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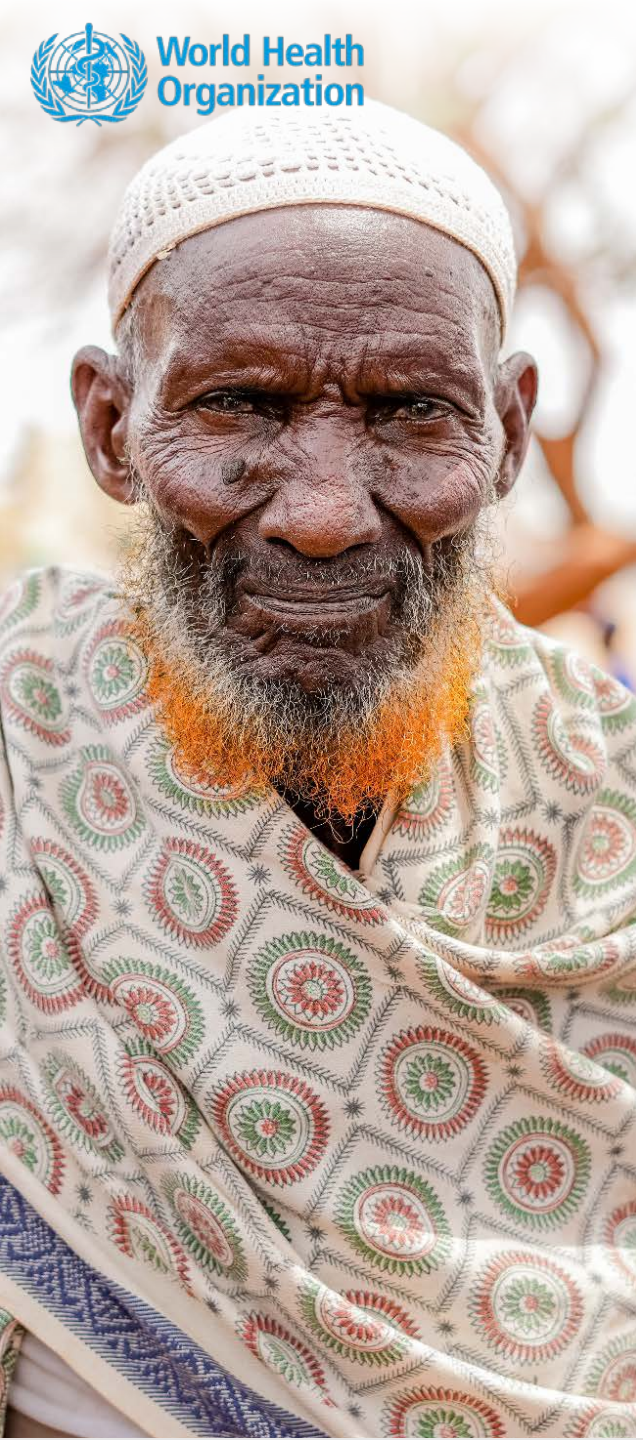

ICOPE

INTEGRATED CARE FOR OLDER PEOPLE

AGEISM

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Learning Objectives

By the end of this module, you will:

- Describe ageism and its impact.
- Classify different types of ageism.
- Identify common myths about ageing.
- Explain the impact of ageism on individuals and society.
- Comprehend various strategies and recommended actions to tackle ageism.

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Introduction

Age is one of the first things we notice about other people.

Ageism arises when age is used to categorise and divide people in ways that lead to harm, disadvantage and injustice and erode solidarity across generations.

What Does Ageism Refer To?

Ageism refers to:

How we think
(Stereotypes)

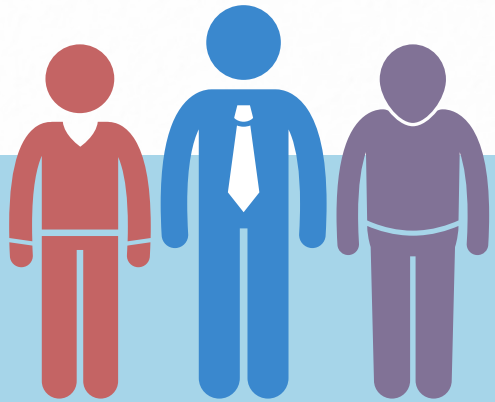
How we feel
(Prejudice)

How we act
(Discrimination)

towards others or ourselves based on age

Ageism Across Generations

Ageism takes on different forms across the life course.



