

**ENDING AGEISM  
IN HEALTHCARE**

**ENDING AGEISM TOGETHER**  
**CHANGING  
THE**   
**NARRATIVE**

# WHY ADDRESS AGEISM?




# AGEISM

Prejudice  
*(how we feel)*

Stereotyping  
*(how we think)*

Discrimination  
*(how we act)*



**AGEISM**

refers to

HOW WE THINK  
(STEREOTYPES),  
FEEL  
(PREJUDICE)  
and **ACT**  
(DISCRIMINATION)

towards others  
or ourselves  
based on age

#AWorld4AllAges

GLOBAL  
CAMPAIGN  
TO COMBAT  
AGEISM

# HOW PREVALENT IS AGEISM?

- **93%**  
**Experienced one of more forms of ageism in daily life**

[Allen et al., 2022]

- **93%**  
**Say workplace age discrimination is common**

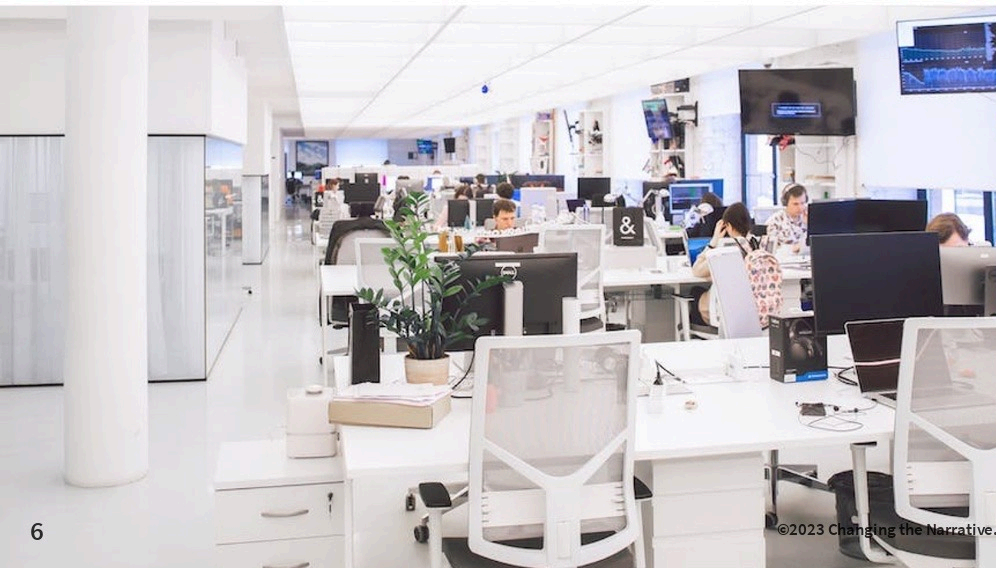
[AARP, 2022]





