

# Ageism

V 1.0.1

Language to avoid



AdvocateNT.AU

*Stand up, speak out - silence is never a solution*

# Ageist Language - what is it?

- Ageist language can or does invoke harmful stereo types of older people.
- It can play negative impacts on policy, attitudes, employment, healthcare and other opportunities for older people.
- Using Ageist terminology in healthcare and hospitals often results in the older person feeling hopeless and excluded from services and care that healthcare rights should include to all persons.

# Ageist Language - what is it?

- Ageist language excludes older people from the rest of the population.
- Ageist Language includes but not limited to words such as “elderly”, “seniors” or “the aged”, and we are all guilty of using such language.
- We must transition away from ageist language and put the person first, included and positive to ensure the best use of resources and best outcomes for all persons.





# Ageist Language - what is it?

- Ageist language shapes perceptions of aging, often carries negative assumptions.
- Ageist terms such as “elderly”, “senior” or “the aged” imply weakness and groups the person rather than a focus on the individual.
- Words and phrases that reflect stereotypes or discrimination against older adults.

# Ageist Language - what is it?

- Person-first language emphasizes the individual before any descriptor (e.g. “older adults experiencing memory loss”).
- Avoiding terms that evoke dependency helps maintain dignity in communication.
- “Elderspeak” is a patronising way of speaking to older adults.
- Patronising language is disrespectful and lead to resistance in healthcare services.





# Ageist Language - what is it?

Ageist language occurs in our hospitals

- Doctor telling a patient that surgery is not an option because they are old.
- Hospital lowering the priority of procedures because the patient is an older person, not listening to lived experiences or impacts to the patient.
- Doctor showing disrespect by not allowing the person to complete what they are saying in describing a health concern.



# Ageist Language - A vehicle for older person abuse

- In very real terms ageist language is one of the hidden in plain site vehicles that delivers abuse of the older person.
- Abuse of the older person exists today in many sectors including healthcare, agedcare, workplaces, within community and families.
- Ageist language (ageism drives isolation, feelings of hopelessness, untrust, permanent harm to a person's wellbeing and complications in health).





# When is a persons age consideration important?

- While ageist language is inappropriate, in a medical setting hospital personnel (either doctors or administration) must understand and consider the increased risks associated with older persons.
- It is not appropriate to reduce or stop medical services because of older age groups or to provide services that may introduce increased harm.
- Often hospital administration personnel override trained medical professionals directions.





# Speaking engagements

Craig Hubbard is available for speaking engagements.

Contact us at <https://advocateNT.au>

- ✓ Older person abuse
- ✓ Workplace Abuse
- ✓ Lived experiences

