Older Workers: Exploring and Addressing the Stereotypes

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2. Executive Summary

Background

Canada has more and more older workers in its labour force in recent years. All levels of government encourage the engagement of older workers who offer value to our economy and the broader society. Yet negative beliefs and attitudes about older workers, in the form of stereotypes, persist and may impact their labour force participation. Negative stereotypes can lead to discriminatory practice from hiring through to workforce exit and can contribute to older workers' lower feelings of self-worth.

In 2019, the Forum of Federal, Provincial and Territorial (FPT) Ministers Responsible for Seniors commissioned a review of the literature to examine current knowledge on attitudes and beliefs about older workers and to uncover initiatives to address stereotypes. Close to 60 English- and French-language articles from academic and grey literature published between 2009 and 2019 were reviewed. The research reveals there are varying definitions of older workers, and also indicates a range of approaches for measuring the concepts contributing to stereotypes. Studies are international in scope and include a mix of industries and occupation groups.

The evidence compiled provides insight into common stereotypes about older workers, stereotype holders, and factors that perpetuate the stereotypes. The work builds upon, and complements, the Forum's initiatives on the labour force participation of older workers and ageism[1],[2], and will help to inform policy discussions and program development. It should be noted that the information compiled for this report was obtained prior to COVID-19 pandemic in Canada. The potential impact of negative stereotypes on the labour force participation of older workers during this time has not been considered.

Exploring the Stereotypes

Age-based stereotyping in the workplace is complex. A framework helps to visualize and understand stereotypes at three different levels: individual, organizational and societal. Individual level stereotypes about older workers' competence, adaptability (most often associated with technology and learning) and warmth (meaning sincere, kind, or trustworthy) are most common. Competence describes a variety of traits, including being capable, skillful and intelligent. The variety of definitions (including what

[1] The social and economic impacts of ageism, including impacts related to employment and workforce, were examined in the report *An Examination of the Social and Economic Impacts of Ageism* (2020).
[2] Ageism is the stereotyping, prejudice and discrimination against people on the basis of their age (WHO, 2018).

is meant by 'competence'), lack of definition, and overlap with other traits makes these stereotypes a challenge to disentangle.

Often, the image of an older worker combines both positive and negative stereotypes. For example, older workers have been described both as "warm" but resistant to change or lacking adaptability. Individual level stereotypes also include assumptions about older workers' health and work-life balance. Perceptions at the organization level suggest that older workers are costly to employ and train, and are unfit for promotion. In society, broad assumptions exist that more older workers and delayed retirement will mean fewer opportunities for younger workers to enter the workforce. Retirement age norms may also contribute to perceptions that adults should exit the labour force at a certain age.

Most commonly examined in research on stereotyping are employers'/managers' and workers' (not always older) perspectives. Managers across sectors and industries hold stereotypes about older workers that may contribute to discrimination; however, managers' own ages may have a mediating effect. Given the array of generations participating in work, these dynamics are meaningful. For older workers, experiencing and/or perceiving stereotyping puts them at risk of internalizing these beliefs and holding negative attitudes towards work, with potentially negative consequences for their labour force participation and mental health. There is limited evidence exploring older worker stereotypes and gender. However, *perception* of being stereotyped differs between men and women, with women perceiving that they are being stereotyped more often than men. Evidence shows that certain industries, notably finance, insurance, retail and information technology, may hold more negative age-based stereotypes..

Most research on stereotypes is undertaken to determine whether or not older worker stereotypes are held. Much less attention is given to whether these stereotypes are rooted in fact. However, most negative stereotypes appear to attribute characteristics of the minority of older persons who have health and cognitive challenges to all older workers, and to ageist views in general. These do not reflect actual older Canadians in today's labour force.

Addressing the Stereotypes

There are initiatives aimed at increasing older adults' labour force participation, but few if any focus specifically on addressing stereotypes about older workers. Existing research recommends highlighting positive characteristics of older adults, addressing discrimination in the workplace through targeting practices from hiring through to exit, and using awareness-raising initiatives to discredit stereotypes.

Resources such as tool kits and guides for employers are emerging that foster age-friendly workplaces and recruiting/retaining older workers. Efforts by employers should

include creating positive intergenerational contact and a culture of inclusion. Awareness initiatives are needed that target older adults, employers and employees, and the general public. Key messages to include are: challenging notions of retirement age norms, recognizing the value and contribution of older adults to the economy and society, examining negative stereotype implications for health, and recognizing the diversity and experiences of older age cohorts today may be different than previous cohorts.

Final Thoughts

Age-based stereotyping in the workplace is complex; positive stereotypes exist alongside negative ones. While some research points to factors like age, job status, and societal norms as contributing to stereotypes, there is a lack of empirical evidence from Canada to corroborate these claims.

The data on stereotyping are largely based on studies 10-20 years old, so caution should be exercised in relying on these sources, particularly with regard to stereotypes and evidence about older workers and technology. The perspectives of employers/managers and older workers are most commonly reported and there is some evidence to suggest that holding negative age-based stereotypes lessens as one becomes older.

The intersection of age-based stereotypes with other stereotypes, such as those found in race and gender, need more investigation. Information on how identity (including gender), diversity, and living environment mediate negative perceptions of older adults would assist initiatives targeting ageism. The changing labour market and what it may mean for understanding older worker stereotypes is also worthy of consideration.

3. Why It's Important to Address Stereotypes about Older Workers

3.1 Introduction

During the last two decades Canada has seen greater numbers of older workers in its labour force. All levels of government encourage this cohort's inclusion and recognize its important economic and social contributions. Yet widespread ageist views may be responsible for persistent negative beliefs and attitudes about older workers and their role in the workforce. The Federal, Provincial and Territorial Seniors Forum has identified ageism as a barrier to older workers' labour force participation (FPT Ministers Responsible for Seniors, 2018). Internationally, it has been recognized that ageist attitudes and behaviours stand in the way of older adults working longer (OECD, 2019). One way that ageism may be expressed is through stereotypes, which can result in discrimination against older workers. Examining the attitudes and stereotypes of older workers is a priority of the Forum.

Research published in the last decade examines beliefs, myths, norms, attitudes, and assumptions that can lead to stereotypical views about older workers and their personality traits, preferences, and abilities, or about how older workers' workforce participation is affected by age-related challenges (such as health issues). Some assume that older workers cost more to employ, or that their employment reduces the number of jobs available to younger workers.

This section of the report, Section 3, looks at ageism and the labour force to examine older worker stereotypes held by employers, older workers/older adults and the general public. Section 4 summarizes the literature search strategy and analyzes relevant research on older worker stereotypes (see Appendix A for search description and parameters). Section 5 uses language and definitions from the research to identify, understand and interpret common stereotypes (see Appendix B for a selection of stereotypes, available evidence and potential actions), as well as insights and knowledge gaps. Section 6 considers how to address stereotypes through potential responses, strategies and initiatives targeted at specific public and private audiences (e.g., older workers, organizations and employers, and the general public). Despite general awareness-raising activities, there appears to be few concrete actions that address ageist stereotypes. Examples and links to promising initiatives are included in Appendix C.

It should be noted that the information compiled for this report was obtained prior to the COVID-19 pandemic in Canada. This work does not consider the influence of negative stereotypes on the labour force participation of older workers during this time.

3.2 Society and the Labour Force

Ageism is the stereotyping, prejudice and discrimination against people on the basis of their age (WHO, 2018). Although all age groups may face negative age-based perceptions, ageism towards older adults has been described as "most tolerated form of social prejudice" (Revera Inc. & IFA, 2012, p. 2). Ageism is rooted in how we perceive age and aging. Evidence suggests that across cultures and continents, young adults (those most often identified as having ageist attitudes) hold remarkably similar perceptions of aging; that is, there is an increase in wisdom but a decline in "the ability to perform everyday tasks" (Löckenhoff et al., 2009, p. 12).. Research on labour force ageism is growing as developed countries' workforces age (Nelson, 2016). Ageism has been identified as one of five challenges[3] facing older Canadians in the labour force (FPT Ministers Responsible for Seniors, 2018).

Ageism may occur as an age-based stereotype: "a simplified, undifferentiated portrayal of an age group that is often erroneous, unrepresentative of reality, and resistant to modification" (Dordoni & Argentero, 2015 citing Schulz et al., 2006, p.43). Used as a mechanism to judge others quickly (Ng & Feldman, 2012), stereotypes arise from "societal culture" and our experiences with "members of stereotyped groups" (Marcus et al., 2016, p. 990). Entrenched stereotypes about older workers (van Dalen et al., 2010) are possibly due to "implicit attitudes…assumed to have developed over an individual's lifetime" (Malinen & Johnston, 2013, p. 459). Paternalistic attitudes are often reflected in stereotypes about older adults being "warm, good-natured, sincere and happy", but barely competent (Marcus & Fritzsche, 2016, p. 222). Since society holds negative perceptions of age and aging (Revera Inc. & IFA, 2012), negative attitudes towards older workers may be rooted in a broader context associating age with decline.

Older worker stereotypes may contribute to age discrimination at all employment stages, from recruitment to workforce exit (Solem, 2016). Age-related stereotypes may impact older workers when they attempt to (re)engage in the labour force (Gahan et al., 2017; Nova Scotia Centre on Aging, 2018). Discrimination can manifest in older workers being not considered for hiring, training or promotions or encouraged towards early retirement. Evidence shows that older workers who

Stereotypes rely on sweeping generalizations that ignore the diversity of both today's labour force and today's growing older population.

[3] The other challenges are: "lack of education and access to training; difficulty in finding and applying for jobs; health issues, work-life balance issues and lack of workplace accommodations; and disincentives or lack of incentives to work in the retirement income system" (FPT Ministers Responsible for Seniors, 2018, p. 1).

perceive and/or experience age-based discrimination or negative stereotyping may show less commitment in the workplace (James et al., 2013) and believe less in their own leadership potential (Tresh et al., 2019). These negative perceptions affect whether or not older workers remain in their jobs (von Hippel et al., 2013).

