



CLASS 21 | AGE-NTS OF CHANGE

Explores pathways to understanding the impact of cultural ageism with a pair-based activity.

TBH FOCUS



BELIEVE IN YOURSELF

SKILLS WORKED



SBBT



PAIR UP

YOU WILL NEED

- Timer or stopwatch
- Whiteboard or flip chart and markers
- *TBH Age-nts of Change* card deck
- *TBH Inspiration Notes* collection, so each student can choose one to take home
- *Now Do It!* worksheets and *TBH Takeaway Handouts*, enough for each student. Distribute to distance learners ahead of class
- Video conferencing technology if modifying for virtual delivery



WELCOME TO CLASS!

- Welcome any new students using the *Welcome to the TBH Course* introduction.
- Introduce today's class.

Welcome to class! I'm glad we are here together. In this course we will explore aspects of our social and emotional selves in the third stage of life. Research shows that taking the time to understand ourselves in this way is directly linked to both our brain vitality and our overall well-being at every age. We will learn about these topics, as well as ways we can create meaning-filled experiences each and every day.

Today's topic is "Age-nts of Change." Our TBH Blueprint focus is the "Believe in Yourself" action point. We've talked about how ageism affects us each personally. Today we will focus on the societal impact of ageism and explore ways we can help change perceptions of aging.

We will be working on the following thinking skills today:



ATTENTION



SPEEDY THINKING



NIMBLENESS



VERBAL SKILLS



MEMORY



PROBLEM SOLVING



TBH LET'S GET IT STARTED!

3 MINUTES

- Lead this gentle seated warm-up to build focus, self-awareness, and get everyone ready to learn and explore together.
- See the [TBH Let's Get It Started!](#) playlist for suggested music to set the pace of your workout.
- See the course introduction for a fully scripted version of this workout.
- Mute distance learners to avoid noisy distractions.

**TBH LET'S GET IT STARTED!****CONTINUED**

We are going to begin with *TBH Let's Get It Started!* Being physically engaged is great for our focus, thinking and awareness. This quick warmup is a great way to get us ready to learn and explore together. We'll do this right at our seats at the beginning of every class. Just watch what I do and follow along.

FEET GET STARTED!

- ▶ Lift right foot slightly off the floor. Point toes up and down, repeat a few times. Circle foot at the ankle. Circle twice to the left then to the right.
- ▶ Lift left foot slightly off the floor. Point toes up and down, repeat a few times. Circle foot at the ankle. Circle twice to the left then to the right.

LEGS GET STARTED!

- ▶ Put both feet on the floor, about hips-distance apart.
- ▶ Extend right leg in front, resting heel on the floor if able.
- ▶ Gently firm up leg muscles from thigh to calf. Focus on feeling. Pause for a few seconds. Then relax leg, releasing tension. Give leg a little stretch and shake.
- ▶ Repeat with left leg. Extend left leg in front, resting heel on the floor if able. Gently firm up leg muscles from thigh to calf. Focus on feeling. Pause for a few seconds. Then relax leg, releasing tension. Give leg a little stretch and shake.

BACKS GET STARTED!

- ▶ While seated, gently twist upper body to the right. Hold for two deep breaths. Release.
- ▶ Repeat to the left, gently twisting the upper body. Hold for two deep breaths. Release.
- ▶ Reach arms forward, gently rounding the upper back. Hold for a few seconds. Release.
- ▶ Reach arms up, straightening upper back, sitting up tall. Hold for a few seconds. Release.

ARMS GET STARTED!

- ▶ Make fists with both hands. Hold for a few seconds. Release. Give hands a little shake.
- ▶ Circle wrists a few times clockwise and counterclockwise.
- ▶ Extend right arm in front, resting arm on right thigh. Gently firm up arm muscles from shoulder to wrist. Focus on feeling. Pause for a few seconds. Then relax arm, releasing tension. Give arm a little stretch and shake.
- ▶ Repeat with left arm. Extend left arm in front, resting arm on left thigh. Gently firm up arm muscles from shoulder to wrist. Focus on feeling. Pause for a few seconds. Then relax arm, releasing tension. Give arm a little stretch and shake.
- ▶ Rest hands on thighs. Gently tense shoulders as you raise them up, and relax and release down, repeat a few times.



VOICES GET STARTED!

- ▶ Gently open and close jaw, repeating a few times.
- ▶ Gently stick tongue out and say “AHHHHH.” Then wiggle tongue back and forth a few times.
- ▶ Squeeze eyes firmly shut, hold for a few seconds. Then release and relax. Open eyes widely.
- ▶ Say “OHHHHHHHHHHH.” Have group say sound with you. Hold for a few seconds.
- ▶ Say “EHHHHHHHHHHH.” Have group say sound with you. Hold for a few seconds.
- ▶ Say “AHHHHHHHHHHH.” Have group say sound with you. Hold for a few seconds.
- ▶ Say “OH – EH – AH.” Hold each sound for a few seconds. Repeat 3 times.
- ▶ Have class repeat 3 times with you the phrase “live every moment, laugh every day, love beyond words.”

