

# Bystander Action for Ageing Well

Office for Ageing Well

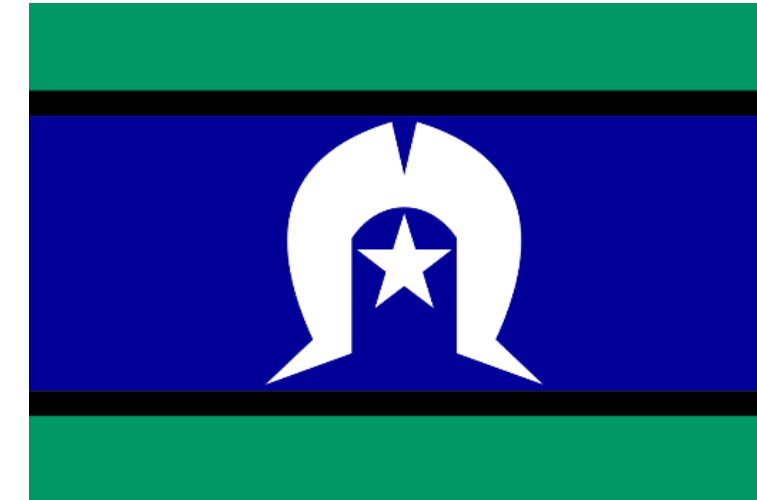
Please complete the pre-workshop survey



Government  
of South Australia

SA Health

# Acknowledgement of Country



We acknowledge this land that we meet on today is the traditional lands for the Kaurna people and that we respect their spiritual relationship with their country.

We also acknowledge the Kaurna people as the custodians of the Adelaide region and that their cultural and heritage beliefs are still as important to the living Kaurna people today.

We also pay respects to the cultural authority of Aboriginal people who may be attending from other areas of South Australia



# Introductions and context

TO UPDATE BEFORE EACH WORKSHOP

Add relevant information to this slide:

Why you are delivering this workshop – any background context

Brought to you by:

- Office for Ageing Well
- Adapt this for each workshop to highlight any workshop partners

# Office for Ageing Well



The Plan > Enabler > Tackling Ageism

Safeguarding the Rights of Older South Australians

- Community Education
- Prevention
- Strategy 2023+

Other initiatives to tackle ageism:

- SA Community Achievement Award – *Office for Ageing Well Tackling Ageism Award*
- Campaigns (social media / TV / radio)

# Purpose and Objectives

Explore the issue of ageism in Australia - how it manifests, its impacts, uncovering and debunking myths and stereotypes.

Understanding the role we can play in addressing ageism.

Provide strategies for how to appropriately and effectively challenge ageism.



# Group Agreement

## Be Open

- > Be open to new ideas
- > Be open to new ways of seeing and doing
- > Be prepared to sit in some discomfort and embrace the challenge

## Be Respectful

- > Acknowledge difference of opinion
- > Provide space for others to contribute
- > Respectful discussion & debate is welcome
- > Questions welcomed
- > Challenge ideas, not people

## Be Present

- > Please turn your phone to silent
- > Take calls outside
- > Listen when others are speaking

## Take Care

- > Avoid disclosure of personal details – not a therapeutic space
- > Please maintain confidentiality
- > It is ok to just listen
- > Take a break if needed
- > Commit to self care

# Support Services

## Adult Safeguarding Unit

1800 372 310

Monday to Friday 9.00am to 5.00pm (non-emergencies)



13 11 14  
lifeline.org.au



1800 737 732  
1800respect.org.au



1800 184 527  
qlife.org.au



1300 78 99 78  
mensline.org.au

# Part 1

# Exploring the Issue



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## Activity - Setting the Scene

How much do you agree with the following statements?



# What is Ageism?

Ageism is the stereotypes (**how we think**), prejudice (**how we feel**) and discrimination (**how we act**) towards others or ourself based on age.

