

AGEISM'S INFLUENCE ON HOW OLDER PEOPLE ARE VIEWED AND HOW THEY VIEW THEMSELVES



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CCNA: Social Inclusion and Stigma Working
Group

HOW DO YOU SEE YOURSELF AGING?



How do you think you will be 20-30-40 years from now?



Stereotypical
Older adult



Not all older adults
are created
equal....

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IYdNjrUs4NM>

Millennials Show Us What 'Old' Looks Like
| Disrupt Aging (American Association of
Retired people; AARP)

<http://wgntv.com/2017/01/18/meet-jay-lavery-the-dancing-farmer-whose-barn-dance-went-viral/>

12,029,137 views

KEEP AN OPEN MIND

- Clinicians work with older adults who may have complex health problems/high level needs; that doesn't mean they are a homogenous group
- Estimate: 1.5 million older adults are implicated in informal care
- Challenge: ageism, be weary of stereotypes



WHAT IS STIGMA?

“stigma is the possession of (or the belief that one possesses) some attribute, or characteristic that conveys a social identity that is devalued in a particular social context”



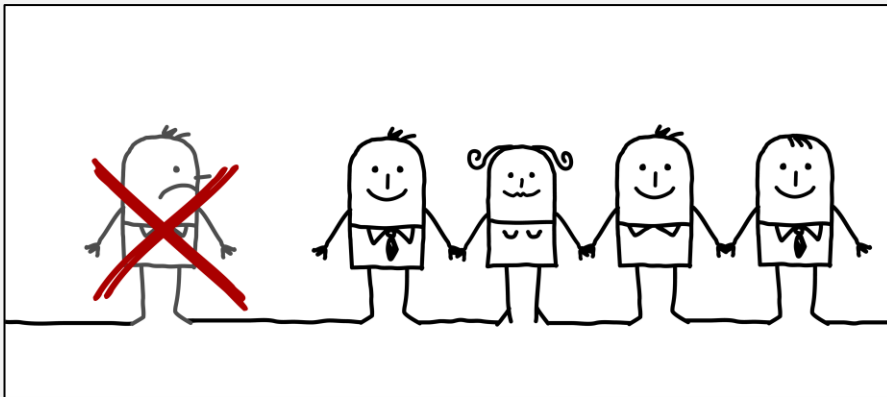
Crocker, Major, & Steele, 1998

WHY IS THE STUDY OF STIGMA SO IMPORTANT?

- We are social beings
- Social Inclusion/exclusion---> effects on health
- Environmental factors that increase the risk of premature death:
 - Smoking
 - Pollution
 - Sedentary lifestyle
 - **Social isolation**
- Meta-analysis: Social relations and mortality (Holt-Lundstad et al., 2010 et 2015)
 - 148 studies (308,849 participants)
 - Social isolation = increased probability of mortality (29%)

PUBLIC STIGMA

- When the general public endorses stereotypes about disease, disability and aging and discriminates against a particular group
- Strongly influenced by medias (Haller et al., 2006)
- Example: members of a neighborhood association endorse the stereotype that people living with HIV/AIDS are “contagious” could protest against plans to build an HIV clinic in their area



Jones & Corrigan, 2014

SELF-STIGMA

- Public stereotypes directed inwardly, towards one's self
- Example: A person with an intellectual disability (ID) could
 - (a) be conscious that “most people” think that people with ID are stupid
 - (b) agree with this stereotype “they’re right” and
 - (c) apply it to themselves “ I am stupid” (Corrigan et al., 2006)



PUBLIC STIGMA, AGING &
THE MEDIA

PUBLIC STIGMA: AGING, HEALTH CONDITIONS, ASSISTIVE DEVICES AND THE MEDIA



The Gerontologist
cite as: *The Gerontologist*, 2015, 1–11
doi:10.1093/geront/gnv094
Advance Access publication July 28, 2015

OXFORD

Research Article

Stereotypes Associated With Age-related Conditions and Assistive Device Use in Canadian Media

Sarah Anne Fraser, PhD,^{*,1,2} Virginia Kenyon, BSc,^{2,3} Martine Lagacé, PhD,^{4,5} Walter Wittich, PhD, FAAO, CLVT,^{6,7} and Kenneth Edmund Southall, PhD^{1,2}

¹The School of Social Work, McGill University, Montréal, Canada. ²CRIR/Institut Raymond Dewar, Montréal, Canada. ³The School of Physical and Occupational Therapy, McGill University, Montréal, Canada. ⁴The Department of Communication, University of Ottawa, Ottawa, Canada. ⁵Centre de Recherche de l'Institut Universitaire de Gériatrie de Montréal, Canada. ⁶Université de Montréal, École d'Optométrie, Montréal, Canada. ⁷CRIR/MAB-Mackay Rehabilitation Centre, Montréal, Canada.

