



CANADIAN NETWORK for
the PREVENTION of ELDER ABUSE



Elder Abuse
Prevention
Ontario

FREE WEBINAR

Mapping the contours of ageism
in the Canadian public discourse and
countering its impact on older adults

January 27, 2023

1:00 PM ET / 10 AM PT



SPEAKER : MARTINE LAGACÉ

Associate Vice-President, Research Promotion and Development,
Office of the Vice-President, Research and Innovation, University of Ottawa

A smudge stick, made of dried herbs and tied with black and white string, is burning in a brass bowl. The bowl is placed on a green wooden surface. The scene is decorated with various natural elements: a large white crystal in the top left, a green chrysanthemum flower, green cedar branches, yellow pom-pom flowers, and a cluster of clear crystals in the bottom right. A semi-transparent white banner with the text "LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT" is overlaid at the bottom.

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

WEBINAR HOUSEKEEPING



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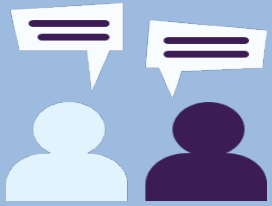


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WEBINAR HOUSEKEEPING



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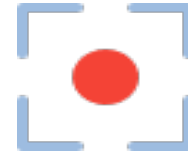
WEBINAR HOUSEKEEPING



Evaluation

Your feedback on knowledge gain from session and suggestions for future topics is appreciated. Options to access survey:

- QR Code
- pop-up notice with link to survey
- Follow-up email with survey link



Recording

A recorded version of this webinar will be available on EAPO and CNPEA's websites.

WEBINAR HOUSEKEEPING

Respecting Privacy and Confidentiality

EAPO appreciates there may be personal circumstances or issues which participants may wish to address. However, in keeping with our commitment to maintaining your privacy and confidentiality, today we will be answering general questions posed through the Q&A.

If someone wishes to discuss specific circumstances, we invite you to contact EAPO following this webinar to arrange for a confidential conversation so that we may further assist you.