Of course, negative stereotypes about older workers are not necessarily true. Assumptions about older workers' cognitive decline, for example, may be rooted in studies involving participants who do not reflect the older working population (Ng & Feldman, 2012). Similarly, stereotypes about older workers' struggles to adapt to technology may not represent those aged 50-65, who are generally familiar with workplace technology (Poulston & Jenkins, 2013) after years working with and adapting to new technologies. Stereotypes rely on sweeping generalizations that ignore the diversity of the current labour force and the older population.

It should be noted that younger workers may also face negative age stereotypes. Many studies examined for this report compare younger and older workers' characteristics or stereotypes. Interestingly, a large German study suggests that younger workers are actually more resistant to change (Kunze et al., 2013), despite this stereotype being associated with older workers.

4. What was Done to Explore Stereotypes about Older Workers

4.1 Approach

Literature published in English and French between January 2009 and October 2019 was identified through database searches (e.g., Academic Search Premier, Business Source Premier), targeted web searches (e.g., Google Scholar, government, organizations), reference list reviews and other sources. Searches yielded over 120 relevant publications. Additional searching was carried out to enhance stereotype context and conceptualization, and to identify initiatives. The primary body of literature consists of articles determined by their abstracts to focus most closely on stereotypes attitudes/perceptions and/or negative images of older workers; these were reviewed in full and annotated (n= 57).

The sample of 57 articles is international in scope and contains primarily empirical research studies published in peer-reviewed journals. Studies from Europe are most common, and while there are some North American studies, Canadian evidence is limited. The studies included reflect a variety of cultural backgrounds which may potentially influence their findings regarding attitudes towards aging. Employer and employee perspectives are most common. Studies draw from workers and employers in various industries, occasionally occupation groups (e.g., taxi drivers) or traditional

"collars" (e.g., blue collar, white collar), or levels of authority (e.g., persons with hiring/decision making authority). Several studies describe their samples as a mixture of industries/sectors, or do not include this information. Studies on recently retired older workers are nearly absent in the sample. Sample sizes of the studies range from close to 100 to over 1,000 participants.

A full description of the methodology is presented in Appendix A.

4.2 Who is an Older Worker?

This research explores stereotypes about older workers. Drawing upon the existing body of research, an older worker is understood as someone who wants to remain engaged in the labour force, wants to join/rejoin the workforce, may have recently left the labour force (due to early retirement, restructuring, inability to find work, etc.) and is described in the literature as "older."

The age of workers identified as older varies internationally. In Canada, an older worker is frequently defined as 55 years of age or more (FPT Ministers Responsible for Seniors, 2019). However, the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) defines an older worker as aged 50 and older (OECD, 2006), which is the common international literature definition.

Research shows older workers as being 40 or older, while other research indicates older workers as 50 or older. Definitions can be influenced by different factors, such as a national mandatory retirement age and anti-age discrimination legislation (Dordoni & Argentero, 2015). Other definitions consider the active workforce's age range (16–65 years old, according to the International Labour Organization, 2005) to designate age 40 as the distinction point between younger and older workers, noting that this age traditionally marks a transition in working life (Ng & Feldman, 2008). As well, different academic disciplines have different conceptions of age (Ilmarinen, 2001; Ng & Feldman, 2008). For these reasons, identifying older workers by age risks excluding relevant findings from studies using a younger definition (or no definition) of an older worker.

In addition to differences in definitions, labelling older workers by chronological age can perpetuate organizational ageist attitudes and age discrimination (Sterns & Miklos, 1995). Age definitions may need to be rethought as more older workers are employed beyond traditional retirement ages, and as younger adults extend their studies and potentially delay career trajectories. Other researchers suggest that organizations need to move away from singling out older workers and adopt workplace practices that are more inclusive of all ages (Desmette & Gaillard, 2008; Fiore et al., 2012).

5. Stereotypes about Older Workers

5.1 Overview

Age-based stereotyping in the workplace is complex. It is frequently multi-dimensional–positive stereotypes exist alongside negative ones (Bal et al., 2011)–and contrasts views about younger workers and older workers. For example, older workers are often seen as warmer (meaning sincere, kind and trustworthy) but less competent (meaning capable, skillful and intelligent) (Krings et al., 2011). However, researchers do not use definitions and measurement instruments that align with labour market research, hampering interpretation and comparability of available findings.

Age-based stereotyping in the workplace is complex; positive stereotypes exist alongside negative ones.

Some authors acknowledge and explore positive images of older workers. In a scoping review of 43 research articles on ageism published between 2006 and 2015, Harris and colleagues (2017) note that reliability and commitment/loyalty are the most common positive stereotypes of older workers. The authors also found that older workers are seen as warm, experienced and knowledgeable, with a strong work ethic, and more skilled socially and interpersonally compared to younger workers, according to employees of all ages, managers and human resource personnel.

Older managers tend to hold positive perceptions about older workers.

Positive images of older workers are more prevalent amongst managers who are themselves older (van Dalen & Henkens, 2017). A 2017 study of 905 managers found an association between managers' own desires to continue working past age 66 and their perceptions of older workers (Nilsson, 2018). Those not planning to retire were more committed to retaining older workers and held positive attitudes about older workers' carefulness and valuable skills and experience in the workplace, particularly through mentorship. Managers who intended to retire at age 66 held more negative stereotypical views about older workers. In comparing older and younger workers, older European managers tended to rate older workers more highly than younger workers (van Dalen et al., 2009).

Discrimination against older workers exists in multiple countries (James et al., 2013; O'Loughlin et al., 2017). In Canada, survey respondents identified employers as a source of age discrimination (Revera Inc. & IFA, 2012) throughout selection, hiring, employment, or exit stages. Unfortunately, the reasons for this discrimination are not

always examined. Focus groups with older workers in Nova Scotia found that job-seeking older adults perceive discriminatory practices during candidate selection, and in some cases, experience discriminatory behavior (such as being asked to state their age during an interview) (Nova Scotia Centre on Aging, 2018).

At least two empirical studies using hypothetical job candidates (Abrams et al., 2016; Krings et al., 2011) support the claim that job-seeking older adults are more negatively perceived than younger candidates. While these studies' participants include college students as well as workers of all ages, their results indicate an inherent age-bias that may impact older adults attempting to join or rejoin the workforce. A similar conclusion is drawn from a survey of 102 human resource personnel in the United States, who were less likely to want to hire the older candidate when asked about the likelihood of hiring one of three differently-aged candidates (Fasbender & Wang, 2017).

Age-based discrimination in the labour force is both implicit and explicit.

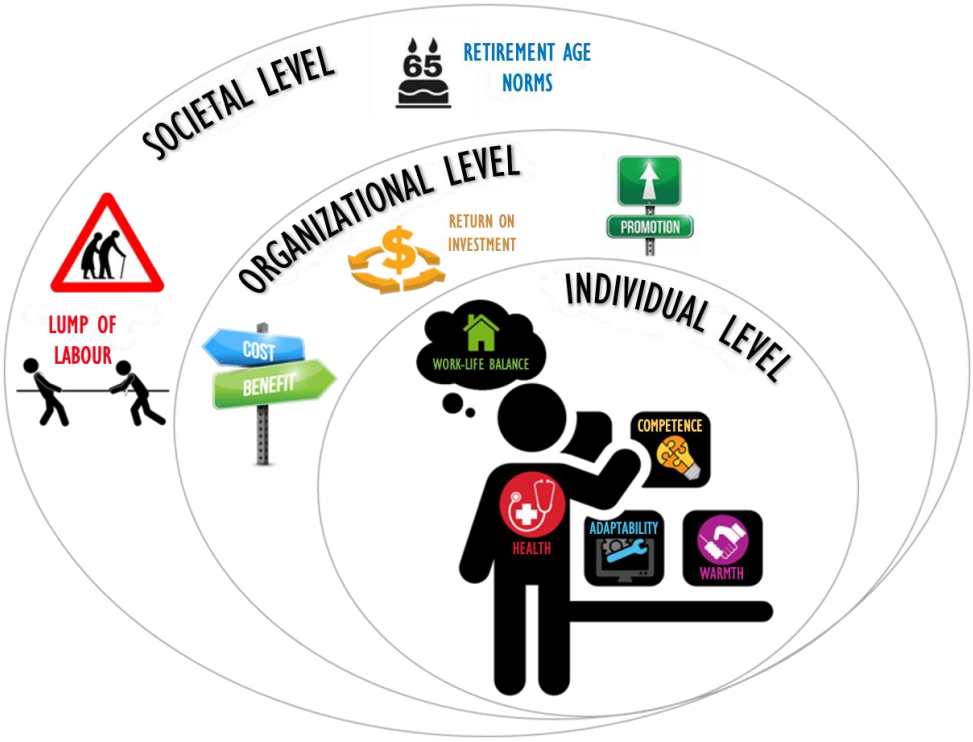
Age-based discrimination in the labour force is both implicit and explicit. An Australian report shows how euphemisms may mask discrimination. Drawing on actual accounts provided to National Seniors Australia, the study emphasizes comments such as "We didn't think you'd fit in", and "We want someone with a high energy level" (Australia Health and Ageing, 2011, p. 13). A small qualitative UK study provides a clear example of age-based discrimination: an unemployed woman (age 51) who was turned down for a job asked for feedback and was told, *"Well, you interviewed extremely well, but we wanted someone younger"* (Moore, 2009, p. 660). Strikingly, data from a Polish study found that where an upper limit for candidate age preference existed amongst managers, age 45 was the average maximum age (Turek & Henkens, 2019). This shows that age-based discrimination persists even in countries such as Poland, where national employment law prohibits age-related discrimination (agediscrimination.info, n.d.).

Studies show that specific negative stereotypes and attitudes contribute to discriminatory behavior and ageism more broadly. Some researchers suggest workplaces counter negative stereotyping by highlighting positive stereotypes about older workers (von Hippel et al., 2013). In fact, one study found older workers to be more interested in learning and development when exposed to positive stereotypes about motivation and ability to work, learn and develop (Gaillard & Desmette, 2010). However, this finding is from a smaller study of white-collar employees in one country, and may not represent other employee groups.