Ageism is everywhere - even within ourselves

Ageism is more socially accepted than other forms of discrimination

Almost everyone will experience ageism

1 in 2 people worldwide are ageist against older people





**Imagine a world without ageism**

**Spoken by**

*Bryan Brown*



EveryAGE Counts: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mW1QG1VKUqk>

# Types of Ageism



**Institutional** - Ageism within laws, cultures, policies, and practices of institutions such as workplaces, health care, politics etc.



**Interpersonal** - Ageism between two or more people.



**Internalised / Self Directed** - Ageism that you direct towards yourself.

# Ageism + other forms of discrimination

Older women are impacted by multiple forms of discrimination at a higher rate than older and younger men and younger women

Older women are significantly more likely to experience abuse or mistreatment than older men

Older women of colour can face age, race, and sex discrimination

Older people living with disability may experience further barriers to full participation



# Impacts of Ageism

Ageism can impact:

- Physical and mental health
- Self-image
- Recovery times
- Quality of life
- Social connections and contentment
- Civic engagement
- Expression of sexuality
- Financial hardship and insecurity
- Lifespan
- Risk of violence and abuse





SA Health: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rK\\_s0vIrvR8](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rK_s0vIrvR8)



## Activity - Uncovering Myths and Stereotypes

When you hear the words 'Old People or elderly' what words and phrases come to mind?



# Activity - Uncovering Myths and Stereotypes

Think of an older adult in your life who you are or were close to

- What characteristics of this person do you love or admire or respect?
- What makes them special and what made them have an impact on you?
- In what ways do you hope or did you hope to be like them when you were the same age?
- Consider their personality traits, physical characteristics, lifestyle, job and activities that they did or do.



# Unpacking Myths and Stereotypes

Stereotypes are often deeply embedded and unconscious.

Each and every one of us holds stereotypes within us.

Stereotypes are formed at a very young age

They are reinforced through upbringing, life experience, media, pop culture etc.

We are not born ageist, ageism is learned - so it can be unlearned!



# Myth Busters

Older people are nice but frail with declining competence

95% of older South Australians live independently at home



Older people are lonely

Young adults were most likely to agree that they feel lonely



Older people have poor technology skills

Approximately 70% of older Australians use the internet multiple times a day



# Older people in the media

National Breaking News

## 65-y-o Tweed Heads woman on drugs offences

AN elderly Tweed Heads woman will appear in court in May after police allegedly discovered drugs and equipment at her home.

News.com.au 2014

## Takeaways from the aged care royal commission



If the final report's major recommendations are adopted, Australia will get a transformed aged care system over the next five years. Here are our top four takeaways.