GOAL OF THE STUDY

- Examine how the Canadian media contributes to create and maintain ageist stereotypes in relation to the health and assistive devices
- Why? If there is a public stigma of older adults in relation to technical aid use, it could reduce help-seeking and use of technical aids



METHODS

- 4 years of articles 2009–2013
- Articles containing:
 - Ageing (old, baby boomer)
 - Health conditions associated to ageing (loss of hearing, vision, mobility, cognition)
 - Stigma (stereotype, prejudice, discrimination)
- 9818 articles found in Factiva Database
- **65** included for critical discourse analysis (*Fairclough, 2003 & Van Dijk, 2008*)



Poll Question:

OF THE FOLLOWING AGEIST STEREOTYPES
THAT EMERGED...WHICH ONE DO YOU
THINK WAS MOST FREQUENT IN THE MEDIA?

STEREOTYPES OLDER ADULTS...

1. Are incompetent
2. Are a burden on the economy
3. Will face inevitable decline
4. Are vulnerable
5. "Freaks"
6. Are ugly
7. Are lost causes
8. Are worthless
9. Are all the same
10. Are a weight on others
11. Are bad drivers
12. Are affected by cognitive impairment
13. Suffer (because of their health conditions)

Which of the 13 do you think were the most frequent?



STEREOTYPES OLDER ADULTS...

1. **Are incompetent**
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STEREOTYPES APPLIED IN DIFFERENT CONTEXTS

- **AUTONOMY:** Health declines and use of assistive devices to maintain autonomy
- **HELP-SEEKING:** Changes in health “normal” for older↓ adults help-seeking behaviour
- **EMPLOYMENT:** Dichotomy: “older workers rock!” vs will we have to accommodate
- **POLITICS:** Burden on health system: older adults vulnerable “we” must take care of “them”

«GOLDEN» QUOTE:



... my golden age has slowly turned into a Band-Aid age... The magnifying glass became quite useful (Band-Aid 1) ... The eyesight and the hearing diminished ... The cataract was removed (No. 6) ... So I gave myself the push and asked for Band-Aid 7, a hearing aid. People tell me I look well rested and have not changed a bit. I don't tell friends about the Band-Aids I use, though."

The Globe and Mail, Lelia Sponsel, Globe Life, L6, 4/6/2010

CURRENT CRITICAL DISCOURSE OF OLDER ADULTS PRE AND PERI COVID-19

- Looking at discourse analysis of Québec media representations of long-term care homes pre- and peri Covid-19
- Inadequate funding and overwhelmed staff
- Subsequent loss of life
- *Social Isolation & Psychological Distress*

Words frequently used:
« Vulnerable »
« Suffer »



Olivia Archambault
University of
Ottawa

Without claiming to be an expert, he quickly realized that his mother seemed to be suffering more psychological distress than (distress) from the virus.

"It's not hard to understand. There's a strong psychological component to it," he says. But I'm not pointing fingers at anyone. They're overwhelmed.

"Then Ms. XX almost instantly began to feel better. Her son was helping her feed her, who has mobility problems. He combed her hair and hummed her favorite songs. (May 3, 2020; Jonathan Tremblay; Journal de Montréal; section: *Actualités*)



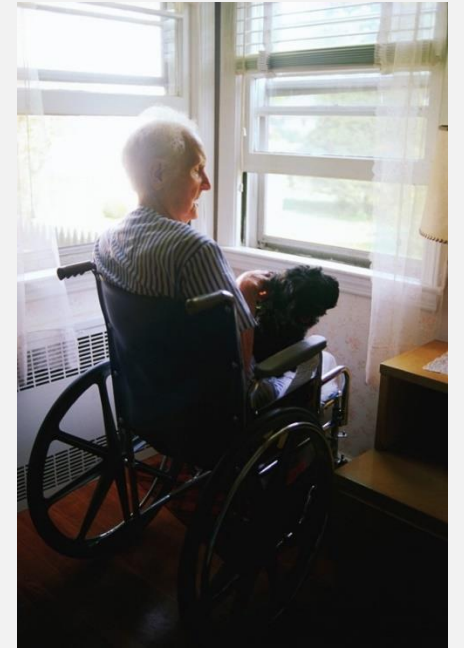
DESCRIPTIVE AGE STEREOTYPES

Positive Stereotypes



Shared by young, middle-aged, and older adults

Negative Stereotypes



Hummert, Garstka, Shaner & Strahm (1994)

PRESCRIPTIVE AGE STEREOTYPES

Identity: act your age

Succession: get out of the way

Consumption: taking more than your fair share

North and Fiske (2012)

Identity



Consumption

Succession

VIEWS OF OUR OWN AGING



UNIQUENESS OF AGING STEREOTYPES: INTERNALIZATION



View of
aging

VIEWS OF AGING MATTER

POWER OF AGING STEREOTYPES: ACTIVATING NEGATIVE AGING STEREOTYPES

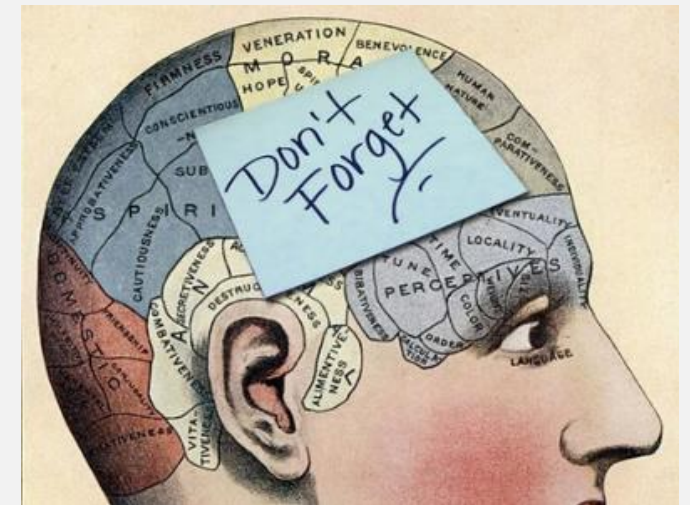
Elevates
cardiovascular stress
responses (Levy et al., 2000;
2008)



