



**Forum on Rural
Population Health**

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ohsu.edu/orhforum



SHARED OUTLOOK ON AGING

Building Age-Positive Organizations & Communities

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Communities + Generations + Innovations

TODAY'S AGENDA

Permanent demographic shift—as many people 65+ as under 18

Age bias—we all have it

Visualizing an age-positive community

Call to action





AGING IS LIVING





WHEN YOU THINK OF AN
“OLDER PERSON,” WHAT COMES
TO MIND?



HOW DO YOU IMAGINE
YOURSELF AT 80?



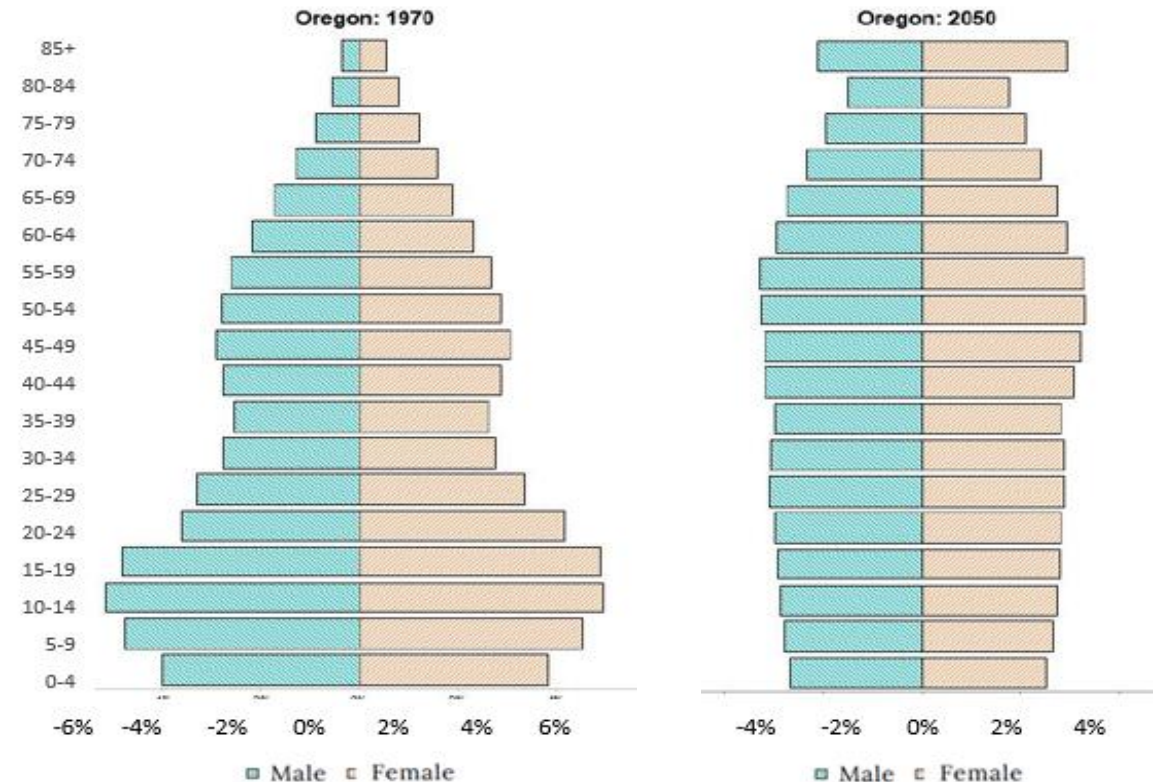
PERMANENT DEMOGRAPHIC CHANGE

Overall Population Growth

Oregon's population grew by 40% between 1993 and 2023, compared with 30% for the U.S.

Negative Net Migration

In 2021, Oregon's population decreased for the first time in nearly 40 years because more people left the state than moved in.



AGEISM IS ALL AROUND US

WHAT IS IT?