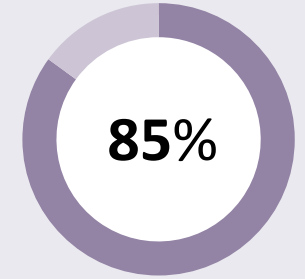
A teenager might, for instance, be ridiculed for starting a political movement.

Both older and younger people might be denied a job because of their age.

An older person might be excluded of possible health interventions simply because of his/her chronological age.

Some Stats on Ageism

A systematic review in 2020 showed that in 85 per cent of 149 studies, age determined who received certain medical procedures or treatments.



A survey shows that many older workers face age discrimination.

64%

Older workers believe age discrimination is present at work.

41%

Workers have experienced it in the past three years.

In the United States of America (USA), a 2020 study showed ageism in the form of negative age stereotypes and self-perceptions led to excess annual costs of US$63 billion for the eight most expensive health conditions.

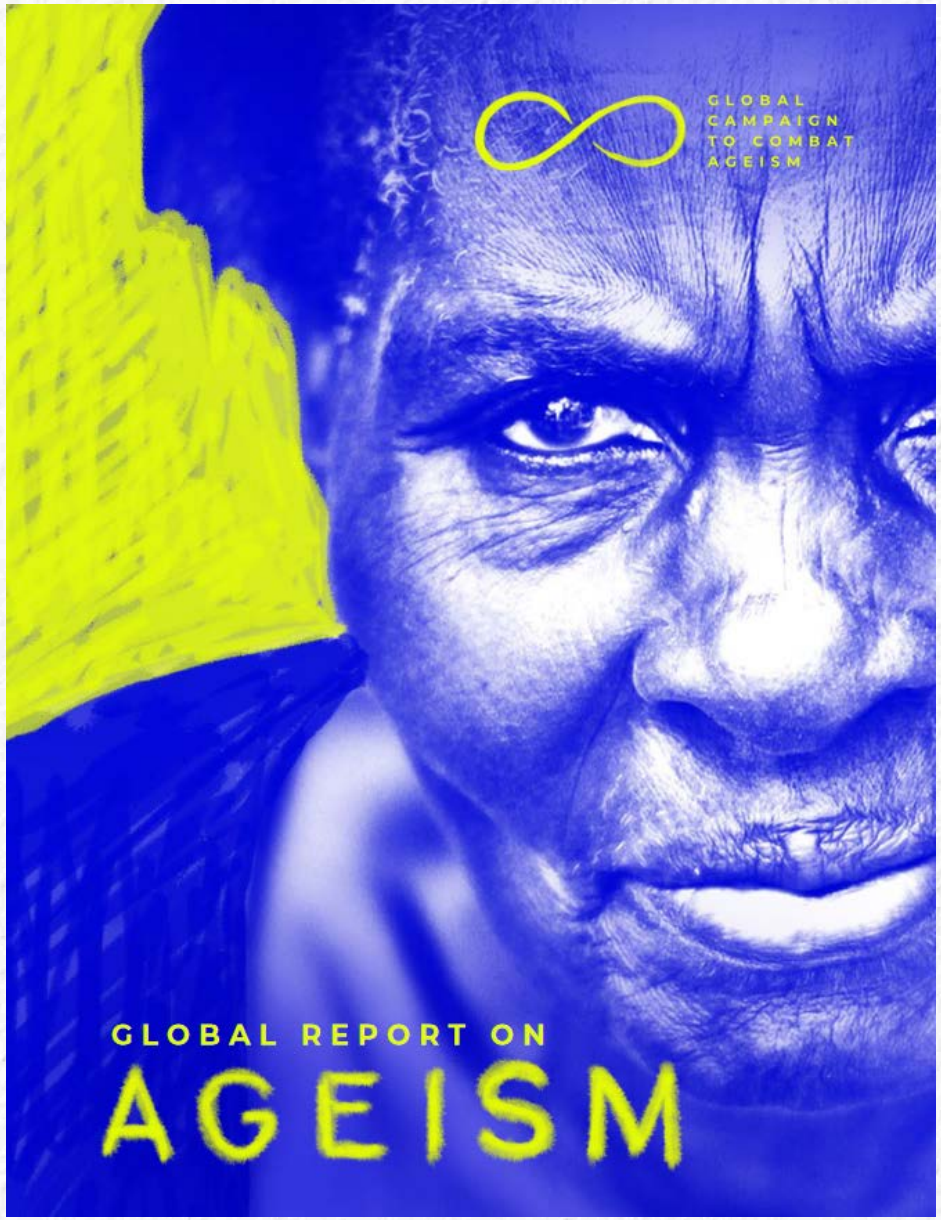
Ageism's Ubiquity

1 in 2 people worldwide is ageist against older people and, in Europe, more younger people report ageism than other age groups.

