



Blog

Five Reasons to Fight Ageism in 2019

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Have you made your New Year's resolutions yet? Maybe you've vowed to lose weight, save money, read more books or clean the garage? We'd like to benefit you, your older loved ones, and even the young folks in the family: fighting ageism.

Today, there is an increased emphasis on reducing prejudice and examining our own biases based on race, religion, gender, sexual orientation and discussions of bigotry, younger people and even seniors themselves often make snide remarks about "old people" who don't share their attitudes c into one bucket. Said Alana Officer of the World Health Organization, "Ageism can take many forms. These include depicting older people as frail, d through discriminatory practices such as health-care rationing by age, or institutional policies such as mandatory retirement at a certain age."

If fighting ageism because it's the right thing to do isn't motivation enough, here are five more reasons to avoid age-related stereotypes:

Ageism harms the overall health of older adults. Experiencing discrimination on a regular basis is a real blow to our self-esteem. And that raises th body, putting seniors at higher risk of heart disease, respiratory problems, depression and disability from numerous causes. Recent studies even sl to a decade!

Ageism raises the risk of dementia. Prof. Becca Levy of the Yale School of Public Health (YSPH) has done much pioneering work on the effects of ag the stress generated by the negative beliefs about aging that individuals sometimes internalize from society can result in pathological brain change genetic risk of Alzheimer's disease are 44 percent less likely to develop dementia if they have positive beliefs about aging!

Ageism can lead to a cycle of decline. Studies show that seniors who internalize the negative messages of ageism are less likely to make healthy lifi and socially connected. This increases their risk of disability, making them feel all the worse. If they assume that older adults are weak and depend

Ageism can harm the future health of people who are young today. Are young people immune to the damaging effects of ageism? Far from it! Prof data on a large group of people, and found that those who held negative stereotypes about older adults were less likely to be healthy in their own I have been unkindly caricaturing."

Ageism is very expensive. In November 2018, Levy's latest study examined the health costs associated with age-related negative stereotypes. Her t for health conditions that are directly affected by ageism. Levy says, "Our findings make a strong case for efforts aimed at reducing the epidemic of for society, but also a human cost for the well-being of older persons."

So in 2019, let's raise awareness of ageism, and take steps to fight it. We can ...

Check our own attitude about aging. How do we talk about seniors? About our own aging? Do we make negative jokes about older adults that rein and "old coot"? Do we devalue people who are living with age-related physical and cognitive challenges? Even when you're purchasing a birthday ca

Seek out positive images about aging. A 2018 study found that images of aging in top-grossing movies are largely negative. "Seniors are rarely seer ridiculed," said Dr. Stacy Smith of the University of Southern California. "When did we become a society that is comfortable with subtle and stigmati served as the pillars and stalwarts of our communities?" Instead, look for books and movies that portray the joys and benefits of being older.

Don't be afraid to "call out" ageism. Today more people are challenging each other to consider their biases. If you hear someone making an ageist remark. Chances are the person has never really examined their own prejudices. We can help younger people—and ourselves, if we are older—rea gratefully accepted and treasured with good care.

Source: *IlluminAge AgeWise*

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