



**AGE Platform Europe**

The voice of older persons at EU level



## **"Tackling Ageism After COVID-19"**

AGE internal workshop

24 November 2020



# House keeping rules

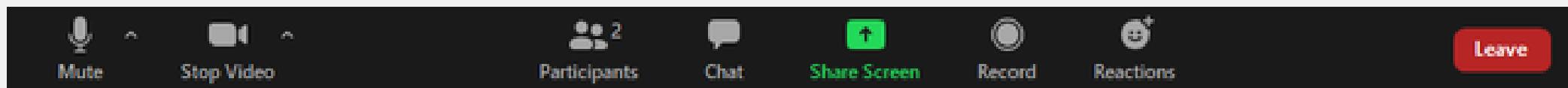
#1 Make yourself comfortable

#2 Mute your mic when not speaking

#3 Mind the oops/ouch rule

#4 Give it a try!

# Unmute and chat



Questions?



Credit: Annie Spratt on Unsplash

# Objectives

**#1 Learn about ageism**  
before/during COVID-19

**#2 Define how to respond**  
to ageism as self-advocates

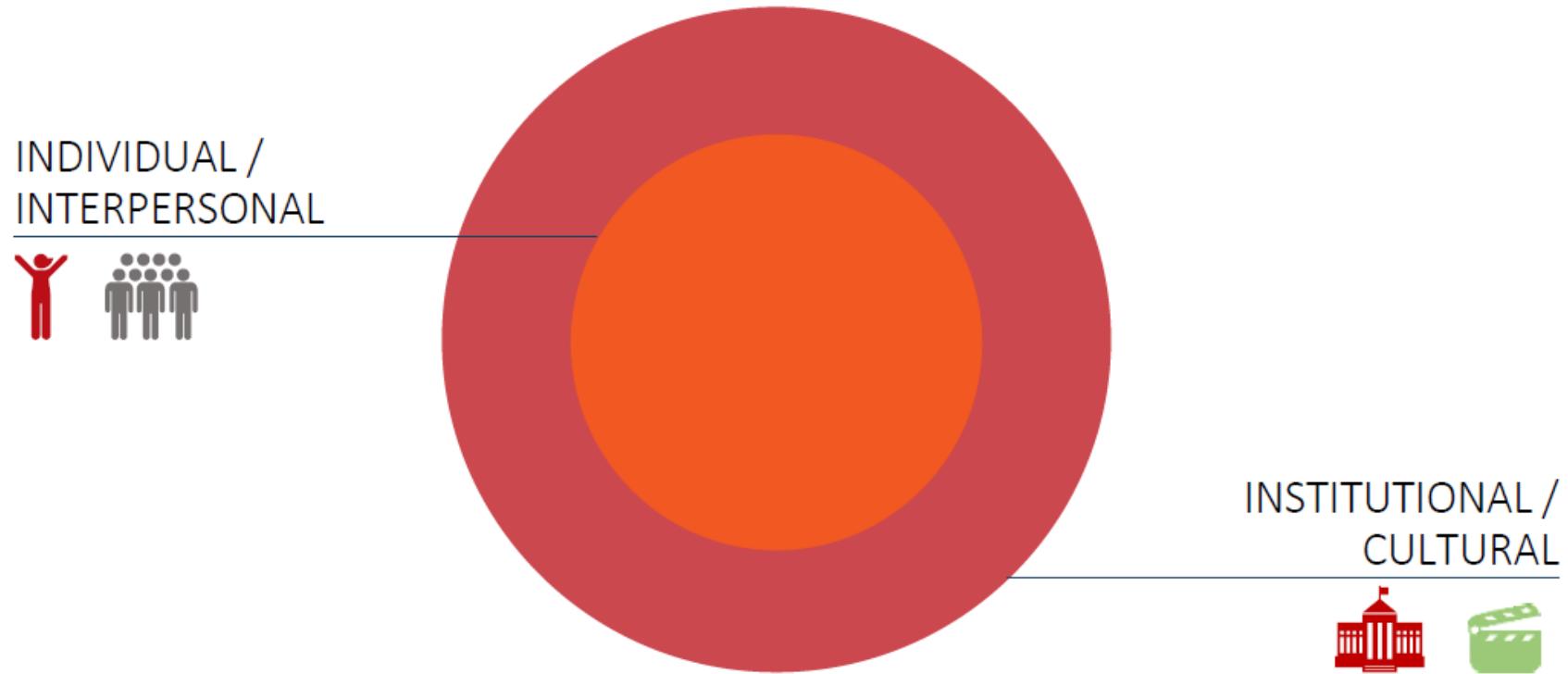
**#3 Identify support needs**  
and tools for members



