



EDMONTON
**Age Friendly
Alliance**

Let's Talk About Ageism!

A Toolkit to Start the Conversation

Acknowledgements

This toolkit was developed by the Edmonton Age Friendly Alliance's Conversation Café Toolkit on Ageism Working Group: Cathy Harvey, Caroline Gee, Michelle Goonasekera, Shanuki Goonasekera, and Tammy Lautner. Thank you to those who reviewed and provided feedback on the toolkit: Michael Alpern, Noella Bradbury, Theresa Fielden, Dianna Millard, and Glenda Tarnowski.

In 2022, the Federal/Provincial/Territorial Ministers Responsible for Seniors Forum (Government of Canada) invited organizations to provide feedback on ageism. Age Friendly Edmonton enthusiastically used this opportunity to host a forum and gather insights from Edmonton's older adults. We extend our gratitude to the Ministers Forum for inspiring the Edmonton Age Friendly Alliance to create the "Let's Talk About Ageism: A Toolkit to Start the Conversation."

Edmonton Age Friendly Alliance is a network for the well-being of older adults. We bring allies together to help make our city more age friendly. This means recognizing diverse populations and the needs of seniors, and actively supporting their inclusion, engagement and well-being.

Anyone passionate about the well-being of older adults is welcome to be an ally! We are powered by the staff and volunteers of Edmonton's community-based senior serving organizations, individual Edmontonians, as well as the Edmonton Seniors Coordinating Council.

This toolkit is intended to provide general information only. Every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of the information contained herein; however, it should not be relied upon as the definitive truth.

© Edmonton Age Friendly Alliance (June 2024). This work is licensed under [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/)

Table of Contents

The Toolkit | **1**

Planning a Conversation Café | **2**

Running a Conversation Café | **4**

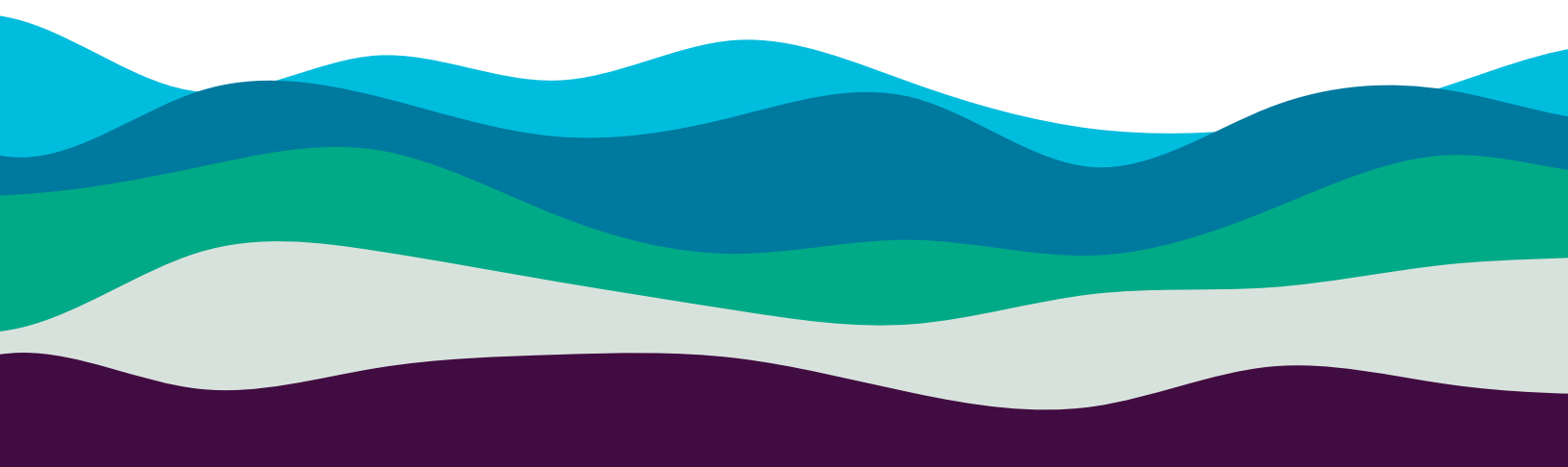
Appendix A - Sample Poster | **15**

Appendix B - Hosting and Facilitation Resources | **17**

Appendix C - Feedback Forms | **18**

Appendix D - Resources | **22**

References | **25**



The Toolkit

Why do we want to talk about ageism?

According to the World Health Organization, ageism refers to “how we think (stereotypes), feel (prejudice) and act (discrimination) towards others or ourselves based on age”¹. Compared to other forms of discrimination, ageism is the most tolerated and widespread². While ageism impacts both young people and older adults, this toolkit will focus on ageism in older adulthood.

