

**OLDER ADULT TASK FORCE – MAY 30, 2022**

**COMMUNICATIONS**

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**Item**

C1. Presentation material titled: “*Conversations on Social Inclusion: Age and Ageism*”

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# Conversations on Social Inclusion: Age and Ageism

City of Vaughan - Older Adult Task Force

May 30, 2022

**CanAge** 

Laura Tamblyn Watts  
Diana Cable  
[www.CanAge.ca](http://www.CanAge.ca)

# AGENDA



1. Introductions - CanAge, Who We Are, What We Do
2. Ageism and What We Can Do About It
3. Q & A

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**About  
CanAge**

**CanAge**\*

## WHO WE ARE

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**Laura Tamblyn Watts, LLB is the CEO of CanAge**, Canada's national seniors' advocacy organization. Her work focuses on aging, inclusion, consumer rights and social justice. She has previously served as Chief Public Policy Officer at the Canadian Association of Retired Persons and National Director of the Canadian Centre for Elder Law and the BC Law Institute. She is Faculty at the University of Toronto in the field of law and aging. She was awarded the Community Leadership in Justice Fellowship by the Law Foundation of Ontario.

Laura has been nominated to the Board of IIROC in September 2020. Laura just completed her terms on the Board of the Ombudsman for Banking Services and Investments (OBSI). Prior to joining OBSI's Board, she Chaired OBSI's Consumer and Investor Advisory Committee for 8 years.

She is a Board member for Elder Abuse Prevention Ontario. She has represented Canada at the United Nations' Open-Ended Working Group on Aging and WHO events. She is a leading voice in issues of seniors' health care, long-term care reform and the social inclusion needs of seniors.

Laura is the author of numerous papers on aging issues, and is a frequent media commentator and keynote speaker on aging issues. She is the author of the forthcoming book: *The 3 am Guide to Your Aging Parents*.



## WHO WE ARE

- **CanAge** is Canada's National Seniors' Advocacy organization.
- We are a non-partisan non-profit organization that educates, empowers and mobilizes people on the issues that matter most to older Canadians and their caregivers.
- We work to advance the rights and well-being of Canadians as we age in order to live vibrant and connected lives.

## WHO WE ARE

# CanAge Values

**Inclusion** – we respect people, value diversity and are committed to equality

**Participation** – we value and recognize the contribution of volunteers within the organization and communities

**Quality** – we strive for advancement and improvement of the lives of older Canadians

**Openness** – we are committed to a culture of collaboration

**Innovative** – we are open to great ideas, different perspectives, new solutions

**Principled** – we take an independent, evidence-based approach to our policy work



Introducing:

  
**VOICES**  
of Canada's Seniors

A Roadmap to an  
Age-Inclusive Canada 



**The 6 Compass Points of this Roadmap are:**

- V** Violence and Abuse Prevention
- O** Optimal Health and Wellness
- I** Infection Prevention and Disaster Response
- C** Caregiving, Long-Term Care, Home Care and Housing Resources
- E** Economic Security
- S** Social Inclusion

# — What is Ageism?

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## DEFINITION

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**Ageism** refers to the:  
stereotypes (how we think),  
prejudice (how we feel),  
discrimination (how we act)  
towards others or oneself based  
on age.

## DEFINITION

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“The term "ageism" refers to two concepts:

**1** - a socially constructed way of thinking about older persons based on negative attitudes and stereotypes about aging

**2** - the tendency to structure society based on an assumption that everyone is young, thereby failing to respond appropriately to the real needs of older persons.”

## DEFINITION

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*Ageism may be institutional, interpersonal or self-directed.*

**Systemic/Institutional Ageism:** describes how laws, norms, rules, policies and practices of various institutions unfairly restrict opportunities and systematically disadvantage individuals based on their age.