## **Ageism as a system**

- Ageism means treating people unfairly because of their age (*HelpAge*)
- Most widespread form of discrimination
- Socially accepted

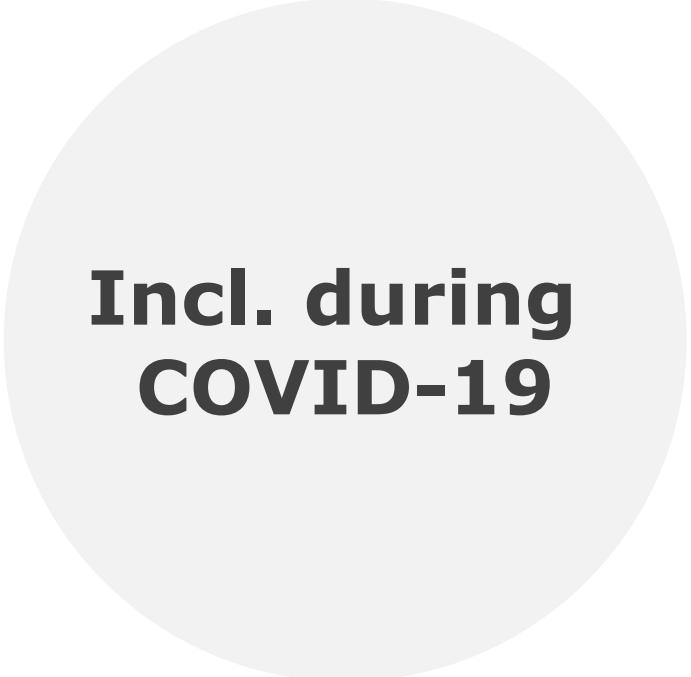
# **Ageism – different levels and contexts**





## **With detrimental impacts**

- Those with negative perceptions of old age have a decreased life expectancy of 7.5 years
- Affects memory, autonomy and self-esteem
- Decreases financial security
- Increased risk of elder abuse
- Drives human rights violations (ex. right to work)
- Less support for age-friendly policies/funding
- Society misses out on experience, knowledge and contributions of older persons → costs

