

Have DEI movements left older adults out?

Dictionary

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age·ism

/ˈɑːj,iz(ə)m/

noun

prejudice or discrimination on the grounds of a person's age.
"ageism in recruitment is an increasing problem"

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COVER STORY

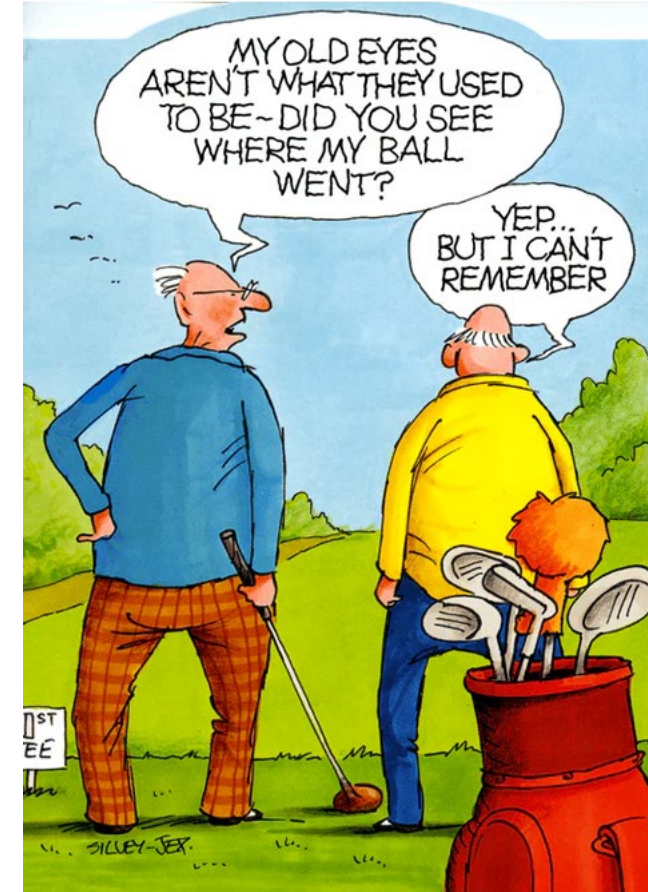
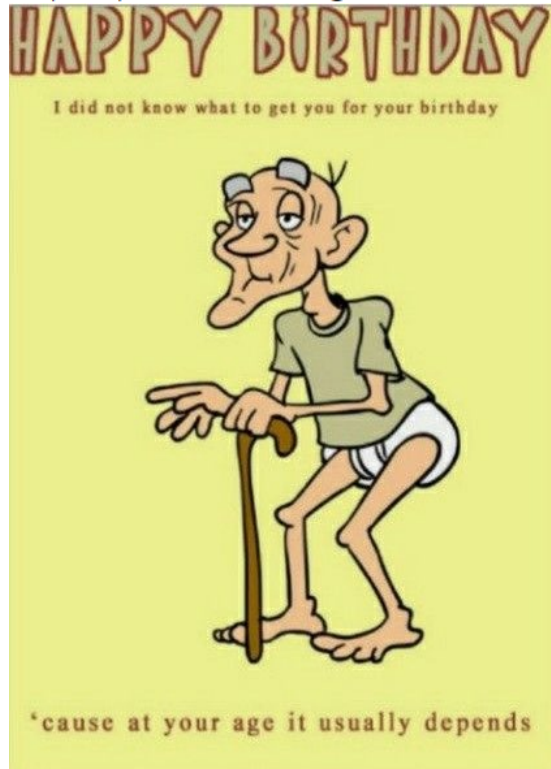
Ageism is one of the last socially acceptable prejudices. Psychologists are working to change that

Psychologists are examining the age discrimination that pervades American culture and helping people to reimagine healthier relationships with their older selves

HAPPY BIRTHDAY!

