

#DisruptAgeism

Ageism is all around us, and has become so normalized within our culture that we often do not recognize it as a form of discrimination. Age discrimination is common currency in our everyday language. Consider how frequently we hear people refer to having a “senior moment,” or when we tell someone they look good “for their age.” We may hardly realize what we’re saying, and we typically do not consider what the harmful effects might be.

Research shows that people with negative attitudes to aging live, on average, seven years less than people with a positive attitude to aging [2002, Journal of Personality and Social Psychology](#). Ageism hurts others and it also hurts us, because we are all aging. Age Wave managing partner VCU Department of Gerontology has been building a theoretical framework that describes how the stigma associated with ageism affects social connectedness and relationships—with others and with ourselves.

Ageism is the one form of discrimination that we will all come to experience should we live long enough [\(2005, The Gerontologist\)](#). We all have a responsibility to #DisruptAgeism by saying what we really mean, instead of saying something ageist. So the next time you forget something, acknowledge that you are preoccupied or stressed. Enjoy telling a friend how great they look (period), and admire someone’s vitality and spirit.



Join the conversation! Use the hashtag #DisruptAgeism

"You're getting up there, when are you retiring?"

"I agree I'm getting up there. Each year my wisdom and experience grows - soon I'll be at the pinnacle!"

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"Interesting. What does my age look like?"

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"You don't look your age."

"You haven't aged a bit."

"Oh dear, I hope I have. I am sure I am growing wiser each year."

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WINNER:

"ENCOURAGING REGIONAL COLLABORATION"



The two managing partners of the Greater Richmond Age Wave Coalition: Dr. Thelma Watson (left), Executive Director of Senior Connections, the Capital Area Agency on Aging, and Dr. E. Ayn Welleford, VCU Gerontology Department Chair

The Valentine launched Richmond History Makers as a tribute to everyday citizens and outstanding organizations that make significant contributions to the greater Richmond region.

From the Valentine: “More than 80 diverse stakeholders (local governments, businesses, nonprofits, academia, philanthropy and individual volunteers) across our community have been working collaboratively to implement, monitor, and evaluate the Greater Richmond Regional Plan for Age Wave Readiness—a shared blueprint that prioritizes targeted actions to improve the well-being of residents in the counties of Charles City, Chesterfield, Goochland, Hanover, Henrico, New Kent and Powhatan, and the City of Richmond. No single organization can do this alone. Targeted actions require transformative approaches and multiple partners to implement.

Age Wave is the first and only regional collaborative helping us do that across generations. And thanks to their progressive efforts, individuals of all ages will have better access to the resources and tools that improve choices of how we live our lives and where we choose to grow old.”