**Interpersonal Ageism:** refers to ageism that occurs during interactions between two or more people.

**Self-Directed Ageism:** outlines how ageist ideas and biases are often internalized and directed at oneself.

## AGEISM IN CANADA

- One in three Canadians admit they have treated someone differently due to their age
- 63% of people aged 66+ say they have been treated unfairly or differently as a result of their age
- 71% agree that Canadian society values younger generations more than older ones.
- Half of Canadians say ageism is the most tolerated social prejudice (versus gender or race-based discrimination)
- 89% of Canadians associate aging with something negative like not being able to get around easily, losing independence or being alone

## AGEISM IN CANADA

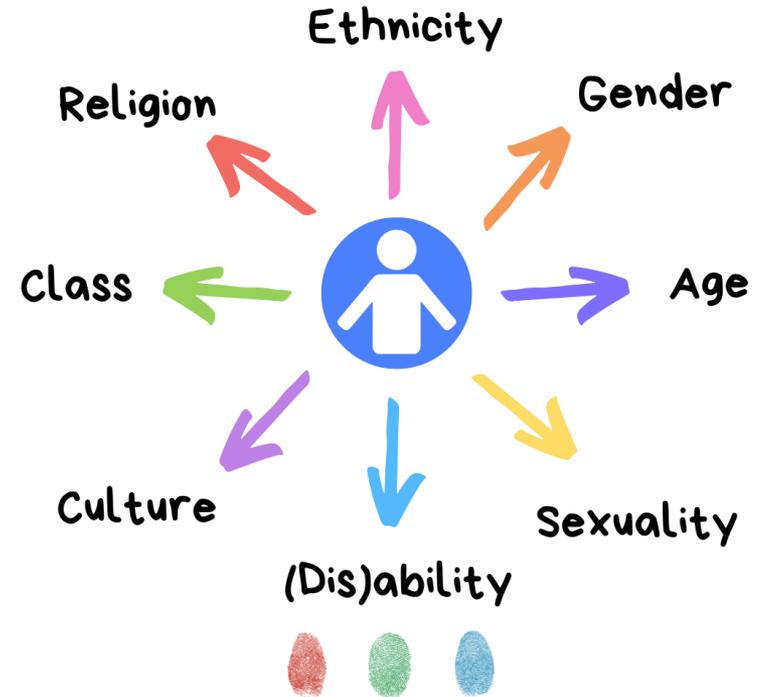
### Types of Discrimination Faced by Older Canadians

- 41% say they have been ignored or treated as though I am invisible
- 38% say people have assumed they have nothing to contribute
- 27% say people have assumed that they're incompetent
- 19% say people have assumed they're hard of hearing
- 16% say people have assumed they have memory loss
- 12% say people have treated them as a child
- 8% say people have assumed they're slow-witted
- 5% say people have disrespected them

## AGEISM & INTERSECTIONALITY



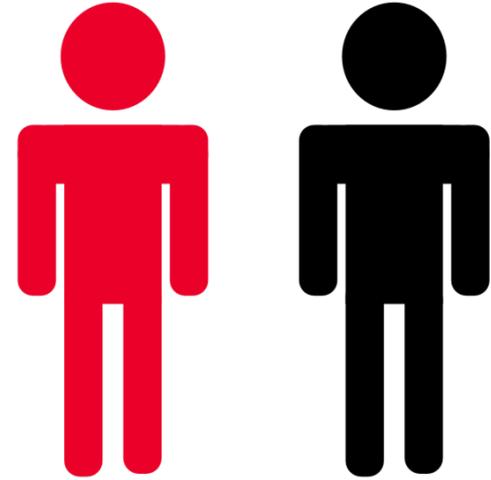
Ageism intersects with other forms of prejudice and discrimination



## SCALE OF AGEISM

### Ageism is prevalent in many societal institutions

- These institutions include: the **healthcare system**, the **legal system**, the **workplace** and the **media**
- The WHO reports that globally, one in two people are ageist towards older individuals



**1** in **2** people are  
ageist against older  
people

## IMPACT

- Ageism has a large impact on physical and mental health as well as social well-being
- Ageism also contributes to negative economic outcomes
- Self-directed ageism had the greatest association with various health outcomes



**AGEISM IS HARMFUL**

Ageism has far-reaching IMPACTS ON ALL ASPECTS OF PEOPLE'S HEALTH

PHYSICAL HEALTH      MENTAL HEALTH      SOCIAL WELL-BEING

Ageism takes a HEAVY ECONOMIC TOLL on individuals and society

#AWorld4AllAges

GLOBAL CAMPAIGN TO COMBAT AGEISM

Image: WHO. (n.d.) Global Campaign to Combat Ageism.  
<https://who.canto.global/v/JMQ81O59Q3/album/MB00K?display=fitView&viewIndex=0&auth=sso&gOrderProp=name&gSortingForward&column=image&id=p920s9nq554f16ten7f1910f73>