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

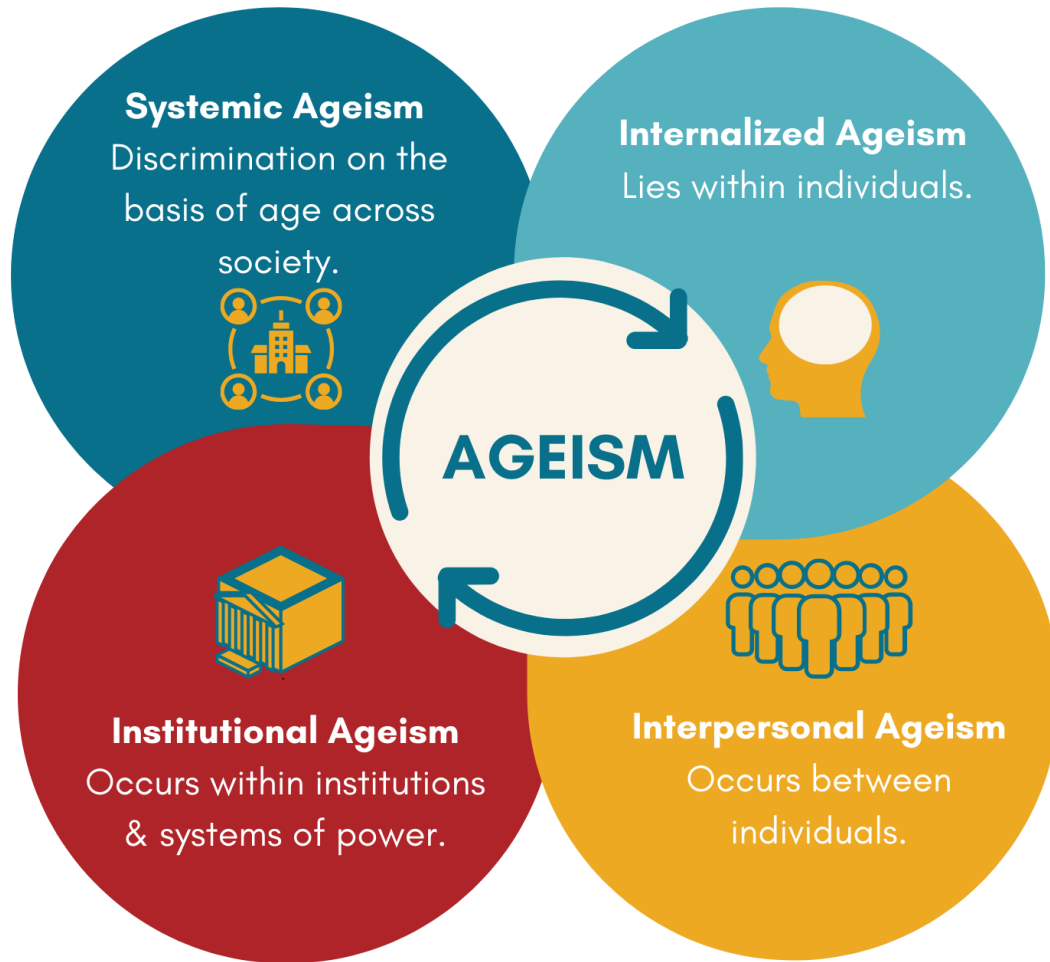
Ageism is the most widespread and socially accepted prejudice today.

