

Cut along dashed lines.

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**AGE-NTS
OF CHANGE**

CARDS



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UN CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF OLDER PEOPLE

Concerned about discrimination, abuse, and neglect against older adults across the globe, the United Nations General Assembly established the Open-Ended Working Group on Ageing in 2010. First tasked with exploring ways to strengthen the rights and protections for older adults, the group's responsibilities were extended in 2012 to include guidance for new international legal instruments to protect the rights of older people.

Members of the working group have called for a UN Convention on the Rights of Older People. They feel a convention would establish a stronger basis for action, provide clearer guidance, and drive more meaningful change. The recent pandemic has further brought into focus discrimination against older persons, and a rise in calls for the UN to address the issue.

Would a UN Convention on the Rights of Older People help combat global discrimination, abuse, and neglect of older adults?

AGEISM IN THE MEDIA

How many older adult characters are on your favorite TV show or in your favorite movie? Chances are there are few. Characters over a certain age are underrepresented in film or TV. When included, older persons are often portrayed in the media as helpless, doddering, useless or burdensome. It is rare to see older adults portrayed in ways that truly reflect a more positive picture of modern aging.

Media bias against older persons furthers cultural ageist stereotypes that are demeaning and negative. Unlike other areas of bias in the media, there have been few calls to address stereotyped portrayals of older persons.

Can you think of one way the media can improve the way older adults are portrayed on TV or film?

TAKE A STAND AGAINST AGEISM

Why is our culture so tolerant of ageism? This is especially serious issue given the negative impact it has on the economic status, health and rights of older persons.

Organizations such as HelpAge International and Age Demands Action are trying to address the issue. Their campaigns to raise awareness of ageism include asking us all to "take a stand against ageism." How? By sharing our own personal reasons why we feel ageism is a problem both publicly and with our community.

Write your own "take a stand against ageism" statement – why are you against ageism?

POSITIVE AGING BIRTHDAY CARDS

Birthdays should be happy, no matter our age! But how often do you see birthday greeting cards with negative stereotypes about growing older?

As a graduate student in Finland, Elena Comincioli launched a campaign to help society reimagine birthday cards with messages that celebrate the power and beauty of those additional years. She invites all of us to get creative and come up with positive greetings that celebrate our birthdays at every age.

Write your own "positive aging" birthday card greeting. You can even add illustrations!

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LANGUAGE STEREOTYPING

One way we can help combat cultural ageism is by thinking before we speak. Almost all of us can be guilty of unintentionally using language that furthers stereotyping of older persons as weak, useless or vulnerable.

Talk positively about ageing and the opportunities it brings. Think about the real meaning behind comments such as “you look good for your age!” or “he’s too old to be doing that.” Discard phrases that promote age-biased stereotypes, such as referring to someone as an “old lady” if they like to eat dinner on the earlier side. Small shifts in how we communicate set an example and help make a difference in how we all perceive ageing.

What is a phrase you might use often that stereotypes aging? How can you change it?

AGEISM IN ADVERTISING

When was the last time you saw older people modeling the latest fashions, or in commercials for products other than insurance or medications? While older adults account for a large percentage of the spending economy, advertisers either ignore the age group or portray older adults in ways that are demeaning and belittling. No wonder 71% of those 55+ say advertising doesn’t accurately reflect their lives.

What will bring change to advertisers’ age bias? Experts say the industry itself to become more inclusive by engaging adults of all backgrounds, including all ages, as part of their teams. Consumers can speak out by calling companies out when they use age-biased advertising, and by patronizing those that promote a more positive aging message.

Have you noticed ageist stereotypes in advertising? How did it make you feel?

YO IS THIS AGEIST?

Ageism is so entwined in our culture it can sometimes be hard to decide if something that you see or what someone says shows age-related bias.

That’s why anti-ageism activist Ashton Applewhite started the *Yo Is This Ageist?* blog. There she invites folks to submit their stories and then comments on whether the tale reflects ageist beliefs or something else. Applewhite’s witty approach keeps the reading fun but on message!

Do you have a question about whether something you saw or experienced was ageist? Submit your own “Yo Is This Ageist?” question to discuss with the class!

THE GRAY PANTHERS

In 1970, Maggie Kuhn was forced to retire from a job she loved solely due to her age. In response, she founded the Gray Panthers, the first grassroots organization devoted to the promoting the rights and well-being of older persons.

Now a network of chapters across the globe, the Gray Panthers continue to advocate at the grassroots level across issues that touch the lives of older persons such forced retirement, healthcare access and housing equality.

Is there an issue that affects older persons that you feel strongly about?

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AGE-RELATED HATE CRIMES

Bias-related crimes carry additional penalties in many areas across the globe. However, age is rarely considered under hate crimes laws, despite the fact that records show many older persons have been targeted for crimes or attack specifically because of their age.

With age-related hate crimes on the rise during the recent pandemic, the European Commission (EU) started to explore including age discrimination under hate crimes legislation. Doing so would provide bring attention to the serious issue of age-related crimes, provide more protection to older persons and encourage other governing bodies to enact similar laws.

Do you feel it is important to include age-related bias crimes under hate crimes legislation?

INTERGENERATIONAL RELATIONSHIPS

How many friends do you have outside your age group? In a recent survey of American adults over, half said that - besides family members - they spend little time with people much older or younger than they are. That means that the majority of us socialize mostly with others in our own generation, leaving us with little meaningful contact with folks of other ages.

Why does this matter? Research shows that one of the best ways we can reduce bias is through personal relationships. Therefore, intergenerational ties can be a very important way to address age-related bias (including prejudices we may hold against younger age groups, such as teens).

Can you think of at least one way we can build better intergenerational relationships?

THE RED HAT SOCIETY

Scottish poet Jenny Joseph once wrote, "When I am an old woman, I shall wear purple, with a red hat which doesn't go and doesn't suit me." In 1998, a group of women led by Sue Ellen Cooper started the Red Hat Society, in honor of the rebellious spirit of Joseph's older woman.

First designed to encourage women over 50 to embrace aging in a fun and playful manner, the Red Hat Society is now open to women of all ages. The grassroots organization has grown to include chapters across the world that give women the chance to join together for socializing, creative activities and playful fun.

What do you do for fun that you might not associate with the stereotype of being "old?"

RADICAL AGING MOVEMENT

What would a society that valued aging and promoted its benefits look like? Anti-ageism activists believe that is the question we should be thinking about. No matter our current age, we all hope to have the chance to do is live a long, healthy life. Yet research shows that cultural ageism impacts our chances of doing so in both personal and societal ways.

A Radical Aging movement to shift how we see aging can create meaningful change. We can all be part of a grassroots effort to transform how we see age. For example, we can participate by challenging ageist beliefs and practices, using age positive language, celebrating the contributions of older people, and promoting more opportunities for intergenerational communication and bonds.

What is one way you can see yourself being part of a Radical Aging grassroots movement?