# — Examples of Ageism

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## AGEISM EXAMPLES



### Systemic/Institutional Ageism

- 304 Geriatricians in Canada
- Age Based Rationing of Care
- Increased wait times for surgeries older people often need (ex. hip and knee surgeries)

### Interpersonal

- Chalking up health complaints to “old age”
- Negative attitudes towards older people
- Harmful internet memes such as “Ok Boomer”

### Self-Directed

- Believing that you are too old to learn new things
- Assuming that you are becoming forgetful due to your age

## AGEISM IN HEALTHCARE: COVID19

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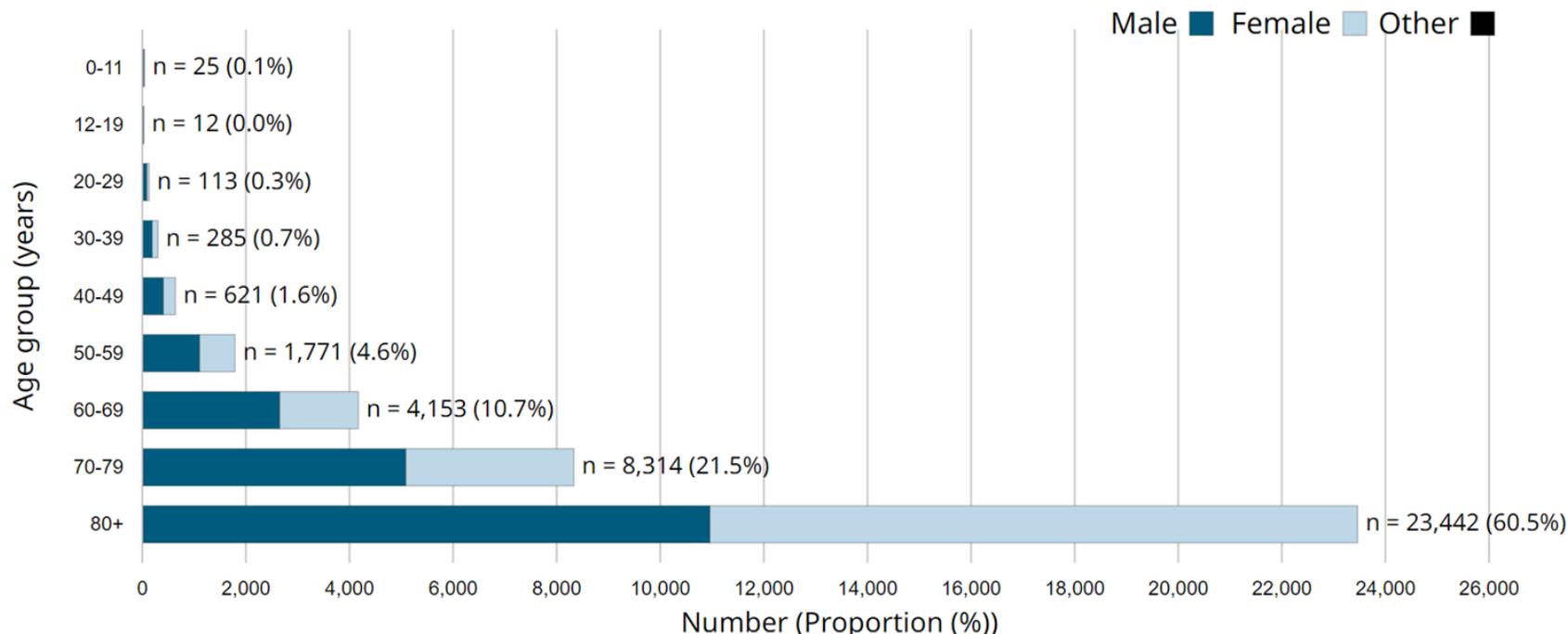
"The problem is we don't value old age. COVID made ageism far worse as we saw people in nursing homes dying because their lives did not matter enough. Many people think that was incompetence, true — but ageism explains it better."