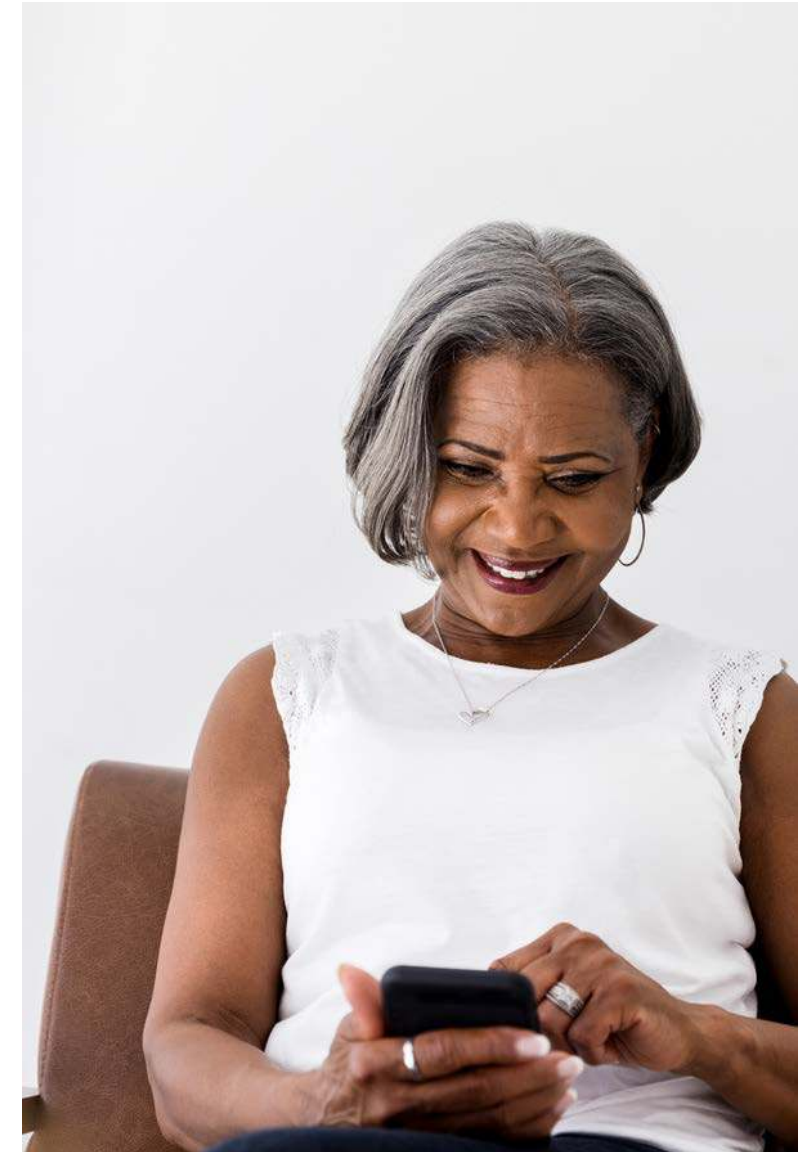
Elder Abuse Prevention Ontario

MISSION

EAPO envisions an Ontario where ALL seniors are free from abuse, have a strong voice, feel safe and respected.

ACTION

Raising awareness, delivering education and training, working collaboratively with like-minded organizations and assisting with service coordination and advocacy.



STOP ABUSE – RESTORE RESPECT

SIMPLY PUT, WE ALL HAVE A ROLE TO PLAY

EAPO is mandated to support the
implementation of
Ontario's Strategy to Combat Elder Abuse.

**Funded by the ON Government, under the
Ministry for Seniors and Accessibility (MSAA)**



Ontario's Strategy to Combat Elder Abuse

1

Public Education and Awareness

A Province-wide, multi-media public education campaign to promote awareness about elder abuse and provide information on how to access services.

2

Training for Front-Line Staff

Specialized training to staff from various sectors, who work directly with seniors, to enhance their knowledge and skills to recognize and respond to elder abuse.

3

Co-ordination of Community Services

To strengthen communities across the province by building partnerships, promoting information sharing and supporting their efforts to combat elder abuse.



Co-ordination of
Community Services

Training for
Front-Line Staff

Public Education
and Awareness

3 Pillars of the Strategy



Canadian Network for the Prevention of Elder Abuse (CNPEA)

MISSION

CNPEA connects people and organizations, fosters the exchange of reliable information, and advances program and policy development on issues related to preventing the abuse of older adults. We do this work at the local, regional, provincial/territorial, and national levels.

VISION

We envision and work toward a Canadian society where older adults are valued, respected, and live free from abuse.

We strive to be the Canadian leader in our field—sharing information and coordinating resources for the prevention of elder abuse.



Speaker - Martine Lagacé

Martine was appointed Associate Vice-President, Research Promotion & Development at the University of Ottawa in August 2018 for a five-year term. She is a professor in the Department of Communication and is affiliated with the School of Psychology. Professor Lagacé was Vice-Dean, Governance of the Faculty of Arts from 2014 to 2018, and Director of the Department of Communication from 2011 to 2012. In addition to her administrative experience, she has extensive expertise in journalism, having worked at Radio-Canada for more than 10 years.

Professor Lagacé has contributed greatly to the advancement of knowledge on the psychosocial aspects of aging, particularly as they relate to discrimination based on age. She has led several field surveys in Canada and abroad, with workers as well as elderly patients to better understand the impact of age-based discrimination. In the francophone community, her academic work on ageism has been groundbreaking. She has edited two books on the topic and regularly publishes articles in academic journals, in both official languages.

Professor Lagacé contributes to several organizations, including the National Seniors Council, the Institut du savoir Montfort, the Bruyère Research Institute and the Institut universitaire de gériatrie de Montréal. She has also forged several international research collaborations, particularly in France and Italy.



Martine Lagacé

Associate Vice-President,
Research Promotion &
Development at the University
of Ottawa / vice-rectrice
associée à la promotion et au
développement de la recherche
en août 2018 pour un mandat
de cinq ans

Mapping the contours of ageism in the Canadian public discourse and countering its impact on older adults