Aging is a process that happens to all of us, and therefore, ageism impacts and concerns us all. Moreover, research indicates that how you think about aging when you're younger impacts how you age later in life³. Anti-ageism activist Ashton Applewhite highlights the importance for younger adults to view themselves as "older adults in training" to connect with their future selves and live purposefully to promote healthy aging⁴.

By having open discussions about ageism, we can raise awareness about its harmful effects, change age-related attitudes and behaviors, and identify actions that we can take to address it. The ultimate goal is to promote respect, understanding, and inclusivity across all generations so that we can create a society we can all age well in.

What is a Conversation Café?

A Conversation Café is a relaxed gathering where people come together to engage and talk about specific topics in a casual and open manner. The idea is to create a welcoming space where everyone's voice is valued and there's no pressure to be an expert or reach a specific conclusion. A Conversation Café is about fostering meaningful dialogue, building community, and exploring ideas together to promote change.

“A Conversation Café will shift our Small Talk to Big Talk” conversationcafe.org

What is the purpose of this toolkit?

This toolkit aims to help people of all ages talk about aging and ageism through the format of a Conversation Café. This toolkit provides resources for planning, preparing, and leading discussions on aging and ageism, complete with promotional and evaluation materials. **We encourage you to unleash your creativity and customize the content to align with your audience, needs, and goals.**



Who is this toolkit for?

This toolkit is designed for organizations, community groups, and individuals interested in starting a conversation about ageism within their organizations, communities, or homes.

Planning a Conversation Café

HOSTING

Planning Team - Form a small planning team to make decisions on the place, date, time, length of session, space, set up, materials needed, refreshments, communications and registration.

Facilitating Team - Assemble a facilitation team by selecting a group of individuals such as volunteers or staff to support the event. Assign individuals to the following roles:

- Host facilitators - Responsible for leading the introductory and closing activities of the event and ensuring the event runs smoothly.
- Topic facilitators - Responsible for guiding the topic discussions, recording perspectives shared by participants, and presenting main insights during the closing of the event. Assign one facilitator for each topic.

Additionally, Edmonton Age Friendly Alliance (EAFA) members are available to support your event if needed. To contact EAFA, see below:

Edmonton Seniors Coordinating Council

#255 Bonnie Doon Shopping Centre
8330 - 82 Avenue
Edmonton, AB T6C 4E3

Phone: 780-423-5635

Email: agefriendly@seniorscouncil.net

For more information on how to host and facilitate a Conversation Cafe, see Appendix B.



PARTICIPANTS

Target Audience - Think about the groups or people you interact with when considering who should be invited and who would be interested in attending the session. These can include colleagues, associates, team members, congregation, classmates, friends, family, and community members.

TIMEFRAME

Date and Time - Select a date and time that will work for the majority of the group. Some examples include during the lunch hour, a staff meeting, or Sunday coffee.

Length of Session - Select a session duration that suits your group's preferences and needs. Consider factors such as the number of topics you plan to cover, the size of your group, and how frequently you intend to host the event. While you have the flexibility to adjust the length, it's advisable to keep the event within a two-hour timeframe for optimal engagement.

VENUE

Location - Choose a venue that aligns with the ambiance, accessibility and convenience for the gathering. For example, a living room, meeting room, community hall, school/office lunch room, or an online Zoom session.

Setup - Consider different seating arrangements based on how people will be engaging in the conversation. Options include theater style, circle, sitting around the table, or on comfy couches.

Food/Refreshments - Consider providing beverages and snacks, taking into account allergies and preferences.

Equipment and Materials - Obtain equipment that would be needed to make the event a success, such as name tags, printed materials, screens, flip charts, and white boards.

GETTING THE WORD OUT

Method - Explore creative ways to reach your target audience and attract attendees to your event. This might involve crafting engaging posters, leveraging social media platforms, sending out email invitations, utilizing word-of-mouth referrals, or distributing flyers. Refer to Appendix A for a customizable poster template that you can adapt to promote your event effectively.



Running a Conversation Café

“What is Ageism” Activity

Begin your Conversation Café by inviting participants to share their thoughts on what ageism means. Follow this discussion with a brief, engaging video to introduce the topic of ageism. This will help enhance everyone’s understanding and prepare them for a deeper discussion on the various aspects of ageism.

Here are some video options you can use to kick off your Conversation Café. Choose one that aligns with your objectives and the duration of your session.

