

Gray for a Day

The Situation

Negative ageism, or the practice of negative stereotyping and discrimination based on age, is a pervasive issue in American society. In relation to older adults, negative perceptions toward the process of aging and older adults themselves affect how people treat others and how they think about their own aging process. Therefore, the implications of how negative ageism is manifested among all individuals are profound and can influence physical and cognitive health, active aging, age-at-retirement, life satisfaction, engagement in physical activity, and mortality (Abrams, Eller, & Bryant, 2006; Kornadt & Rothermund, 2011; Levy, 2018; Sarkisian, Prohaska, Wong, Hirsch, & Mangion, 2005; Swift, Abrams, Lamont, & Drury, 2017). A strategy for reducing negative ageism is to challenge common misconceptions through factual education (Rodgers & Gilmour, 2011). Such initiatives can lead to transformative attitude changes (Aslan, Kartal, Cinar, & Kostu, 2017; Rodgers & Gilmour, 2011), embolden empathy (Levy, 2018), provide learners with realistic expectations of aging (Lucchetti, Lucchetti, de Oliveira, Moreira-Almeida, & Ezequiel, 2017; Rodgers & Gilmour, 2011), and encourage health-promoting behaviors that improve overall quality of life (Aslan et al., 2017).

Short-Term (Knowledge)

Understand how senses and functional abilities can decline with age.

Understand the influence of sensory and functional decline on daily life.

Indicator

~ Improved knowledge (assessed via evaluation survey) in both of these areas.

Medium-Term (Behavior)

Develop skills to effectively interact with and support someone who may be experiencing age-related sensory and functional challenges.

Understand how taking steps to improve or maintain one's health in the present will contribute to sensory and functional well-being in the future

Indicators

~ Improved attitudes (assessed via evaluation survey) in both of these items.

Long-Term (Change in Condition)

Improve overall health and wellness behaviors among participants.

Reduce ageism and ageist behaviors.

Indicators

~ Improved behaviors (assessed via evaluation survey) in both of these items.

Public Value

Gray for a Day is a cost-effective curriculum that can be used by Extension professionals to inform others of age-related sensory and functional decline, foster empathy toward older adults who may be experiencing such decline, guide discussion on negative ageism and aging, and promote ways to improve overall health and wellness among individuals of all ages and groups of all sizes.

Outputs

Increased numbers of Extension agents who are trained in the GFAD program

Increased numbers of participants in the GFAD program

Increased numbers of returned evaluations from agents who deliver the GFAD program