**\$63 BILLION IN ANNUAL HEALTH CARE  
COSTS DUE TO AGEISM**

# WORKPLACE AGE DISCRIMINATION COSTS U.S. ECONOMY \$850 BILLION ANNUALLY





# LESS FUNDING FOR OLDER ADULT PROGRAMS

## LESS SUPPORT FOR AGE-INCLUSIVE POLICIES

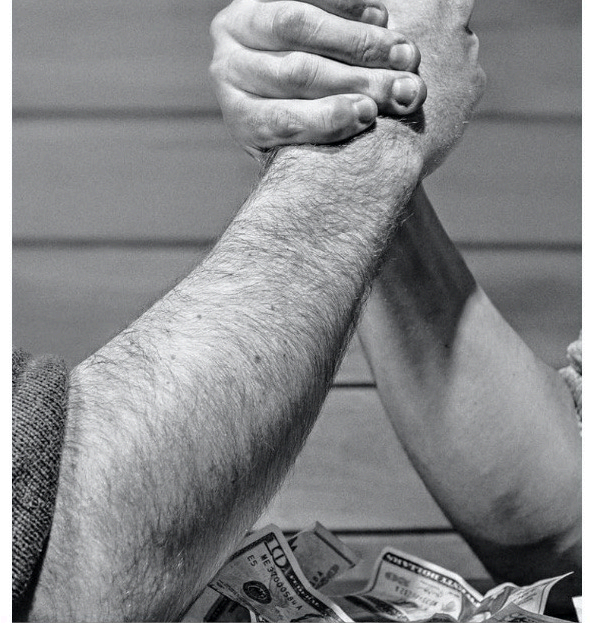
# HOW SOCIETY THINKS ABOUT AGING



Individualism

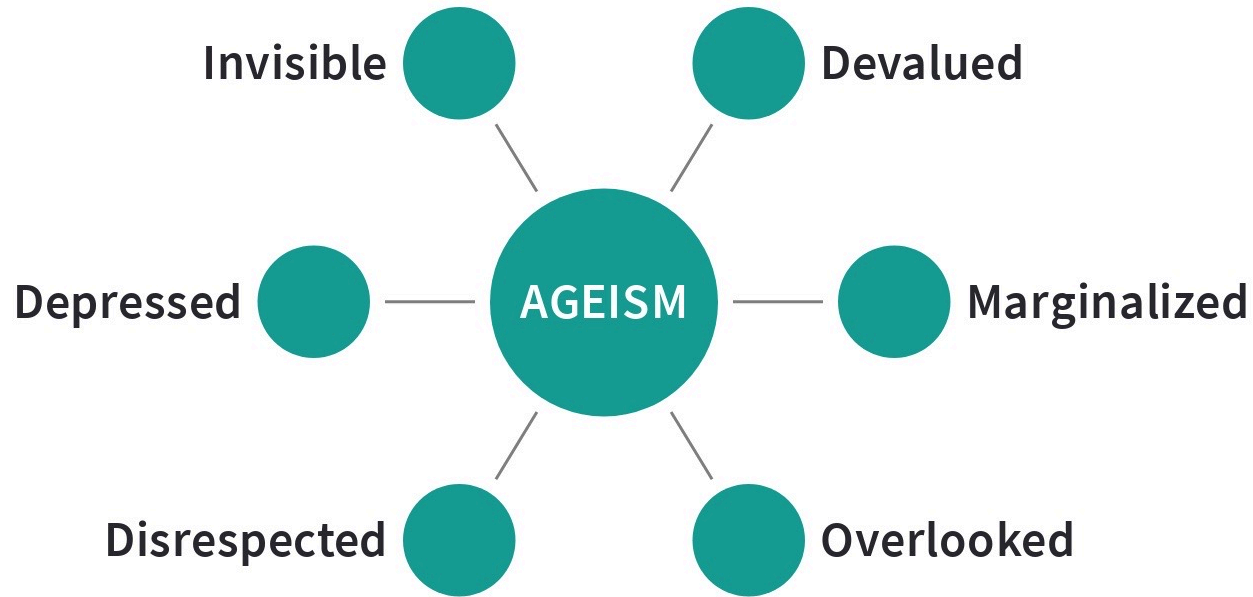


Ideal vs. Perceived



Us vs. Them

# WHAT AGEISM FEELS LIKE



# WHAT AGEISM SOUNDS LIKE

## Physical health

"This pain is simply because of my age"

## Mental health

"All older people are experiencing depression"

## Learning

"I'm too old to learn how to use new technology"

## Behaviors

"I'm too old to change my habits now"



# NEGATIVE IMPACTS OF AGEISM



- Physical and mental health\*
- Economic security\*\*
- Memory\*
- How long we live\*

• Source: \*Levy, 2022; Urban Institute\*\*

# AGEISM: A RISK FACTOR FOR ELDER ABUSE

- ISOLATION
- Older adults viewed as less worthy, invisible
- Older adults are less likely to report abuse
- Underfunded services & programs





# INSTITUTIONAL AGEISM



**WORKPLACE AGE DISCRIMINATION**



**MEDICARE EXCLUSIONS**



**PANDEMIC**

# INTERPERSONAL AGEISM

- Elderspeak
- “Of course your knee hurts. You're getting older.”
- “George? He's too old to learn the new software.”



# INTERNALIZED AGEISM

- Self-talk
- “I'm having a senior moment.”
- “I'm too old to learn that.”



