CENTRE ON AGING



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

It affects people of all ages and exists in our institutions (institutional), our relationships (interpersonal), and ourselves (self-directed).

Ageism intersects and exacerbates other forms of disadvantage, such as those related to sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, race, ability, and class.

1 in 2 people are ageist against older adults.

Ageism can negatively impact:



Health

Poorer physical and mental health.

Well-being

Reduced quality of life and life satisfaction.

Social Participation

Limited opportunities to engage in society.

Employment

Underemployment and unemployment.

Stereotypes: Beliefs and expectations about individuals of a certain age that guide our social behaviour.

Prejudice: Emotional feelings directed towards individuals of a certain age.

Discrimination: Treatment of individuals based on their age.

Institutional: Social norms, policies, and practices that restrict opportunities and disadvantage individuals because of their age.

Interpersonal: Occurs within interactions between two or more persons.

Self-directed: Used against oneself.

The Importance of an Age-Friendly University

An age-friendly university (AFU) is dedicated to making policies, programs, services, and environments inclusive and accessible for people of all ages within the campus community. Discrimination against older adults is a significant concern in higher education, as many institutions were originally designed to serve younger students and employees. At the same time, younger adults can also face challenges when it comes to having their voices heard in decision-making processes, even though they represent the primary student demographic.

Policy, educational, and intergenerational interventions are needed to combat ageism. An AFU can develop inclusive policies that promote equal opportunities and reduce age-based discrimination. It can raise awareness about ageism through its educational and workplace programs. Additionally, it can promote collaborative educational, research, and professional development activities that involve younger and older generations, fostering mutual understanding and creating a more supportive campus environment.

UCalgary is a member of the AFU Global Network and is actively working to improve the institution's age-friendliness. Visit the Centre on Aging website to learn more.

References

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