

#BeingWithAging
Evolution and Revolution

2023 ALCA Conference
Needham, MA

Susan Wehry MD
 Director, AgingME
 October 5, 2023





AGING | life CARE[®]
 A | L | C | A | C | O | N | F | E | R | E | N | C | E
 The Tsunami of Need
 Prepare, Survive, Thrive

1

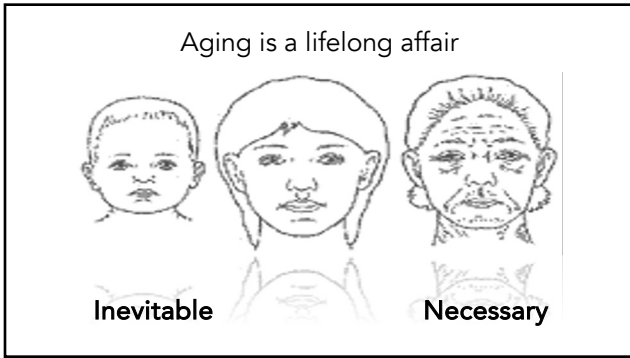
#BeingWithAging
Objectives

2

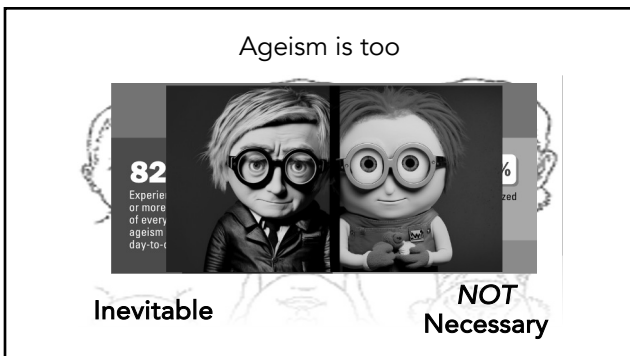
Outline

Words | Perspectives |
 Reimaginings | Strivings
 and Thriving

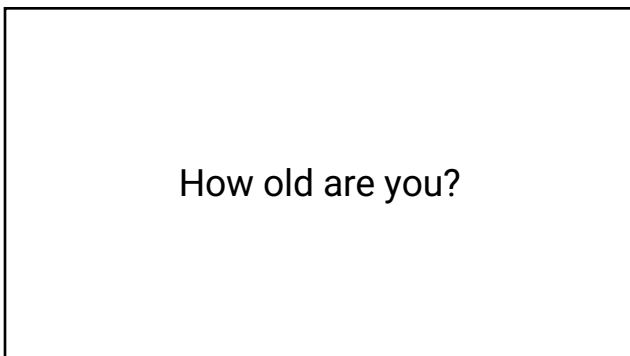
3



4



5



6

Ageism


Butler 1996

WHO 2021

Stereotypes	how we think
Prejudice	how we feel
Discrimination	how we act

7

**Ageism:
prejudice against our (future) selves**



8

3 ages for women in Hollywood

Babe

District Attorney

Driving Miss Daisy

9

Reframing

Framing is the process of making choices about what to emphasize and what to leave unsaid. Here's a quick tour of themes to avoid and alternatives to advance.


Instead of these words and cues:	Try:
"Tidal waves," "tsunamis," and similarly catastrophic terms for the growing population of older people	Talking affirmatively about changing demographics: "As Americans live longer and healthier lives..."
"Choice," "planning," "control," and other individual determinants of aging outcomes	Emphasizing how to improve social contexts: "Let's find creative solutions to ensure we can all thrive as we age."
"Seniors," "elderly," "aging dependents," and similar "other-ing" terms that stoke stereotypes	Using more neutral ("older people/Americans") and inclusive "we" and "us" terms
"Struggle," "battle," "fight," and similar conflict-oriented words to describe aging experiences	The Building Momentum metaphor: "Aging is a dynamic process that leads to new abilities and knowledge we can share with our communities."
Using the word "ageism" without explanation	Defining ageism: "Ageism is discrimination against older people due to negative and inaccurate stereotypes."
Making generic appeals to the need to "do something" about aging	Using concrete examples like intergenerational community centers to illustrate innovative solutions

10

Lets us fool ourselves into thinking that we'll never die

#ChangingAging
 #EngagingAging
 g
 #ReframingAging
 ng
 #AGE+
 #BeingWithAging

11



Positive Aging

"Older individuals with more positive self-perceptions of aging outlived those with less positive self-perceptions of aging by seven and a half years"

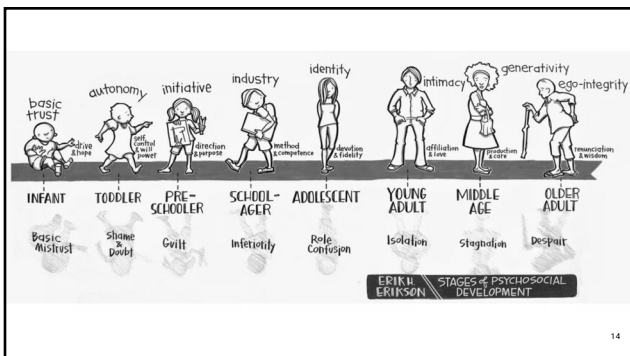
Jl of Personality and Social Psychology Levy et al., 2002

12

Tasks

Developmental
Existential
Social | Economic
Functional

13



14

Robert Peck


Ego differentiation I am not my job

Body transcendence of... I get by in spite of...