AARP - [Millennials Show Us What ‘Old’ Looks Like | Disrupt Aging](#) (4:08 minutes)

PARTICIPANT - [Why You Should Stop Giving This "Compliment"](#) (3:34 minutes)

THE BENEVOLENT SOCIETY - [Imagine A World Without Ageism](#) (2:38 minutes)

Sample Agendas

On the following pages are two sample agendas for facilitating Conversation Café sessions, one designed for a 1.5-hour session and the other for a 50-minute session. You can also adapt these agendas for shorter or longer sessions as needed.



1.5 Hour Agenda

Time Allocated	Activity	Notes
15 minutes	<i>Welcome and Introduction</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Welcome participants • Engagement activity • Present video to introduce the topic of ageism • Explain the Conversation Café format and ground rules
60 minutes	<i>Conversation</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Choose four ageism topics from the toolkit and assign participants equally to each topic • Topic facilitators guide discussions using prompts and take notes of the perspectives shared • Participants engage in open discussions for 10 minutes per topic • Once 10 minutes are up, ask participants to rotate to the next table • After two rotations take a 10-minute break • Continue with two more rotations until participants have discussed all four topics
15 minutes	<i>Closing and Call to Action</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Topic facilitators briefly summarize key points discussed for each topic to the whole group • Present call to action - e.g. each participant writes down one thing they will do in the next month to address ageism • Provide resources for further learning about ageism (Appendix D) • Invite feedback from participants about the event (Appendix C)

50 Minute Agenda

Time Allocated	Activity	Notes
10 minutes	<i>Welcome and Introduction</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Welcome participants • Engagement activity • Present video to introduce the topic of ageism • Explain the Conversation Café format and ground rules
30 minutes	<i>Conversation</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Choose two ageism topics from the toolkit and assign participants equally to each topic • Topic facilitators guide discussions using prompts and take notes of the perspectives shared • Participants engage in open discussions for 10 minutes per topic • Once 10 minutes are up, ask participants to rotate to the next table
10 minutes	<i>Closing and Call to Action</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitators briefly summarize key points discussed for each topic to the whole group • Present call to action - e.g. each participant writes down one thing they will do in the next month to address ageism • Provide resources for further learning about ageism (Appendix D) • Invite feedback from participants about the event (Appendix C)



Conversation Topics

To enhance your Conversation Café experience, you can use the topics, prompts, and questions provided below, or feel free to create your own topics tailored to your audience and goals. Some topic suggestions include men's health, women's health, sexuality, mental health, religion, and spirituality.

Topic One - Personal Beliefs about Aging

- What are your thoughts on aging? Do you see it as a positive or negative experience, and why?
- How do you perceive older adults in society? Are there any stereotypes or misconceptions you believe exist about aging?
- Do you think there are any cultural differences in how aging is perceived and valued? If so, what are they?
- How do you think society's view of aging has changed over time, and what do you hope for in the future?



Topic Two - Ageism in the Beauty Industry

REVERSE THE FACE OF TIME, NOW!

PREVAGE®
Anti-Aging Daily Serum

Helps reverse the signs of environmental damage, the #1 cause of aging skin.* Clinically proven to reduce the appearance of fine lines, wrinkles, sun damage and uneven skin texture. 96% of women saw an improvement in skin's overall appearance in just four weeks.*

Proof... not Promises™

Available at Nordstrom and nordstrom.com
elizabetharden.com
#prevage

ARDEN ACTIVE SKINCARE
REPAIR
TRANSFORM
OPTIMIZE

Elizabeth Arden
NEW YORK

Image obtained from: [Women's Media Centre](https://www.womensmediacentre.com)

- How does the beauty industry promote ageism?
- What happens when we connect beauty with being young?
- What can we do to challenge age-related stereotypes that the beauty industry spreads?

Topic Three - Ageist Greeting Cards



Image obtained from: [Rusty Pencil](#)

- How do greeting cards show ageist ideas?
- How can we make greeting cards more inclusive and respectful in their designs and messages?
- Can greeting cards help fight ageism? If so, how?

Topic Four - Ageism in the Workplace



Image obtained from: [Academy to Innovate HR](https://www.academytoinnovatehr.com/)

- What are some examples of ageism in the workplace?
- What can organizations do to welcome people of different ages and make everyone feel included?
- What can individuals do to fight ageism in their workplace?

Topic Five - Ageism in Everyday Language

RETHINKING AGEIST LANGUAGE

Ageist	Inclusive
"They" or "Them" when talking about other generations	"We" or "Us" to show you aren't separating people by age
Inappropriately addressing people with terms of endearment	Calling someone by their preferred name to show respect regardless of age
"Young at Heart" implies being young is good, but older is bad	Give thoughtful compliments based on a person, not their age
Speaking to an adult of a different age with childish language (elderspeak)	Talking to adults as a peer and an equal, regardless of their age

Image obtained from: [Age Options](#)

- How does everyday language contribute to ageism?
- Can words that seem harmless actually hurt older adults?
- How can we raise awareness and change our language to be more inclusive and respectful of all ages?