- World Health Organization

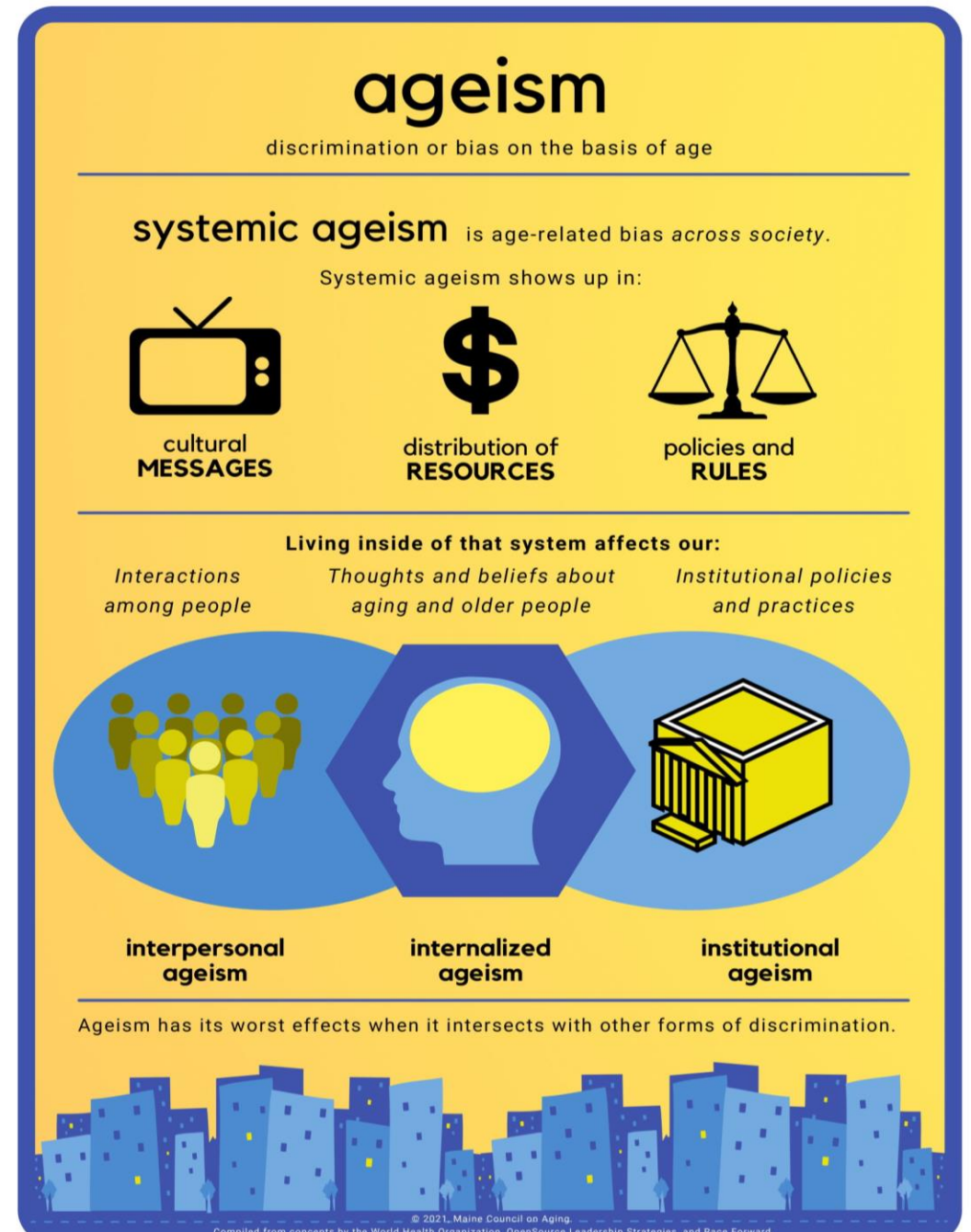
Ageism is a human rights violation and the only discrimination that *everyone* experiences.



