



Dear supporter,

Thank you for hosting a Games Event on Ageism Awareness Day. You are taking an important step in ending ageism in Australia and we are deeply appreciative of your support.

This year we've created The EveryAGE Counts Snakes & Ladders of Ageism board game. We've designed this game as a playful way to highlight the pitfalls of ageism (snakes) and the things we can do to end ageism (ladders). We hope that by playing this game, it'll initiate conversations about the most common ageist serpents and draw attention to the ladders that can help give us a boost back up.

We have included some information on ageism below to provide some background for you and your guests.

If you'd like to let us know what you discussed, the stories you shared and the ideas you came up with to end ageism we'd love to hear them at info@everyagecounts.org.au

Your involvement in this day helps shine a light on ageism and its impacts, and with your help we hope to build an Australia without ageism. Thank you again for your participation in Ageism Awareness Day. Your support is truly valued.

Kindest regards,

Marlene, Sue, Joel and Marybeth - The EveryAGE Counts team

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What is Ageism?

- Years of research and experience have shown us that the term ‘ageism’ is not as well known or understood as other forms of prejudice and discrimination. Sometimes that means that when we observe or experience ageism we are not sure what we are seeing or what to do about it.
- Ageism against older people is stereotyping, discrimination and mistreatment based solely upon age.
- Ageism has been referred to as the most highly tolerated form of prejudice and discrimination.
- Ageism can be experienced across the life course, but EveryAGE Counts’ particular focus is on older people. Having said that, we know from research that intergenerational connection reduces the extent to which people hold ageist views so strengthening intergenerational solidarity is important.
- Ageism is all around us. It is:
 - In our everyday lives – being ignored or invisible, being left out, or treated as irrelevant, being seen as incompetent or incapable, losing agency and autonomy in making one’s own decisions;
 - In our institutions (like health care, age care, employment) – being overlooked, trivialised or, at worst, being abused or neglected;
 - In industries or workplaces where, at some point, we are considered ‘too old’ or ‘past our use-by date’, or we are judged as no longer competent or competitive;
 - In our media portrayals of older people - as foolish, frail or forgetful;
 - In our language and humour - just think about all those ageist birthday cards you have ever received or given!;
 - In beauty products and the anti-ageing industry – where being old is being ‘ugly’;
 - When we are treated as being all the same – as one homogenous clump of older people – but being 60 is no more like being 90 than 10 is like 40.
- Ageism has 3 dimensions - how we think (stereotypes, attitudes, assumptions), act (discrimination, exclusion) and feel (prejudices, biases) about getting older and old people (which is all of us – if not now, in the future... if we’re lucky)

We find it useful to think about two types of ageism:

- **Malevolent/hostile ageism** is about abuse, neglect, cruelty, exploitation.
- **Benevolent ageism** is about infantilising older people, taking someone's autonomy and decision making away, being patronizing or offering unwanted help or pity. This is about seeing older people as friendly but basically incompetent, easily duped, needing protection, or essentially irrelevant. Research tells us that benevolent ageism is the most entrenched because we tend to think of older people as frail, sick, dependent.

What are the impacts of ageism?

- Ageism is not benign or harmless. It has devastating impacts. It can distort our attitudes to older people and ageing and have profound negative impacts on our personal experience of growing older.
- Ageism is pervasive but often hidden. Ageism is highly tolerated, but it shouldn't be.
- Ageism shortens lives (by up to 7.5 years!); leads to poorer physical health and mental health; impedes recovery; leads to greater financial insecurity, exacerbates social isolation and loneliness; and reduces quality of life. Ageism also impacts our confidence, job prospects and control over life decisions.
- Ageism affects how we feel about ourselves as we get older. Many of us have internalised negative attitudes and fears about getting older and this time of life. Many of us have also internalised the rhetoric of older people being a burden on society, rather than focussing on the many benefits that flow from living and working longer.

How do we end ageism?

- Ageism Awareness Day is an opportunity to draw attention to ageism and its impacts and to build momentum for the social movement to end it.
- We are all getting older. This is about all of us. Those of us in later life now, and those of us who will be in later life the future.
- Research shows that it is up to each of us, in our own communities, to take the first steps towards ending ageism. By knowing what ageism is, and naming it when we see it, we are taking an important step towards building an Australia without ageism.

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- Get involved and join EveryAGE Counts, Australia's a national coalition and grassroots movement to end ageism.
- Register your interest in joining an upcoming session of the EveryAGE Counts Advocates training. This training gives you the skills and knowledge to change ageist attitudes in your own community. Find out more here: https://www.everyagecounts.org.au/advocates_training
- For more ideas about what you can do to end ageism go to: www.everyagecounts.org.au

Suggested conversation starters

- Have you experienced ageism? What form did it take? In what setting?
- Have you witnessed ageism? What form did it take? In what setting?
- What impact did it have on you? How did you feel?
- Did you or anyone else do anything about it? What did you/another person do? Did it work?
- What would an Australia without ageism look like? What would be different?
- What can we do to end ageism? How do we influence the people around us and the settings in which we live and work?

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