Martine Lagacé
Professor, Department of Communication / School of Psychology

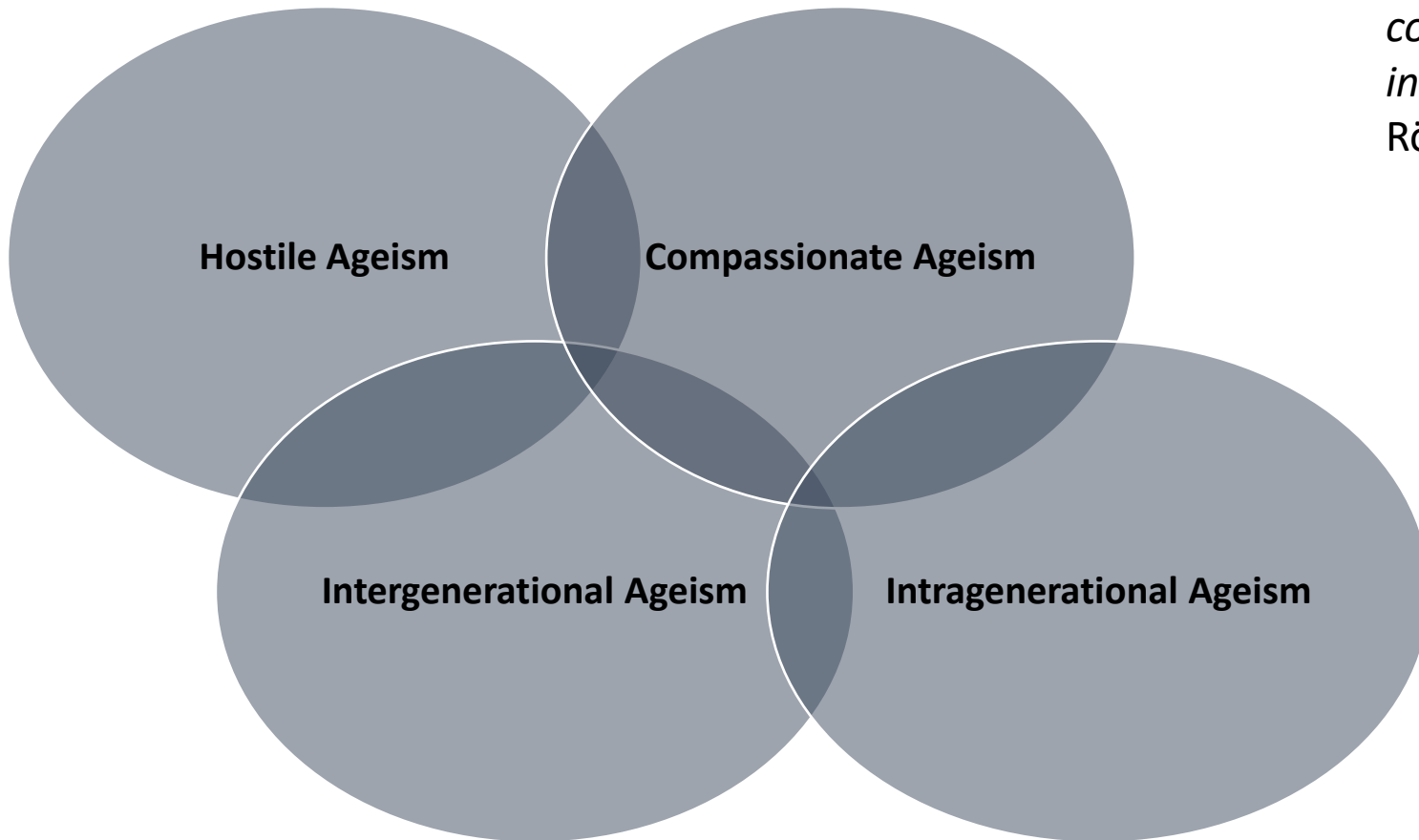
Elder Abuse Prevention, Ontario January 27th,
2023

Presentation Outline

- How ageism is conceptualized as a form of abuse
- The subtle expression of ageist stereotypes : exploring the discourses on aging during the Covid-19 pandemic
- The social and economic impact of ageism
- Countering ageism


Conceptualizing ageism

Ageism is defined as the complex, often negative construction of old age, which takes place at the individual and the societal levels (Ayalon & Tesch-Römer, 2018)



Public discourse : setting the boundaries and frontiers around aging

- Discourse refers to an assemblage of “metaphors, representations, images, stories, that, when articulated together, produce a certain version of events” (Gill, 2000).
- Critical discourse analysis: language is not neutral but a social construction of reality.
- From a Foucauldian perspective, the discourse constructs the hegemony of certain norms and ideologies.
 - What norms, ideologies stemming from the public discourse around aging and older adults?
 - *Media*
 - *Political*
 - *Academic*
 - *Older adults*



Public discourse : setting the boundaries and frontiers around aging

- Norms and ideologies stemming from public discourse can be internalized within a person's self-concept and as such, impact one's self-esteem. (Cotrina, Huarcaya & Ferreira 2020)

Goals of the study

- *How were older adults and the aging process portrayed in the public discourse during the Covid-19 pandemic?*
- *Were these discourse imbued with ageism?*