Ageism affects us throughout life and exists in our institutions, our relationships and ourselves.

Popular Myths of ageing and its Facts

Myths	Facts
"To be old is to be sick"	The majority of older people are able to perform functions necessary for daily living and to manage independently until very advanced ages.
"You can't teach an old dog new tricks"	Older people are capable of learning new things and continue to do so over the life course.
"Too little, too late"	Never too late to gain benefits, especially from recommended healthy behaviours and interventions.
"Life's lottery is won at birth"	Genetic factors play a relatively small role in longevity and quality of life.
"Don't judge a book by its cover"	The majority of older people with partners and without major health problems are sexually active.
"Older people don't pull their own weight"	The majority of older people who do not work for pay are engaged in productive roles within their families or the community at large.



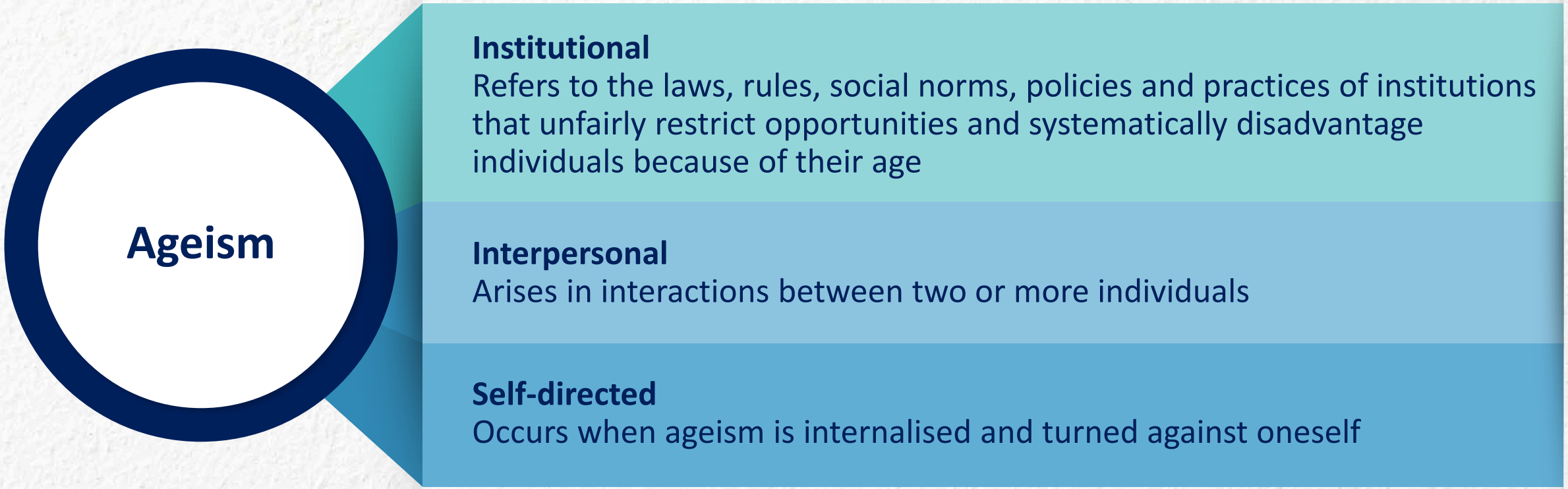
Global Report on Ageism

In 2021, WHO, OHCHR, UNFPA and UNDESA published the Global Report on Ageism. The report brings together the best available evidence on the nature and magnitude of ageism, its determinants and its impact on health and wellbeing.

It outlines what strategies work to prevent and counter ageism, identifies gaps and proposes future lines of research to improve our understanding of ageism.

The driving vision of the Global Campaign to combat ageism is to create a World for all ages.