Impairs motor
performance (Levy &
Lefheit-Limson, 2009; Levy,
2000)



Impairs memory
function (Hess, Hinson, &
Statham, 2004; Levy, 1996; Levy
& Lefheit-Limson, 2009)



POWER OF AGING STEREOTYPES

VIEWS OF AGING

More negative views of aging:



- Experience more hearing decline (Levy, Slade, & Gill, 2006)
- More likely to experience worse health in later life (Levy, Zonderman, Slade, & Ferrucci, 2009)

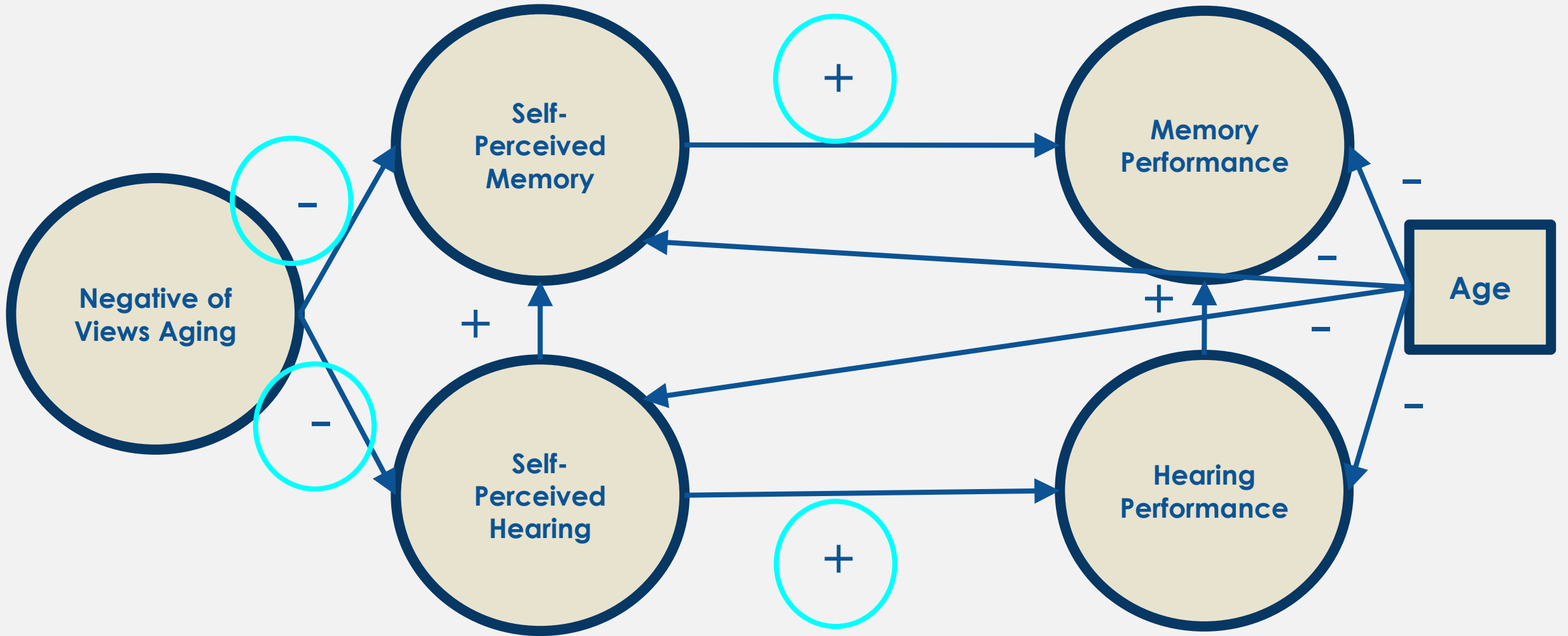


STUDY: VIEWS OF AGING, HEARING, & MEMORY

How do older adults' views of aging relate to their self-perceptions of memory and hearing ability and to their performance?

