"Tackling Ageism After COVID-19"
AGE internal workshop
24 November 2020
House keeping rules

#1 Make yourself comfortable
#2 Mute your mic when not speaking
#3 Mind the oops/ouch rule
#4 Give it a try!
Unmute and chat

Questions?
Objectives

#1 Learn about ageism before/during COVID-19

#2 Define how to respond to ageism as self-advocates

#3 Identify support needs and tools for members

Credit: Annie Spratt on Unsplash
Ageism as a system

- Ageism means treating people unfairly because of their age (HelpAge)
- Most widespread form of discrimination
- Socially accepted
Ageism – different levels and contexts

- INDIVIDUAL / INTERPERSONAL
- INSTITUTIONAL / CULTURAL

Credit: © WHO / Vânia de la Fuente-Núñez
Those with negative perceptions of old age have a decreased life expectancy of 7.5 years

- Affects memory, autonomy and self-esteem
- Decreases financial security
- Increased risk of elder abuse
- Drives human rights violations (ex. right to work)
- Less support for age-friendly policies/funding
- Society misses out on experience, knowledge and contributions of older persons → costs
COVID-19 presented as an old-people virus
All older people considered vulnerable
Age-specific measures in some countries
Absence of consultation of older people
Lack of support and material in long-term care
De-prioritisation and discrimination of older people for life-saving interventions
Older people should sacrifice for economy/other generations (ex. older people’s tax)
Ageism starts with stereotypes

Top 10 words in news articles that feature ageing and older people

Centre for Ageing Better
Stereotypes

- Stereotypes define what is expected (look, behaviour, preference, etc.).
- Stereotypes influence our cultural norms.
- Stereotypes define what is normal, what is acceptable.

It frames the way we think, feel, and act. Towards ourselves, and towards others.
We’re exposed early

Disney’s witch
We’re exposed throughout life
Questions

Do you have questions on these concepts?

Would you add something?
How ageism shapes the way we see ageing and older people?

Us vs. Them
Idealised ageing vs. Perceived reality
Individualism vs. Social justice
COMMUNICATIONS TRAPS AND THEIR UNINTENDED CONSEQUENCES

- Super "Senior"
- Zero sum game
- Sympathetic "Senior"
- Stories without solutions
- Ageism as a civil rights issue
- Demographic disaster

Credit: Changing The Narrative CO
Before COVID-19 vs
During COVID-19

Captain Tom Moore by Guinness World Records

Christalain nursing home in Brussels by Mauricio Lima
Are we (just) old?

Well, we're old.
We have to pack a lot of shit into a day.
I have good days and bad, but I get up every day knowing that I'm the same person I was 10, 20, 30 years ago,
and while my body can sometimes get tired or broken,
my spirit, my thoughts, and passions, remain strong and invincible.

Lesbians, esp. older lesbians, want connection in spaces that aren't a pub, aren't about dating: "We are passionate, political and radical. We want to stay that way"

#lgbticonferenceberlin2020

Credit: Age & Opportunity // Extract from the video “I am still me” (by AgeOn and the Institute on Ageing)

Print screen of Ailbhe Smyth from Twitter
Diversity
Intersectionality
Certainly there are very real differences between us of race, age, and sex. But it is not those differences between us that are separating us. It is rather our refusal to recognize those differences, and to examine the distortions which result from our misnaming them and their effects upon human behavior and expectation. (…)

My fullest concentration of energy is available to me only when I integrate all the parts of who I am…

Age, Race, Class and Sex: Women Redefining Difference
Audre Lorde, 1980
Age equality

Intergenerational solidarity
The “every generation for itself” mentality that has been perpetuated in recent months, seriously overlooks many of the similar struggles both young and old face in lockdown.

Ultimately, we all grow up, we all try to find a way into the labour market, we all carry the inequalities we faced in our lifetime with us into old age.

*Let’s stop playing the Covid-19 generation blame game*
European Youth Forum and AGE Platform Europe, 2020
• Ageing isn’t something that happens to us in the second half of our life: it’s a lifelong process.

• We age from the moment we are born. In this sense, ageing is another word for living; to be anti-age is to be anti-life.

(Anne Karpf, How to Age)
Questions

How do we respond to ageism?

At individual level e.g. “You’re too old for…”

At societal level e.g. “Let’s confine the elderly”
How do we respond to ageism?

Focus on behavioural change rather than raising awareness

Equality education in schools, in families, etc. For ex. See representation of older age in children’s books to address attitudes towards older age

Influence how society sees older people:
Role of media/marketing?
Lifecycle approach
Disability/vulnerability doesn’t only come with older age

Show contributions of older people (work, silver economy...)

Ageing = Living
If we don’t age, we’re dead

Intersectionality to show complexity of living and ageing

Communication/contacts between generations, make visible older people’s talents

Individual level: stay in contact with other generations (volunteering, etc.), active engagement in community/society
Ultimate objective?

At societal level, equality and social justice

At community level, interdependence and mutual support

At individual level, autonomy and freedom

Would you change something?
What’s the path?
HOW DO WE GO FROM INDIVIDUAL EFFORTS TO MOVEMENT BUILDING?

#EndingAgeismTogether

Credit: Changing The Narrative CO
Questions

Do you mobilise against ageism with your organisation?

How do you/would you do it?

What is the role of AGE?
Acting together

Options available...

- **Events** for the release of WHO Report on Ageism
- **#AgeingEqual** platform for older people’s voices?
- **Trainings** to/by AGE members (train the trainers)?
- **Toolkits** to run local conversations about ageism?
- **Guides** for a communication free from stereotypes?

Other ideas? Other needs?
Take-Away

What are you taking home?

Did the workshop meet your expectations?

What should be our next step?
Want to know more about us?

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