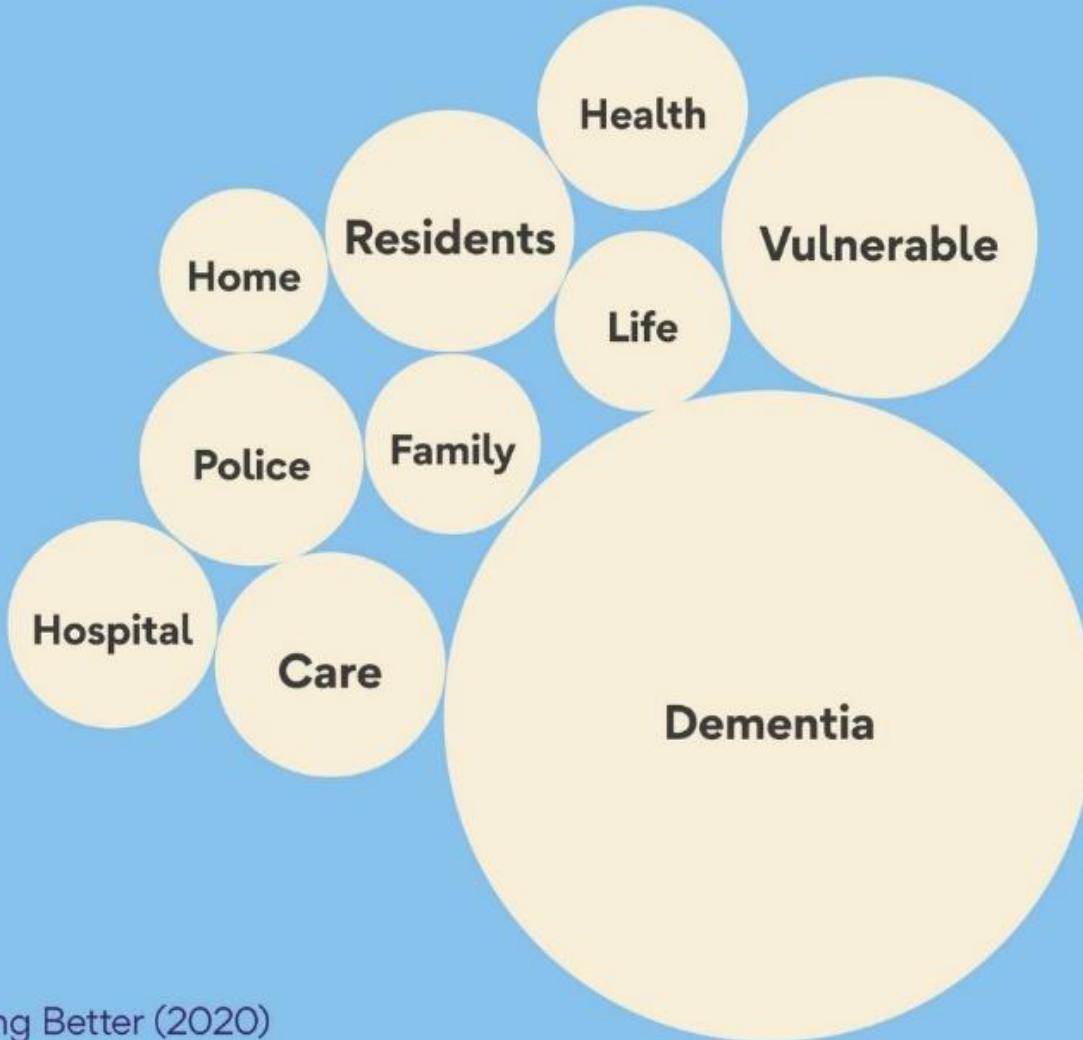


## Incl. during COVID-19

- COVID-19 presented as an old-people virus
- All older people considered vulnerable
- Age-specific measures in some countries
- Absence of consultation of older people
- Lack of support and material in long-term care
- De-prioritisation and discrimination of older people for life-saving interventions
- Older people should sacrifice for economy/other generations (ex. older people's tax)

# Ageism starts with stereotypes

**Top 10 words in news articles that feature ageing and older people**



**Centre for Ageing Better**

Source: 'An old age problem?', Centre for Ageing Better (2020)

# Stereotypes

- Stereotypes define what is expected (look, behaviour, preference, etc.).
- Stereotypes influence our cultural norms.
- Stereotypes define what is normal, what is acceptable.

**It frames the way we think, feel, and act.  
Towards ourselves, and towards others.**

We're exposed early

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Disney's witch



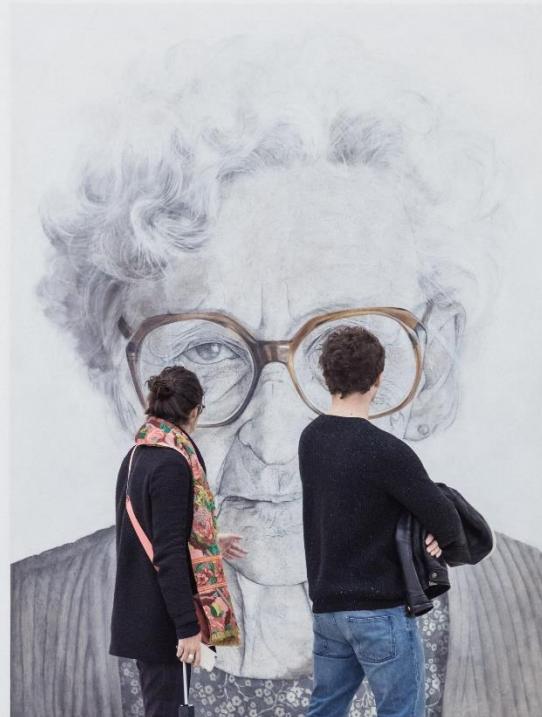
# We're exposed throughout life



# Questions

Do you have questions on these concepts?

Would you add something?