[Read more](#) →

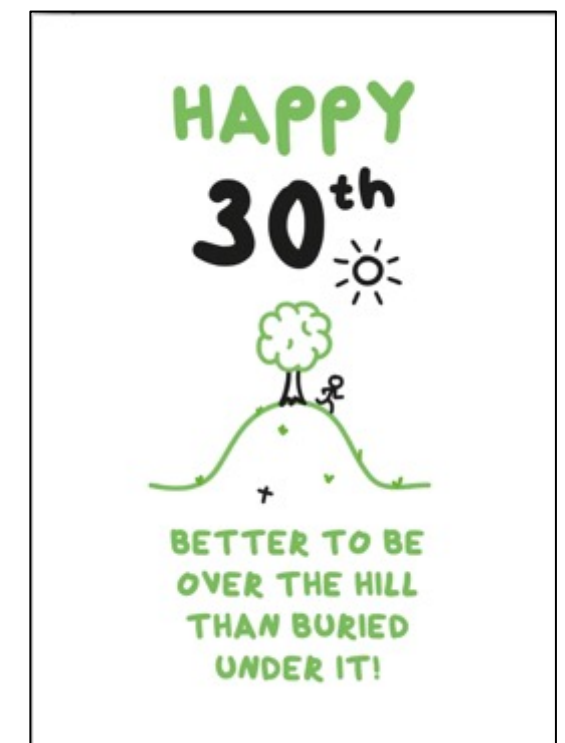
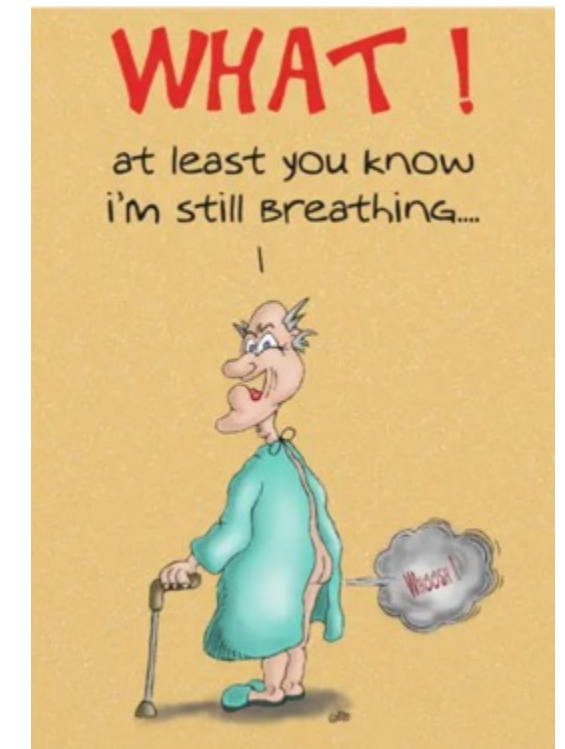
ABC News 14 Nov 2022



Grandpa Simpson



Tammy (movie 2014)