INVISIBLE & EMBEDDED



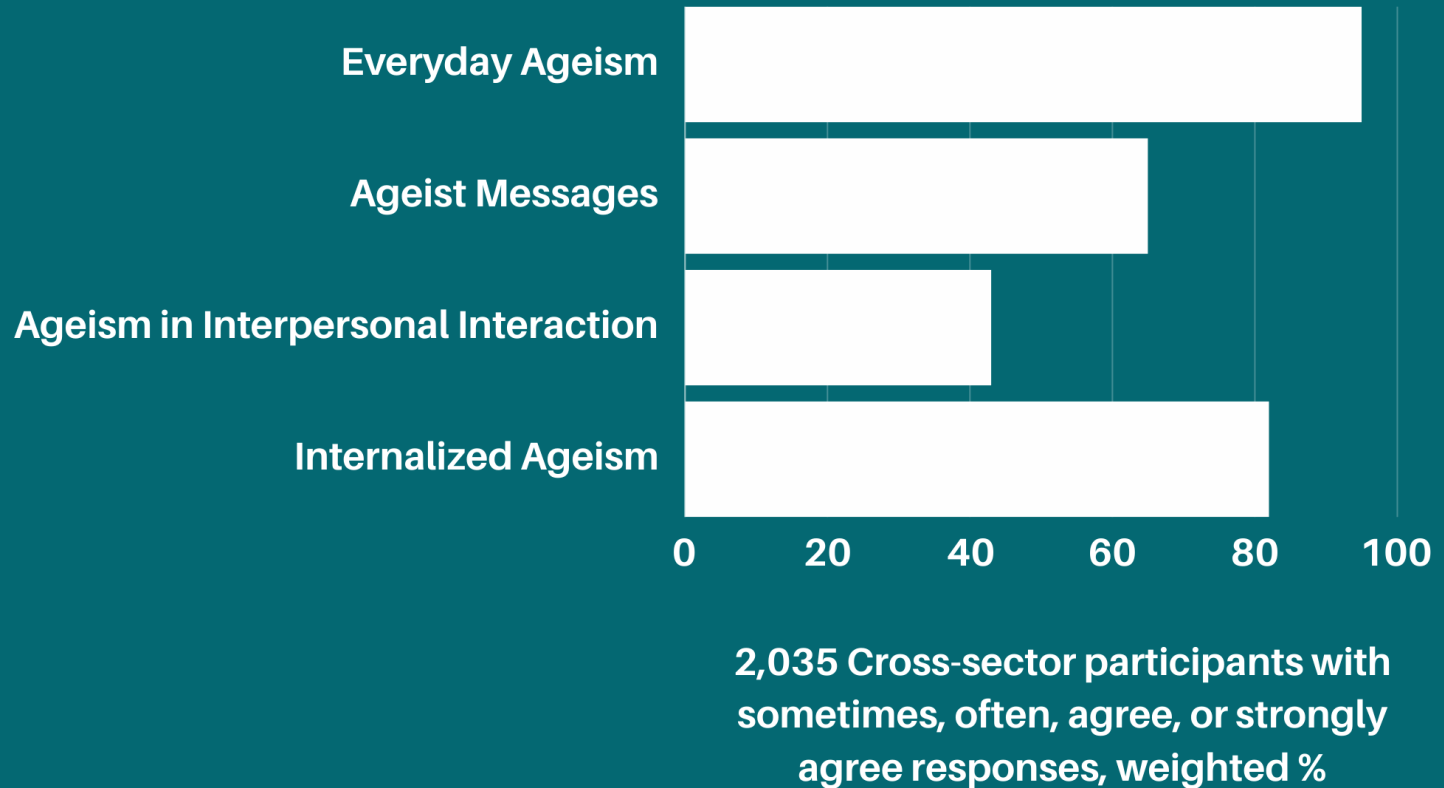
Source: Maine Council on Aging



WHY THIS MATTERS

- We're living longer, but our views on aging, communities, and support systems haven't caught up to our *new* old age.
- This mindset holds us back from embracing aging as a ***lifetime journey of learning, growth, and health***. A shift in perspective can transform our workplaces, communities, economy, and our own sense of self as we age.
- Embracing a new map of life will allow us to integrate flexibility into how we learn, work and live across our lifespans.