Chasteen, Pichora-Fuller, Dupuis, Smith, & Singh (2015). *Psychology and Aging*





Chasteen, Pichora-Fuller, Dupuis, Smith, & Singh (2015). *Psychology and Aging*

VIEWS OF AGING AND AGEISM

AGEISM

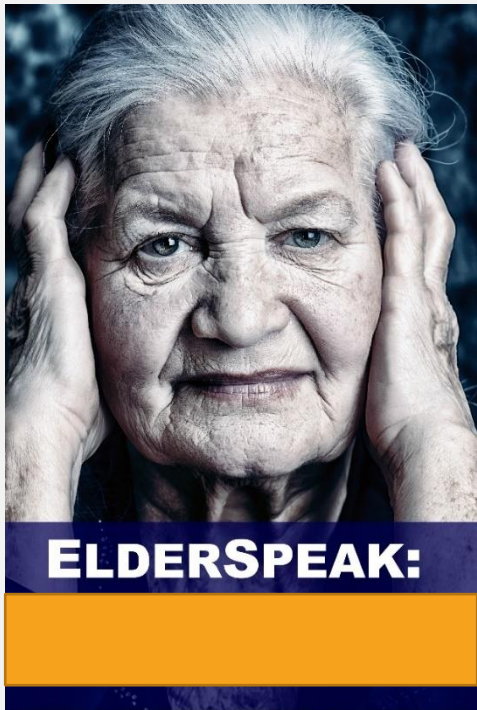
- The stereotyping, prejudice, and discrimination against people on the basis of their age.
- One of the most socially normalized prejudices



STUDY: APPROPRIATENESS OF AGEISM

Types of ageism

Benevolent vs Hostile



Degree of closeness

Family/friend vs



Horhota, Chasteen, & Crumley-Branyon
(2019)

Younger family members (e.g., children, grandchildren)

Same-age family members (e.g., spouse, siblings)

Familiar service workers (e.g., doctors, nurses, cashiers, hairstylists)

Unfamiliar service workers

Friends

N=424 young,
middle-aged,
older adults

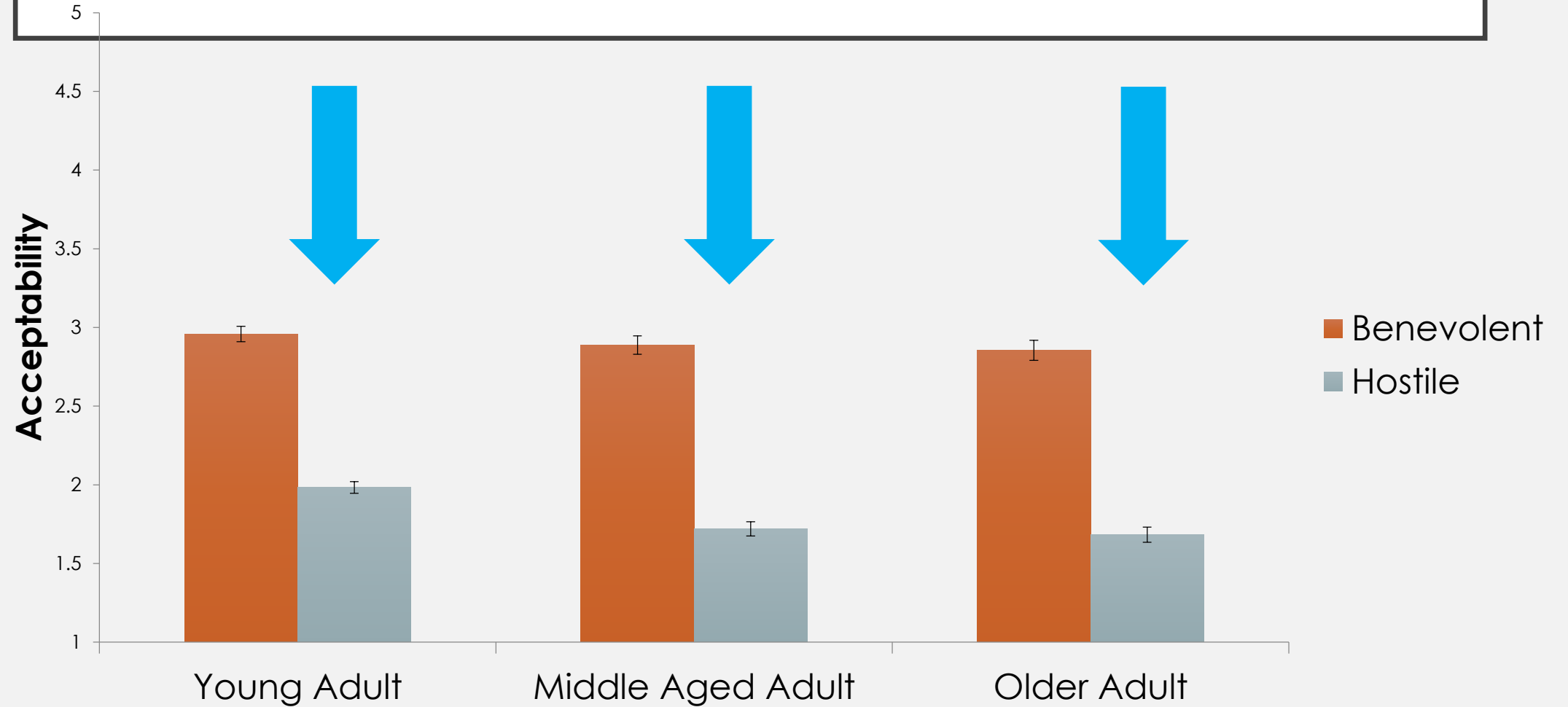
Acceptability
of 30
benevolent &
hostile ageist
acts

