

Perceptions of aging and older adults



The experience of ageism is widespread and frequent.¹ Over **80%** of people surveyed report experiencing one or more incidences of ageism.²



Ageism has been found to be a risk factor for elder abuse. It can lead to discriminatory behaviors, like **neglect, abandonment, and emotional, financial, and physical harms.**



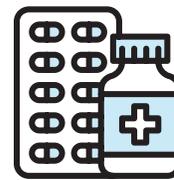
89% of Canadians associate aging with something negative like not being able to get around easily, losing independence, or being alone.³



Because of ageism, older people are victims of specific forms of harm. It also makes access to protection and justice more difficult for older persons.



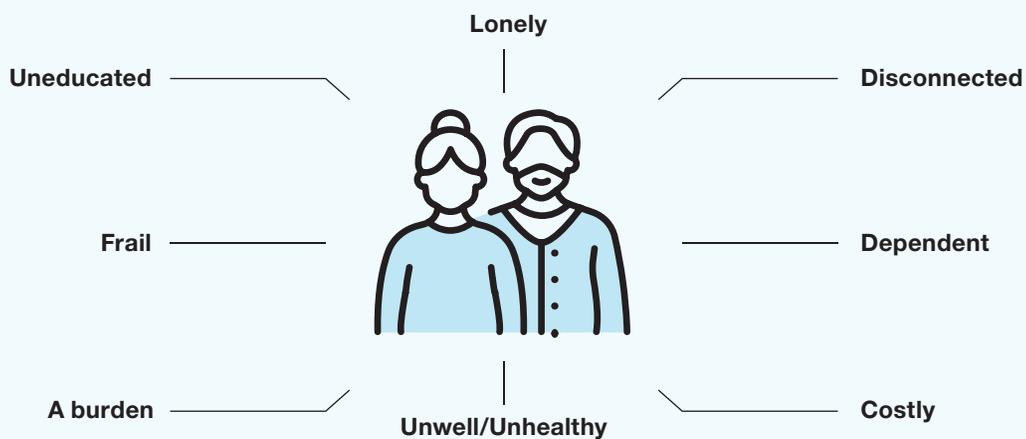
Ageism is defined as the stereotyping of, and discrimination against, individuals or groups because of their age. Negative attitudes regarding older Canadians can have a significant impact on their health, well-being, and involvement within their communities.



Ageism can influence the way decisions are made about older people. Within health care, for example, a person's age, rather than their overall health status, can influence medical decisions about the diagnostic tests or treatments provided to an older person.⁴

- The way we see others is influenced by our beliefs, experiences, and attitudes, which can affect the way we treat others.
- When common values, beliefs, and attitudes about aging are internalized and normalized, this leads to ageism.

Ageist assumptions made about older adults:



¹ Erdman Palmore, PhD, The Ageism Survey: First Findings, The Gerontologist, Volume 41, Issue 5, 1 October 2001, Pages 572–575.

² National Poll on Healthy Aging, July 2020, <http://hdl.handle.net/2027.42/156038>

³ Revera Report on Ageism, <https://ifa.ngo/wp-content/uploads/2013/03/Revera-IFA-Ageism-Report.pdf>

⁴ Make Addressing Ageism, Elder Abuse and Social Isolation a National Priority, <https://nationalseniorsstrategy.ca/the-four-pillars/pillar-1/addressing-ageism-elder-abuse-and-social-isolation/>

Realities of aging and older adults

Combat ageism by flipping the script



Nearly **1/5** Canadians are age 65 or older.



The vast majority of Alberta seniors indicate they are able to complete daily activities with minimal or no impairment (**96%**).⁵



The majority of Alberta seniors live at home in their communities (**93%**).⁶



Seniors are **volunteers**⁷

- **44.6%** of seniors aged 65-74 are volunteers.
- **35.4%** of seniors aged 75+ are volunteers.



Alberta seniors have high levels of life satisfaction. **91%** report being satisfied or very satisfied.⁸



77% of Alberta seniors are grandparents.⁹ Many are family historians, helpers, and childcare providers.



Seniors make up **4.3%** of Alberta's workforce. **17.4%** of seniors participated in the workforce in 2021.¹⁰



Technology adopters

- **60%** of Canadian seniors own a smart phone.¹¹
- **83%** of Alberta seniors used the internet in 2020.¹²



Seniors are caregivers¹³

- **18%** of seniors in Alberta are caregivers for a loved one.¹⁴
- **One-third (34%)** of Canadian caregivers aged 65 and older provided care for a spouse or partner. This proportion increased to almost half (47%) among seniors aged 75 and older.



Healthy aging activities

- **44%** of Alberta seniors engage in at least 150 minutes of physical activity per week.⁸
- **14.7%** of Alberta seniors regularly participate in sports.¹⁵



Educational profile of Alberta seniors¹⁶

- **35%** Postsecondary certificate or diploma
- **21%** University degree of bachelors or above



Actions for Albertans to recognize and respond to ageism

- Educate yourself on the existence of ageism and recognize your personal attitudes and biases associated with aging and older adults.
- Encourage intergenerational contact between older adults and younger people.
- Speak out when you witness ageism.
- Recognize the important contributions older adults make to society.
- Follow the "golden rule" and treat everyone the way you would like to be treated.

⁵ Statistics Canada. Table 13-10-0789-01 Health characteristics of seniors aged 65 and over, Canadian Health Survey on Seniors

⁶ Statistics Canada. Table 98-10-0045-01 Type of collective dwelling, age and gender for the population in collective dwellings: Canada, provinces and territories; Statistics Canada. Table 98-10-0043-01 Structural type of dwelling, age and gender: Canada, provinces, and territories, census divisions and census subdivisions

⁷ Statistics Canada. Table 45-10-0039-01 Volunteer rate and average annual volunteer hours, by definition of volunteering and age group

⁸ Statistics Canada. Table 13-10-0096-01 Health characteristics, annual estimates

⁹ Statistics Canada. Table 39-10-0044-01 Number of grandparents in Canada (x 1,000)

¹⁰ Statistics Canada. Table 14-10-0327-01 Labour force characteristics by sex and detailed age group, annual

¹¹ Statistics Canada. Table 22-10-0115-01 Smartphone use and smartphone habits by gender and age group, inactive

¹² Statistics Canada. Table 22-10-0135-01 Personal internet use from any location by province and age group

¹³ Statistics Canada. The experiences and needs of older caregivers in Canada (75-006-X202000100007)

¹⁴ Statistics Canada. "2018 General Social Survey on Caregiving and Care Receiving"

¹⁵ Statistics Canada. Table 13-10-0602-01 Regular participation in sports by sex and other demographic characteristics

¹⁶ Statistics Canada. Table 14-10-0020-01 Unemployment rate, participation rate and employment rate by educational attainment, annual