Prevalence of Any Experiences of Everyday Ageism



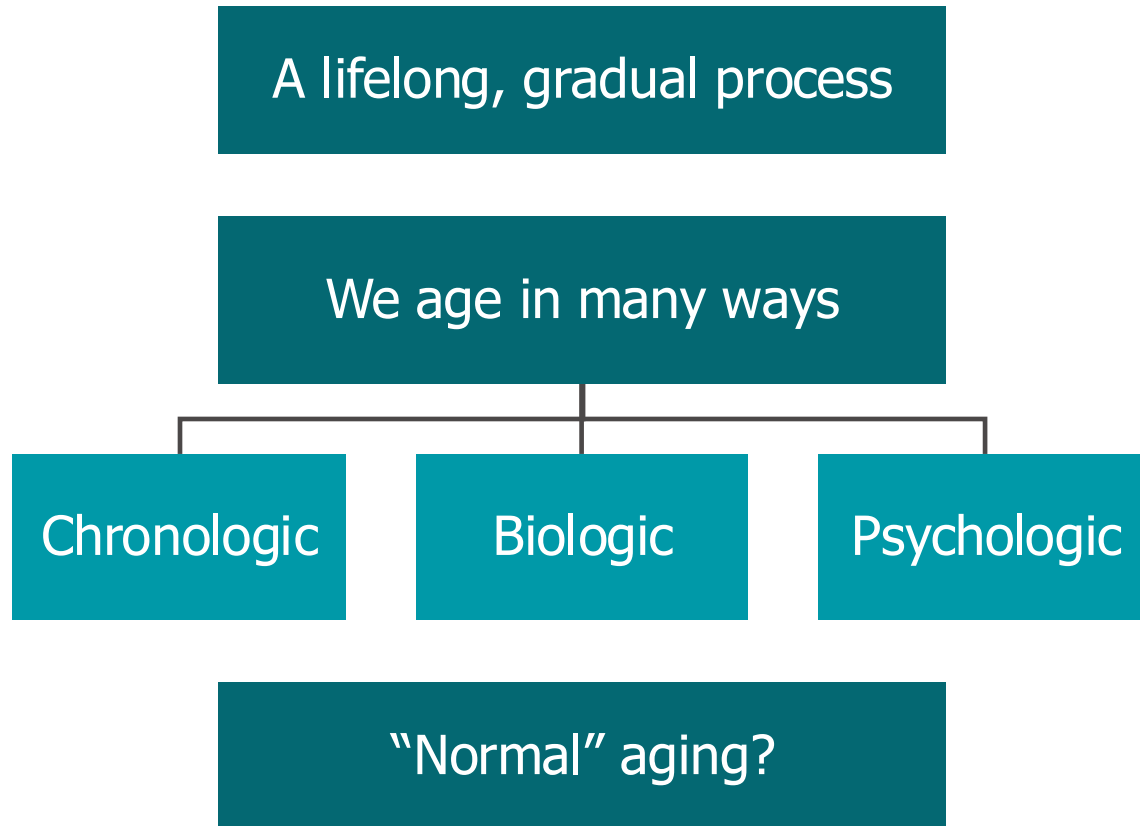
How Do We See Ourselves?

- What is my identity? (ex. white, middle-aged woman in good shape who's a little weird 😊)
- What is my age bias?
- How do my thoughts around age affect my work?
- What other thoughts are coming up for you?



We have **all** internalized this bias.

WHAT WE MEAN WHEN WE TALK ABOUT AGING



MYTH BUSTING

TRUE OR FALSE?

- You can't teach an old dog new tricks.
- The term "ageism" is a relatively recent term having been coined 20 years ago.
- Ageist attitudes are typically developed in the young adult years as we have increased exposure to older workers in the workplace.
- The majority of people age 65+ have Alzheimer's disease.

FALSE

FALSE

FALSE

FALSE

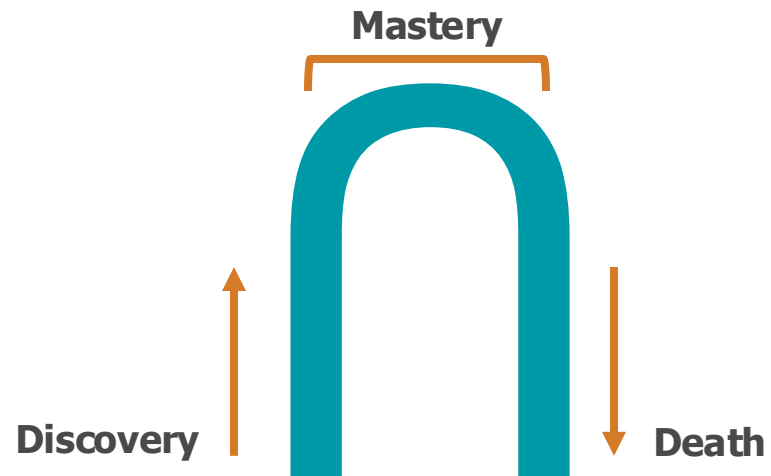
MYTH BUSTING

TRUE OR FALSE?