Methodology – Case Study

Types of public discourse:

1. Op-eds (from journalists)
2. Op-eds (from older adults or associations defending the rights of older adults)
3. Scholarly articles
4. Federal, Provincial and Territorial Communications and Press Briefings

Selection of documents

- Key-words: COVID-19/pandemic; older adults; aging; crisis; health, etc.
- Documents published in April; mid-september/mid-october; december 2020;
- Final sample: 110 documents;
 - Medias (20)
 - Older adults (20)
 - Academia (10)
 - Governments (60)

Thematic Content Analysis

- **Coding Grid:**
 - Domains and themes
 - Ageism exacerbated and-or criticized?
 - Framing of the aging process?
 - Roles attributed to older adults during the pandemic?

Findings – Main Theme

- Most frequent theme (and word) : **VULNERABILITY** of older adults (in long-term care) and the societal need to protect them:

«No one intentionally wants to bring COVID into these facilities, but staff and visitors can still do so inadvertently. We must do everything we can to protect the most vulnerable, especially in long-term care facilities, personal care homes, but also all those who live independently, such as our parents and grandparents. »

(Excerpt of Press Briefing)

Findings – Framing of The Aging Process

- The majority of documents (and mostly press briefings) associated the process of aging as a loss and a burden (social and economic)

«We are dealing with an aging population with ever-increasing needs and demands, and we are only at the beginning.»

(Excerpt of Press briefing)

Findings – Exacerbating Ageism?

- Media op-eds, older adults op-eds and press briefings have exacerbated ageism through their discourse:

«... They are seniors, confined to their beds or who need walkers or wheelchairs to get around. They depend largely on other people, such as parents, health professionals or caregivers, to meet their basic needs. Many of them, given the opportunity, would say without hesitation that they do not want to be a burden to others. »

(Excerpt of Media Article)

Findings – Criticizing Ageism?

- Scholars (and to a lesser extent older adults) criticized the ageist discourse and its negative impact.

«The current situation has highlighted the need to rethink the status and role of older persons in our society and to specifically address the impact and influence of ageism in decision-making and caregiving.»

(Scholarly article)

However: compassionate ageism towards the oldest old on the part of the healthy and autonomous older adults?

Findings – Roles Attributed to Older Adults During the Pandemic?

The majority of speeches portrayed older adults as *victims* of the pandemic, rather than citizens capable of contributing to the fight against the pandemic.

«For older adults, especially those with underlying health conditions, COVID-19 poses a significant risk. It is for them that we must remain vigilant. »

(Excerpt of Press briefing)

Summary of Findings

- The « vulnerability » of older adults is by far the main theme discussed in the four types of discourse
- Older adults are portrayed mostly as « victims » of the pandemic (with no self-agency).
- Scholars (at least some) were criticizing ageist attitudes and behaviors as well as the impact on older adult's mental health, social isolation and self-esteem; they also discussed how ageism intersects with racism and sexism
- Older adults (and associations defending the rights of older adults) were also criticizing ageism and acknowledged its impact on older adults. However their critics mostly concerned healthy and autonomous older adults. Compassionate Ageism?
- Older adults strengths and contributions to society were rarely acknowledged.

An examination of the Social and Economic Impacts of Ageism

- Goal: Examine, through a review of literature, the social and economic impacts of ageism related to employment, health and health care, social inclusion, safety and security, media and social media.
- Sources include academic and non-academic documents (produced by governments and organizations that represent and/or support older adults):
 - Published between 2014 and 2019, available in French or English.
 - A total of 136 articles relating to impacts were analyzed.

Findings: Economic Impacts

- France and the United States (US) are among the few countries that have estimated the economic costs of discrimination.
- US researchers sought to calculate the cost of ageism on health conditions for people aged 60 years or older in the US over the course of one year.
- Exposure to age-based stereotypes and negative self-perceptions of aging aggravated older adults' medical condition resulting in a one-year cost of \$63 billion.

Findings: Social Impacts

- Findings show how the physical and mental health of older adults are negatively impacted by ageist stereotypes. This includes ageist practices by others, such as caregivers and employers.
- Much of the literature demonstrates how older adults and older workers *internalize* ageist stereotypes and how this, in turn, can lead them to act in ways that endorse these stereotypes.