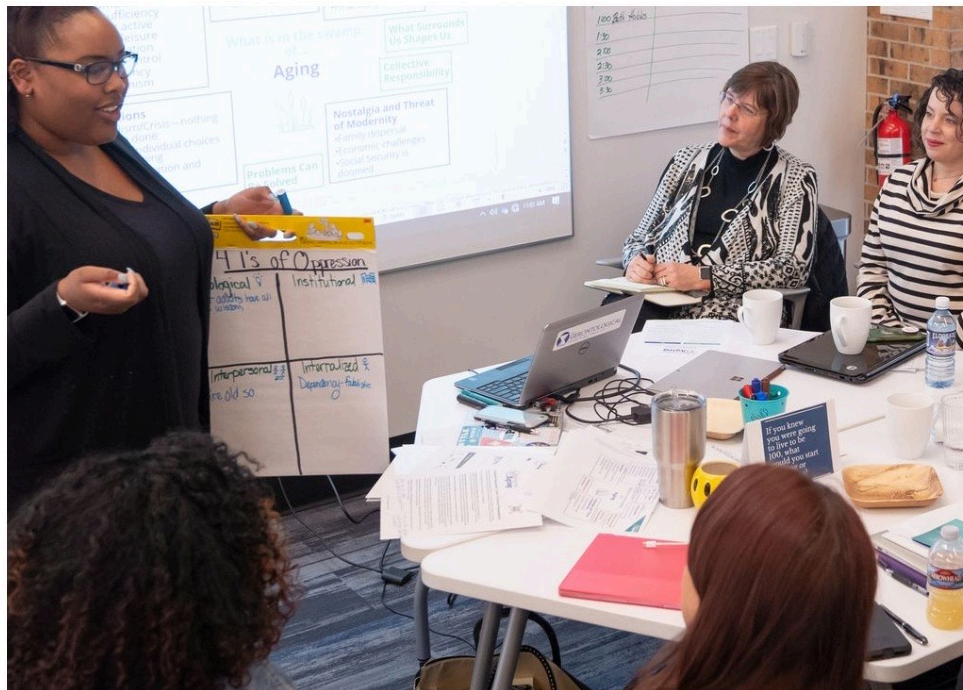
# POSITIVE BELIEFS ABOUT AGING...



- Increased longevity (7.5 years)
- Improved health
- Greater ability to recover
- Reduced likelihood of dementia (by almost half)
- Improved memory and reversing cognitive decline

Source: Levy, 2022

# STRATEGIES TO COMBAT AGEISM



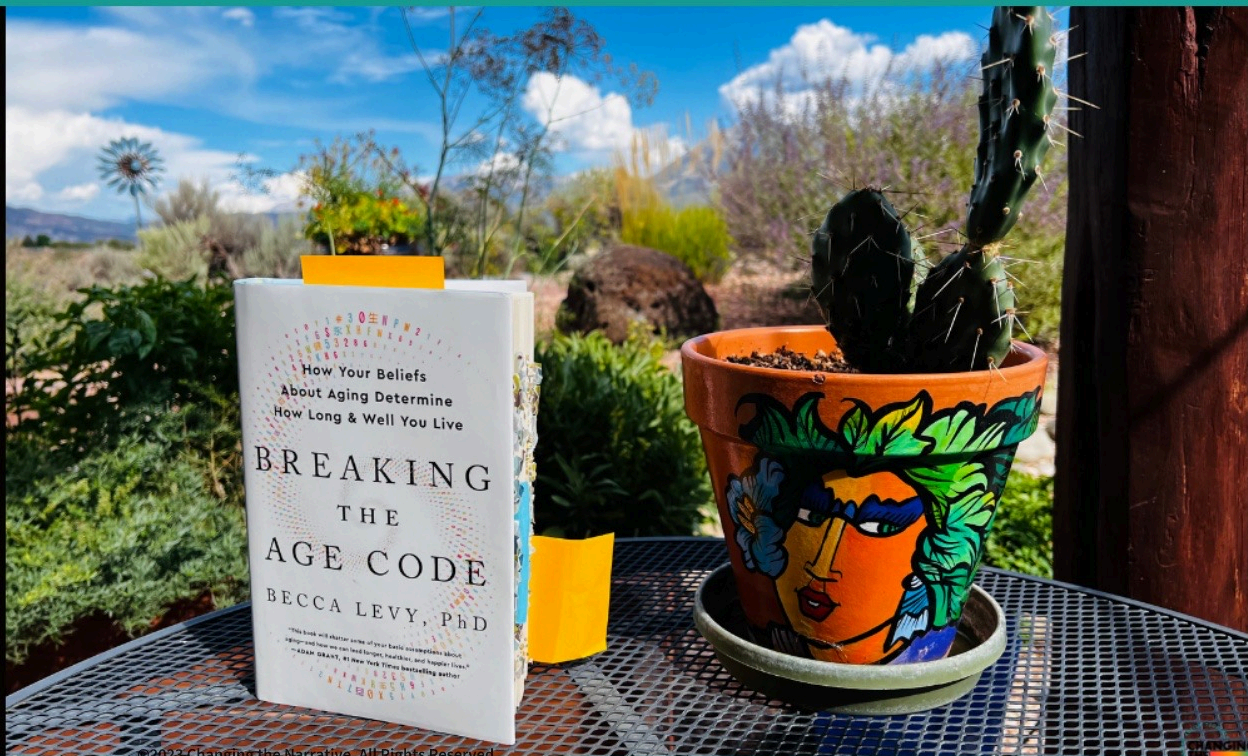
- 1 Education
- 2 Connecting generations
- 3 Influencing law and policy