5 degrees of
closeness:
same-aged
family to
unfamiliar
worker

Calling someone an insulting name
related to their age. (H)

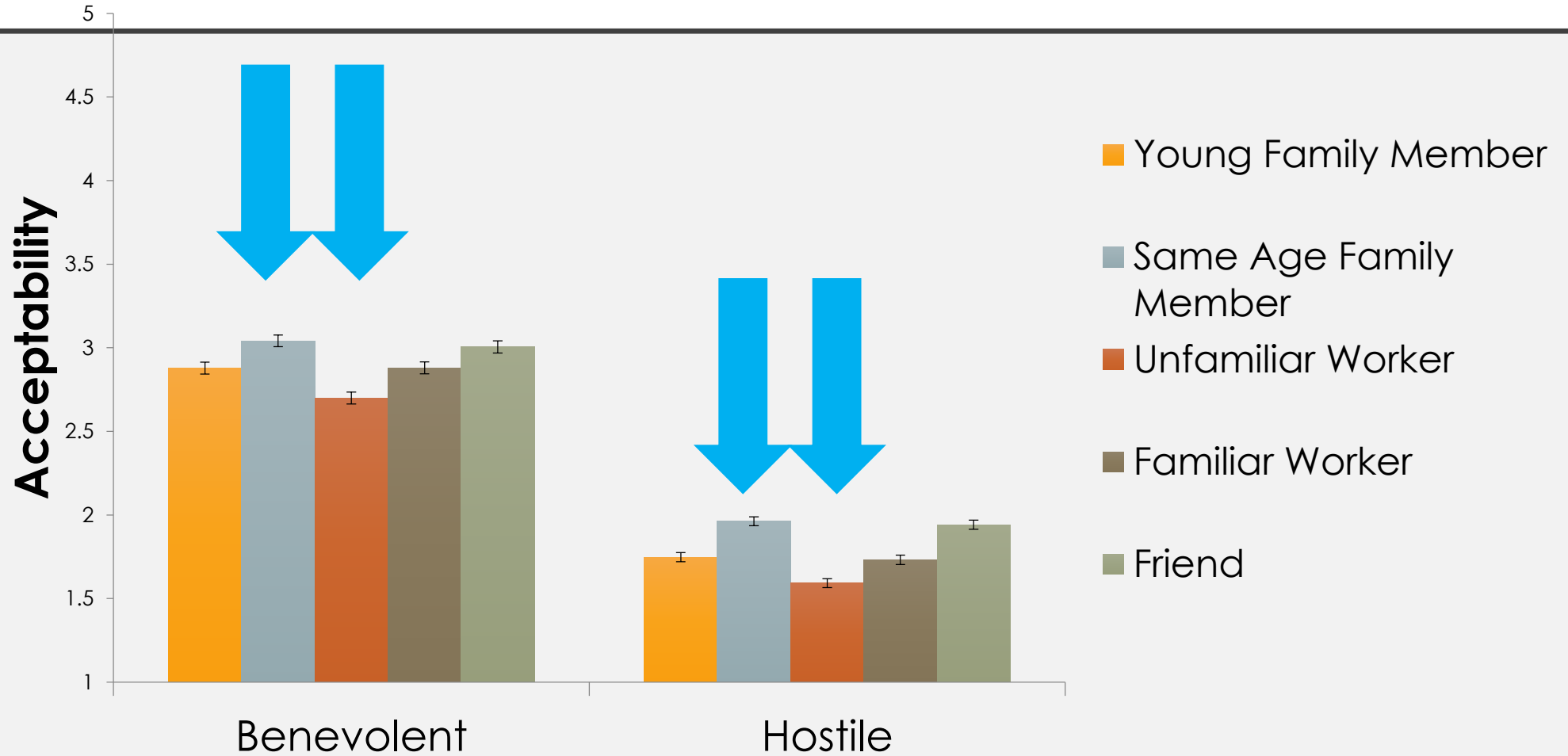
Using simple words when talking to older
people so that they can understand
more easily (B)

BENEVOLENT AGEISM MORE ACCEPTABLE



Horhota, Chasteen, & Crumley-Branyon
(2019)