Ego transcendence goes on My life ends, life goes on

15

Normative Aging Issues



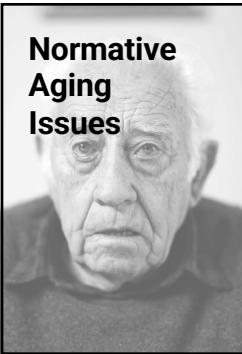
Biological

- Acquiring motor skills
- Learning impulse control
- Sensory changes
- Fluctuating reserves
- Recovery varies
- Medication sensitivity

16

16

Normative Aging Issues



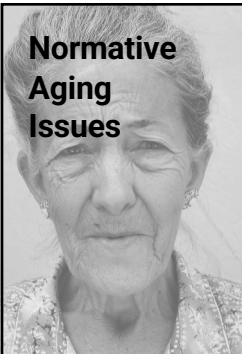
Cognitive

- Sensory impairment
 - Attention
 - Registration
- ↓ Memory
 - More trials
 - Less efficient recall

17

17

Normative Aging Issues



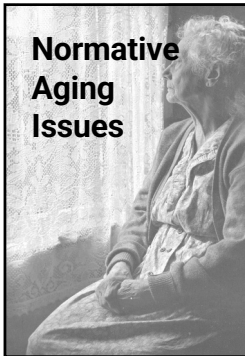
Psychological

- Positive
- Resilience
- Loss
- Developmental tasks
- Goals and values may change

18

18

Normative Aging Issues



Social

- Change in role
- Change in connection
- Less visible
- Risk of abuse, exploitation

19

19



Net result

Live in fear of:

- losing autonomy
- reprisal
- losing options

Anxious when decisions challenged

May minimize deficits

Defend independence

20

20

Fear of dependency > fear of death

Portacolone et al.

21

Independence


Remaining independent = staying in one's own home

Accepting help at hand
Doing things alone

Having family, friends, and money as resources

Preserving physical and mental capacities

22




On being dependent

23

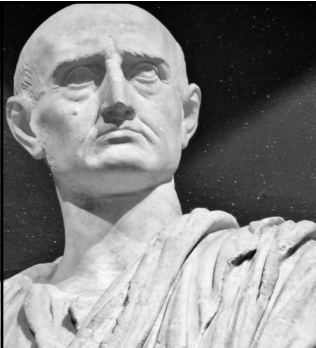
What To Do? How To Be?

24

"Culture lies beyond the purpose of nature. Could by any chance culture be the meaning and purpose of the second half of life?" Jung, C.G. (1933)



25



Cicero

my old age sits light upon me..., and not only is not burdensome, but is even happy. For as Nature has marked the bounds of everything else, so she has marked the bounds of life.

Lifelong love of, and search for, wisdom

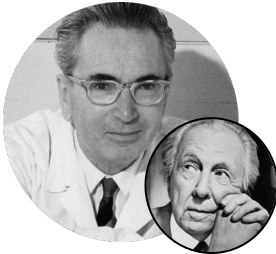
De Senectute 44 BC

26

By our very nature, we are

- Free
- Spiritual
- Unique
- Responsible

Driven by the will to meaning



Viktor Frankl

27

Poetry

Poetry, Auden wrote, "might be defined as the clear expression of mixed feelings,"

28

When you see me sitting quietly,
Like a sack left on the shelf,
Don't think I need your chattering.
I'm listening to myself.
Hold! Stop! Don't pity me!
Hold! Stop your sympathy!
Understanding if you got it,
Otherwise I'll do without it!
When my bones are stiff and aching,
And my feet won't climb the stair,
I will only ask one favor:
Don't bring me no rocking chair.
When you see me walking, stumbling,
Don't study and get it wrong.
'Cause tired don't mean lazy
And every goodbye ain't gone.
I'm the same person I was back then,
A little less hair, a little less chin,
A lot less lungs and much less wind.
But ain't I lucky I can still breathe in.

Don't Bring Me No Rockin' Chair




29

I curse the world that blunders into me, and hurts
But know
Its bad fit is the best that we can do.

From "A Patient Old Cripple"
Jenny Joseph, in her 80's

30

<p>Non-Normative</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Serious mental illness Dementia, due to any cause Depression Substance use disorders Abuse, neglect, exploitation 	
---	---

31

Bring to mind someone with dementia you've loved, cared for or served

How do you feel when you bring them to mind?
How do you think about them and their dementia?

32

<p>Concerns</p> <p>And</p> <p>Triggers</p>	Safety	Treatment refusal
	Falls	Non-adherence
	Fear of Decline	Protection from exploitation
	Access to medical care	Lifestyle intolerance
Access to services		

33

Biomedical model


Signs
Symptoms
Challenges
Carepartners/givers
Treatments

"How can I help?"

34

People with a *disease* are more likely to be offered...

Assessment
Medication
Plans of care focused on symptoms



35

Disability model

Support
Accommodations
Empowerment
Contributions

"How can I include?"

36

People with a *disability* are more likely to be offered...

- Assessment, health promotion and remediation
- Counselling and assistance with adaptation
- Modifications and assistive technologies
- Accommodations



37

Towards a dementia-inclusive society
 WHO toolkit for dementia-friendly initiatives (DFIs)



What part can you play in creating a dementia Inclusive society?

World Health Organization

38

Being Dementia-Inclusive

Give voice Download WHO Toolkit Foster participation and inclusion

39

#beingwithaging

Accept vulnerability
 Live authentic lives, rooted in hope
 Held together in *personal* and *collective* narratives

Listening to the actual voices of aging human beings is a key to understanding identity—its makings and unmakings.

Jan Baars, Age and the Art of Living

40



41

Thanks

For being here
 For all you do

swehry@une.edu
 Twitter@beingwithaging
 FB @agingmegwep

42