

# Ageism in Health Care



## WHAT IS AGEISM?

### ● AGEISM

Ageism involves stereotypes, prejudice, and discrimination of people based on their age. Ageist thoughts, attitudes and behaviours are targeted towards individuals and groups because of their advanced age.

### ● TYPES OF AGEISM

- **Structural** (systemic / cultural) ageism refers to ways society fosters age discrimination. This can include media messages, humour, beauty industry standards & ageist commentary.
- **Institutional** (organizational) ageism is evidenced in discriminatory policies or practices implemented at the organizational or governmental level.
- **Interpersonal** (self-directed) ageism occurs when an individual internalizes ageist stereotypes to an extent that it negatively affects the individual's health and well being
- **Individual** ageism refers to discriminatory behaviours or interactions between individuals.

## GLOBAL STATISTICS

- More than 1 in 3 people worldwide admit to being ageist
- 1 in 10 people in Europe admit to having been a target of ageism
- According to the WHO, ageism costs society millions of dollars
- In a global systematic review of the impacts of ageism, 75% of studies identified that ageism was associated with worse health outcomes
- Approximately 1.5 million cases of depression are associated with ageism

WHO, 2021

## AGEISM'S IMPACT ON HEALTH

Ageism has the potential to impact our physical and mental health as we age.

PHYSICAL	MENTAL
Prolonged death Risky health behaviours Decreased risk of STD's Adverse Drug Events	Poor self concept Depression Anxiety Increases opportunity for flourishing

### ● ACTION

There are many ways individuals and organizations can combat ageism in the health care setting.



**Policies & Practices** - create policies and practices that address age-based discriminatory hiring practices directed towards any age.

- Examples include hiring policies; training policies for older employees



**Education** - Implement educational interventions to teach people about ageism at all levels of academic education.

- Examples include mandatory gerontology courses for health-related programs in the academic setting; hire academic faculty that have expertise in care of the older adult



**Intergenerational Contact** - Increasing intergenerational contact between generations.

- Examples include ensure older adults have opportunities for engaging with one another