5.2 Common Stereotypes

A three-part framework–consisting of individual, organizational and societal levels–helps to envision and understand stereotypes about older workers (see Figure 1). The individual level draws on research that identifies three common stereotype areas specific to older workers: competence, adaptability and warmth (Marcus et al., 2016). Based on additional literature, stereotypes about older workers' health and work-life balance are also added to the individual level. Individual level stereotypes in these areas may contribute to stereotypes about older workers' productivity and performance. For example, Dutch employers and employees in one study identified older workers' productivity as lower than younger workers (van Dalen et al., 2010). However, the authors' definition included 11 different traits and skills (including mental capacity and willingness to learn), many of which can be considered aspects of the individual level stereotype areas in Figure 1. The organizational level concerns stereotypes about older workers' value, cost and worth to an organization. The societal level concerns stereotypes linked to labour force trends and considerations, as well as the norm that older adults should exit the workforce by age 65.

Figure 1 : Age-based Stereotypes: Common Dimensions



Many of these stereotypes are inter-related and speak to more than one level. For example, managers who believe that older workers are less competent in relation to innovation and cognitive ability (individual level) may fashion this into an attitude that older workers are not fit for promotion (organizational level) (Guillen & Kunze, 2019). In another instance, cognitive decline may apply both to competence and health individual stereotype areas. The framework is useful as an organizing tool to help address the challenges of defining and grouping stereotypes.

5.2.1.1 Individual

Competence

Many studies identify competence as a common negative stereotype about older workers. Evidence suggests that stereotypes of older workers being less competent than younger workers are held by young adults (Krings et al., 2011), human resources professionals (Krings et al., 2011), and other workers (Shiu et al., 2015–workers with a mean age of 35), including younger workers (Kadefors & Hanse, 2012). Multiple definitions of "competence" are used in the literature, including capable, skillful and intelligent (Krings et al., 2011). It is often examined in conjunction with "warmth", as these are the two core dimensions of social judgement and stereotype content theories used by some researchers (Krings et al., 2011; Marcus et al., 2016).

Perceptions of productive skills or attributes may underlie some competence stereotypes. In the literature, authors have conceptualized skills requiring "physical and mental capacity" (Karapinska et al., 2013, p. 890) as markers of productivity. In one study, these productive skills are described as "stress resistance, creativity, flexibility, physical stamina, new tech skills and willingness to train" (van Dalen & Henkens, 2017, p. 9). Competence stereotypes are a challenge to untangle because studies' use varied definitions and stereotypes frequently overlap.

Some studies examine the potential consequences of competence stereotypes. Being seen as less competent has implications for older job candidates competing with younger candidates, even when an older candidate may simultaneously be seen as warm (Krings et al., 2011; Shiu et al., 2015). An older worker's ability to innovate (relating to idea implementation) is a factor in project managers' perceptions of their competence (Guillen & Kunze, 2019). A large, multi-country study in Europe found that older workers are more satisfied with their jobs when they live in a country that views older workers as competent (Shiu et al., 2015).

Studies link competence to mental capacity, productivity, memory and executive functioning.

Assumptions of older workers' mental capacity and intelligence may contribute to perceptions of competence. Mental capacity is identified as an aspect of productivity in some research (Lamont et al., 2015; van Dalen et al., 2010). In an empirical study comparing productivity of workers aged 35 and younger with workers aged 55 and older, authors found that older workers' mental capacity was rated comparatively lower (van Dalen et al., 2010). Research finds some potential truth to this stereotype. One literature review notes that older workers "may have more difficulties with complex tasks that require a high level of executive functioning" and that they have "poorer recognition and recall memory" than younger workers, which results in employers trusting older workers' memories less (Ng & Feldman, 2008, p. 395). The perception that older adults' abilities decline with age is discussed in one study as an important determinant of negative perceptions of older workers' development capability (Fiore et al., 2012).

In a review of research published prior to 2009, authors concluded that older workers are perceived as less intelligent than younger workers (Ng & Feldman, 2008). However, discussion about competence stereotypes notes that age is not related to curiosity or willingness to learn (Appelbaum et al., 2016). A review of studies suggests that older workers' wisdom and expertise may compensate for potential cognitive performance decline, so that work performance is unaffected (Ng & Feldman, 2008). However, other research suggests older adults may actually underperform because they are aware of negative stereotypes about their cognitive performance and fear confirming them (Lamont et al., 2015).

Adaptability/Resistance to Change

Older workers lacking adaptability in the workplace is a common stereotype, perhaps grounded in societal beliefs that older workers "are harder to train, less adaptable, less flexible, and more resistant to change" (Posthuma & Campion, 2009, p. 162). For example, 55% of participants (aged 18 and older, not necessarily employed) in a large Australian study felt that workers aged 55 and older "were more likely to have difficulty adapting to change" (O'Loughlin et al., 2017, p. 99). A second study from Australia, with nurse recruiters as the participants, found that adaptability was a characteristic attributed by recruiters to younger (under age 40) rather than older (aged 55-70) nurses (Gringart et al., 2012).

Studies show that negative stereotypes about resistance to change and lack of adaptability are common, particularly regarding technology.

European and New Zealand studies confirm employers' negative stereotypes about older workers' ability and willingness to adapt to change, including technology and training (Poulston & Jenkins, 2013; van Dalen & Henkens, 2017; van Dalen et al.,

2009). For example, hotel managers in New Zealand perceived employees aged 50 and older as being slow to learn, including about technology, and uninterested in training and technology (Poulston & Jenkins, 2013). The study notes a major employment barrier arising from the stereotype of older workers' disinterest in technology, although current older workers are generally familiar with workplace technology. A study with employers and older workers in various industries (mostly commercial services and trading) in Hong Kong also confirms employers' negative stereotypes about older workers' technological adaptability. The authors concluded that employers most commonly held older worker stereotypes that this cohort had "difficulty taking up new jobs" and was "slow in learning" (Cheung et al., 2011, p. 127).

Approximately 40% (United Kingdom) to 60% (Greece) of employers in a comparative 2005 study using European data believed there would be "less enthusiasm for new technology" as their employees' average age increased (van Dalen et al., 2009, p. 20). This study found that "new technology skills" was the lowest rated characteristic attributed to older workers by employers (van Dalen et al., 2009, p. 21). As both a skill and a characteristic of older workers, "willingness to train" received a low rating from managers in the Netherlands (van Dalen & Henkens, 2017, p. 12).

A Slovenian study on employee perceptions found that older workers (aged 50-65) agree they are stereotyped as less adaptable and more resistant to change, compared to younger workers aged 18 to 49 (Rožman et al., 2016). A study of pharmaceutical companies in the United States found that negative perceptions of older workers' capacity for innovation and change (measured by creativity, flexibility, motivation, willingness to learn, and innovation) lessened with respondent age (McNamara et al., 2016).

Are older workers actually resistant to change? Results are mixed. A study of nearly 3,000 German workers in various sectors (largely the service industry; average participant age of 39), found that it was actually younger workers who were more resistant to change (Kunze et al., 2013).

Results are mixed regarding older workers being resistant to change.

Stereotypes about motivation are linked to perceptions of older adults' adaptability. A review of 318 studies found that "the only stereotype consistent with empirical evidence is that older workers are less willing to participate in training and career development activities" (Ng & Feldman, 2012, p. 821). They note that this stereotype is based on assumptions that older adults are nearing retirement, are less focused on work achievements, have "less capacity to learn new material" and "are more difficult to teach" (Ng & Feldman, 2012, p. 830). The authors concluded that age has a weak, negative relationship to

career development motivation and motivation to learn (Ng & Feldman, 2012). However, these findings must be interpreted carefully to avoid perpetuating the stereotype of older workers' resistance to training and development, since this is not a homogeneous group (Finkelstein et al., 2015).

A study of German employees aged 50 to 64 working at different levels in automotive supply, electrical industry, insurance, IT service industry, trade, and waste management breaks the stereotype of unmotivated older workers (Rabl, 2010). Results from this study indicate that these participants showed motivation to achieve (measured by responses to questions about their hope for success and fear of failure). However, the author found some evidence of employees' fear of failure when confronted with managers' age discrimination. The authors discuss the potential implication that older workers facing discrimination may exhibit unmotivated behavior as the stereotype becomes self-fulfilling (Rabl, 2010).

Warmth

"Warmth" appears often alongside competence in research about older worker stereotypes (Krings et al., 2011; Marcus et al., 2016). Warmth is variously defined as being "sincere, kind and trustworthy" (Krings et al., 2011, p. 188), being "tolerant" (Iweins et al., 2013), and "warm-hearted, warmer personality, likeable… [and] friendly" (Tresh et al., 2019, p. 5). Other studies refer to reliability, loyalty/commitment to an organization, social skills and management skills (Karpinska et al., 2013; van Dalen & Henkens, 2017). The descriptors "stable" and "dependable" also appear interchangeably with "reliable" in the literature. This collection of varied terms is generally thought of as interpersonal skills, personal qualities or behavior characteristics.

Research examining stereotypes in this area is focused on employers'/managers' perceptions. Managers and employers often see older workers as being more reliable (Bal et al., 2011; Karpinska et al., 2013; van Dalen & Henkens, 2017), more dependable (Posthuma & Campion, 2009)[4], and more committed and loyal than younger workers (Karpinska et al., 2013; Posthuma & Campion, 2009; van Dalen et al., 2009; van Dalen et al., 2010; van Dalen & Henkens, 2017). A multi-country study on European employers' perceptions found that reliability was the most highly rated characteristic of older workers (van Dalen et al., 2009). Managers have indicated that commitment, reliability and social skills are advantages offered by older workers (van Dalen & Henkens, 2017). Both commitment and loyalty have been used to measure productivity in several European studies (van Dalen et al., 2010). Findings revealed that managers

[4] Based on a review of literature, the authors define dependable to mean "more stable, honest, trustworthy, loyal and committed to the job and … less likely to quit or miss work". P.170

perceive older workers as more loyal and committed, perceptions that may arise at the point of hiring.