Topic Six - Ageism in Healthcare

In 2018, there were reportedly **304** geriatricians in Canada. Canada only has **1** certified geriatrician for every **14,689** older Canadians – with 4 provinces and territories having either none or **only 1** geriatrician to serve their entire population.

Source: Canadian Medical Association, 2018



National
Seniors
Strategy

NIA NATIONAL
INSTITUTE
ON AGEING

Image obtained from: [National Institute on Ageing](#)

- How does ageism affect older individuals' experiences in the healthcare system?
- What steps can healthcare professionals take to address age-related biases and provide excellent care for older adults?
- How can we combat ageism in healthcare?

Topic Seven - Ageism in Media



Image obtained from: [Spoiler TV](#)

- How do TV shows, movies, and news articles affect how people think about getting older?
- What impact do stereotypes in media have on older individuals' self-worth and sense of belonging?
- Can the media be a force for challenging ageist messages? How?

Topic Eight - Intergenerational Relationships



Image obtained from: [Linking Generations Northern Ireland](#)

- What are the benefits of intergenerational relationships?
- What are some specific examples of skills or knowledge that younger and older individuals can learn from each other?
- How can we create opportunities for meaningful interactions between generations?

Keep the conversation going

Thank you for being an essential part of our journey to end ageism. Let's not let our efforts stop here. Keep hosting Conversation Cafés, speak out against ageism wherever you encounter it, and encourage others to do the same. Together, we can create a more inclusive and respectful society for people of all ages.

Appendix A - Sample Poster

Your logo

CONVERSATION CAFÉ ON AGEISM

Join us to share your perceptions and experiences of ageism and its impacts, as well as your ideas to address it.

What is a Conversation Café?

A Conversation Café is a relaxed gathering where people come together to engage and talk about specific topics in a casual and open manner. The idea is to create a welcoming space where everyone's voice is valued and there's no pressure to be an expert or reach a specific conclusion.

What is Ageism?

"Ageism is "the stereotypes (how we think), prejudice (how we feel) and discrimination (how we act) towards others or oneself based on age."

World Health Organization, 2020

Date: Include the date of your event here

Time: Include the time of your event here

Location: Include the location of your event here

Registration: (link)

For more information, please contact: Include your contact person's name and email address or telephone number

**On the following page, you will find an interactive template of this poster.
Please download this pdf to edit this template and print the page.**

CONVERSATION CAFÉ ON AGEISM

Join us to share your perceptions and experiences of ageism and its impacts, as well as your ideas to address it.

What is a Conversation Café?

A Conversation Café is a relaxed gathering where people come together to engage and talk about specific topics in a casual and open manner. The idea is to create a welcoming space where everyone's voice is valued and there's no pressure to be an expert or reach a specific conclusion.

What is Ageism?

"Ageism is "the stereotypes (how we think), prejudice (how we feel) and discrimination (how we act) towards others or oneself based on age."

World Health Organization, 2020

Date:

Time:

Location:

Registration:

For more information, please contact:

Appendix B - Hosting and Facilitation Resources

Here are additional resources offering valuable tips for hosting and facilitating your Conversation Café:

[The Complete Hosting Manual](#) - Conversation Café

[Conversation Café: A How to Guide](#) - Paul Born

Appendix C - Feedback Forms

Facilitator Evaluation Form

Thank you for leading a Conversation Café on ageism using the “Let’s Talk about Ageism” toolkit. Your feedback is invaluable for us to enhance the toolkit and improve upcoming Conversation Cafés. Please take a moment to reflect on your facilitation experience by responding to the statements below. This evaluation form will take approximately 5 minutes to complete.

1. I felt prepared for the Conversation Café in terms of understanding the content, designing activities, and organizing materials.

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

2. The provided materials were effective in leading discussions, managing group dynamics, and keeping participants engaged.

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

3. The provided materials were effective in fostering a safe and respectful environment for all participants.

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

4. I was satisfied with the materials and support that was provided for facilitating the Conversation Café.

	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	1	2	3	4	5	
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	

5. Please identify any specific areas that could be improved upon for future sessions.

Thank you for your time and feedback!

Ageism Workshop Participant Evaluation Form

Thank you for participating in our Conversation Café on ageism. Your feedback is valuable to us in improving future Conversation Cafés. Please take a few moments to complete this evaluation form by responding to the statements below. This evaluation form will take approximately 5 minutes to complete.