BREATH GETS STARTED!

- ▶ Take a deep breath in through the nose and exhale out through the mouth.
- ▶ Spread arms apart and bring hands together in front, making a big circle as if hugging a large globe.
- ▶ Give selves big hug, wrapping arms across waist and squeezing gently, as able.

Great job, everyone!



BRAIN PLAYS | QUESTIONS FOR THE AGES

5 MINUTES

- Lead this quick cognitive warm up to build attention, nimbleness and self-awareness, as well as group connection.
- Ask 1 of the *Questions for the Ages* prompts from the list below.
- Have students take turns answering the question prompt one at a time, at a quick pace.
- Randomly ask a student to explain why they gave a specific answer to increase the engagement of the play.
- Clap or snap fingers together to set the pace.
- When repeating this class, select different prompts. Or ask students to offer “questions for the ages” for the class to answer.
- Encourage distance learners to join in from home.

We will begin each class with a quick warm up called “Brain Plays.” These exercises are designed to flex our thinking and get us ready for the work we will do together.

Today’s Brain Play is called “Questions for the Ages.” In a moment, I’m going to ask a question. Then we’ll go around and everyone will give their response. Here’s the catch! We’ll go at a very quick pace, so you’ll have to think fast. This is a great workout that builds our attention and cognitive speed, which are both key intellectual skills. And just to keep us on our toes, I may decide to ask one of you why you gave the answer you chose! Ready?



QUESTION FOR THE AGES PROMPTS

- Would you rather be 16 or 61?
- Would you rather go back for prom or a school football game?
- Would you rather be starting high school or retirement?
- Would you rather work at a gym or a nightclub?
- Would you rather have a toddler or a teenager?
- Would you rather have dinner with Winston Churchill or Marilyn Monroe?
- Would you rather visit New York City or New Orleans?
- Would you rather bike, hike or drive?
- Would you rather eat a snail or a goldfish?
- Would you rather drink milk or champagne?
- Would you rather have sushi or pasta?
- Would you rather skydive or go trail riding on a horse?



LEARN THE TBH SCIENCE

5 MINUTES

- Present the science behind the class.
- Allow for brief discussion of the science with your students.

In a previous class we explored how ageism may impact how we see ourselves as we grow older and the kinds of expectations we have for our thinking and overall well-being.

Another way we can think about ageism is at a cultural level. There are many ways in which ageism is pervasive across the different institutions that make up our world. For example, we may be exposed to age bias in the media or in our workplace. Even things that seem trivial like birthday cards or how we talk to each other can include negative messaging about being older. Can you think of some examples you've noticed? Pause for discussion.

You may wonder whether ageism really matters – well, it does! Studies have shown that age-based discrimination significantly impacts things like our access to good healthcare, economic opportunities, as well as how we are treated in settings like the legal system or in how our governments set policies in housing, resource distribution or other areas.

Experts point out that ageism is in fact one of the biases still tolerated in our world. But there are ways that can change, and steps each of us can take to help make a difference.



NOW DO IT!

15+ MINUTES

- Lead your class in this workout to personalize their learning of the science.
- Have students break into pairs of 2 or 3.



- Give each pair one *Age-nts of Change* card. Allow pairs 5 minutes to discuss the problem on their card and come up with an example solution to share with the whole class.
- Have pairs take turns sharing their solutions with the class.
- When repeating this class, have students select different partners and insure they are given a different card from the deck. Or modify to do “All Together” and invite students to create “Positive Aging” birthday cards or “Stand Against Ageism” statements, then share with the whole class.
- Distribute materials to virtual learners ahead of class. Adjust scripting accordingly.

So how can we make a difference in promoting more positive perceptions of aging? We’re going to explore that together right now. In a moment we will break into pairs. Try to partner with someone you haven’t worked with before. I will give each pair an *Age-nts of Change* card. On the card is a situation that reflects cultural age bias and a question for you and your partner to discuss. You’ll have about 5 minutes to talk together. Then we’ll take turns sharing what you learned as well as your answers to the questions all together.

And working collaboratively and problem-solving challenges our attention, active listening and stretches our minds with creative thinking, all great ways we can boost our brain health!

Let’s get started.



TBH TAKEAWAY

10 MINUTES

- Share this brief wrap-up to end the workout.
- Distribute or email class handouts.
- Ask students to share one thing they will “take away” from today’s class.

It’s interesting to explore how ageism affects us in so many ways, even though we may not be aware of it day to day. I hope that learning more about the negative consequences age bias can have on our self-perception as well as culturally will make a difference in how you allow aging to impact your personal growth and well-being.