Health

Stereotypes that older workers are in poor health are common, according to a review of research (Ng & Feldman, 2012). As noted in one study, the image of older workers in physical decline (perceived as not maintaining health and fitness) is common (Collien et al., 2016). In the literature on older worker stereotypes, health is regarded as both physical and mental, tied to research that considers cognition a part of competence. Some employers perceive that older workers (aged 50 and older) lack physical stamina, therefore affecting productivity and job performance (van Dalen & Henkens, 2017). Older workers often put on a more "energetic appearance" when job-seeking to counter the stereotypical images of "older inactive persons with deteriorated health" (Berger, 2009, p. 329). A study in the Netherlands found that job applicants "who appear more vital encounter higher chances for employment" (Karpinska et al., 2013, p. 901), suggesting that employers' perceptions of older workers' vitality is a factor.

The stereotype that older workers are less healthy than younger workers is not borne out in the research, therefore psychological and physical health problems are not more common amongst older workers (Ng & Feldman, 2012). However, the existence of negative stereotypes around aging in the workforce can cause feelings of stereotype threat[5], which then negatively affect mental health (von Hippel et al., 2013). Remarkably, a German study undertaken as that country began widespread promotion of older workers' potential suggests that some managers interested in promoting early retirement may use mental and physical decline stereotypes to support early retirement (Collien et al., 2016).

Believing negative stereotypes can impact older workers' mental health.

Work-Life Balance

Older workers being "more vulnerable to work-family imbalance" is a common stereotype (Ng & Feldman, 2012, p. 821). This stereotype is based on assumptions that older workers focus more on family, community and leisure than do younger workers and consequently have less time and energy for work. While some evidence suggests that older people are invested more in family than in work compared with younger workers, a 2012 analysis concluded that older workers do not experience more

[5] "Stereotype threat is the psychological threat of conforming or being reduced to a negative stereotype about a group to which one belongs" (von Hippel et al., 2013, p. 17)

imbalance than younger workers. However, a more recent study of Dutch supermarket workers found that those aged 50-67 were more likely to feel an imbalance between their work and private life than their co-workers under 30 years old. The authors suggest that this might be explained by older workers being more likely to prioritize goals outside of work (Peters et al., 2019).

It is interesting that the research noted above makes no mention of caregiving responsibilities contributing to imbalance. This may be because those with significant caregiving responsibilities may not be able to maintain labour force attachment. However, working and caregiving is common in Canada (60% of caregivers of all ages are employed), and most caregivers are between 45 and 64 years of age (Sinha, 2013). Research suggests that this cohort of workers could benefit from support through caregiver-friendly workplace policies.

5.2.1.2 Organizational

Cost/Return on Investment

A common stereotype about older workers is that they cost organizations more because they use their benefits more frequently, have higher wages, and are near retirement (Posthuma & Campion, 2009). A review of literature showed managers are concerned with health care costs related to employing older workers (Appelbaum et al., 2016). Participants in older worker focus groups in Nova Scotia note this concern, perceiving employers view them as using costly medical and dental benefits (Nova Scotia Centre on Aging, 2018). A related assumption is supported by job seekers' recognizing that employers are reluctant to train them due to perceived low return on investment (Berger, 2009). However, as adults increasingly delay retirement, investing in training workers in their 50s is likely to reap benefits for an organization (Poulston & Jenkins, 2013). As well, hiring early retirees with pertinent experience or skills over new workers that need training may result in significant cost savings (Karpinska et al., 2013). Furthermore, one review (Posthuma & Campion, 2009) suggests that payback from training investments tends to produce short-term benefits to organizations. There was no evidence found in the articles reviewed for this report that employers hold stereotypes about older workers' needs for accommodation due to health concerns and/or the costs associated with addressing this potential need.

Older workers are perceived to cost employers more due to high use of health benefits, wages and training expenses.

Fitness for Promotion

Some studies examined whether older workers are seen as fit for promotion. National survey data from Australia found that stereotypes of older workers' adaptability and productivity contribute to perceptions that workers 55 and older "were more likely to be made redundant [and] less likely to be promoted" compared to younger workers (O'Loughlin et al., 2017, p. 99). This perception was found to be held by people of all ages, both males and females. A large study of US retail employees examined the perception that older workers are less likely to be promoted; employees who held this perception were less likely to be engaged at work (James et al., 2013).

5.2.1.3 Societal

Lump of Labour

At the societal level, the "lump of labour" stereotype suggests that younger workers are denied employment opportunities when more older adults engage in work and delay retirement. The FPT Seniors Forum identifies this as a fallacy; in fact, the number of jobs in an economy is variable, not fixed (FPT Ministers Responsible for Seniors, 2018). Researchers from the Stanford Institute for Economic Policy investigated the claim that delayed retirement will cause higher unemployment for younger workers in the US (Munnell & Wu, 2013). They used population survey data for individuals aged 20 to 64 collected between 1977 and 2011, and found **no** evidence for claims that the presence of older workers reduces opportunities or wages for younger workers, even considering gender and education levels.

Increasing older workers' labour force participation does not lead to fewer opportunities for younger workers.

Retirement Age Norms

A retirement age norm is the expectation that older workers should retire at a certain age (or age range) (Mulders et al., 2017). Although not a stereotype, a norm is similar in that it is a perception or belief that may impact behaviour. For example, many Canadians view 65 as the normative age of retirement, due to this being the age eligible to receive public pension benefits such as Old Age Security. Research shows that managers, older workers and the general public believe in retirement age norms. Data collected from the 2006 European Social Survey found that most Europeans over age 50 endorse early retirement age norms (Radl, 2012). The results are distinguished by sex: participants endorsed 61 years and four months as the mean ideal retirement age for men, but set women's ideal retirement age as two-and-a-half years younger. When

asked to specify what age was "too old to work" (p. 762) for men and women, average response was 64.5 years and 60 years, respectively. However, women were more in favour of later retirement than were men (Radl, 2012).

In terms of social class, Radl (2012) found that working class respondents more readily endorsed earlier retirement than did service class and self-employed respondents. One possible explanation for self-employed later retirement age norms may be a "greater degree of work autonomy" as well as "lack of access to public early-retirement schemes" (Radl, 2012, p. 767). Focus groups with older job-seekers in Nova Scotia provide some insight into Canada's age norms, with many noting employers hold the norm of retirement at age 65. Yet, employers interviewed for this research claimed not to subscribe to the idea of a typical retirement age (Nova Scotia Centre on Aging, 2018).

Managers' beliefs about retirement timing may affect employment for older workers. Research on recruitment and retention practices in six European countries found that organizations where managers hold higher retirement age norms are more likely to support retired workers' rehiring and working beyond traditional retirement age (Mulders et al., 2017). Nilsson (2018) found that managers intending to retire at the official retirement age were more likely to believe that employees should retire at that age as well.

Older adults are working longer, challenging persistent retirement age norms.

A stereotype potentially rooted in retirement age norms is that "older workers are quick to retire" (FPT Ministers for Seniors, 2012a, p. 2), yet recent data show that many older adults are working longer. The most recent Census shows that one in five Canadians aged 65 and older are working (Statistics Canada, 2017). Research on labour force participation and retirement trends suggests that Canadians working past the age of 65 will continue due both to need and a desire for continued employment (Bélanger et al., 2016). While public policy changes in Canada (i.e., elimination of mandatory retirement, changes to pension eligibility) provide an opportunity to re-examine the retirement norm at age 65, these changes are relatively recent. There is limited research on their impact, trends of delayed retirement, and the stereotype that older workers are quick to retire.

5.3 Insights and Uncertainties around Stereotypes about Older Workers

5.3.1.1 Older Workers' Perceptions

A large body of research explores older workers' own perceptions of being stereotyped. It confirms older workers' experiences of age-based stereotypes in the workplace (Rožman et al., 2016) and shows that factors such as intergenerational contact, individual differences including age (Finklestein et al., 2015), having a younger manager, being part of a young workgroup, and doing manual labour (Kulik et al., 2016) may influence an older worker's perception of being stereotyped.

Older workers' gender may also be a factor. A study of over 2,000 employees of a national Italian rail company found that women were more likely than men to perceive that others were negatively stereotyping them based on age (Manzi et al., 2018). Another contributing factor is job status, or the level of one's position within an organization. Research from Australia and the US found that older workers with greater job seniority may be less likely to perceive themselves as targets of negative aged-based stereotypes (von Hippel et al., 2013). The Italian rail employees study also examined job status (participants self-reported if they were supervisors, clerks or manual workers) as a possible factor in perception of being stereotyped, but found no evidence of it, although there are some limitations noted with that study's sample.

Perceiving that they are being negatively stereotyped based on age is linked to negative consequences for older workers. Dutch supermarket floor workers who perceived age stereotyping at work had negative perceptions of their own employability (Peters et al., 2019). Portuguese blue-collar workers in the manufacturing sector who perceived negative stereotyping from their younger co-workers "held more negative attitudes towards their work" (Oliveira & Cardoso, 2018, p. 199). There is also evidence linking perceptions to performance in older adults. One study from the United Kingdom found that older adults may underperform when they face being compared to a younger person on a task for which older adults are often negatively stereotyped. In the study, older adults showed decreased cognitive performance in completing a task (relating to mathematics and cognition) when they feared that they would be negatively compared to younger adults (Swift et al., 2013). This finding appears consistent with other research which concluded that performance is affected when older adults fear confirming negative age-based stereotypes (Lamont et al., 2015).

A study from the United Kingdom provides insight into how "taking on" a stereotype and its potential consequence may be affected by gender. Examining self-rated leadership potential in workers of different ages and gender, the authors found differences in the impacts of internalized ageist stereotypes: men (but not women) who believed the stereotype that older workers are "warmer" rated themselves as having less leadership potential, while women (but not men) who believed the stereotype that older workers are less competent rated themselves as having less leadership potential (Tresh et al., 2019). Exposure to positive age stereotypes may reduce the consequences of internalizing negative aged-based stereotypes. Being exposed to positive age stereotypes (motivation, ability to work, learn and develop) was found to influence white-collar employees' retirement intentions in one study. These employees were "less willing to retire early" and had "more interest in learning and development" (Gaillard & Desmette, 2010, p. 86). The diversity of workers, workplace cultures, and roles may be significant in designing interventions to address older workers' perceptions of stereotyping and its impacts.

Exposure to positive age stereotypes may reduce the negative consequences of internalizing negative aged-based stereotypes.