CLOSENESS OF PERPETRATOR MATTERS

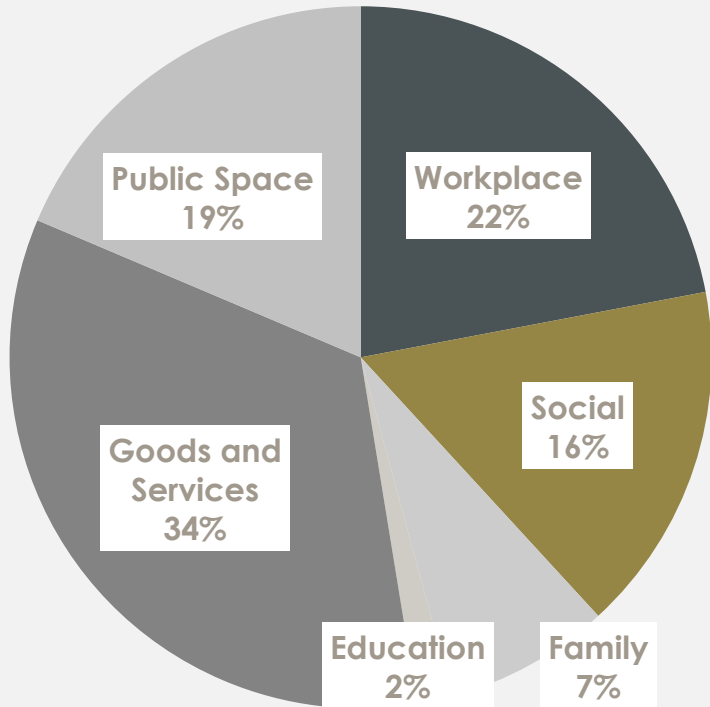


Horhota, Chasteen, & Crumley-Branyon (2019)

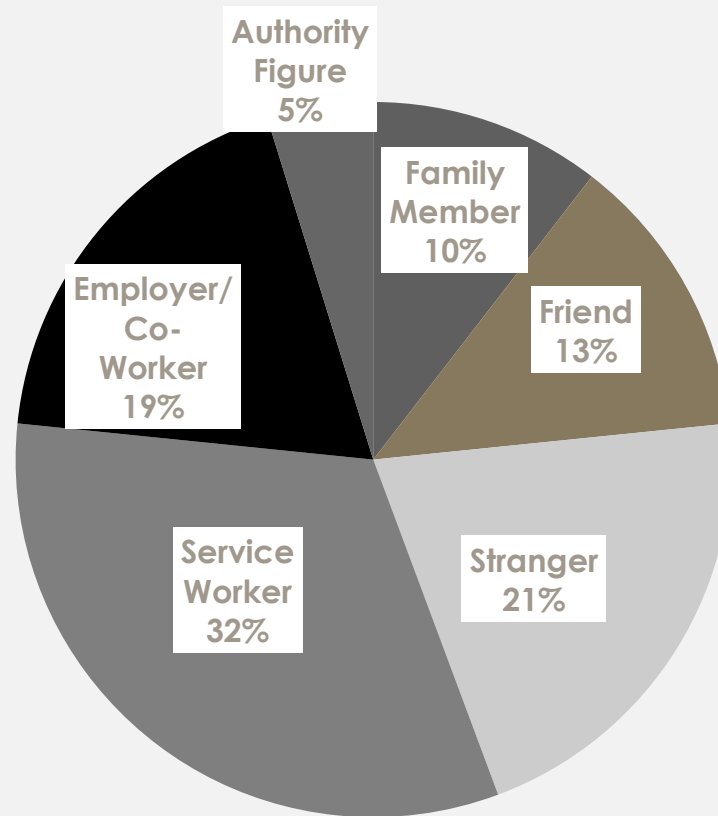
EXPERIENCES OF AGEISM

STUDY: OLDER ADULTS' EXPERIENCES WITH AGEISM

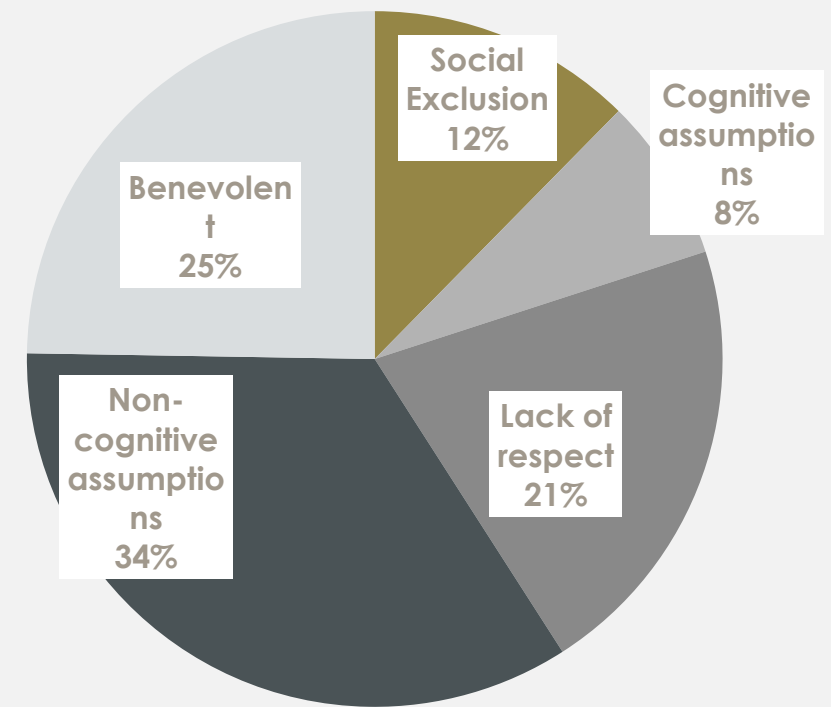
Domain



Perpetrator



Content



Chasteen, Horhota, & Crumley-Branyon (2020)