(Margaret Morganroth Gullette, 2021)

# AGEISM IN HEALTHCARE: COVID19



Figure 7. Age and gender <sup>4</sup> distribution of COVID-19 cases  in Canada as of May 6, 2022, 8 am EST (n=38,736 <sup>1</sup>)



Screen shot from: <https://health-infobase.canada.ca/covid-19/epidemiological-summary-covid-19-cases.html?stat=num&measure=deaths&map=pt#a2>

# AGEISM IN THE WORKFORCE

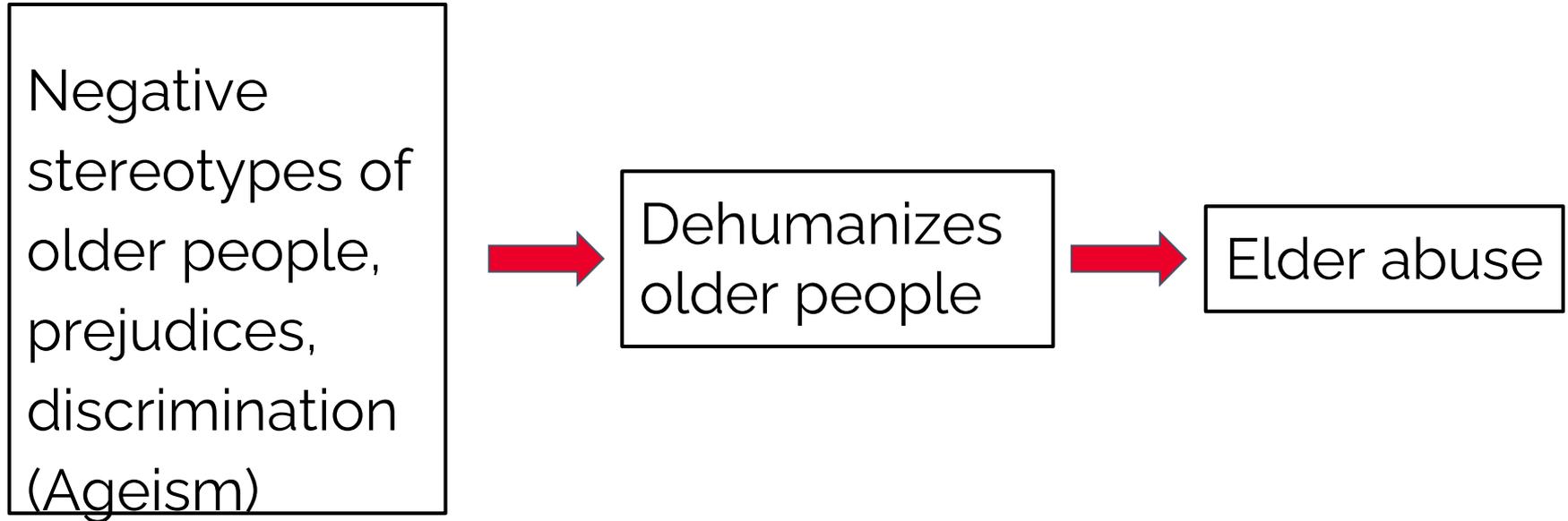


Image:  
[https://cdn.aarp.net/content/dam/aarp/work/work\\_at\\_plus/2019/12/1140x760-age-discrimination-harrass.imgcache.rev.web.700.469.jpg](https://cdn.aarp.net/content/dam/aarp/work/work_at_plus/2019/12/1140x760-age-discrimination-harrass.imgcache.rev.web.700.469.jpg)

- I applied for a job and the guy said, "Gee, we didn't expect anybody your age to apply for this." (Ed, age 60)
- Middle-aged people are perceived as health insurance risks and pension plan risks ... Middle-aged people are perceived as too expensive because of their experience. (Derek, age 58)
- [...] Employers only want young people. They think they can work quickly and they are more flexible and will agree to work the night shift. (Barbara, age 45)

(Berger, 2021)

## AGEISM & ELDER ABUSE



## AGEISM & ELDER ABUSE



You're too old to understand, just sign this

You don't *really* need this money. I'm in the prime of my life so I need it more

If you don't have the capacity to make this decision, than you don't deserve your money

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# City of Vaughan: Facts and Statistics