Birthday cards

# Breaking free of stereotypes

## Meet the 103-year-old dancer still performing, choreographing and making costumes

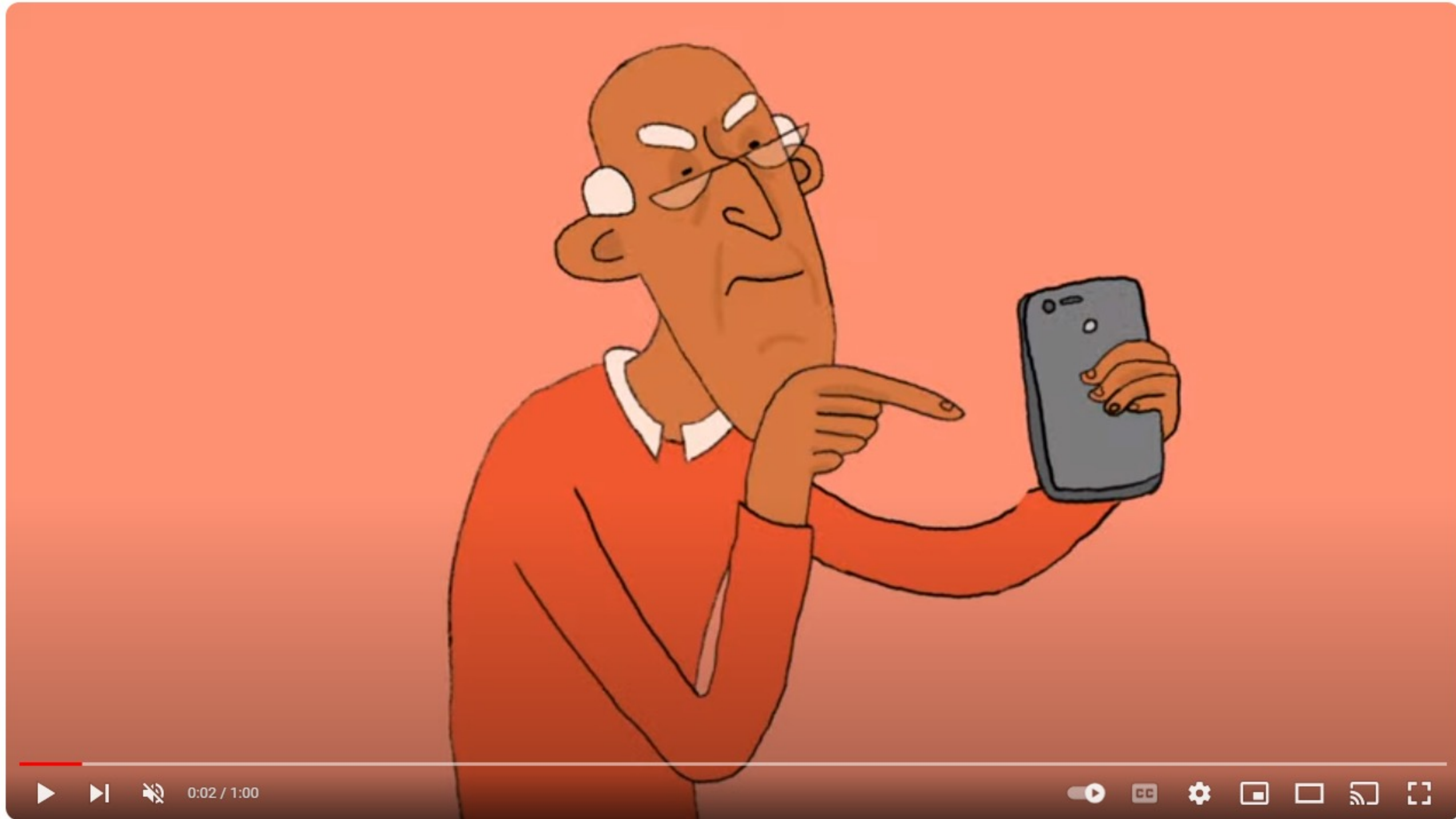
By Eloise Fuss

Posted Fri 1 Dec 2017 at 2:56pm, updated Fri 1 Dec 2017 at 4:25pm



Eileen Kramer, 103, is getting ready to perform in dance drama A Buddha's wife. (ABC: Eloise Fuss)





Help page: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Prc9S0W24P4>

## Taking action to tackle ageism

SA can lead the way in creating an inclusive society, moving beyond ageism.

Everyone can play a role in tackling ageism.

We can all challenge stereotypes, bias and prejudice when we see it and send a strong message that ageism is not accepted in our community.



A woman with short brown hair and glasses, wearing a vibrant floral patterned shirt, is smiling warmly at a man in a bright yellow sweater. They are seated at a table in a cafe or bakery, with a green mug and glasses of coffee in front of them. In the background, a staff member in a white shirt and black apron is visible behind a counter with menu boards. A green rectangular box with the word "Break" is overlaid on the right side of the image.

Break



# Part 2

# Tackling Ageism Through Bystander Action



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# What is a bystander?

## A 'Bystander' is...

somebody who observes an emergency, act of violence, discrimination or other unacceptable or offensive behaviour.

## A 'Passive Bystander'...

refers to individuals who observe an emergency, act of violence, discrimination or other unacceptable or offensive behaviour and fail to act or intervene.

## An 'Active Bystander'...

refers to the individual who takes action to intervene in response to the observed incident.



## What happens when we do nothing?

Sends a message that we are ok with what was said or done

Encourages people to keep being disrespectful or discriminatory

Makes older people feel like they should just take a joke (contributing to internalised ageism)

Creates a culture where ageism is able to flourish.



# What happens when we are active bystanders?

Sends a message to people being ageist that we're not ok with those attitudes or behaviour

Encourages people being disrespectful or discriminatory to consider their behaviour and change their ways


