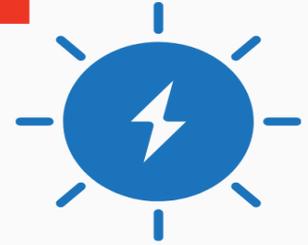
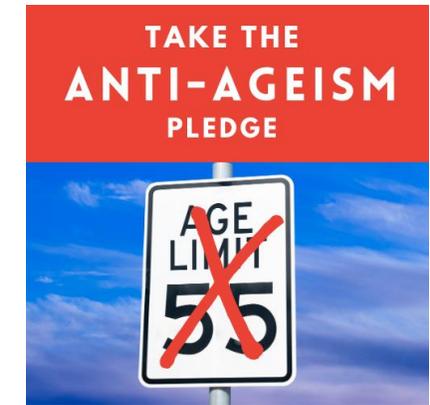


POWER IN AGING

BUILDING AN
AGE-POSITIVE
MAINE THROUGH
CONVERSATION &
ACTION



Becoming More Equitable and Inclusive: The Invisibility of Ageism



JESS MAURER, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, MCOA

M A I N E

C O U N C I L

O N A G I N G

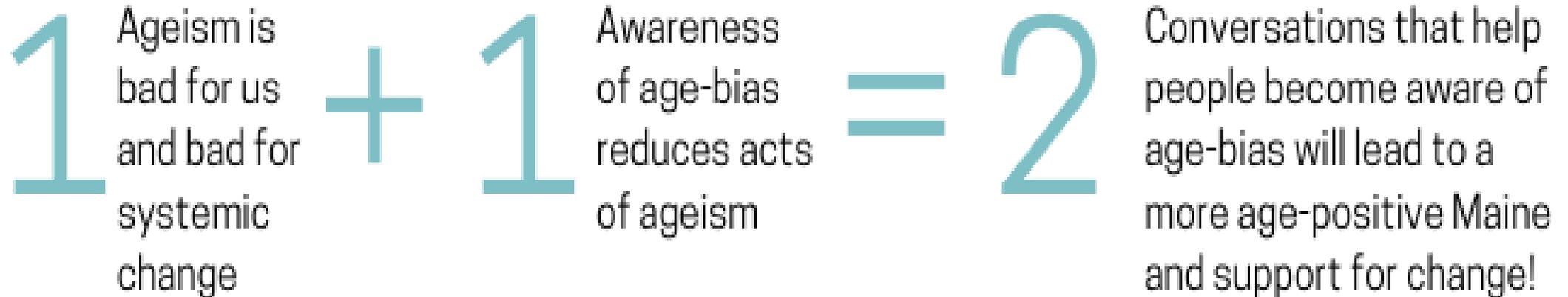
Power in Aging Project

MCOA has launched a new anti-ageism movement in Maine called the ***Power in Aging Project***, funded by the Maine Community Foundation.

The goal of the project is to ***address ageism and age-bias*** through conversation and action to build a ***more age-positive culture in Maine***.

To support action, we have a cadre of “power trainers” available to follow up with technical assistance and in-depth presentations and conversations with employers, the media, and healthcare providers.

Basic Premise



Kathy Greenlee's 2020 Charge to the MCOA

The screenshot shows a Zoom meeting interface. The top bar includes the Zoom logo, menu options (Meeting, View, Edit, Window, Help), system icons (camera, microphone, battery, etc.), and the time (Wed 9:26 AM) and device (MacBook Pro). The main content area is split: on the left, a presentation slide titled "We Must Lead This Change" with a bulleted list of points; on the right, a video feed of Kathy Greenlee. The bottom toolbar contains various controls like Unmute, Start Video, Security, Participants (168), Chat, Share Screen, Polling, Pause/Stop Recording, Closed Caption, Reactions, and a red Leave button.