5.3.1.2 Age and Gender

"Gendered ageism" refers to intertwined ageism and sexism (Taylor et al., 2013), and may mean older female workers are more vulnerable to ageist stereotypes compared to older male workers. Investigating those who hold gendered stereotypes about older workers, Turek and Henkens (2019) found that employers with gender preferences for job candidates were more likely to have discriminatory age preferences. However, a Dutch study on managers' employment decisions about early retirees found no evidence that gender affected decision-making when participants were presented with a hypothetical retired job applicant (Karpinska et al., 2013). More broadly, a study involving participants from the general Australian adult population determined that gender did not play a role in whether a person held negative stereotypes about older workers (O'Loughlin et al., 2017).

Evidence does exist that connects gendered age discrimination to a specific stereotype: older women working for European managers who agreed with the statement that "older workers are biding their time until retirement" were less likely to receive workplace training than their male counterparts (Lössbroek & Radl, 2019, p. 2177). This finding is significant given the study's large sample size and variety of sectors/industries. However, as noted in 3.3.1, perception of being stereotyped has been shown to differ between men and women.

Evidence connecting older worker stereotypes to gender is limited, for the gender of the stereotype holder and for the worker. This does not mean that older adults' negative stereotypes are the same regardless of gender or have the same impacts; rather, research in this area likely focuses on the broader level of ageism.

Outcomes of internalizing negative stereotypes are different for older women than older men.

5.3.1.3 Knowledge Gaps

Although the body of research on stereotyping includes studies published in the last ten years, the samples upon which many are based can be ten to twenty years old. Caution should be exercised in relying on such sources given the dynamic nature of the labour market and recent increases in older adults participating in work. This is especially important when considering stereotypes and evidence about older workers and technology. Today's older workers have experienced considerable technological change in the workforce and studies using data from 15 years ago or more do not reflect current workers.

Most available studies are based in European countries. A noted knowledge gap is the absence of Canadian empirical studies meeting the review criteria. The lack of Canadian evidence and information about identity, diversity, and living environment make it difficult to draw conclusions about applicability to a Canadian context. Nor does evidence show how stereotyping may differ across Canada's regions.

Knowledge gaps relating to identity (e.g., gender, ability and race), diversity (e.g., new immigrants, Indigenous communities and LGBTQ peoples), and living environment (rural, urban and on-reserve), and the intersections among these factors and age, are evident in the literature. More research is needed that examines how age-based stereotypes interact with stereotypes in other identity and diversity categories, such as age and race. It is known that belonging to a racialized group may increase an older adult's vulnerability to workforce discrimination. For example, a study found that older Black British job applicants were invited to interviews less often than older White British applicants, but both groups were invited far less than younger job applicants (Drydakis et al., 2018). Information on how older adults from minority groups experience age-based stereotyping in the labour force, for instance, would be insightful for informing targeted initiatives.

Many larger empirical studies include participants across a variety of sectors, industries, or job classifications, making it difficult to draw conclusions about where specific stereotypes are held. Where studies did use samples from identified sectors and job classifications, authors did not discuss the relationship between job context and stereotypes. One study involving travel agents found that older job candidates were perceived by potential employers as lower in competence and higher in warmth, but it cannot be concluded that this finding is unique to this industry (Krings et al., 2011).

Understanding stereotypes by contextual factors such as identity, diversity and living environment is lacking.

One article offers sector examples, claiming that "age stereotypes are particularly strong in certain industries, such as finance, insurance, retail, and information technology" (Posthuma & Campion, 2009, p. 165). That review, however, includes studies published in the 1970s and may not be relevant to today's labour force. A study on ageism in Norwegian working life across all ages concluded that the public sector is more age-friendly than the private sector. A Polish study of employers examining skill requirements and likelihood of recruiting someone over age 50 found that "the chances of an older candidate being hired are especially hindered in jobs requiring computer, physical, social, creative and training skills" (Turek & Henkens, 2019, p.1). The same study found greater acceptance of older workers in health, culture, and public administration, and lower acceptance in trades and service. The research gives little attention to job factors such as part-time employment, and there is no research specific to stereotypes of older worker entrepreneurs or contract workers.

There may even be a more significant knowledge gap regarding ageism in the workplace. Although we know that ageist stereotypes exist, there is little empirical evidence exploring their roots and how such stereotypes lead to discriminatory practice. This in turn reduces our understanding of effective strategies. Unlike corresponding investigation into workplace gender and race, our understanding of ageist stereotypes lags behind (Gahan et al., 2017).

6. Potential Action Addressing Stereotypes about Older Workers

6.1 Overview

Although there are repeated calls for evidence of promising directions and initiatives (Gahan et al., 2017; Ng & Feldman, 2012), minimal information exists about initiatives addressing any older worker stereotype.[6] Recommendations or suggestions are generally broad statements about addressing workplace discrimination and calls for initiatives to raise awareness aimed at hiring managers and older workers themselves. Certain jurisdictions (e.g., Alberta, Nova Scotia) are implementing action plans to support older workers' increased workforce participation, but do not appear to target any single stereotype in their approach. The World Health Organization calls for action at a systems level, such as abolishing mandatory retirement ages and implementing anti-discrimination laws.

One noteworthy initiative seeks to create "age-friendly workplaces" that foster older adults' labour force participation, which may be hindered because of ageist beliefs (Appannah & Biggs, 2015). Similar to the Age-Friendly Communities initiative, workplaces wanting to be age-friendly challenge attitudes and beliefs about older workers and implement practices to create an inclusive culture where performance is not attached to age (Appannah & Biggs, 2015). While the World Health Organization has not established criteria as to what constitutes an age-friendly workplace, initiatives that promote this idea generally consider workplace recruitment and hiring practices and how employers can be supportive of older workers' needs. For example, the *Age-Friendly Workplaces: Promoting Older Worker Participation* resource offers guidance on how to recruit and support older workers (FPT Ministers Responsible for Seniors, 2012a). The UK has developed guidelines and a tool kit outlining practical actions to help employers become age-friendly workplaces (Centre for Aging Better, 2018). The *Certified Age Friendly Employer Program* is an initiative based in the US to identify organizations that show a commitment to best practice standards for hiring and employing people age 50 and older (see Appendix C, Initiative #2). This certification tells older adults the employer is committed to a workplace free from age bias or discrimination. Close to 100 employers have earned this certification.

Some literature also suggests age-friendly workplaces are inclusive of everyone, regardless of age, and proposes strategies for valuing a diverse workforce and managing workplace age diversity in general. This focus on "inclusivity" despite age is

[6] That is, several articles discuss initiatives to extend older workers' tenure through changes in employment and health policy, workplace accommodation, enhanced benefits, worker protections, etc., but they do not target stereotypes specifically.

noted in the literature as a strategy to eradicate age-segregation/intergenerational divide in the workplace.

The following offers a synthesis of available initiatives and other suggestions to mitigate stereotypes about older workers and any ensuing discriminatory behaviours.

6.2 Older Workers

Older adults can themselves take on stereotypes, which can affect their well-being in terms of labour force attachment as well as health. Several articles cite the importance of initiatives aimed at older adults to boost their learning/work aspirations and sense of value and worth. As noted, awareness campaigns emphasizing positive information and images about older workers and championing successful older workers are important for older adults. Such examples can include individuals in leadership roles or taking on new challenges. Exposure to this type of positive messaging in workplace and public settings can discredit stereotypes.

Public awareness campaigns should be undertaken by non government organizations as well as government to highlight the harmful effects of taking on stereotypes so that older adults are supported to resist adopting ageist beliefs.

Professional development opportunities to keep older adults' skill sets relevant is a common suggestion (Abrams et al., 2016; Berger, 2009; Fiore et al., 2012), particularly given workplace changes arising from knowledge-based economies and continually transforming technology. Such opportunities can be supported in the workplace for current employees or for individuals trying to join/rejoin the labour force through employment work centres or community organizations. Professional development opportunities for all workers about work settings that are multi-generational are also recommended to understand respective value systems and other factors that may contribute to work style.

Another suggestion to position older adults better as job candidates is to provide opportunities for learning about résumé framing, which minimizes potential for bias screening and better aligns skills with a position's required competencies.

6.3 Organizations and Employers

Initiatives for organizations and employers include awareness activities along with aids such as tools and guides to support recruitment and hiring practices and human resource policy reviews**.** For example, WorkBC developed a resource to equip employers with valuable insights into recruiting and retaining older workers (WorkBC,

2008). In addition to drawing attention to hiring and recruitment practices, this resource also contains information about common misconceptions (stereotypes) about older workers (see Appendix C, Initiative #3). There are also suggestions for fostering a work culture supportive of inclusivity; for instance, the resource *Age-Friendly Workplaces: Promoting Older Worker Participation*, which helps raise general awareness amongst employers (FPT Ministers Responsible for Seniors, 2012a), and the *Age-Friendly Workplaces: A Self-Assessment Tool for Employers*, can be useful (FPT Minsters Responsible for Seniors, 2012b).

Awareness initiatives

The literature emphasizes the importance of awareness-raising about older workers' value. While such recommendations are not usually attached to specific stereotypes, this action is suggested to debunk employers' prevailing negative beliefs about older workers, especially regarding competence and resistance to change as presented in 3.2.1. For example, the study that found younger workers are more resistant to change than older workers suggests that this evidence be used in executives' awareness seminars (Kunze et al., 2013). To address the competence stereotype, it is suggested that counter-evidence be provided to hiring personnel, given how commonly this stereotype is applied at hiring (Krings et al., 2011). Examples of awareness-raising show several different communications approaches; however, there is limited evidence about their impact.

Several awareness approaches are found in an OECD-developed resource to promote longer working lives (OECD, n.d.). Austria has undertaken an awareness campaign featuring testimonials of successful persons over 50. Belgium launched a campaign, "There is no age for talent", which includes events organized by unemployed people aged 55 and above to motivate peers and employers. The Danish ministry of employment established a special website recognizing the most innovative/best practices to promote older workers. Resources include tools to help with senior-specific development policy and senior employee appraisals.