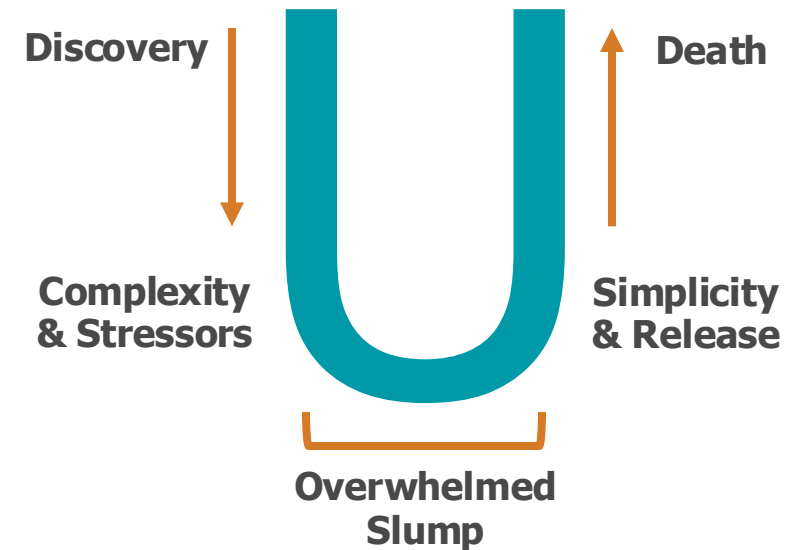
- Older adults are frequently excluded from clinical trials. **TRUE**
- Single adults over 50 make up half of the houseless population. **TRUE**
- All medical schools require students to complete a rotation in geriatrics. **FALSE**
- People with positive age beliefs generally live longer. **TRUE**