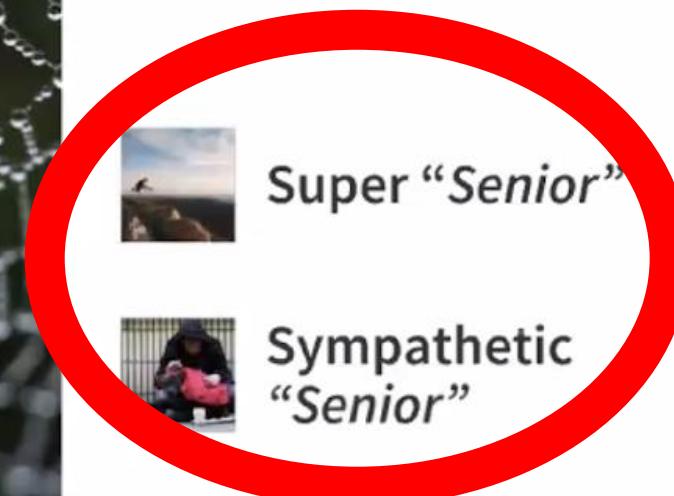
Credit: Ryan Stefan on Unsplash

# How ageism shapes the way we see ageing and older people?

Us      vs.      Them  
Idealised ageing      vs.      Perceived reality  
Individualism      vs.      Social justice



## COMMUNICATIONS TRAPS AND THEIR UNINTENDED CONSEQUENCES



Super “Senior”



Sympathetic  
“Senior”