Appendix B offers some evidence about existing stereotypes about older workers. To counter these negative stereotypes, messaging based on evidence can be effectively communicated to the general public. Moreover, such campaigns could be designed that more accurately represent current and incoming older workers, who are likely different from the workers upon whom current stereotype research is based. Awareness campaigns could counter stereotypes linked to competency and adaptability/resistance to change. For example, promoting the baby boomer population as one that has embraced technological change throughout their lives (Huyler & Ciocca, 2016) would

lead to a more appropriate understanding of this group. Similarly, promoting emerging science around neuroplasticity and the aging brain in relation to older workers could help counter existing beliefs about adaptability and learning capacity. Furthermore, messages about increasing life expectancy and existing retirement norms failing to serve older adults' social and economic needs will help address prevailing views about exit from the labour force. Within the workplace, inclusive images of workers of all ages should be strategically and widely displayed (e.g., lunchroom, washroom, promotional materials). This strategy can reinforce the message these images convey and improve a sense of organizational acceptance and belonging.

Human resources practice

Suggestions targeted at organizations' recruiting, hiring and promotion practices are key because the individuals following these practices are largely responsible for work atmosphere and employees' entry and exit. Such policies and practices may intentionally or unintentionally discriminate against older employees.

Advertising of positions is an area that should receive attention. Employers should not use biased/exclusive words and phrases in job postings, and avoid language such as "energetic", "mature", and "highly experienced" or reference to number of years' experience, etc. (Smeaton & Parry, 2018, p.78). To help mitigate "age" as a recruitment hiring factor, an analysis of jobs could be undertaken to understand job tasks and required competencies for success, then use the "competency" information in recruitment, interview, and appraisal processes (Posthuma & Campion, 2009). The use of online application processes with screening features can assist with unbiased assessment of applications.

In organizations where negative stereotypes are more common–such as finance, insurance, and information technology–greater effort can be made to reflect older workers in the recruitment process. For example, "Recruiting advertisements could feature older workers at computers, using the company gym and so forth" (Posthuma & Campion, 2009, p. 182).

Initiatives to counter the belief that older workers are disinterested in training and development should ensure training events employ teaching strategies that support adult learning principles such as active participation, modelling, practical case examples, and self-paced learning (Appannah & Biggs, 2015; Posthuma & Campion, 2009).

In an effort to motivate older adults to prolong their career, an initiative adopted in Norway involved "Milestone Dialogues" between managers and employees aged 55 and 60. These intentional conversations focus on motivation and competence and actions are identified. Managers are trained in the dialogue concept before engaging in these conversations (OECD, 2013).

An interactive online resource for UK managers incorporates many of these suggestions (Age Action Alliance, n.d.) This kit contains specific considerations and practical information for recruiting and retaining older adults, including a content section correcting many common misconceptions about older workers (see Appendix C, Initiative #4).

Fostering inclusive workplaces

Several initiatives can help foster a wholly inclusive workplace regardless of those factors that can divide and pit employees against one another (e.g., age, gender, and race). For example, employers could focus on a strength-based workplace model whereby team assignments include individuals of all ages leveraging each other's strengths. Other suggestions in support of inclusivity include:

- Adopt interview and hiring decision processes that include diversity (e.g., age, gender, race) (Iweins et al., 2012).
- Include age as part of diversity strategies (Berger, 2009)
- Regularly assess and monitor management's attitudes and behaviours towards older workers or diversity more broadly (e.g., sex, age, race).
- Incorporate greater flexibility into human resource practices and strategies in order to address the needs and values of all employees regardless of their generation (Becton et al., 2014).
- Create champions such as a specific manager or committee whose work it is to promote and celebrate diversity in the workplace (e.g., age, gender, race) and encourage opportunities for engagement (Smeaton & Parry, 2018).
- Prepare future managers to work with older employees and emphasize greater variation within age groups than between them and recognize that variables such as employee skills are more important than age in predicting job performance (Posthuma & Campion, 2009).
- Create opportunities for positive intergenerational contact (e.g., mentorship, intergenerational partnering), which has been shown to reduce prejudice, in-group identification and diminish vulnerability to the stereotype threat among older workers (Bayl-Smith & Griffin, 2014; Cadieux et al., 2019).

Moreover, drawing on recent work to reduce gender bias in the workplace, the "small wins" model is worthy of consideration to achieve sustainable organizational change. Its five-step approach is designed to walk organizations through the process of identifying biases, developing solutions, intervening with concrete actions and evaluating wins (see Appendix C, Initiative #5). The model is premised on achieving small wins that can create supporters incrementally, thereby building blocks for larger organizational transformation (Correll, 2017).

6.4 General Public

Public awareness initiatives about older workers' value and importance are usually embedded within campaigns about the aging population and older adults in general, or initiatives through broader aging-specific strategies (e.g., Alberta, Nova Scotia, British Columbia). A campaign launched by the National Initiative for the Care of the Elderly is specifically targeting ageism in the workplace with tips and tools (see Appendix C, Initiative #6). Their material describes positive attributes of older workers (to refute existing negative stereotypes) and examples of implicit ageist workplace behaviours (e.g., having work contributions ignored, being talked down to by bosses). A public awareness campaign about older workers is noted as part of the City of Boston's age-friendly initiative (City of Boston, 2017).

Public awareness initiatives should draw on the materials of the ReFraming Aging initiative (Frameworks Institute, 2017) and draw upon a range of media (e.g., print, online, social media). Important messages to convey include: challenges to retirement age norms, contributions to economy and society from older workers' labour force participation, evidence refuting stereotypes about age and disability and cost implications (or promoting a business case for employers), and the heterogeneity of the older population.

7. Final Thoughts on Stereotypes about Older Workers

The current literature on prevailing stereotypes about older workers provides some insights into who holds these views and the factors that perpetuate them. It finds negative stereotypes of older workers' competence and adaptability are common. In turn, these negative stereotypes may contribute to perceptions that older workers are unproductive and perform poorly. Conversely, positive stereotypes of older workers' personal qualities such as warmth are also found. There is some evidence to suggest that holding negative age-based stereotypes lessens as employers/managers and workers themselves become older. However, drawing conclusions is challenging given the variety of ways that stereotypes are defined and measured. While some research published in the last 10 years has examined age-related health stereotypes, there are fewer studies on stereotypes related to work-life balance and organizational and labour force costs of employing older workers. Much research is based on younger workers' perceptions of older workers, which can perpetuate intergenerational conflict and prohibit inclusive workplaces.

While the research proves that stereotypes exist, there is little examination of causal factors, other than perhaps broader ageist views of aging and the aged in society. More research into the mediators of specific stereotypes could help to identify work sectors and industries where older workers most face negative consequences. Other gaps include the lack of Canadian literature and consideration of identity, diversity and living environment. Mechanisms such as flexible workplace policies and government efforts to remove structural barriers to working longer are important mechanisms to promote older workers' labour force participation but they do not address stereotypes.

Negative stereotypes have generated discriminatory practices in screening, hiring and performance appraisal processes, contributing to older workers being marginalized or excluded from the labour force. Negative stereotypes have also been linked to older workers themselves reporting a lower self-

FURTHER CONSIDERATIONS

Older workers are increasingly participating in part-time and part year work. Non-standard employment (e.g., contract work) is also becoming more common for all workers. Understanding stereotypes in a changing and dynamic labour market is important.

Today's workplaces have the potential to employ individuals from up to five generations. To more fully understand stereotyping at play in multigenerational workplaces, a review of perceptions held by, and perceived by, all generations is required.

worth and early exit from the workplace. In view of growing attention to the importance of older adults' labour force participation, efforts are needed that create for them welcoming, inclusive, and supportive environments. Potential responses to addressing stereotypes include fostering age-friendly workplaces, general and targeted awareness-raising initiatives, and critical assessment of workplace practices to help address ageist attitudes and behaviours targeted towards older workers. These potential responses should be considered in the context of an evolving and dynamic labour market and recognizing the diversity of the older population.

This research focused on stereotypes as one manifestation of ageism, a known barrier to older workers' labour force participation. However, other factors may come into play as potential barriers to older Canadians continued participation in the labour force. Given the changing and dynamic labour market, more research from the Canadian context is needed on how current and emerging trends/factors influence older adults' labour force participation.

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Appendix A – Approach

Document Search and Selection

The literature review process included identifying peer reviewed and grey literature from Canada and other jurisdictions on stereotypes and attitudes about older workers meeting the following criteria:

- available in full text
- published in English or French
- published between January 2009 and October 2019.

Databases Used:

Academic Search Premier, Business Search Premier, Google Scholar, Google

Keywords Used:

Searches (conducted in English and French) included these keywords "*ageism *workplace / age discrimination *workplace / stereotypes *older workers / ageism *employment *stereotypes / age discrimination *ageism in employment / myths *stereotypes * older workers / ageism *workplace strategies / age friendly workplace / ageism * workplace *myths/ ageism *work *employment / stereotype of age in workplace / stereotype of older adults in workplace / ageism *workplace initiatives / age bias *stereotypes in workplace / age bias *stereotypes in workplace / ageism *retirement / agisme au travail / agisme au travail *stereotype / stereotype *age discrimination in hiring / older workers *stereotypes *discrimination / age stereotypes in workplace / ageism *stereotype *unemployment / ageing workforce *discrimination / older workers *immigrants *ageism in workplace / older women *ageism in workplace / *intergenerational workspaces *stereotypes *older workers / ageism *entrepreneurship / senior entrepreneurship *age discrimination*

Search results were supplemented with additional literature from the following sources:

- previous research undertaken by the research team
- reference lists of retrieved articles
- materials provided to the research team
- targeted searches for concepts (e.g., multi-generational workplaces, initiatives) that could provide additional context or aid in interpretation of, the literature retrieved.

In addition, targeted searches using Google were completed to identify any relevant initiatives from stakeholders Table 1).

Table 1: Stakeholders

Stakeholder Organizations – websites searched for Initiatives	
AARP	Chartered Professionals in Human Resources
Atlantic Provinces Economic Council of Canada	Conference Board of Canada
Broadbent Institute	Council of Canadians
Business Council of Canada	Fraser Institute
Caledon Institute of Social Policy/ Maytree	Human Resources Professional Association
Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives	Institute for Research on Public Policy
CARP	National Seniors Council
C.D. Howe Institute	Public Policy Forum
World Health Organization	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development

Literature included in this review focuses on the perspectives of older workers, younger workers, managers and employers from different job sectors. Literature on older adults in, or recently in labour force more broadly (i.e. unemployed, under-employed, retired, etc.) is also included.