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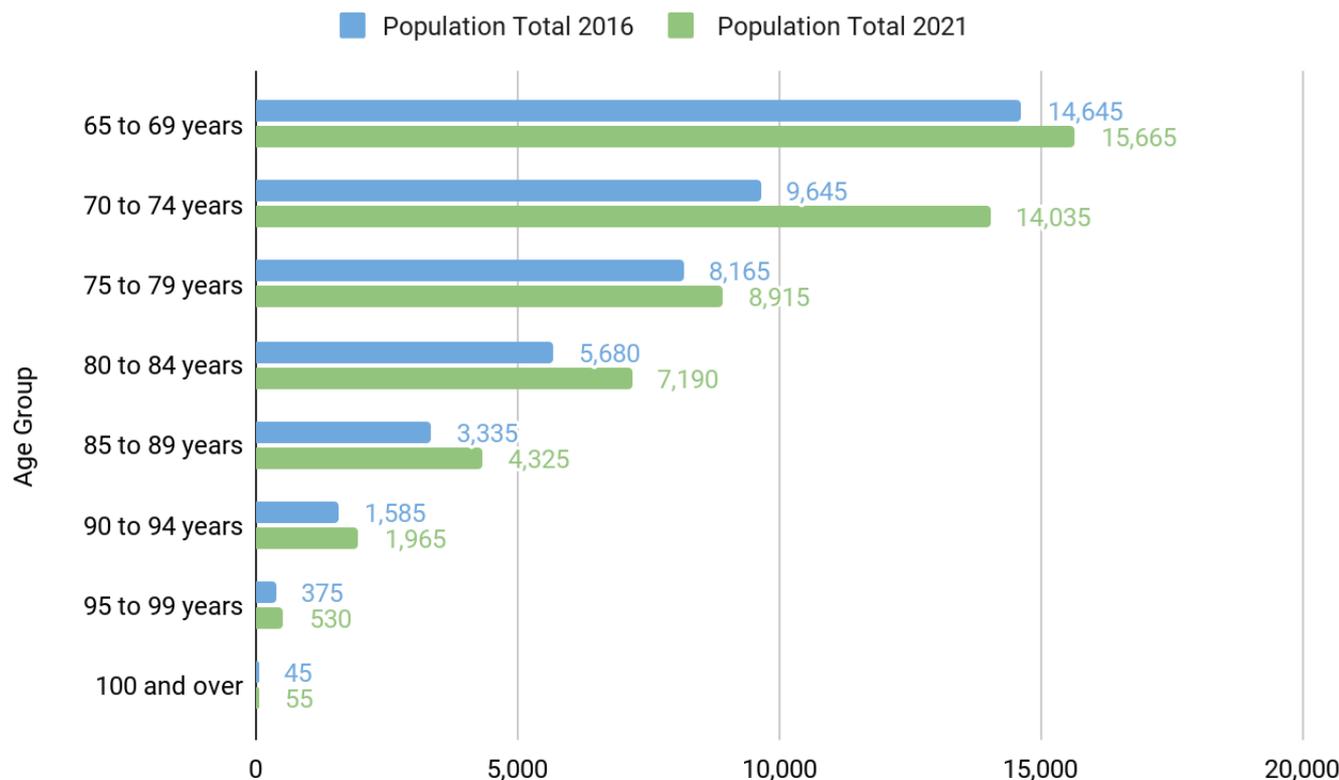
## Fun Facts

- Vaughan was initially incorporated into a township in 1850
- On January 1st, 1991, Vaughan was officially incorporated as a city
- As of 2021, the population of Vaughan was 323,103 people (Statistics Canada, 2021 Census)
- By 2031, it is estimated that adults age 55+ will represent more than 30% of the population

Image: City of Vaughan, n.d.,  
[https://www.vaughan.ca/news/media/thumbnails/vaughan\\_logo\\_blk.jpg](https://www.vaughan.ca/news/media/thumbnails/vaughan_logo_blk.jpg)



# CITY OF VAUGHAN: Population Demographics



- Population data was retrieved from the Canadian Census for the city of Vaughan in 2016 and 2021 respectively
- The proportion of adults age 65 and over is increasing

## CITY OF VAUGHAN

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With the senior population of Vaughan rising, fighting ageism should be our top priority.