Ageism as a  
civil rights  
issue



Zero sum game



Stories  
without  
solutions



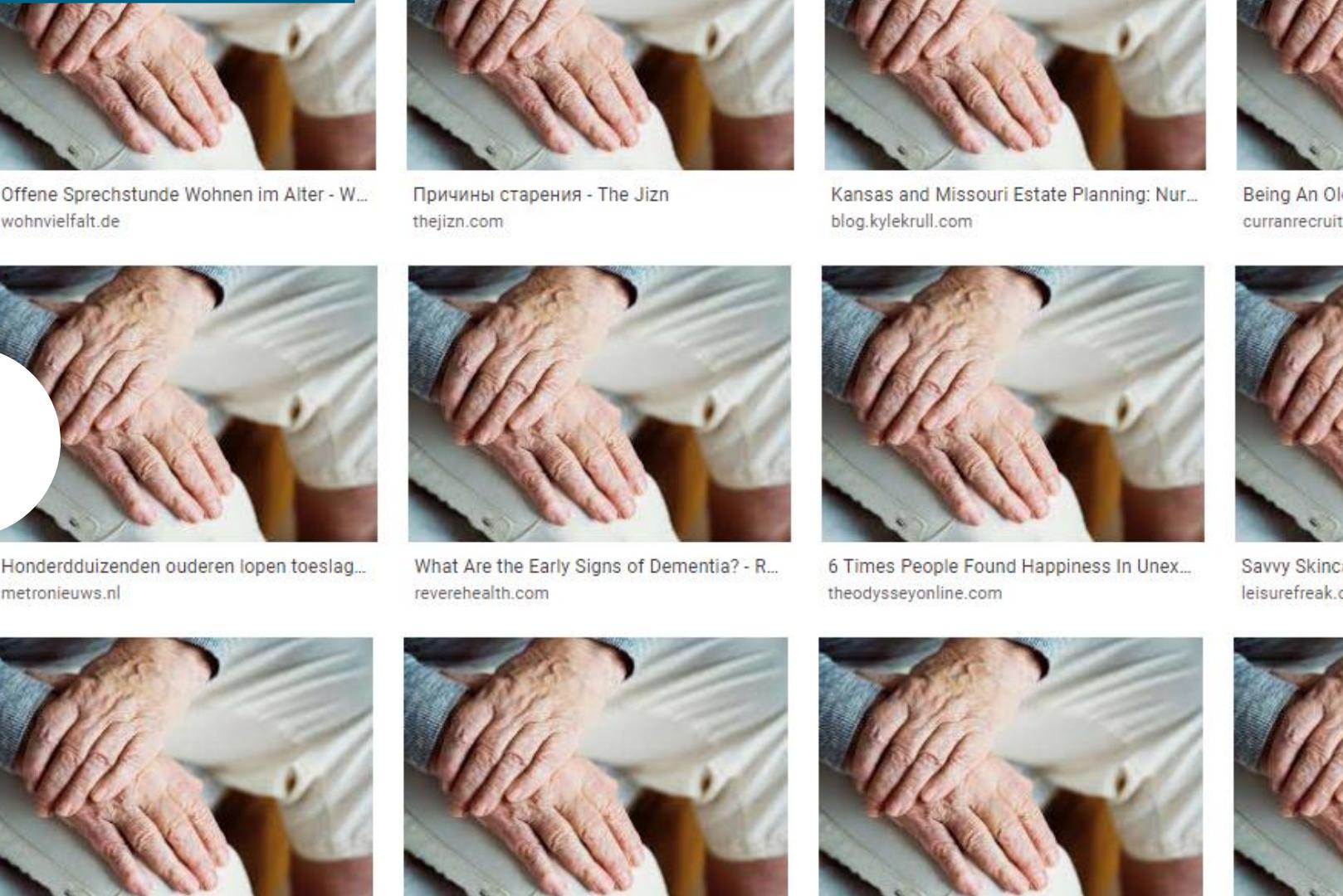
Demographic  
disaster



# Before COVID-19



VS



Offene Sprechstunde Wohnen im Alter - W...  
[wohnvielfalt.de](http://wohnvielfalt.de)



Причины старения - The Jizn  
[thejizn.com](http://thejizn.com)



Kansas and Missouri Estate Planning: Nur...  
[blog.kylekrull.com](http://blog.kylekrull.com)



Being An Old...  
[curranrecruit.com](http://curranrecruit.com)



Honderdduizenden ouderen lopen toeslag...  
[metronieuws.nl](http://metronieuws.nl)



What Are the Early Signs of Dementia? - R...  
[reverehealth.com](http://reverehealth.com)



6 Times People Found Happiness In Unex...  
[theodysseyonline.com](http://theodysseyonline.com)



Savvy Skinca...  
[leisurefreak.co](http://leisurefreak.co)

# During COVID-19



Captain Tom Moore by Guiness World Records

vs



Christalain nursing home in Brussels by Mauricio Lima

**WHEN COVID-19  
HIT, MANY  
ELDERLY WERE  
LEFT TO DIE**



**Are we  
(just) old?**



*I have good days and bad, but I get up every day knowing that I'm the same person I was 10, 20, 30 years ago,  
and while my body can sometimes get tired or broken,  
my spirit, my thoughts, and passions, remain strong and invincible.*