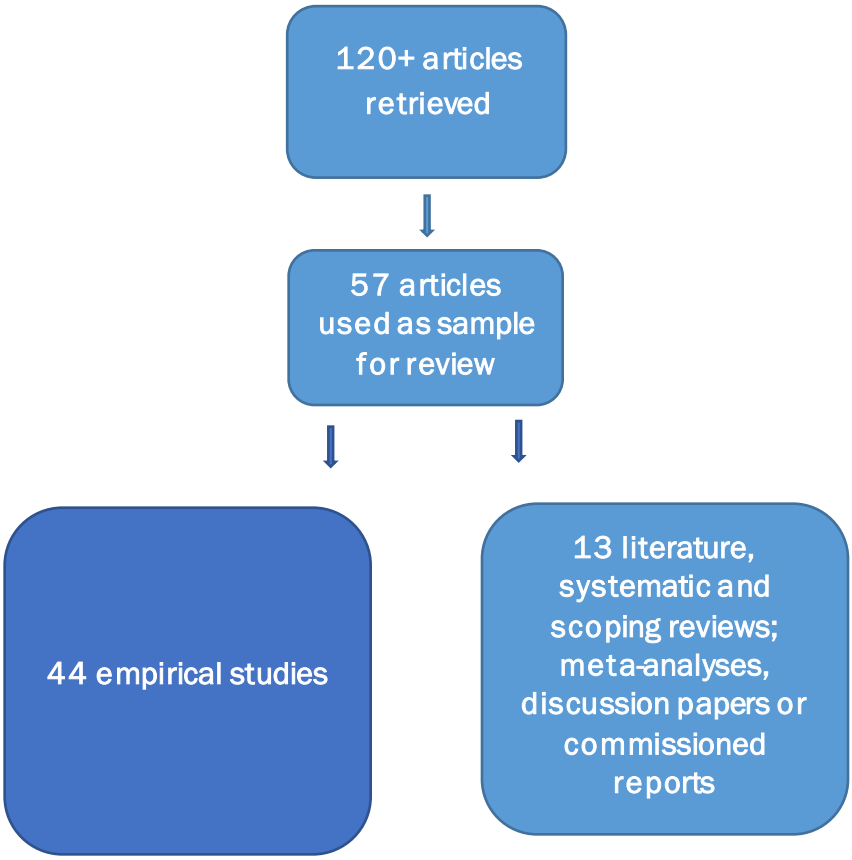
The title and abstracts of initial literature selected were reviewed by the team for focus on stereotypes of older workers. Information from the retained articles such as research method, jurisdiction, article type, research question/purpose/hypothesis, study sample/description, industry/sector/ occupation type, stage (job seeking, hiring, employed, retirement, rehiring following retirement), older worker definition, attitude/stereotype examined, findings, counter evidence, initiatives, recommendations, and implications were organized in a Microsoft Excel document for examination by team members.

This process resulted in in a list of over 120+ articles for consideration. A scan of the articles was conducted to eliminate literature that did not meet the inclusion criteria. This process resulted in the selection of 57 articles used as the sample. These articles were found to have direct relevance to identifying and/or understanding stereotypes and older workers (See Figure 2). Articles that were out of scope, did not address specific stereotype and those that had a broader focus relevant to ageism, discrimination and/or initiatives were not included in the sample for analysis; however, many contribute to the context or interpretation of the key findings.

The sample includes a commissioned report and two discussion papers, in addition to 10 literature reviews, scoping or systematic reviews, or meta-analyses (articles combining the results of multiple studies), one of which published in 2008 is included because it is highly cited in the literature. Empirical studies' participants are a wide

range of ages and are in some cases post-secondary students or members of the general public, but mostly studies explore perceptions about older workers from employees or employers (which may include human resources professionals, hiring managers, or others with hiring power or a supervisory role); many studies include both groups. Almost all involved over 100 participants, with about a dozen having sample sizes over 1,000. This includes a few multi-country studies and a large study of United States retail workers.

Figure 2: Sample Description



Appendix B – Selected Negative Stereotypes, Available Evidence and Potential Actions

There are both positive and negative stereotypes about older workers. Evidence to prove or refute stereotypes is not available for all stereotypes identified through the literature search. This table lists a selection of negative stereotypes for which evidence and/or counter-evidence of their basis in fact was found. (Note that this is different than evidence that a stereotype exists). The stereotypes are mainly a contrast between older and younger workers (e.g., older workers are less motivated than younger workers). The last column offers suggested actions to address the stereotype.

Stereotype	Level	Evidence about the Stereotype (with Source)	Suggested Action to Address Stereotype
Lower mental capacity	Individual	Older workers "may have more difficulties with complex tasks that require a high level of executive functioning" and may have "poorer recognition and recall memory". *(Ng & Feldman, 2008 - meta-analysis)* Performance often improves with age and when declines are found, they tend to be small. *(Posthuma & Campion, 2009 - literature review)* The threat of age-based stereotype reduces cognitive and memory performance.	Promote evidence about memory and normal aging and the emerging evidence from neuroscience.

Stereotype	Level	Evidence about the Stereotype (with Source)	Suggested Action to Address Stereotype
		(Lamont et al., 2015 - meta-analysis of 32 articles using experimental designs in controlled settings)	
Less intelligent	Individual	Age is unrelated to curiosity and willingness to learn. *(Appelbaum, 2016 - literature review)* Recent evidence suggests older workers may use compensatory strategies to counter declines in cognitive performance resulting in work performance not being affected. *(Krings, Sczesny & Kluge, 2011 - empirical research)*	Promote images of older adults engaging in variety of activities (e.g., sports, arts, leisure), profile older adults who take on new initiatives. Promote value of life-long learning.
Resistant to change	Individual	Younger workers in this study were found to be more resistant to change than the older workers. *(Kunze, Boehm, & Bruch, 2013 - survey of nearly 3,000 German employees in various job categories and industries [service industry most prevalent])*	Promote evidence that indicates baby boomers have engaged and embraced change throughout their life, often being the driver of societal changes.
Less willing to participate	Individual	A review of data from 318 published studies concluded that this stereotype was the only	Promote images of older adults engaged in activities representing

Stereotype	Level	Evidence about the Stereotype (with Source)	Suggested Action to Address Stereotype
in training and career development		one consistent with empirical evidence. However, the authors caution that older workers are not a homogenous group. *(Ng & Feldman, 2012 - meta-analysis)*	learning sessions. Profile older adults leading a group of other employees. Promote statistics about older workers working past retirement age norms and profile older adults looking to change careers or who are seeking new work opportunities. Target industries and sectors where change is continual (e.g., information technology, finance, business).
Less motivated	Individual	Evidence from older data shows age has a weak, negative relationship to career development motivation and motivation to learn. *(Ng & Feldman, 2012 - meta-analysis)* However, a study of German workers aged 50-64 were found to be motivated to achieve success in their careers. These workers were employed at different levels in a variety of organizations. *(Rabl, 2010 - empirical research)*	Same as previous.

Stereotype	Level	Evidence about the Stereotype (with Source)	Suggested Action to Address Stereotype
Less healthy	Individual	Evidence demonstrates older workers do not have more psychological problems or more day-to-day physical health problems. *(Ng & Feldman, 2012- meta-analysis)*	Promote evidence about health and normal aging. Promote profile of baby boomers who are today's and tomorrow's older workers and whose health and wealth is different from previous cohorts.
Vulnerable to work-life imbalance	Individual	Evidence from studies conducted more than 10 years ago shows older workers are not more vulnerable to work-family imbalance than younger workers. While older workers may have a preference towards spending time with family, fewer competing constraints on their time may mean that they don't experience an imbalance between work and family. *(Ng & Feldman, 2012 - meta-analysis)* Dutch supermarket workers under age 30 reported greater imbalance between work and private life than those aged 50-67. *(Peters et al., 2019 - empirical research, small study of 98 participants)*	Promote older workers as having family responsibilities, such as caregiving for an older parent, which can create work-life imbalance if not supported. This is similar to younger workers who may have responsibilities for children. Offer professional development sessions for all employees on work-life balance.

Stereotype	Level	Evidence about the Stereotype (with Source)	Suggested Action to Address Stereotype
More costly	Organizational	Hiring early retirees who have pertinent experience or skills costs significantly less than hiring retirees who do not. *(Karpinska, Henkens & Schippers, 2013 - survey of more than 200 managers, various sectors, The Netherlands)* Higher salary differentials for long term employees may be offset by lower rates of absenteeism. *(Posthuma & Campion, 2009 - literature review)*	Obtain evidence on cost of employees by age and length of tenure, accounting for salary of comparable positions, use of health benefits and absenteeism (frequency, duration). Promote role of older workers in mentoring roles with younger workers to demonstrate potential benefit of older, long term workers.
Not worth training	Organizational	Payback from training investments tend to benefit organization in short term. *(Posthuma & Campion, 2009- literature review)*	Promote benefits to employer of employees with skills and training regardless of age. Promote statistics about older workers working past retirement age norms.
Take jobs away from other workers	Societal	The number of jobs in an economy is stable. A US study of data collected between 1977 and 2011 did not find evidence to support claims	Obtain evidence on Canada labour market with attention to industry and geography.

Stereotype	Level	Evidence about the Stereotype (with Source)	Suggested Action to Address Stereotype
		that delaying retirement will result in fewer jobs for younger adults. *(FPT Ministers Responsible for Seniors, 2018 - report);* *(Munnell & Wu, 2013 - discussion paper)*	Promote images of multi-generational work settings.

Appendix C – Examples of Promising Initiatives

Initiative #1 – Guide: Becoming an age-friendly employer (UK)
www.ageing-better.org.uk

Initiative #2 – Certified Age Friendly Employer Program (United States)

http://www.retirementjobs.com/

RetirementJobs.com
JOBS FOR PEOPLE OVER 50

Login
Create Account
Employers: Post Jobs

home | job search | reviews | premium | career advice | about us

Certified Age Friendly Employer Program

CERTIFIED AGE FRIENDLY EMPLOYER (CAFE)™ PROGRAM

The Age Friendly Foundation's ("The Foundation") *Certified Age Friendly Employer (CAFE)*™ program is an initiative to identify those organizations that are committed to being the best places to work for employees at or above age 50. A list of employers that have earned The Foundation's *Certified Age Friendly Employer*™ designation is available at this page: https://www.agefriendlyfoundation.org/success-stories.