Thank you to the authors and co-authors

- *Martine Lagacé*, PhD, University of Ottawa
- *Marcel Mérette*, PhD, University of Ottawa
- *Julien Navaux*, PhD, University of Ottawa
- *Tracey O'Sullivan*, PhD, University of Ottawa

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- *Philippe Rodrigues-Rouleau*, PhD cand., University of Ottawa

**Thank you to the funding agency: Employment and Social
Development Canada (ESDC):**

Link to studies

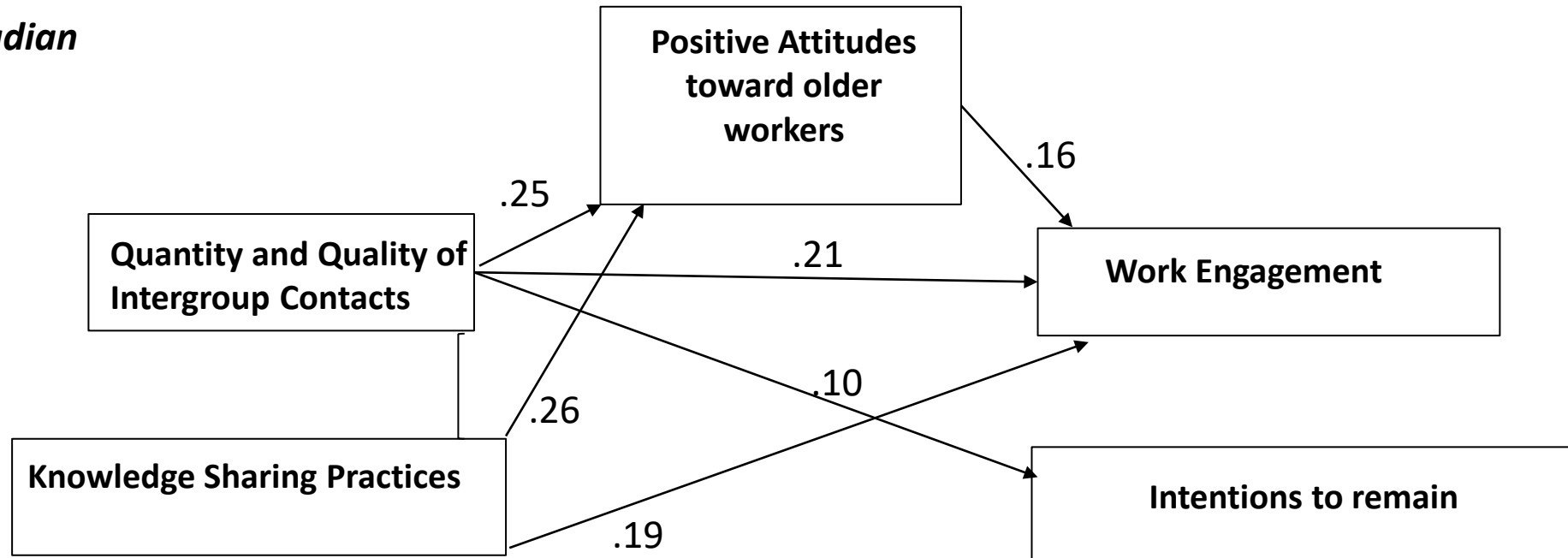
- [An examinationA case study on ageism during the COVID-19 pandemic -
Canada.ca](#)
- [of the social and economic impacts of ageism / prepared by: Dr. Martine Lagacé,
Dr. Marcel Mérette, Dr. Julien Navaux and Philippe Rodrigues-Rouleau.: Em12-
84/2022E-PDF - Government of Canada Publications - Canada.ca](#)

Countering Ageism?

- Initiatives that combine education with higher levels of intergenerational interaction are shown to be the most promising in changing attitudes.

A study on the Impact of Intergenerational Interactions on Ageism in the Context of Work

N = 603 Canadian Workers



Lagacé, M., Donizzetti, A.R., Van de Beeck, L., Bergeron, C.D., Rodrigues-Rouleau, P. & St-Amour, A. (2022). Testing the shielding effect of intergenerational contact against ageism in the workplace: a Canadian study. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*. 19(8),

Thank you for your participation!

Questions?

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Your Feedback is important to us!

WE WOULD
APPRECIATE HEARING
FROM YOU.
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minutes to complete
our survey!



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SCAN ME



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Discover the Future Us Strategy:

www.futureus.cnpea.ca



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CANADIAN NETWORK *for*
the PREVENTION of ELDER ABUSE

RÉSEAU CANADIEN *pour la* PRÉVENTION
du MAUVAIS TRAITEMENT des AÎNÉS



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Thank
you!