*So, how do we combat ageism?*



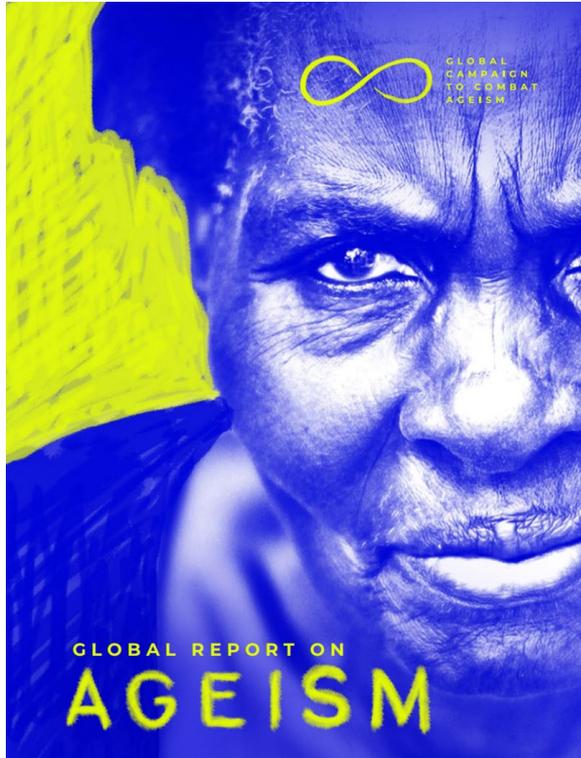


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# Fighting Ageism

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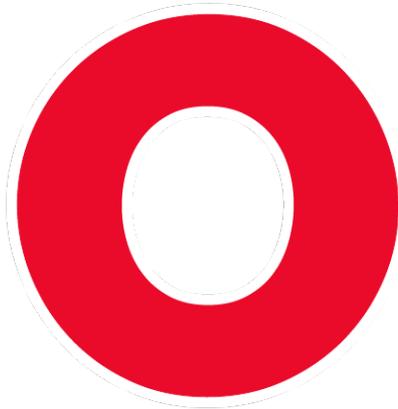
## STRATEGIES



### The World Health Organization's Global Report on Ageism (2021):

- Policy and Law
- Educational Interventions
- Intergenerational Contact Interventions

# Optional Health Care & Wellness



Issue 6: Sensory Health

Issue 7: Dementia and Cognitive Impairment

Issue 8: Mental Health and Substance Abuse

**Issue 9: Increase Sector Capacity in Geriatrics**

Issue 10: Rehabilitative Care

Issue 11: Wait Times

Issue 12: Inter-Jurisdictional Practices

Issue 13: Innovation

Issue 14: Hospice, Palliative and End of Life Care

Issue 15: System Change

## **VOICES RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **Issue #9: Increase Sector Capacity in Geriatrics**

#### **Recommendation #31: Rotations and Training**

Work with the regulatory health colleges and educational institutions to require geriatric rotations and/or training modules for all physicians and healthcare professionals.

#### **Recommendation #33: Financial Incentives to Create Sector Capacity**

Create financial incentives through educational grants to support an increase in students studying geriatric health and social care generally, then practicing in Indigenous, rural, and remote communities specifically.

# Social Inclusion



Issue 35: Loneliness and Social Exclusion

Issue 36: Seniors and Technology

Issue 37: Transportation

**Issue 38: Address and Reduce Ageism**

Issue 38: Indigenous Seniors

**Issue 40: Promote Intergenerationalism**

## **VOICES RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **Issue #38: Address and Reduce Ageism**

#### **Recommendation #125: Reduce Workplace Ageism**

Eliminate all forms of ageist mandatory retirement, and provide workplace options for job transformation and accessibility accommodation. Have private and public employers specifically include age and ageism in their diversity and inclusion policies, human resources, and employee engagement programs.

## **VOICES RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **Issue #38: Address and Reduce Ageism**

#### **Recommendation #126: Ageism in the Media**

Encourage media and corporations to reject the negative portrayal of older adults and ageist stereotypes, and promote images of positive, diverse imagery of aging.

#### **Recommendation #127: Canadian Anti-Ageism Campaign**

Create a Canadian Anti-Ageism Campaign. Develop anti-ageism modules for inclusion in educational curricula about discrimination and rights.

## **VOICES RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **Issue #38: Address and Reduce Ageism**

#### **Recommendation #128: Age-Inclusive Communities**

Amend building codes and by-laws to include age-friendliness and accessibility inclusion appropriate for our aging population. Promote investment in age-friendly and dementia-friendly communities. Encourage retail and grocery stores to have age- and dementia-friendly services and checkout lines.