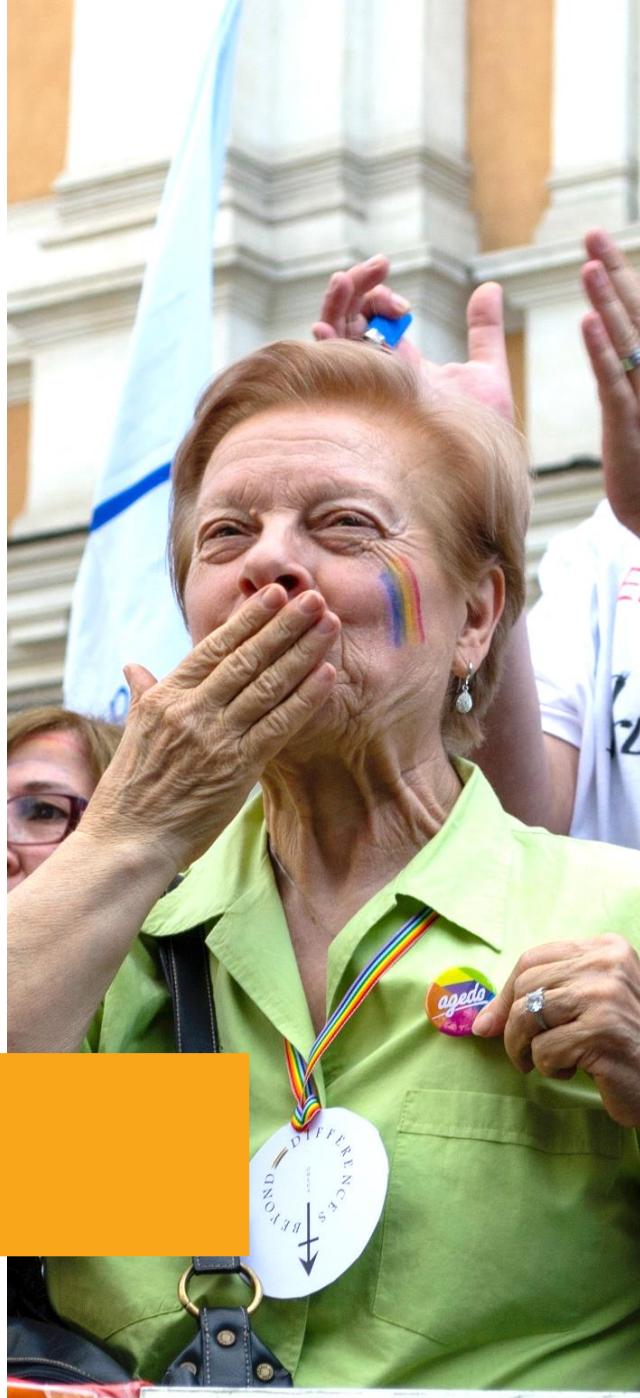
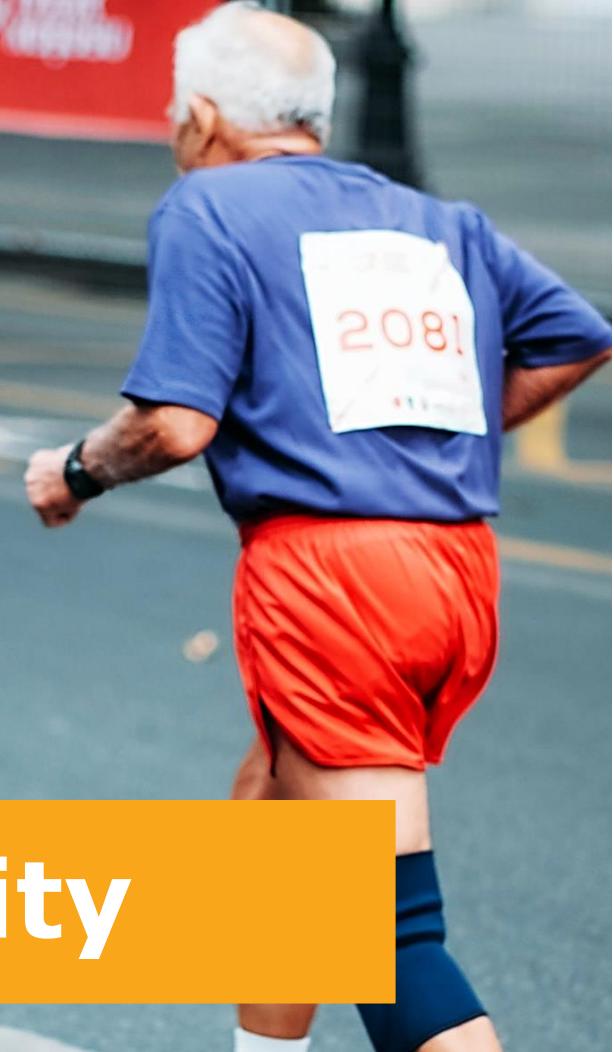
Credit: Age & Opportunity // Extract from the video  
“I am still me” (by AgeOn and the Institute on Ageing)



Lesbians, esp. older lesbians, want connection in spaces that aren't a pub, aren't about dating: "We are passionate, political and radical. We want to stay that way"

#lgbticonferenceberlin2020

Print screen of Ailbhe Smyth from Twitter



# Diversity

# Intersectionality

**Certainly there are very real differences between us of race, age, and sex. But it is not those differences between us that are separating us. It is rather our refusal to recognize those differences, and to examine the distortions which result from our misnaming them and their effects upon human behavior and expectation. (...)**

**My fullest concentration of energy is available to me only when I integrate all the parts of who I am...**

*Age, Race, Class and Sex: Women Redefining Difference*

Audre Lorde, 1980

<https://bit.ly/3pS8rP5>



Age equality

Intergenerational solidarity

Credit: Simon Birt on Unsplash

**The “every generation for itself” mentality that has been perpetuated in recent months, seriously overlooks many of the similar struggles both young and old face in lockdown.**

**Ultimately, we all grow up, we all try to find a way into the labour market, we all carry the inequalities we faced in our lifetime with us into old age.**

*Let's stop playing the Covid-19 generation blame game*  
European Youth Forum and AGE Platform Europe, 2020  
<https://bit.ly/338P8XT>



- Ageing isn't something that happens to us in the second half of our life: it's a lifelong process.
- We age from the moment we are born. In this sense, ageing is another word for living; to be anti-age is to be anti-life.