CHALLENGING VIEWS OF AGING

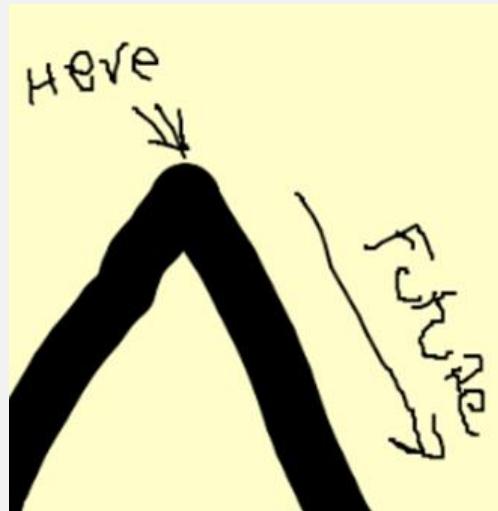
CHALLENGING VIEWS OF AGING

- Activating incremental views (Plaks & Chasteen, 2013)
- AgingPlus Program (Brothers & Diehl, 2017)
- Reframing Aging Initiative
(<https://www.asaging.org/reframing-aging>)
- Confront ageism: set new norms re: acceptability

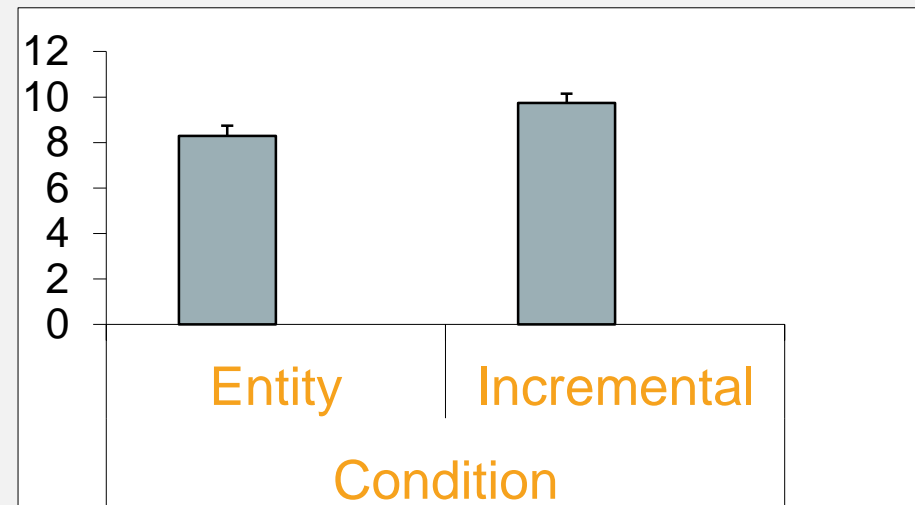
ACTIVATE INCREMENTAL VIEWS OF AGING

Lay theories of abilities

- Entity: abilities are fixed
 - Essentialist beliefs of aging: aging is a fixed process that is uncontrollable
- Incremental: abilities are malleable