# EDUCATE: HOST A BECCA LEVY BOOK CLUB

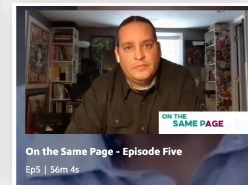
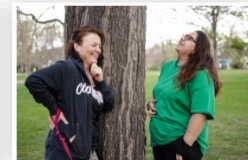
**CHANGING  
THE  
NARRATIVE**  
ENDING AGEISM TOGETHER

**BECCA LEVY  
BOOK CLUB  
TOOLKIT**



# INTERGENERATIONAL CONNECTIONS

## Intergenerational Toolkit



# SUPPORT POLICY SOLUTIONS



- Age discrimination laws
- Upskilling older workers
- Healthcare



# STORIES ABOUT AGING



- Messages & language with a path forward

# TALKING ABOUT DEMOGRAPHIC CHANGE

**AVOID**

**INSTEAD USE**

Silver tsunami, grey  
wave, going off the  
demographic cliff



People are living longer  
Birth rates are declining

Finite resources | zero  
sum



Let's use our ingenuity |  
re-envision what's  
possible | create new  
policies and programs to  
address our changing  
world

# TALKING ABOUT AGEISM

**AVOID**

**INSTEAD USE**

Using the term without  
defining it

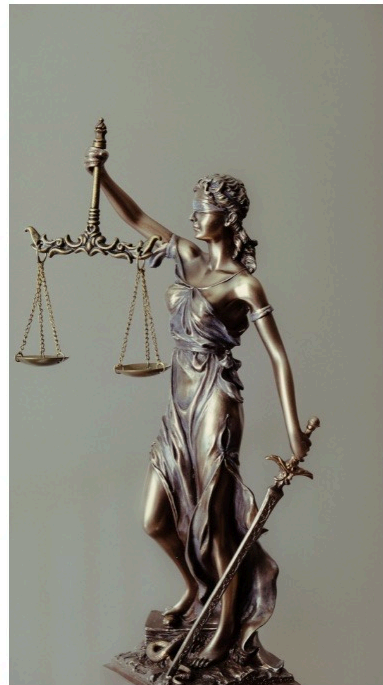


Always define and  
explain what it is

Comparing ageism to  
other isms



Talk about ageism as a  
matter of justice



# TALKING ABOUT AGING & OLDER ADULTS

## AVOID

Elderly, senior citizens,  
"our" seniors



Us versus them



Anti-aging, battling or  
fighting age



## INSTEAD USE

Older adults, or  
descriptive language

Us and We

Acknowledge that aging is a  
normal and dynamic process



# EXPLAIN AGEISM



Ageism is prejudice, stereotyping and discrimination based on age.

Assumptions and stereotypes

Use workplace discrimination as an example.



# EXPLAIN IMPLICIT BIAS



*Stereotypes and assumptions that affect our actions, decisions and understanding - unconsciously.*

**In early childhood we subconsciously begin forming negative beliefs about older people & aging.**

# THE OPPORTUNITY TO LEAD

THINK A, B, C



# ATTITUDES

*What do we believe...*  
about ourselves aging?  
about older adults?





# BEHAVIOR

How can we BE  
the role model  
addressing  
ageism?



# COMMUNICATIONS

How can we shift our own communications to reframe aging?

How can we encourage those in our networks to do so?



# PERSON-CENTERED HEALTHCARE

- Care that is respectful of individual patient/client preferences
- Needs and values are discussed
- Ensuring those values guide clinical decisions
- Patients are included in the decision making process.





## LET'S CONNECT!

- @ info@changingthenarrativeco.org
- changingthenarrativeco.org/
- f ChangeNarrativeUS
- changing-the-narrative-co
- @ kris@changingthenarrativeco.org