Shows older people that we support them and their rights

Gives others the confidence to be active bystanders as well

Makes ageism unpopular in our community

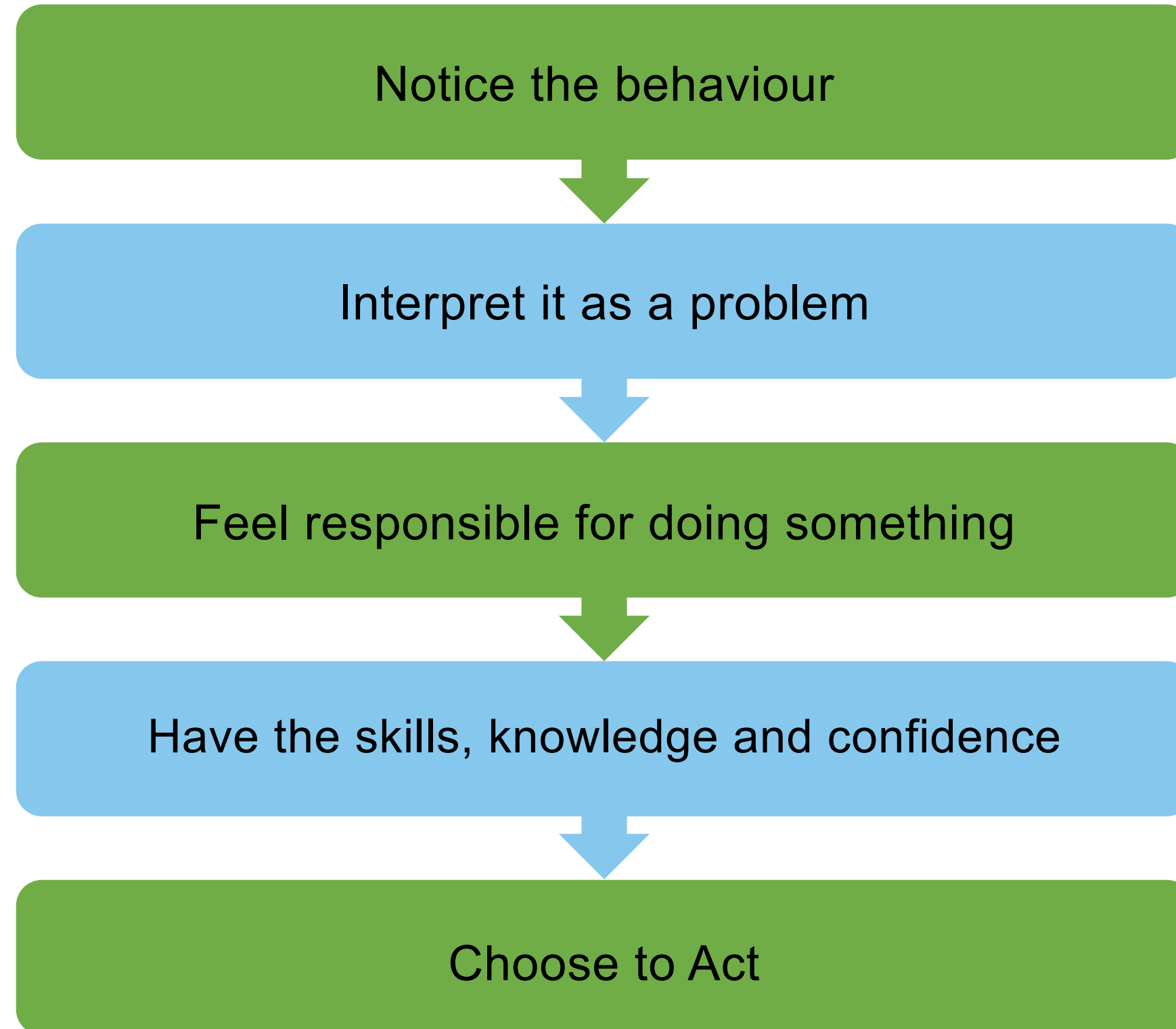
Creates a culture in which ageism is less likely to occur and ageing is celebrated





Activity - What stops us  
from being an  
active bystander?

## Being an active bystander



# The Golden Rules

## Safe

Consider the best course of action to take  
Don't be aggressive, violent or rude  
Seek help if needed

## Active

Do something  
Focus on what you can do  
Believe you can make a difference

## Calm

Keep your cool  
Don't escalate a situation  
Keep it respectful and non-confrontational



# Active Bystander Strategies

## Direct Strategies

Require you to engage directly with the person displaying the behaviour or intervene in a situation as it unfolds.