Recall Performance



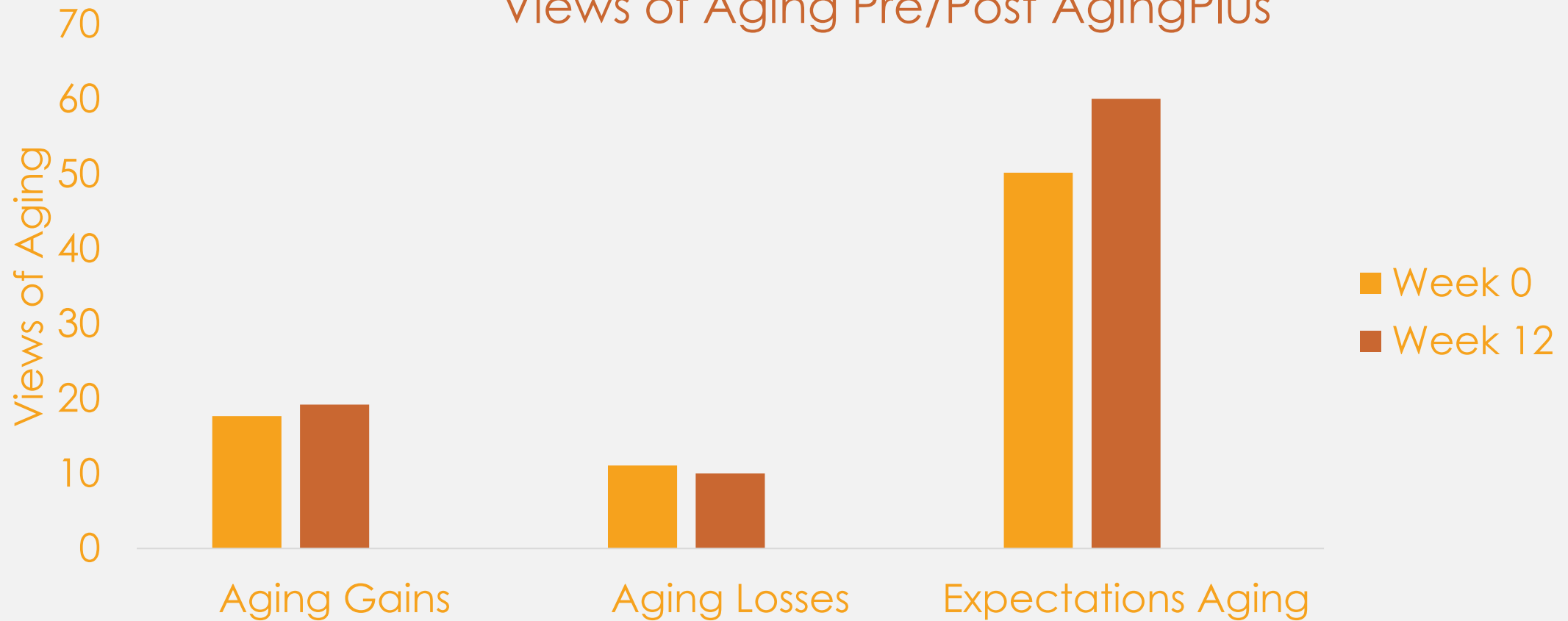
CHALLENGING VIEWS OF AGING

- Activating incremental views (Plaks & Chasteen, 2013)
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(<https://www.asaging.org/reframing-aging>)
- Confront ageism: set new norms re: acceptability

AGINGPLUS PROGRAM

(BROTHERS & DIEHL, 2017)

Views of Aging Pre/Post AgingPlus



CHALLENGING NEGATIVE VIEWS OF AGING

- Activating incremental views (Plaks & Chasteen, 2013)
- AgingPlus Program (Brothers & Diehl, 2017)
- **Reframing Aging Initiative** (<https://www.asaging.org/reframing-aging>)
- **Confront ageism**
 - Set new norms



REFRAMING & CONFRONTING AGEISM

- Contest media representations of older adults that are ageist
- Recent work with Martine Lagacé, Bienvenue Bongé et al. and our CCNA team:

COMMENTARY

Ageism and COVID-19: what does our society's response say about us?

SARAH FRASER^{1,†}, MARTINE LAGACÉ^{2,†}, BIENVENU BONGUÉ³, NDATTÉ NDEYE³, JESSICA GUYOT³,
LAUREN BECHARD⁴, LINDA GARCIA⁵, VANESSA TALER⁶, CCNA Social Inclusion and Stigma Working

Age and Ageing 2020; **00**: 1–4
doi: 10.1093/ageing/afaa097

- Annotated version published in *Le Devoir*, French media publication in Québec; *Il faut mettre fin à l'âgisme*, Texte collectif, 18 avril/2020; section idées

REFRAMING & CONFRONTING AGEISM

- Contest media representations of older adults that are ageist
- Recent editorial by leading researchers on age stereotypes and ageism:
- Solicit the views, opinions, voices of older adults and their caregivers



Journals of Gerontology: Psychological Sciences
cite as: *J Gerontol B Psychol Sci Soc Sci*, 2020, Vol. XX, No. XX, 1–4
doi:10.1093/geronb/gbaa051
Advance Access publication April 16, 2020

OXFORD

Editorial

Aging in Times of the COVID-19 Pandemic: Avoiding Ageism and Fostering Intergenerational Solidarity

Liat Ayalon, PhD,^{1,◊} Alison Chasteen, PhD,^{2,◊} Manfred Diehl, PhD,^{3,◊} Becca R. Levy, PhD,⁴ Shevaun D. Neupert, PhD,^{5,◊} Klaus Rothermund, PhD,⁶ Clemens Tesch-Römer, PhD,⁷ and Hans-Werner Wahl, PhD^{8,*}

CONCLUSIONS

- Age stereotypes and ageism are prevalent and affect our views of aging
- How we view aging matters
 - Influences our sensory, physical, cognitive, and emotional well-being
- Interventions to improve views of aging are needed
- Viewing aging less through the lens of age stereotypes may open us up to opportunities



DAVID BOWIE

Aging is an extraordinary process where you become the person you always should have been.

seniorplanet.org

Thank you

Kathy Pichora-Fuller, UT Mississauga

Jason Plaks, UT St. George

Michelle Horhota, Furman University

Intergroup Relations Lab, UT St. George

Martine Lagacé, uOttawa

Walter Wittich, uMontréal

Kenneth Southall & Virginia Kenyon, uMcGill

Bienvenu Bongue, Ste-Étienne France

Lauren Bechard, uWaterloo

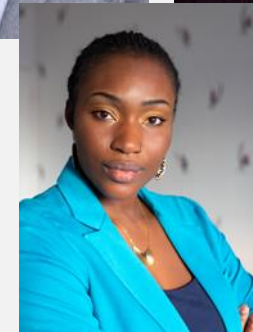
Jessica Guyot & Ndatté Ndeye, Ste-Étienne

Our participants!!

Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council

Canadian Institutes of Health Research

**Ministère de la famille et des aînés: Program:
"Québec ami des aînés."**



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