Talking: Program Feed

We Must Lead This Change

- Ask questions and challenge a 65+ grouping
- Seek disaggregated data
- Talk about the differences between age groups
- Understand ageism in this context
- Look specifically at the oldest old
- Aggregated data impacts program design & cost

greenlee global MCOA Wisdom Summit

Unmute Start Video Security Participants 168 Chat Share Screen Polling Pause/Stop Recording Closed Caption Reactions Leave

It's time to stop lumping all older people into one group – we need to disaggregate ages and be more specific.

We need to start showing up as our age. If we don't like to be labeled "senior" or "elderly," and we try to distance ourselves from those words, why use them to describe anyone else?

**Kathy Greenlee
Former ACL Director**

Maine's Aging Demographic

AARP membership = 50

589,000 Mainers are over 50 – 54% of Maine's *adult* population

Medicare = 65

286,000 Mainers are over 65 – 26% adult population

Maine's 70+

194,000 – 18% of adult population

Maine's 80+

66,000 – 6% of adult population (64% women)

A Global View on Ageism

“Ageism pervades many institutions and sectors of society, including those providing health and social care, the workplace, the media and the legal system.”

WHO Global Report on Ageism, March 2021



Discussion

What words or phrases come to your mind to describe ageism and its impacts?

ageism

discrimination or bias on the basis of age

systemic ageism is age-related bias *across society*.

Systemic ageism shows up in:



cultural
MESSAGES



distribution of
RESOURCES



policies and
RULES

Living inside of that system affects our:

*Interactions
among people*

*Thoughts and beliefs about
aging and older people*

*Institutional policies
and practices*



**interpersonal
ageism**

**internalized
ageism**

**institutional
ageism**

Ageism has its worst effects when it intersects with other forms of discrimination.



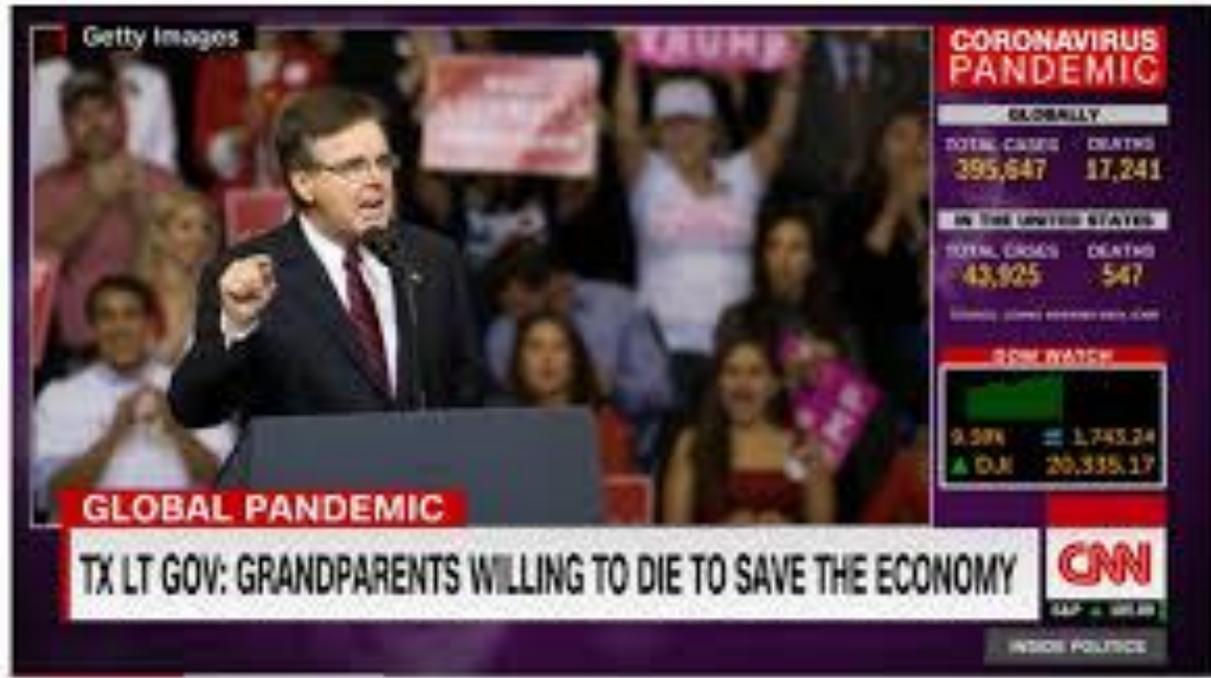
Impact of Ageism

Ageism has significant impact on the health and well-being of older people, including:

- In the workplace, leads to personal economic challenges in later life, but also allows Maine's workforce challenges to grow
- In the community, puts constraints on community roles and contributions
- In healthcare, results in poor health outcomes
- In the media and popular culture, marginalizes the immense contributions of older people and further diminishes the value of older lives
- ***In policy arenas, leads to less support for needed systemic changes***

Long term impact of overt ageism during COVID is to be determined.

COVID - Overt Ageism at its Worst



“Ben Shapiro Suggests Older People Dying Of COVID-19 Is ‘Tragic,’ But Also Not So Bad...that an 81-year-old dying of the coronavirus “is not the same thing” as a younger person dying from it.” Huff Post 4/29/20

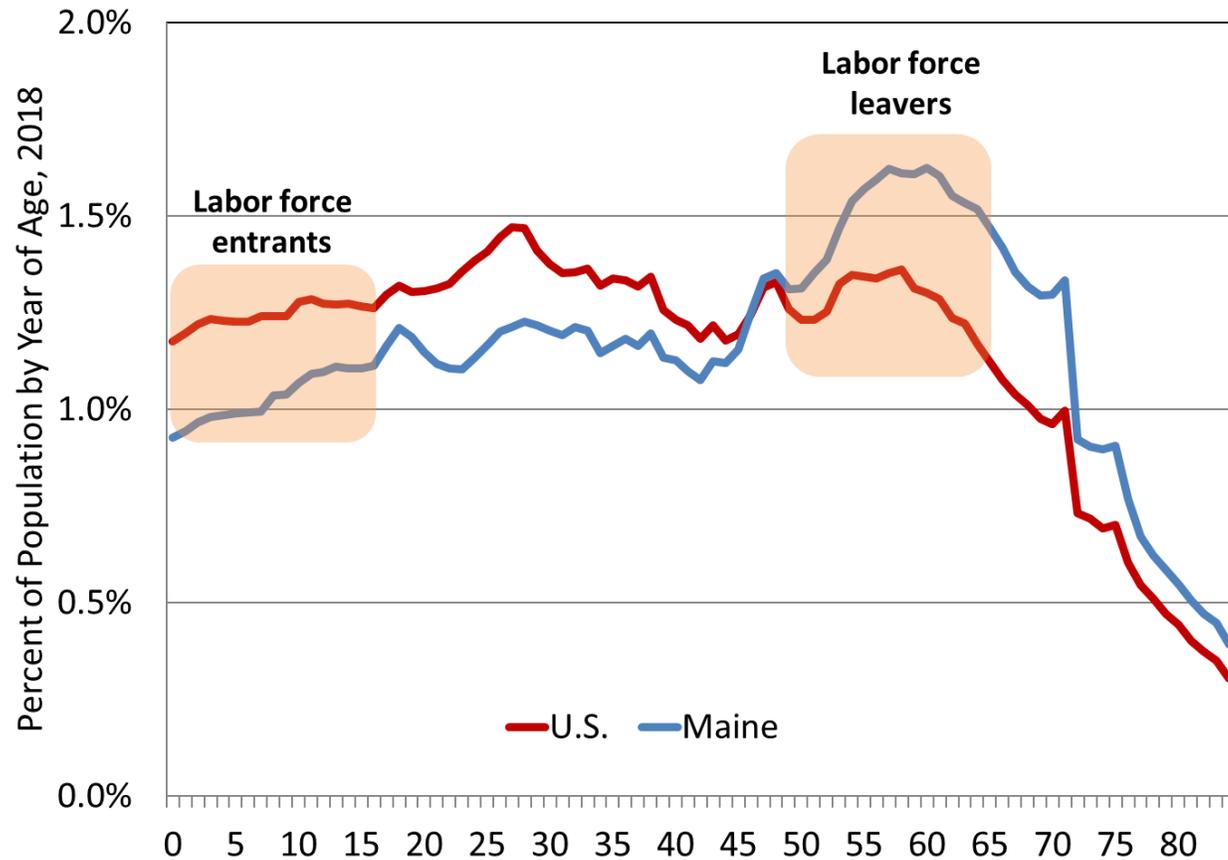
The journalist is 76 years old

Lindsey Ellefson | March 25, 2020 @ 6:16 AM



Fox News' Brit Hume defended comments from Texas lieutenant governor Dan Patrick Tuesday night, saying it is "entirely reasonable" that elderly Americans could be fine with dying amid the coronavirus outbreak to save the U.S. economy.

Ageism at Work – A Case Study



Maine has a high share of people in their 50's and 60's and low share of young people relative to the U.S.

411,000 Maine workers will likely leave the workforce in the next two decades, while only 302,000 workers will be available to enter the workforce.

This results in a *gap of 109,000* workers in a total labor force of 700,000.

MAINE

COUNCIL

ON AGING

2013 Making Maine Work

2013 Maine Development Foundation & Chamber of Commerce Report identified several groups of people that offered opportunity to address our workforce needs.

“Of these groups, seniors may provide the greatest opportunity”

Recommendation: Increase Workforce Participation of People 65+

GOAL: Add 12,000 more workers by 2020

“If Maine can achieve New Hampshire’s rate of older worker workforce participation by 2020, we can add 12,000 to our state’s labor force.”

What's Holding (some of) us Back?

Why aren't older workers a key part of our workforce development strategy?

They're here, they're trained, and many want to work. The business case for leveraging the benefits of older workers and building a multi-generation workplace is compelling. So, what's holding us back?

Ageism – or more specifically, our unproductive, and often inaccurate stereotypes about aging, older people, and older workers is a large part of the answer.

Thankfully, the solution is relatively simple...understand age-bias and how it operates in the workplace, be intentional about recruiting and retaining older workers, and use available tools to help you build a robust multi-generational workforce!

Reframing Aging

Reframing Aging



A Social Change Endeavor
designed to improve the
public's understanding of aging

 @ReframingAging

*Original research conducted by the
FrameWorks Institute and sponsored by the
Leaders of Aging Organizations*