What aspect of ageism do you think affects you the most?



TBH TAKE A BREATH

5 MINUTES

- Lead this signature relaxation and affirmation exercise to close the class.
- See the [TBH Take a Breath](#) playlist for suggested music to set the pace of your workout.
- See the course introduction for a fully scripted version of this workout.
- Mute distance learners to avoid noisy distractions.



Let's wrap up with our "TBH Take a Breath." Being mindful of our breath and sharing some positive thoughts are wonderful ways to acknowledge what we've learned together before we go back to our day. Research also shows that these kinds of exercises help us focus better and even learn more effectively.

- ▶ *Have students get comfortable, resting both feet flat on the floor, hands resting in their laps.*
- ▶ *Have students close their eyes and keep them gently closed.*
- ▶ *Ask students to focus their attention on their breathing, noticing the rate and rhythm of their breath. Allow them to focus on their natural breathing for a few moments.*
- ▶ *Instruct students to begin rhythmic breathing. Ask them to inhale slowly and deeply through their nostrils, breathing gently into their chest and belly. Then ask them to exhale slowly through their lips, slowing the rate and rhythm of their breath.*
- ▶ *Have students continue rhythmic breathing, instructing them to continue to focus on gently and slowly inhaling and exhaling, allowing their attention to simply "ride" the wave of their breath. Allow them to focus on rhythmic breathing for several moments.*
- ▶ *Offer the following positive affirmation statements below in a calm, slow voice. Invite students to simply listen, repeat the phrase silently to themselves, or to think about what each statement means to them.*

My body is relaxed.

I am grateful for my years.

I am grateful that I can make a difference in the world.

I am grateful for myself.

I take this time and this breath for me.

- ▶ *Pause for several moments.*
- ▶ *End the exercise by inviting students to bring their awareness back to the room, gently opening their eyes and becoming more aware of their surroundings.*
- ▶ *Invite them to end practice with gratitude for taking a moment for themselves, for the chance to learn together and connect with each other.*



COMING UP NEXT!

2 MINUTES

- Thank students for attending the class.
- Ask students to take a *TBH Inspiring Note* to take home.
- Invite students to join you for the next TBH class.

Thank you for being here today. I hope you found today's exploration of ageism inspiring.

Before you go, please take a *TBH Inspiration Note* from this (bag/box/bowl). Each one has a special quote to inspire you over the days ahead.

I look forward to seeing you for our next Total Brain Health class. Be sure to bring a friend!



CLASS RESOURCES

TBH Age-nts of Change Card Deck. Print out 1 deck to use for the activity. Print the cards 2-sided and in color. Cut them apart. If possible, laminate the cards for easier handling, cleaning, and durability.

TBH Inspiration Notes. Print out the notes at the beginning of the course. Print the notes 2-sided and in color. Cut them apart. If possible, laminate the cards for easier handling and durability. Keep the notes in a bowl or bag and allow students to randomly pick one note without looking to take home at the end of each class. If needed for physical distancing, you may hand out the notes.

NOW DO IT! WORKSHEETS

Use this worksheet to run your class.

Age-nts of Change Worksheet. Use this worksheet to support the class exercise. Distribute or email to distance learners.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

[How ageist beliefs undercuts us all.](#) American Psychological Association (May 2020). A helpful overview on the costs of ageism with a focus on the impact of the COVID-19 crisis.

[Old School Anti-Ageism Clearinghouse](#) offers many wonderful resources and additional programming ideas on combatting ageism.

[Who you calling “young lady?” and other ageist language that needs to change – now.](#) AARP Disrupt Aging Blog (2018). About the everyday labels that perpetuate ageism.

Card Deck Resources. Additional resources to support the card deck workouts.

[Age-Related Hate Crimes.](#) A report to the European Commission from AGE Platform Europe on hate crimes tied to age bias.

[How Ads Do a Terrible Job Portraying Older Adults.](#) A *Next Avenue* article from Ken Dychtwald and Robert Morison on advertising and ageist stereotypes.

[Intergenerational Relationships.](#) This joint report from the Eisner Foundation and Generations United offers an in-depth picture of the value of intergenerational ties.

[Media’s role in the stereotyping of aging adults.](#) A multimedia story map exploring the ways media perpetuates age bias.



[Positive Aging Birthday Cards](#). This Wordpress site offers examples and further information about age bias in the greeting card industry.

[Stereotyping Communications](#). This short guide from AGE Platform Europe provides an easy overview of stereotyping in daily conversation.

[Take a Stand Against Ageism](#). HelpAge International site with anti-ageism pledges.

[UN Conference on the Rights of Older People](#). HelpAge International site with short video explaining the need for this conference and other resources for action.

[Yo Is This Ageist?](#) Terrific Q and A blog curated by ageism expert Ashton Applewhite.