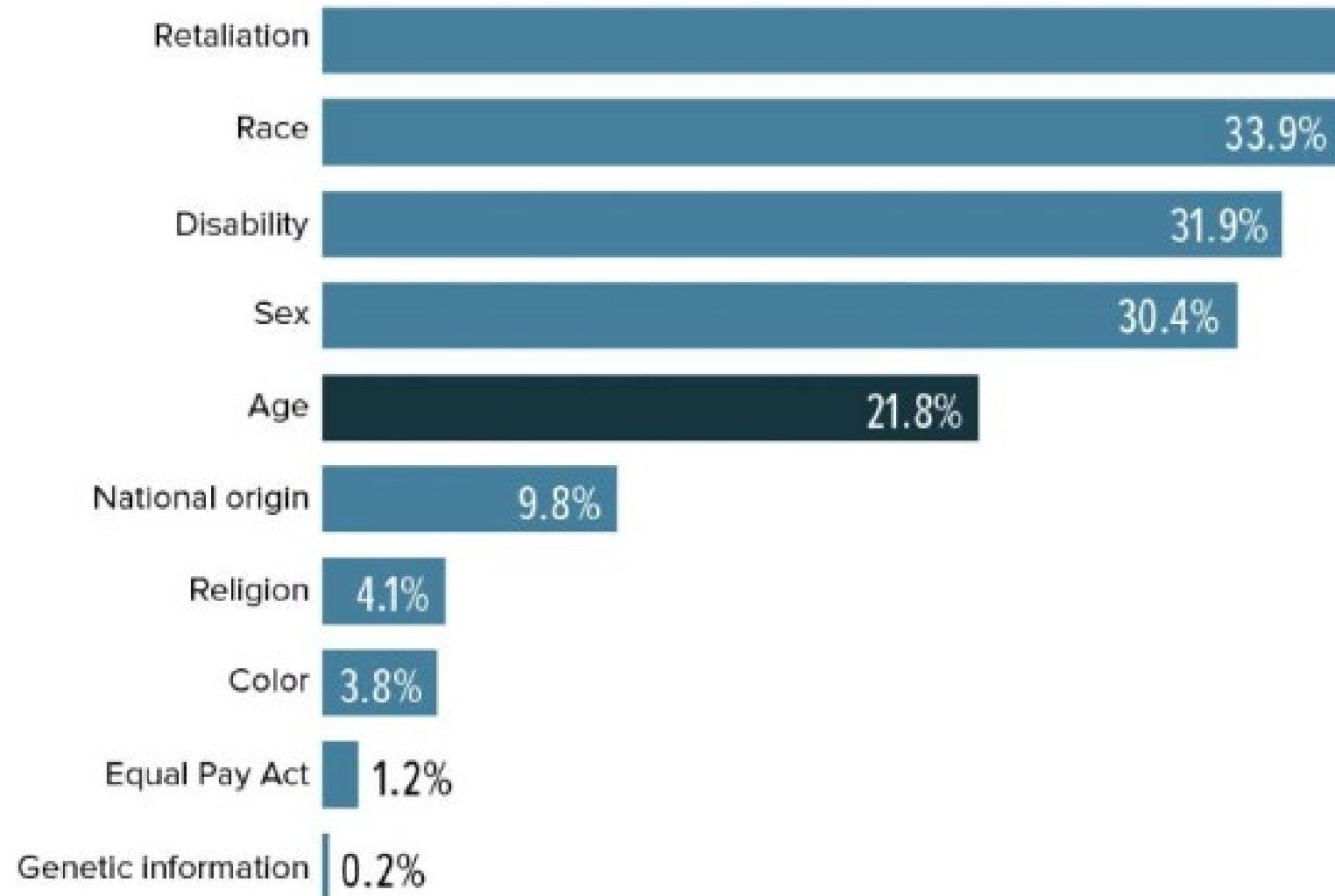


YOU'RE OFFICIALLY A GRUMPY OLD MAN!



Age Discrimination in the Workplace

In fiscal year 2017, the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission received 84,254 workplace discrimination complaints. Below is the breakdown of complaints by the type of discrimination alleged:



Note: These percentages add up to more than 100 because some charges allege multiple types of discrimination.
Source: U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission.

Older Workers and Age Discrimination

The Age Discrimination in Employment Act (ADEA), signed into law in 1967, forbids discrimination in the workplace against anyone 40 or older. A recent survey shows that many workers still believe there are signs of age discrimination on the job today.