(Anne Karpf, *How to Age*)

# Questions

How do we respond to ageism?

**At individual level** e.g. "*You're too old for...*"

**At societal level** e.g. "*Let's confine the elderly*"

A photograph of an elderly woman with short, light-colored hair and glasses, wearing a yellow t-shirt and floral pants. She is sitting with her arms crossed, looking off to the side. The background is a bright, overexposed sky and a blue sea.

Comfort break

Please return for 11:05

# How do we respond to ageism?

Focus on behavioural change rather than raising awareness

Equality education in schools, in families, etc. For ex. See representation of older age in children's books to address attitudes towards older age

Influence how society sees older people:  
Role of media/marketing?

Lifecycle approach

Disability/vulnerability doesn't only come with older age

Show contributions of older people (work, silver economy...)

Ageing = Living  
If we don't age, we're dead

Intersectionality to show complexity of living and ageing

Communication/contacts between generations, make visible older people's talents

Individual level: stay in contact with other generations (volunteering, etc.), active engagement in community/society

# **Evidence?**

# **Data?**

# **Reports?**

# **Partner?**

# **Stories?**

# **Action?**

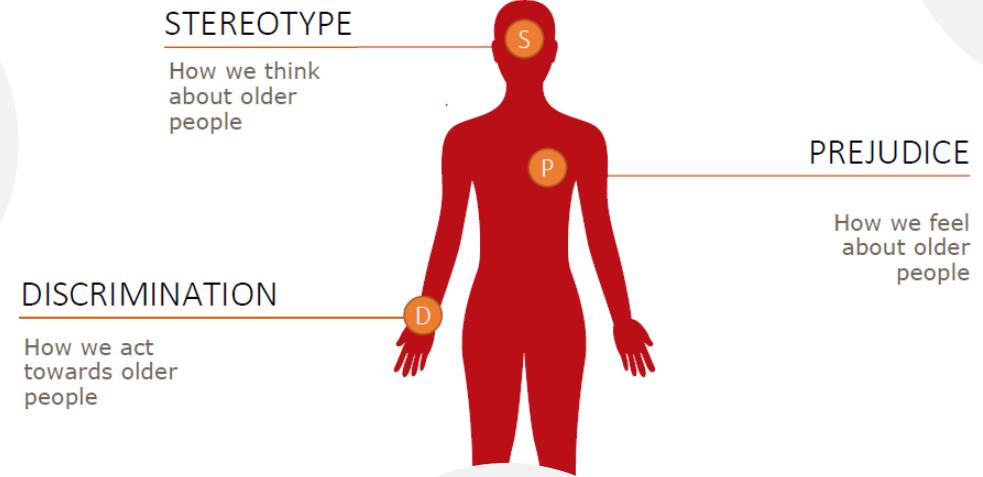
# **Legal?**

# **Humor?**

# **Emotions?**

# **Empathy?**

# **Frustration?**



Credit for the image:  
© WHO / Vânia de la Fuente-Núñez

# Ultimate objective?

At societal level, **equality** and **social justice**

At community level, **interdependence** and **mutual support**

At individual level, **autonomy** and **freedom**

Would you change something?



What's the path?

# HOW DO WE GO FROM INDIVIDUAL EFFORTS TO MOVEMENT BUILDING?





# Questions

Do you mobilise against ageism with your organisation?

How do you/would you do it?

What is the role of AGE?

# Acting together

Options available...

- **Events** for the release of WHO Report on Ageism
- **#AgeingEqual** platform for older people's voices?
- **Trainings** to/by AGE members (train the trainers)?
- **Toolkits** to run local conversations about ageism?
- **Guides** for a communication free from stereotypes?

Other ideas? Other needs?

# Take-Away

What are you taking home?

Did the workshop meet  
your expectations?

What should be our next step?



Credit: Sacha Verheij on Unsplash



## Want to know more about us?



[www.age-platform.eu](http://www.age-platform.eu)

[info@age-platform.eu](mailto:info@age-platform.eu)



@AGE\_PlatformEU



AGE Platform Europe



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