

## Calls to Action

Calling all ASA Members!

We are asking you to become involved in Ageism Awareness Day to help shift attitudes toward older age and older people by reaching out to others and providing materials and assistance where and when possible.



- Educate yourself about ageism—particularly if you are going to serve as a spokesperson. The fact sheet below these calls to action provides several key messages and talking points.
- Gather a group of people and watch Ashton Applewhite's *[TEDtalk: Let's End Ageism](#)*. This can be done at a senior center, at a Committee/Commission meeting, in someone's home, etc. Invite younger folks to watch it, too.
- Send our Tool Kit materials (Ageism Fact Sheet, OpEd, Press Release) to your local newspapers and to local news broadcasts. Check for appropriate outlets that have newsletters.
- If your local newspaper runs letters to the editor, submit one about Ageism Awareness Day, and why it is so important.
- Share personal stories whenever possible. Human interest stories are important. Including on social media.



- Contact your local university/college and ask if there is a professor who is an expert in ageism. Invite that person to speak at an upcoming event/commission meeting, etc.
- If you have a Village in your community or are a member of a Village, invite an ageism expert to come and speak. Or run the [Ashton Applewhite TEDTalk](#) and follow it with a discussion.
- Local Area Agencies on Aging should invite an expert on ageism to speak at a meeting.
- Send materials to local officials and or appropriate local politicians.
- If your city, county or state has a Commission on Aging, send them materials.
- Provide information about ageism to the religious leaders in local houses of worship. Unitarian Universalist churches often host guest speakers, encourage them to have a speaker come and talk about ageism.
- Post about the day on Facebook and Instagram, using a short illustrative tale with a photo representing aging in a positive light, then explain the day and why it matters.
- On Twitter post one of the ageism facts, talk up the day and tag ASA and any journalists or other well-known people who might retweet it. This should be done repeatedly prior to the day and on the day itself.



## A Few Facts About Ageism

Ageism refers to the stereotypes (how we think), prejudices (how we feel) and discrimination (how we act) towards others or oneself based on age ([World Health Organization](#)).

There are many forms of ageism, including:

- Internalized: how we feel about ourselves as aging people; and ageism in which older adults marginalize and discriminate against other older people ([Tracey Gendron, gerontologist](#)).
- Implicit: The unconscious bias that includes attitudes, feelings and behaviors toward people of other age groups that operates without conscious awareness or intention ([Becca Levy, PhD](#)).
- Cultural: The everyday, invisible, profoundly ingrained and normalized negative messages about aging and old people embedded in movies, TV, songs, jokes, etc. ([Tracey Gendron](#)).
- Benevolent: Patronizing, paternalistic beliefs that older people need to be protected and taken care of by younger people, because they are no longer able to make decisions for [themselves](#).

Ageism is the most widespread and socially accepted form of prejudice. On a global scale, one in two people is ageist ([World Health Organization](#)).

Ageism intersects and exacerbates all the other “isms,” including racism, sexism and ableism. Multiple intersecting forms of bias



compound disadvantage and worsen the effects of ageism on individuals' health and well-being ([WHO Ageism Report](#)).

Ageism and age stereotypes are often internalized at a young age—long before they are relevant. Even by age 3, children are familiar with age stereotypes, which are reinforced over their lifetimes ([Flamion et al., 2020](#)).

Ageism affects our health. Older individuals with more positive self-perceptions of aging live 7.5 years longer than those with less positive self-perceptions of aging ([Levy, 2002](#)).

Ageism harms our financial well-being. Older workers face longer periods of unemployment, discrimination during the hiring process, and fewer professional development opportunities ([U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, 2018](#)).

Ageism harms our economy:

- AARP estimated \$850 billion in lost gains to the Gross Domestic Product as a result of involuntary retirement, underemployment and unemployment among older workers ([AARP, 2020](#)).
- Levy and colleagues (2020) estimated that \$63 billion in healthcare costs, or \$1 out of every \$7 spent on the 8 most expensive health conditions among people ages 60 and older, are due to ageism ([Levy et al., 2020](#)).

Ageism in American medicine and society is a matter of life and death, as dangerous as any incorrectly prescribed medicine or slipped scalpel. These negative stereotypes often result in less effective care, such as denial of treatment options, under-diagnosis of depression, and mismanaged pain ([AARP Bulletin, 2010](#)).



Ageism in media remains pervasive. A study found that only 1.5% of characters on television in the United States were older people, and most of them had minor roles and were often portrayed for comic effect, drawing on stereotypes of physical, cognitive and sexual ineffectiveness ([WHO Global Report on Ageism, p. 27](#)).