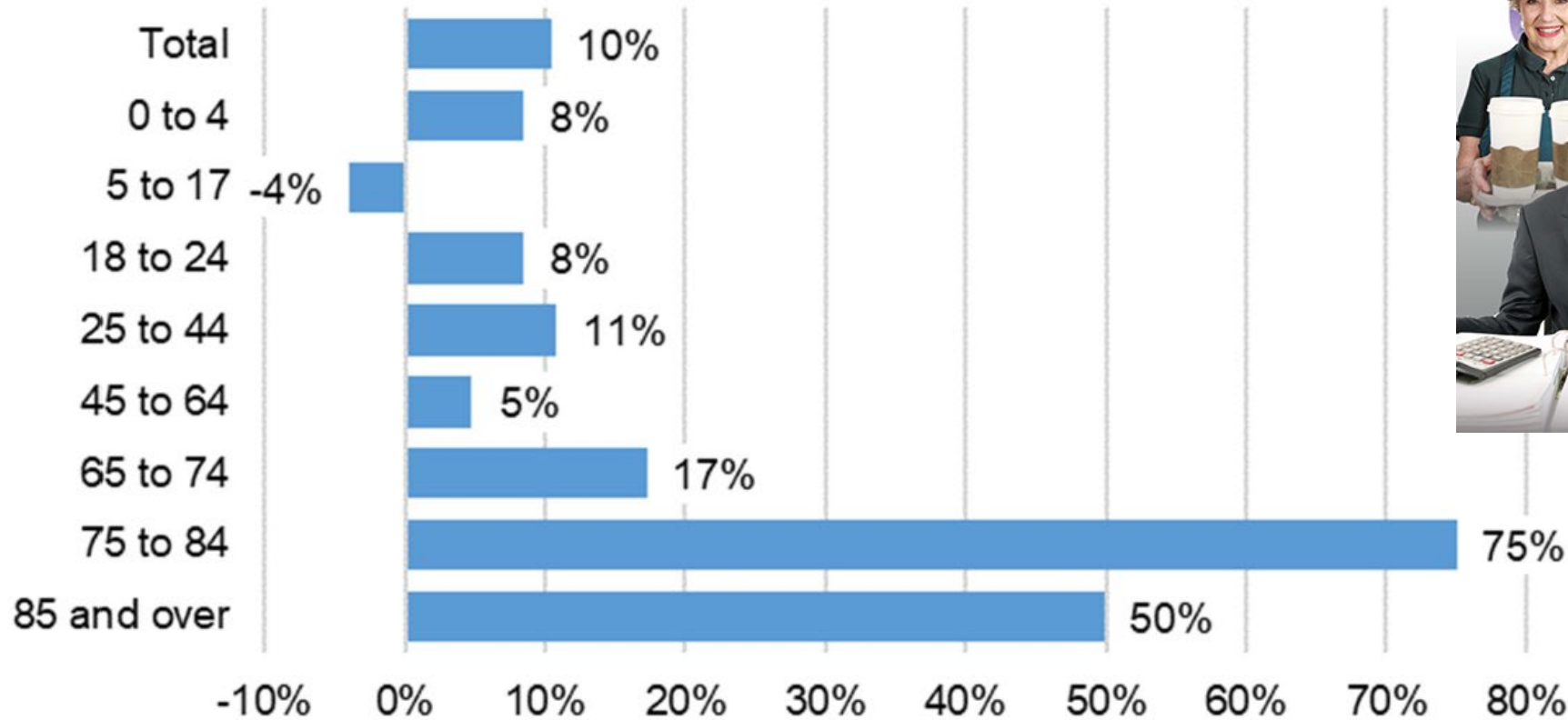
58% of adults believe age discrimination begins among workers in their 50s.

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics
Staying Ahead of the Curve 2013: AARP Multicultural Work and Career Study Perceptions of Age Discrimination in the Workplace — Ages 45-74

GRAPHIC: AARP Digital Design

Aging Population 2020-2030

Projected Percent Change by Age Group - Colorado



Aging myths busted



- Older adults are better than middle-age adults at orienting their attention and ignoring distractions (Veríssimo, J., et al., *Nature Human Behaviour*, Vol. 6, No. 1, 2022)
- Happiness is lowest in middle age and increases through older age (*Journal of Population Economics*, Vol. 34, No. 2, 2021)
- Mental health improves across the life span (Thomas, M. L., et al., *Journal of Clinical Psychiatry*, Vol. 77, No. 8, 2016)
- Semantic memory continues to improve for many older adults. Procedural memory typically stays the same as we age (<https://www.apa.org/topics/aging-older-adults/memory-brain-changes>)
- Older workers tend to be more experienced, have better focus, have stronger work ethics, often stay longer with an employer, have lower health care costs and have fewer accidents at the workplace. (<https://blogs.cdc.gov/niosh-science-blog/2023/09/25/older-workers/>)

The harms we cause...



Ageism...

- Older individuals exposed to negative-age-stereotype primes tended to perform worse on memory tests while those exposed to positive-age-stereotype primes perform **better** (Levy, 1996; Hess, Auman, Colcombe, and Rahhal 2002; Shih, Ambady, Richeson, Fujita, & Gray, 2002; Shih, Pittinsky, & Ambady, 1999).
- People (both younger and older) are more likely to perceive memory lapses in older adults as a result of factors that cannot be changed (e.g., a mental difficulty) and less likely to attribute these lapses to factors that can be changed (e.g., lack of effort), as compared with the same memory lapses in younger adults (Erber et al., 1990; Erber & Rothberg, 1991; Erber, Szuchman, & Rothberg, 1990).

Reduces
function

Promotes self-
stereotypes

Perception is everything!

- Positive beliefs about aging protect against dementia, even among those with APOE4 variant (*PLOS One*, Vol. 13, No. 2, 2018).
- Negative self-perceptions of aging are associated with a higher prevalence of heart disease, lung disease, diabetes, musculoskeletal disorders, and injuries (*The Gerontologist*, Vol. 60, No. 1, 2020).

Why???



Resources

