



**NEWS COLUMN – Area Agency on Aging District 7, Inc.**

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**Ageism Awareness**

by Debbie Gulley, AAA7 Interim Executive Director

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Ageism Awareness Day is observed in October, but each day we should be aware of the existence and impact of ageism in our society. The Area Agency on Aging District 7 (AAA7) is proud to conduct advocacy and education to combat ageism in our district and beyond.

The most widespread and socially accepted form of prejudice, ageism is defined by the World Health Organization as “the stereotypes (how we think), prejudices (how we feel), and discrimination (how we act) towards others based on age”.

Evidence shows ageism is widespread in society and can be found everywhere, from our workplaces and health systems to stereotypes we see on television, advertising and in the media.

From the American Society on Aging, here are a few facts about ageism, which affects people of any age and harms all:

- There are many forms of ageism, including internalized, cultural, implicit and benevolent.
- Ageism decreases quality of life and can shorten lifespan by 7.5 years.
- Although it is universal, people do not always take ageism as seriously as they do other forms of inequity.
- Ageism intersects with, and exacerbates, all other discriminatory “isms.”
- In the media, underrepresented older adults most often reflect negative stereotypes.
- According to the United Nations, on a global scale, one in two people are ageist.

Think about how you respond and react to aging and how you can be positive and help promote positivity surrounding aging. We should respect and value people of all ages. Aging is something we are all experiencing and is a privilege that we should all appreciate more.

If you have any questions about how our Agency can help you age better, please contact the AAA7 at 1-800-582-7277 or e-mail [info@aaa7.org](mailto:info@aaa7.org).

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