**What is Ageism**

- *Ageism is a negative stereotype or myth about growing old expressed in our language and our behavior.*

- *Ageism is an assumption that chronological age is the only thing that defines who we are.*

- *Ageism is discrimination and prejudice on the basis of age in the workplace and our society in general.*

- *Ageism is the practice of treating older people as helpless, unproductive and powerless.*

**Recognize Ageism**

**In the media:**
- Overrepresentation of older adults in commercials for products such as laxatives, antacids, and denture adhesive
- Emphasis on youth and physical beauty to sell products
- Lack of representation of older adults in commercials for clothing, cars, dining and entertainment

**In our communication with older adults:**
- Talking in simple sentences
- Talking in “baby talk”
- Talking slowly to all older persons
- Speaking loudly to all older persons

**In our language:**
- Using words such as “geezer”, “elderly”
- Using phrases such as “over the hill”, “those elderly…”, “old as dirt”

**In our beliefs:**
- Older adults are “stuck in their ways” and will not change
- Older adults do not want to learn new things
- Older adults do not have fun
- Equating aging with being unhealthy and dying and equating youth with health and beauty
- The assumption that someone with a physical impairment also has a mental impairment.

**Fight Ageism**

- Educate yourself and others about the aging process.
- Get the facts on aging to combat stereotypes and myths about aging.
- Teach children the concept of the life cycle with positive images of old age.
- Accept aging as a natural part of life.
  “Do not resent growing old. Many are denied the privilege.” - Unknown
- Challenge yourself to recognize ageism in the things you say and do, then change your language and your actions.
- Take notice of the advertisements you see and question why older adults are not represented.
- Recognize ageist jokes and avoid using them.
  “Be kind, for everyone you meet is fighting a hard battle.” - Plato
How Do You Want To Be Treated?

Provided by the Senior-Friendly Action Team

The Nash County Aging Department provides sensitivity training for businesses, organizations, schools, government offices, and any other entity wishing to become more informed on this topic.

Contact 459-1691 for more information on sensitivity training.

“Change has to come from within.”
-Yvonne C. Moore

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