HOW WE FRAME AGING

The Current Narrative

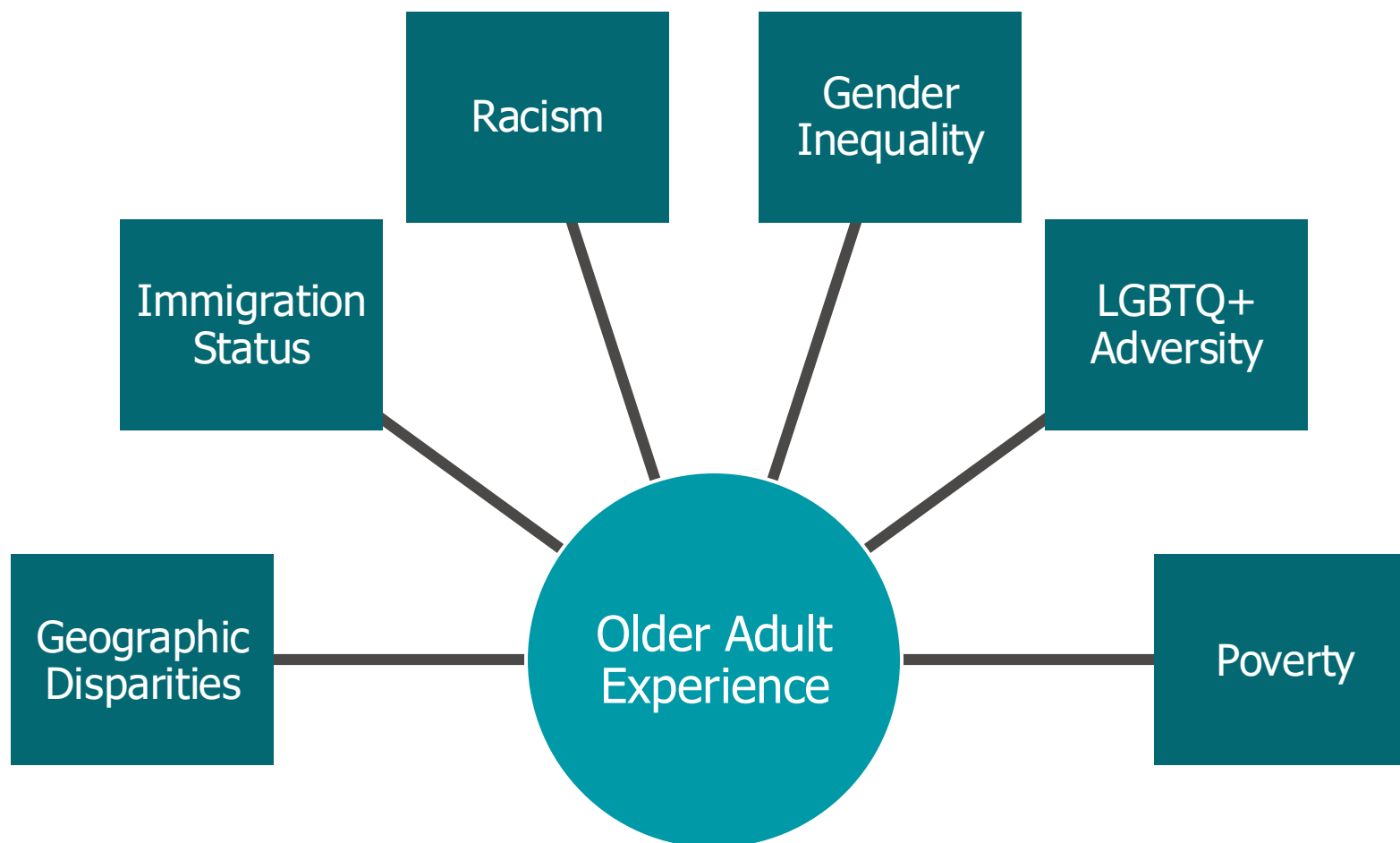


The Happiness Curve



INTERSECTIONALITY OF AGEISM AND OTHER INEQUITIES

Most at risk for ***not*** experiencing the happiness curve are those experiencing multiple inequities.



AGE IS CHANGE

WE DO THINGS DIFFERENTLY

- A slow and steady process that leads us to becoming our unique, individual selves.
- We become more complex, not simpler.
- “Wear and tear” take a toll on the body, but we learn to adapt. Healthy aging coexists with chronic illness.
- Positive age beliefs -> exercise, social, intellectual/creative engagement -> positive age beliefs
- We have a life story to share.



AGING IS GROWTH!

STILL EVOLVING AND MATURING BRAINS

- Our brains make new cells and connections until the day we die. It is not all loss and deterioration.
- We gain new coping mechanisms like increased acceptance, humility, and gratitude.
- We become more confident, less fearful of being judged.
- We focus on what really matters.



INTERNALIZED & INTERPERSONAL AGEISM

THE WORDS WE USE MATTER

Self-Sabotage



Negative thoughts about our own aging process



Falsely attributing perceived faults to age

Elder Speak



Talking to older adults in high, cutesy voices or very loud voices



Use infantilizing references such as "daycare" and "diapers," or call an older adult "sweetie" or "cute" without their permission

Invisibility



Talking about an older person in their presence rather than addressing them directly



Speaking for them as if they can't answer



Doing for them as if they cannot do for themselves

Can you relate?



How can we promote and support healthy aging
in our communities?



AGE+ is Your Partner

Leadership Exchange on Ageism

Designed for executive business, organization, policy, and community leaders, LEA is an intensive, participatory, peer-learning leadership development experience. [Scholarships](#) are available.

AGE+ Consulting

As experts in aging, we help agencies and organizations working with older adults, their families, and communities in areas such as planning, marketing, and program implementation.

Take Action!

- Sign up for the [Oregon Healthy Aging Listserv](#)
- Learn more about ageism and explore resources and tools from [Old School.](#)
- Read the [Communication Best Practices](#) guide from the Reframing Aging Initiative
- Use the World Health Organization [Quick Guide](#) to Avoid Ageism in Communication
- Stay involved and up-to-date with [AGE+!](#)

Thank
You!

JOIN THE MOVEMENT



Communities + Generations + Innovations

Championing a new vision for healthy and equitable aging for all Oregonians by empowering communities, linking generations and stimulating innovation to make longer life an opportunity, not a burden.

www.ageplus.org

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Please Take a Quick Survey!

Your feedback and experiences are invaluable in highlighting the impact of this presentation. Please take a moment to fill out this form to share your insights. Your responses will help us further the conversation around ageism and drive meaningful change on behalf of all generations in Oregon.





Thank you to the 2025 Forum partners!

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Population Health