## Indirect Strategies

Allow you to do something without getting directly involved in the situation as it unfolds.





## Call it out

Name the behaviour or attitude explicitly

"That comment was really disrespectful."

"That is actually quite an ageist view point."

Let people know you don't find ageist jokes funny

Ask people why they think a certain way

"What's wrong with getting older? Life's great in your 60s/70s/80s."

Be clear and direct

"That's not ok."

"Please stop that."



## Question ageist jokes and opinions

Ask them to explain their joke or comment.

"I don't get it, why is that funny?"

They will have to explain the joke and will hopefully consider why it might not be funny.



# Use "I" Statements

Short, clear statements

Let you be assertive but not aggressive

Work well with people you have a relationship with

- First you state your feelings e.g. "I feel uncomfortable..."
- Then you name the behaviour e.g. "when you make jokes about older people..."
- Then you say why e.g. "because it is disrespectful to older people..."
- And then you state what you want the person to do in future e.g. "and from now on I want you to be more considerate."



## Use body language

Body language can be really influential - don't overlook it.

Can be simpler and more effective than words.

Disapproving look

Shake of the head

Eye roll

Walk away or change the subject

Don't laugh at jokes



## Bring it home

Personalise their behaviour

Get them to consider how their behaviour may impact others

Prevent them from 'othering' or dehumanising the person or group they are being ageist towards.

“What if someone said that about your father, grandmother etc?”



## Use the situation or context

Refer to workplace policies, codes of conduct or socially accepted norms or culture to challenge behaviour.

"You might get in trouble if you say or do that here."

"That goes against our policy, I wonder what HR would think of that."

"Our centre/workplace respects all ages, we don't say that here."



## Start a conversation

Ask about beliefs and values

"Why do you say that?" "Why do you do that?"

Reframe the intervention as caring and less critical

"I think you're great and can do many wonderful things."

Raise a concern before it becomes a bigger issue

"I'm concerned with how you speak to your parents etc."

Be constructive - you're not trying to start a fight.

Create an opening for discussion.



## Get help from others

Make a formal report - Report the incident or concern via official complaints/reporting channels e.g. to a manager, HR process etc.

Report offensive behaviour or attitudes online - Check out the eSafety website for information.

Ask others who are better equipped to challenge the behaviour to speak on your behalf.

If you are concerned about someone's safety or wellbeing, reach out to support services for assistance and advice.





# Support older people and others being active bystanders

Ask if they are ok and let them know they are not alone.

Acknowledge the disrespect for what it is: out of line, not cool, ageist, limiting etc.

Let them know you will support them if they want to report an incident or make a complaint.

Save screenshots, emails or interactions of disrespect.

Listen supportively.

Provide information about resources available.

Show support to others who are being active bystanders.



## When it doesn't go to plan

Focus on values - if facts aren't working, find common values: "Don't you want your mother to live a full and happy life?"

Don't take it personally - how someone reacts to being called out is on them, not you.