1. I was satisfied with the content and delivery of the Conversation Café.

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

2. The ageism topics discussed during the Conversation Café were important and relevant.

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

3. The activities and exercises provided me with a deeper understanding of ageism and its impact.

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

4. I would recommend this workshop to others interested in learning about and addressing ageism.

1 2 3 4 5

Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree

5. Please identify any specific areas that could be improved upon for future sessions.

Thank you for your time and feedback!

Appendix D - Resources

Here are additional resources to further support your Conversation Café or to share with participants after the event.

Topic One - Personal Beliefs about Aging

[Why you should stop giving this “compliment”](#) - Youtube, Video (3:34 mins)

[My Aging Story](#) - The Age Collective, Website

[Internalized Ageism Campaign](#) - Guide by Changing the Narrative

[Break Free from Ageism](#) - YouTube, Video (1:00 min)

Topic Two - Ageism in the Beauty Industry

[Dispelling beauty myths: Aging with grace](#) - YouTube, Video (5:49 mins)

[The beauty industry’s obsession with anti-ageing: Is this the beginning of the end?](#) - Article by Centre for Ageing Better, Website

[Can the Beauty Industry Ditch Anti-Aging?](#) - Article by Montecristo Magazine

Topic Three - Ageist Greeting Cards

[Anti-ageist birthday card project](#) - Changing the Narrative, Website

[Many birthday cards mock getting older. These artists are painting a different picture](#) - Article by CNN

[Dan Levitt: It's time to stop buying ageist birthday cards](#) - Article by Vancouver Sun

Topic Four - Ageism in the Workplace

[Addressing ageism towards older workers](#) - Article by Jonathan Lai

[Balanced teams are better teams](#) - Government of Alberta, Video (3:00 mins)

[Flippin' Ageism](#) - A course about creating an age-friendly workplace by The Centre for Career Innovation

[What is Ageism? 12 Examples of Ageism in the Workplace](#) - Academy to Innovate HR, Website

Topic Five - Ageism in Everyday Language

[Words are powerful](#) - A style writing guide for speaking and writing by Saskatchewan Seniors Mechanism

[Challenging ageism through everyday conversations, dialogue, and discussions](#) - Guide by Age Without Limits

Topic Six - Ageism in Healthcare

[Advocate for your health](#) - Poster by Changing the Narrative

[Age-friendly healthcare](#) - Guide by Changing the Narrative

[Ageism still rampant in healthcare](#) - Article by CBC

Topic Seven - Ageism in Media

[Andie MacDowell on ageism towards Hollywood actresses](#) - YouTube, Video (2:24 mins)

[Naomi Watts gets candid about ageism in Hollywood](#) - YouTube, Video (2:19 mins)

[Jean Stapleton discusses ageism in Hollywood](#) - YouTube, Video (2:50 mins)

Topic Eight - Intergenerational relationships

[57 years apart - A boy and a man talk about life](#) - YouTube, Video (4:35 mins)

[Why We Need Intergenerational Relationships](#) - YouTube, Video (8:17 mins)

[The Power of Intergenerational Connection](#) - American Society on Aging, Website

[The Shared Mic: Conversation for the Ages](#) - Age Friendly Edmonton, Podcast

More about Ageism:

[Yo, Is This Ageist?](#) - This Chair Rocks, Website

[Ageism](#) - World Health Organization, Website

[What if aging was unbound by ageism?](#) - YouTube Playlist by Changing the Narrative

[Exploring ageism through role-play workshops](#) - A Guide by HelpAge

[An old age problem? How society shapes and reinforces negative attitudes to ageing](#) - Paper by the Centre for Ageing Better

References

- 1 World Health Organization. (2021). Global campaign to combat ageism toolkit. https://cdn.who.int/media/docs/default-source/campaigns-and-initiatives/global-campaign-to-combat-ageism/global-campaign-to-combat-ageism---toolkit---en.pdf?sfvrsn=6c546ce7_22&download=true
- 2 Revera Inc. & International Federation on Ageing (2013). Revera report on ageism. <https://ifa.ngo/wp-content/uploads/2013/03/Revera-IFA-Ageism-Report.pdf>
- 3 Levy, B. (2022). Breaking the age code: How your beliefs about aging determine how long and well you live. William Morrow.
- 4 Ashton Applewhite (Apr 26, 2019). Rather than identifying as old, young or middle-aged, be an “old person in training” instead. TEDTalks. <https://ideas.ted.com/rather-than-identifying-yourself-as-old-young-or-middle-aged-be-an-old-person-in-training-instead/>