

Getting past Ageism

Eight ways to overcome ageism in everyday life

If you are ready to take action, then here are eight positive steps that you can take to show more respect for people of all ages:

1. **Challenge myths.** There are many myths about being young and being older. Begin to recognize myths by listening and reading carefully to identify when a negative attitude about age is being portrayed.
2. Recognize that **a label tells you very little** about what to expect from a person – how healthy they are, mental capacity, interests and abilities. Go beyond the stereotypes of age and get to know the person.
3. **Learn more about aging.** The more you know about aging and what to expect the more that you will be prepared to recognize inaccurate stereotypes of aging.
4. **Listen to people who have experienced ageism.** Younger people and older people have stories to tell and can best tell us how ageism has affected their lives.
5. **Watch and read media carefully** to detect negative attitudes towards aging. Write an email or letter if you see an advertisement or program that features negative stereotypes.
6. **Keep the conversation going.** The more age discrimination remains hidden, the more people grow to believe that it is acceptable. People of all ages and abilities have value, so speak up about negative images of aging.
7. **Create opportunities to connect generations.** Ageism can grow when people of different generations do not have a chance to learn about each other. Ensure that older and younger residents are included in community events to strengthen the connection between people.
8. **Watch your words.** There are many common expressions that can depersonalize people, such as “our seniors”. Avoid using language that refers to people generically.