

Gerontological nursing

with Dr Sherry Dahlke and Andrea Vogt

Talking points

Knowledge

1. By 2030, what proportion of the world's population will be over 60 years old?
2. What are some examples of institutional ageism?
3. What are some examples of internal ageism?

Comprehension

4. Why is healthcare for older people typically more complex than for younger people?
5. What problems arise when people assume certain health conditions are an inevitable part of ageing?

Application

6. If you were a researcher, how would you investigate the origins of the stigmas that gerontological nursing is 'less interesting and physically harder work' than other forms of nursing?
7. How do you think intergenerational contact can combat ageism? What specific activities could bring generations together and improve attitudes towards ageing?

Synthesis

8. Countries with ageing populations have expressed concern over how they will support an increasingly older population with a decreasing workforce. What solutions could help tackle this issue? How could addressing ageism contribute to this?

Evaluation

9. Before reading Sherry and Andrea's article, what stereotypes did you have of older people, and where did these originate? To what extent has this article changed your perception of attitudes towards older people?

Activity

Imagine you are a nurse educator, like Sherry. You are tasked with encouraging a class of student nurses to consider a career in gerontological nursing. Design a short presentation that outlines the importance and rewards of working with older people, introduces the issue of institutional ageism in healthcare and explains how effective gerontological nursing can help combat this.

Consider the following:

- How will you dispel common myths about ageing, older people and careers in gerontological nursing?
- What key message(s) do you want your audience to take away?
- What facts and figures (from the article or your own research online) support your message(s)?
- How will you keep your audience engaged in your presentation? For example, you could include interactive elements such as a quiz or opportunity for debate.

Deliver your presentation to your class. Can you convince your classmates to pursue a career in gerontological nursing?

More resources

- Visit the Awakening Canadians to Ageism website (www.ualberta.ca/nursing/research/research-chairs-and-units/inpop/awakening-canadians-to-ageism.html) to find resources and information about Sherry's research, including a debunking of myths about ageing.
- The World Health Organization has a wealth of resources about ageing (www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/ageing-and-health) and has launched a strategy to end ageism (www.who.int/health-topics/ageism)
- This article explores how psychologists are attempting to combat ageism, 'one of the last socially acceptable prejudices': www.apa.org/monitor/2023/03/cover-new-concept-of-ageing
- In this short, entertaining video, 100-year-old Grandma Eileen explains how to talk to older people: www.youtube.com/watch?v=Qm8qKdp-Als
- This social experiment highlights how quickly young people can dismiss the older generation: www.youtube.com/watch?v=mwNjYe7MM7Y
- In this TED talk, Dr Laura Carstensen explains why most people become happier as they get older: www.youtube.com/watch?v=oiUrklQzymg
- In this TED talk, Ashton Applewhite explains why we shouldn't fear growing older: www.youtube.com/watch?v=WfjzkO6_DEI