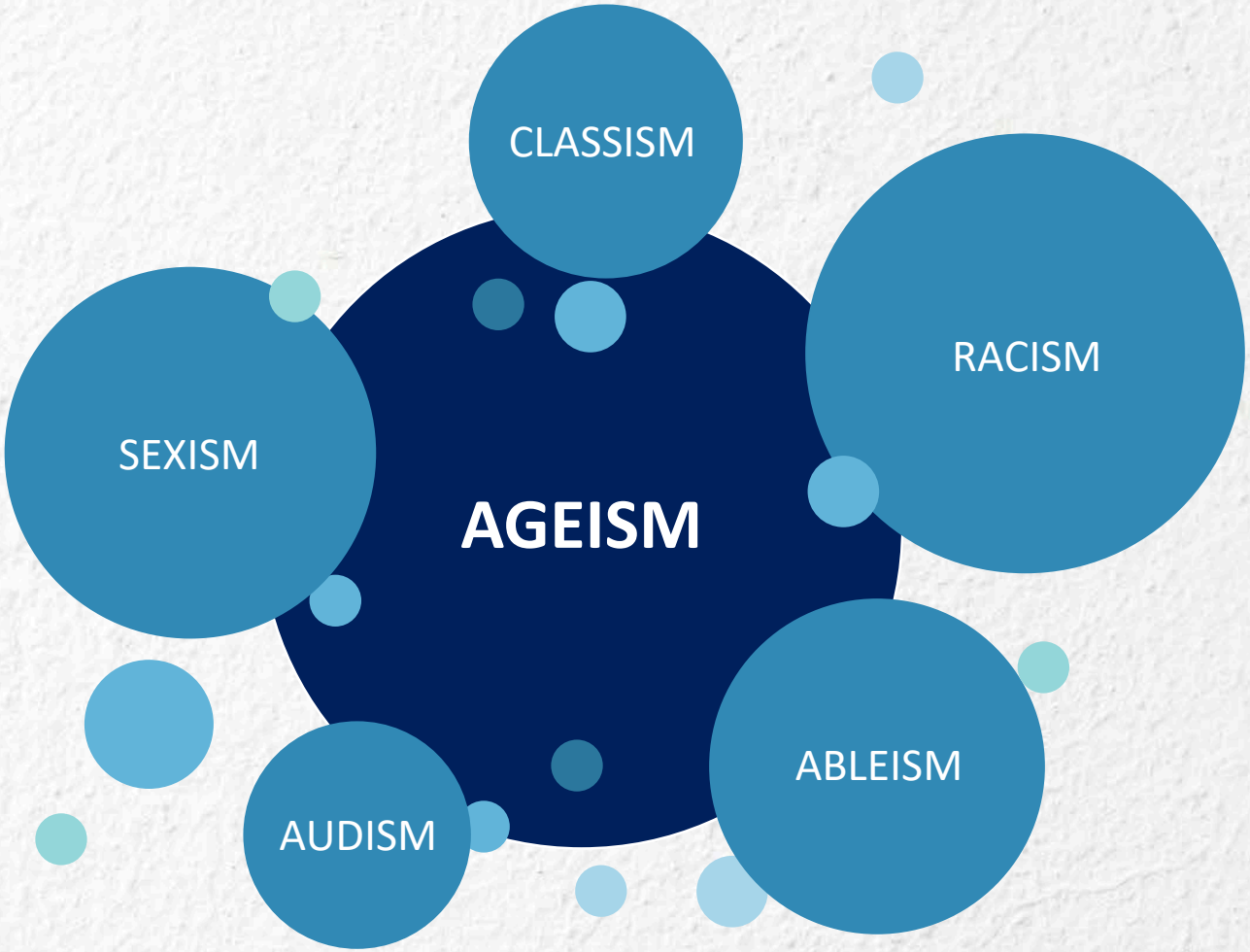
Types of Ageism



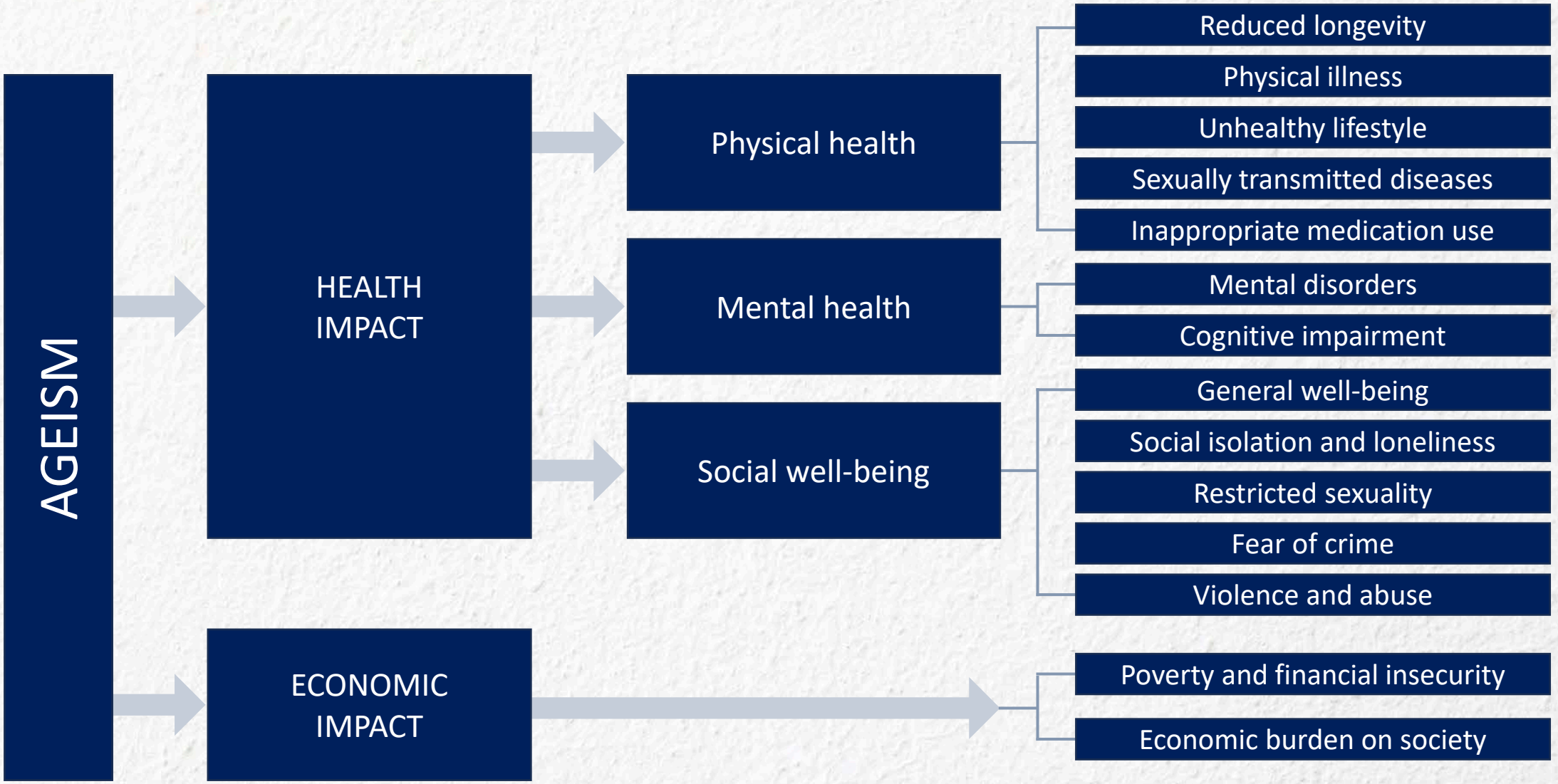
Intersections of Ageism

Ageism starts in childhood and is reinforced over time.

Ageism often intersects and interacts with other forms of stereotypes, prejudice and discrimination.



The Impact of Ageism



Strategies Against Ageism

Three strategies to reduce ageism have been shown to work:

Policy and law

For example, policies and legislation that address age discrimination and inequality and human rights laws

Educational interventions

Across all levels and types of education, from primary school to university, and in formal and non-formal educational contexts

Intergenerational contact interventions

To foster interaction between people of different generations

Oct 2023
https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789240070264

Recommendations for Action

Invest in evidence-based strategies to prevent and tackle ageism

- Priority should be given to the three strategies supported by the best evidence.
- Strategies must be scaled up.
- Where interventions have not been implemented before, they should be adapted, tested, and then scaled up once they show to work in the new context.

Improve data and research to gain a better understanding of ageism and how to reduce it

- Improving our understanding of all aspects of ageism.
- Data should be collected across countries, particularly in low- and middle-income countries.
- Develop strategies to reduce ageism.

Build a movement to change the narrative around age and ageing

Age and Bias: Breaking Stereotypes

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Summary

- Ageism arises from categorising and dividing people based on age
- Ageism is stereotyping (how we think), prejudice (how we feel) and discrimination (how we act) based on age.
- Ageism can manifest in the laws and practices of our institutions, between people, and be internalised turned against ourselves.
- Ageism is very harmful to our physical, mental and cognitive health and wellbeing, and is cause of relevant costs for our societies.

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Summary

- Three strategies to reduce ageism have been shown to work: policy and law, educational activities, and intergenerational contact interventions.
- Recommendations emphasise evidence-based approaches, scaling up successful strategies, and improving global understanding through data collection and developing anti-ageism movements.

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