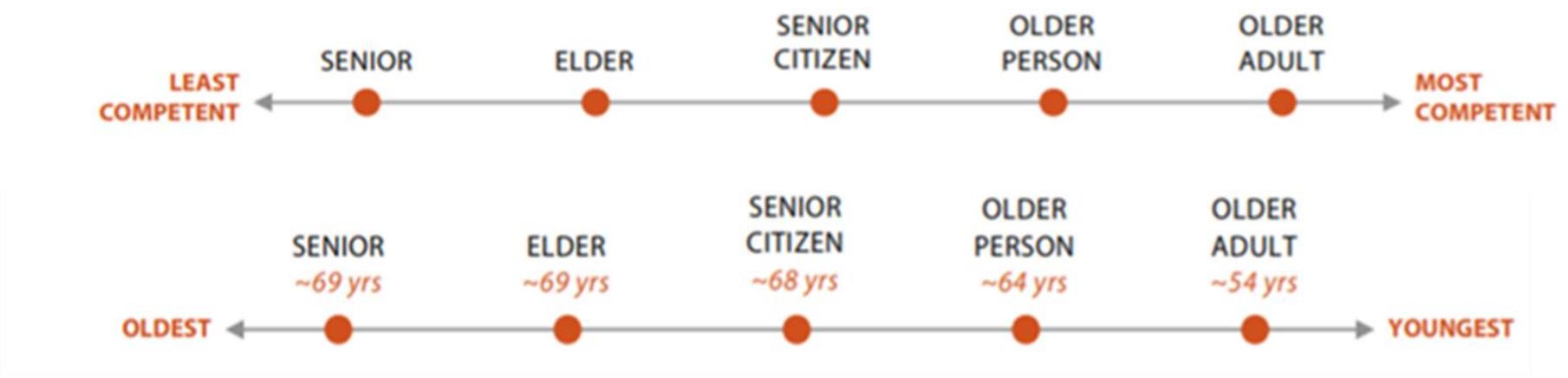


Cultural models are cognitive short cuts we rely on to interpret and understand experiences, thoughts and feelings. They are largely automatic and shape our reaction to information. FrameWorks empirical research found:

- Public perceptions about older people are incomplete and unrealistic: older people are either living a life of leisure or are frail, decrepit, and dependent.
- **Ageism is not considered a “real” problem, as compared to racism, sexism, homophobia, etc.**
- Aging “problems” are considered individual, not systemic – people should have worked harder, family should be stepping up, etc.
- Terms like tsunami and crisis immobilize, polarize, and do not motivate people to action. This can fuel “us versus them” thinking.

Seniors/Elders Least Competent

How do American's view words describing older people:



Conversations Work

“But behind the words [take me behind the barn and shoot me] is an assumption that we can’t write off. Like the grim jokes, it expresses a judgment over which lives are worth living.

Like other kinds of prejudice, ageism doesn’t have to be something we are aware of to work on us. It gets perpetuated by the choices we make even if we think it’s not a factor.”

PPH Editorial, Greg Kesich, January 31, 2021

2021 Examples

“What can a person over 65 master anyway?” Quote from a grant reviewer in relation to a requirement in a art grants program that participants gain some mastery of the technique.

Question on Foundation Eligibility Quiz:

Does your organization conduct its work using Anti-Oppression values?

Anti-Oppression is the work of actively examining, challenging and removing oppressive policies, practices, procedures and norms perpetuated by power inequalities in society and institutions. Anti-oppression values explicitly oppose and strive to undo all forms of oppression, including racism, white supremacy culture, xenophobia, nativism, colonialism, white saviorism, classism, sexism, patriarchy, homophobia, transphobia, ableism, and religious discrimination.

Intention Matters

11,500 babies born each year – every child needs to grow up healthy and ready to take the jobs of Maine’s future. We must be intentional about this.

24,000 people turning 65 each year – every older person should live to their full potential, working, creating, mentoring, governing, etc. We must be intentional about this too.

Maine has the opportunity to lead on intentionally aligning investments to support healthy aging across the full continuum of age – from birth until we take our last breath, whenever that may be. Yellow buses, schools, housing and our workforce challenges can be transformed if we shift our thinking, and everyone wins.

Without intention, we don’t know what we’re losing.

Demographics

	Gray		Hallowell		Eastport		South Portland		Maine	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
65+	1,551	19.2%	575	22.9%	428	31.7%	4,268	16.7%	259,176	19.4%
Men	758	20.4%	254	21.7%	169	28.6%	1,868	43.8%	117,451	18.0%
Women	793	18.1%	321	24.0%	259	34.1%	2,400	56.2%	141,725	20.8%
80+	108	1.3%	220	8.8%	103	7.6%	1,089	4.3%	63,618	4.8%



A Story About Bob



Intersectionality & Historical Bias

	Gray		Hallowell		Eastport		South Portland		Maine	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Median Income of 65+ men living alone	\$56,522		\$50,208		\$22,500		\$41,920		\$27,008	
Median Income of 65+ women living alone	\$35,707		\$38,438		\$15,625		\$25,368		\$22,059	



Biggest gap: \$21k



Smallest gap but lowest overall

What are you funding?

POVERTY

Arts

Equity

Food Security

HOUSING

Workforce

Homelessness

Community

Climate Change

Natural Resources

There is a way to intentionally include older people without shifting mission or priority!