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**Age-Friendly**

**CanAge\***

## AGE-FRIENDLY

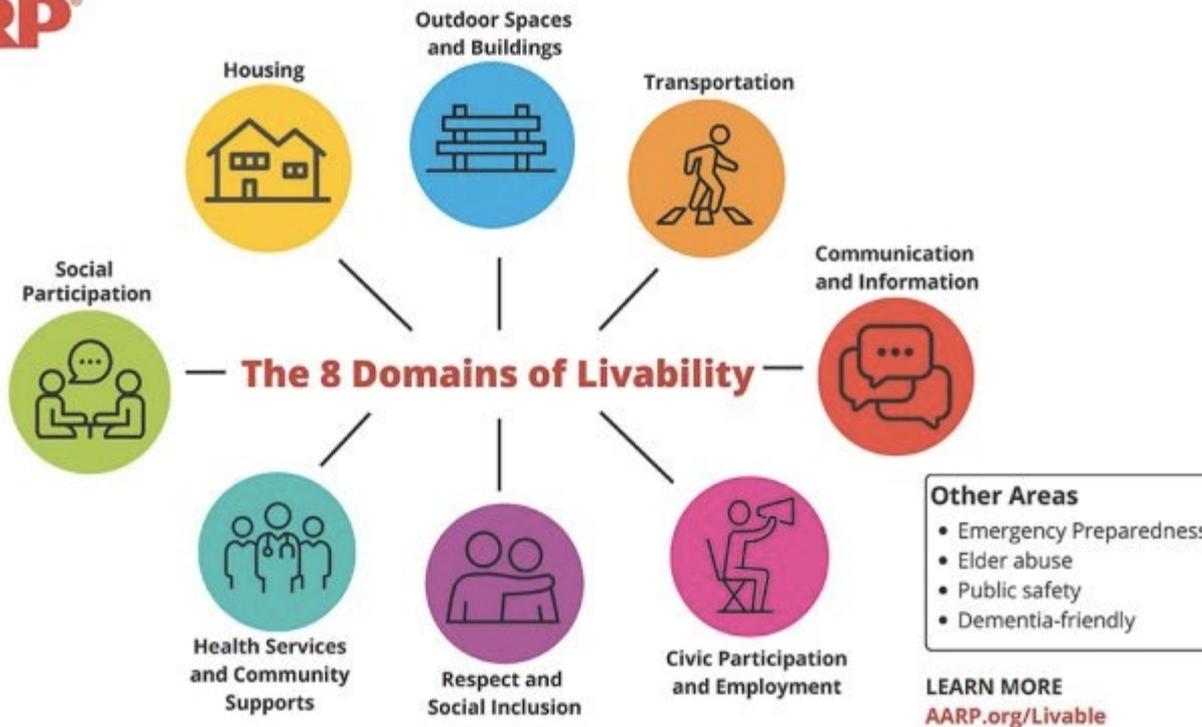


“...age-friendly environments are free from physical and social barriers and supported by policies, systems, services, products and technologies that:

- promote health and build and maintain physical and mental capacity across the life course; and
- enable people, even when experiencing capacity loss, to continue to do the things they value.”

(World Health Organization, n.d.)

# IN PRACTICE



Illustrations from iStock

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Image: <https://www.aarp.org/content/dam/aarp/livable-communities/age-friendly-network/2021/8%20Livability%20Domains%20Graphic-122020.pdf>

## **IMPACT OF AGE-FRIENDLY**

### **“What is an age-friendly world?”**

A world in which you would want to grow older.

Age-friendly environments foster healthy and active ageing. They enable older people to: age safely in a place that is right for them; be free from poverty; continue to develop personally; and to contribute to their communities while retaining autonomy, health and dignity. Because older people know best what they need, they are at the centre of any effort to create a more age-friendly world.”

(WHO, n.d.)

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**Thank you!  
Questions?**

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[CanAge.ca](http://CanAge.ca)

**2** **CanAge Connections**  
Our monthly newsletter

Sign up today.  
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**3** Follow us on social media

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**4** Become a CanAge member for free.

Visit [CanAge.ca/join](http://CanAge.ca/join) for your 1 year free membership!

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