ABOUT THE PROGRAM

This special designation means The Age Friendly Foundation has determined—following a confidential, comprehensive in-depth analysis based on interviews with authorized employer representatives—that the employer meets The Foundation's Age Friendly Certification Standards. Meeting these Certification Standards specifically includes the employer showing a commitment to employ individuals over age 50 and to internally investigate employee complaints regarding age discrimination. *Certified Age Friendly Employers* pay a fee for triennial reviews & monitoring and for support of The Age Friendly Foundation's extensive advocacy outreach on behalf of job seekers over age 50. *Certification* does not mean that the business's products or services have been evaluated or endorsed as age friendly by The Foundation. Businesses are under no obligation to seek *Certification*, and some businesses are not certified because they have not sought certification. Similarly, not all organizations that apply for certification, earn it, however, in these cases, The Age Friendly Foundation will identify key weaknesses in the employer's program so that they may improve those deficiencies and reapply at a future time.

CERTIFICATION PURPOSE

The purpose of the *Age Friendly Employer Certification* program is to assist age 50+ job seekers by identifying those employers committed to objectively considering them for appropriate employment, free of age bias or discrimination which is one of their major concerns. *Certified Age Friendly Employers* want age 50+ candidates to know they are valued for their knowledge, maturity, reliability and productivity.

our company

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CERTIFICATION STANDARDS

The Age Friendly Foundation's research and evaluation of the recruiting, employment and human resources policies, practices and programs of recognized Age Friendly employers yields a model of proven best practice standards. This model is the basis of the *Certification* evaluation program. The twelve categories of best practices standards are:

1. General Commitment and Workforce Policies
2. Organization Culture and Employee Relations
3. Workforce Planning and Composition
4. Employee Retention
5. Candidate Recruiting
6. Management Style and Practices
7. Training and Development
8. Job Content and Process Accommodations
9. Work Schedules, Arrangements and Time Off
10. Compensation Programs
11. Healthcare Benefits
12. Savings and Retirement Benefits

Within each standard category are several established prominent best practice policies, practices and programs that comprise the framework of the The Age Friendly Foundation's *Certification* evaluation process.

RECOGNITION

The certification granted by The Foundation is that of *Certified Age Friendly Employer*. This designation is issued following successful completion of the *Certification* evaluation by Foundation staff. Certified employers are listed on the RetirementJobs.com website, other authorized sites and in publicity material. The *Certification* seal is inserted on *Certified Age Friendly Employer* profiles and individual job postings. Further, the certified employers are encouraged to place the seal on their own career sites, on postings at other online sites, and in appropriate marketing collateral.

ELIGIBILITY

Any employer is eligible to apply to become a *Certified Age Friendly Employer*.

Initiative #3 –WorkBC Booklet on How to Engage Mature Workers (excerpt)

https://www.workbc.ca/Resources-for/Mature-Workers.aspx

Mature Worker Misconceptions

Making a strategic decision to better engage and recruit mature workers may be new to your business.

Common misconceptions about mature workers include:

Older workers have difficulty learning new skills, particularly with respect to technology. Many experienced workers are eager to learn new skills, but are often overlooked for professional development opportunities as a result of outdated assumptions about willingness to learn new skills. Discussing and offering new training opportunities is vital to creating an environment where learning can comfortably occur.

Older employees will not work for many years. Research suggests that mature workers sustain the highest job tenure overall. Their traditional values of dedication and service translates into loyalty for your company.

Older workers have more health problems that will cause them to miss work. Employees aged 50+ do not sustain more injuries or absences than their younger counterparts. Many mature workers remain employed because of the psychological and social benefits a workplace community provides. This positive correlation between work and health has been well-documented and indicates that people who stay engaged in work (either paid or unpaid) tend to remain in better health and live longer – in all age groups.

It is awkward for young employees to manage older workers. A multigenerational workforce provides an excellent opportunity for mutually beneficial relationships. A commitment to ongoing and open communication creates an environment where respect and understanding can thrive.

All mature workers want to work part time. Mature workers are often interested in flexible work options. Providing flexibility to your employees will help distinguish you as an employer of choice, not only for mature workers, but to other potential labour pools such as immigrants, First Nations, young people and people with disabilities.

"Seniors are phenomenal employees. Some people say that mature workers don't like change but in my opinion that's absolutely not the case. When you teach them something they pick it up quickly and then they can run with it. You don't have to be standing over them constantly."

Lori Keetch, Editor/Owner, Senior Connector

Initiative #4 – Employer Toolkit: Guidance for Managers of Older Workers (UK)

http://ageactionalliance.org/

11. Mythbusting

Myth	Reality
Only younger employees are keen to develop their skills or learn new ones.	Many older workers are just as keen to develop their skills as their younger colleagues. However, it is possible that they are not asked to attend training as often as their younger colleagues. Older workers will also have more experience learning and developing within a work environment, making them well suited to benefit from any future training opportunities.
Older workers are set in their ways and inflexible.	This is an outdated assumption, and many older workers will have experienced considerable change throughout their working and personal life, improving their resilience and adaptability.
Older workers are just waiting to retire. They are inefficient and unproductive.	The ability of someone to do their job is rarely age-dependent; there is no need to assume that an older worker is less effective or less motivated than a younger colleague. In fact, many older employees may have grown and developed in the workplace as a result of training and experience. An efficient and productive mixed-age workforce makes sense for many organisations.
Older workers will always miss too much work due to illness/ disability.	Even though some older people (like every age group in the working population), have a long term disability or illness, many can continue in work with effective management. Whether this requires small physical adjustments or flexible working arrangements, actively managing those who do have health concerns or a disability can ensure lower staff turnover and fewer sick days.
Older workers do not understand new technologies.	Equally there may be aspects of work which younger people are less comfortable with, i.e. legacy IT systems. What is important is that where either case is true, appropriate measures are taken to train staff and identify and address gaps in skills and knowledge
Older workers are weak and cannot do manual jobs.	For most people, age and strength are not inherently connected until a point much later in life than they would typically consider working. Rather than age, exercise, nutrition, and other lifestyle factors are bigger influences than age on of the relative strength required in the workplace. If strength or stamina does become an issue, an employer must consider how accommodations or retraining within the workplace can support staff.
Older workers cost more than younger ones.	If this results from a merit-based allocation of pay, than it is often justified, as the older worker may bring more experience to a job which demands more responsibility. However, if differing salaries are not as a result of merit, but solely because of age, than a case could be made for age discrimination.

Initiative #5 – "Small Wins" Model for Organizational Change

Correll, S. (2017). Reducing gender biases in modern workplaces: A small wins approach to organizational change. *Gender & Society, 13*(6), 725-750.

Initiative #6 – Anti-Ageism in the Workplace (Canada)
www.nicenet.ca

Anti-Ageism in the Workplace

Ageism is the most socially accepted, normalized and tolerated form of discrimination today. It is the stereotyping and discrimination against individuals or groups based on their age. Ageism, like racism and sexism stems, from the assumption that all people of a group (i.e. older people) are the same. Within the workplace, older adults are less likely to be hired, receive training and experience more discrimination than their younger colleagues.

Five ways **you** can combat ageism in the workplace:

1. Take the World Health Organization's (WHO) Ageist Attitudes quiz
2. Use these tips to look out for signs of age discrimination at work
3. Start a conversation about ageism by sharing our "Aging Cream" ageism awareness video or downloading the campaign posters
4. Talk to your HR department about your organization's people policies and practices
5. Take the NICE Relating to Older People Evaluation

Ageism Against Older Employees in the Workplace

10 Signs of age discrimination at work:

1. Hearing age-related comments or insults
2. Seeing a pattern of hiring only younger employees
3. Being turned down for a promotion due to age
4. Being overlooked for challenging work assignments
5. Becoming isolated or left out
6. Being encouraged or forced to retire
7. Experiencing layoffs
8. Having your position eliminated
9. Receiving a performance improvement plan
10. Facing unfair discipline

A survey of harassment of older adults in the workplace in the United States (Blackstone 2013) showed the following percentage of people experienced:

- Having their work contributions ignored – 25.1 per cent
- Being left out of decisions that affect their work – 23.0 per cent
- Being talked down to by co-workers – 20.8 per cent
- Being talked down to by bosses – 20.2 per cent
- Verbal exchanges characterized by yelling and swearing – 13.1 per cent
- Comments or behaviours that demean their age – 12.6 per cent
- Offensive age-related jokes – 9.8 per cent

The concept of retirement is an ageist notion that at a certain age all individuals should be ready to leave the workforce. Whereas, in 2015 Statistics Canada highlighted that one in five (or 1.1 million) Canadians 65 years and older reported working, the highest recorded since 1981.

Creating a More Age-Inclusive Workplace

No matter what your role is at your workplace, you can ask about or volunteer to take an active role in helping to reduce ageism in any of the following areas:

Establish Policies

Similar to harassment and workplace bullying policies, employers should clearly define acts of age discrimination and outline follow-up for management to address these instances. All employees should be aware of these policies.

Rethink Interview Processes

Inappropriate interview questions such as: asking a candidate their age, when they plan to marry, or when they hope to retire should not be part of interview questions.

Review Existing Policies & Procedures

Indirect age discrimination can also occur in the workplace. Examining any areas where there may be biases, such as in recruitment practices, sick leave policies, or training processes can help to avoid any ageist policies or practices.

Encourage Intergenerational Work

Employees can benefit from supporting and learning from one another across experiences, skills, and ages. Set up intergenerational teams or mentoring processes to support these interactions.

Highlighting the positive attributes of older workers:

1. Large client networks
2. Large professional networks
3. High skill levels
4. Low turnover rate
5. Strong work ethic
6. Reliable
7. Loyal

Read 10 Advantages of Retaining and Hiring Older Workers: Lessons from NYC Small Businesses.