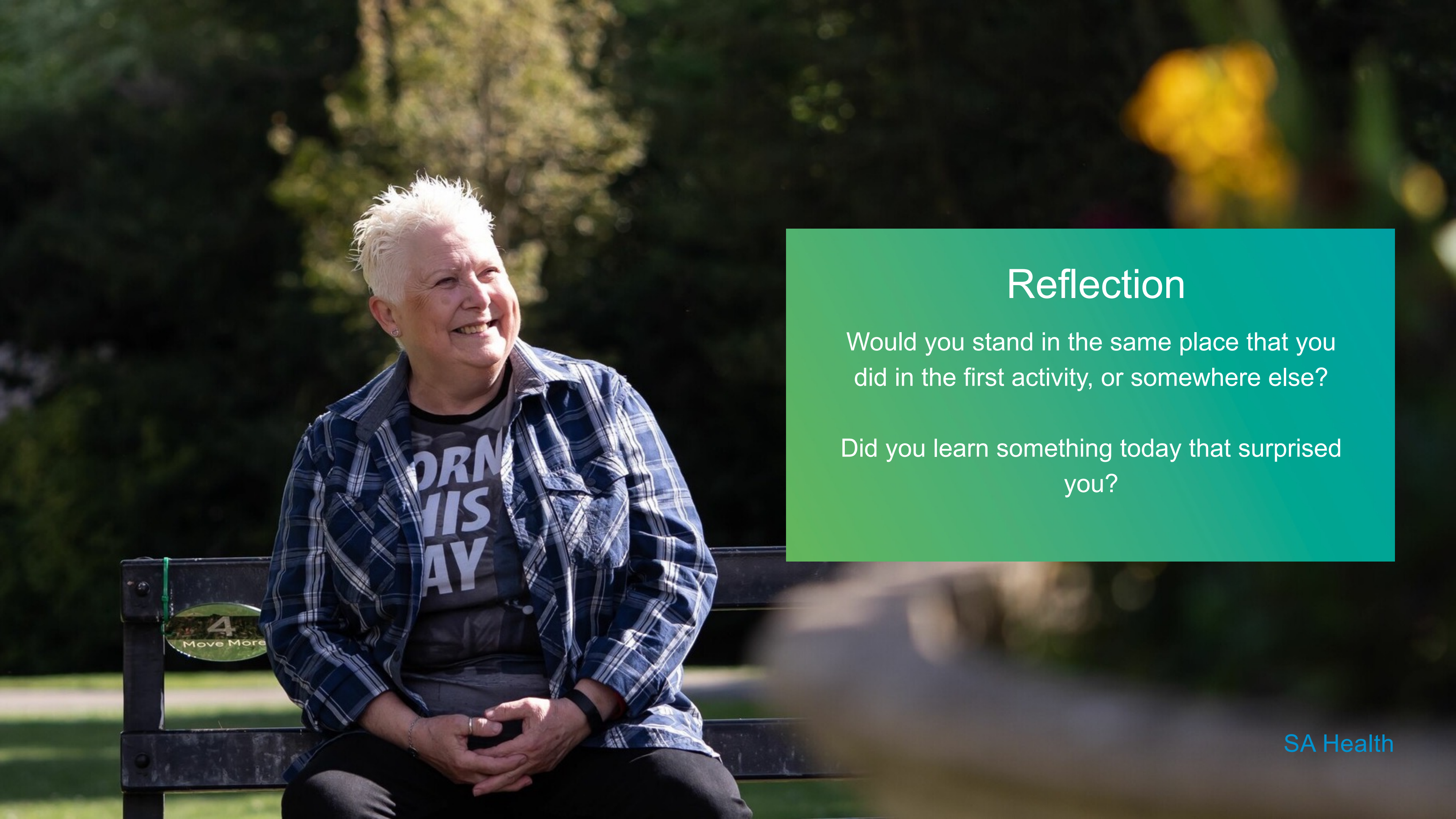
Know when to let it go - some attitudes will never change, remember it's ok to walk away and save your own time and energy.

Research says you're helping - we're still helping to fix the problem by letting others know what's not ok.



A photograph of two elderly individuals sitting at a table. The person on the right is a man with a full white beard and hair, wearing a light blue button-down shirt under a dark vest, smiling broadly. The person on the left is a woman with long, curly white hair, wearing a dark top and a red patterned scarf, looking towards the man. On the table in front of them are two dark-colored coffee cups. The background is a blurred indoor setting.

## Activity - Scenarios



## Reflection

Would you stand in the same place that you did in the first activity, or somewhere else?

Did you learn something today that surprised you?

## Call to Action

**Check it Out** - Use an 'ageism lens' to spot ageism in your everyday life.

**Spread the Word** - Talk to your friends, family and colleagues about what you have learned today.

**Don't stop learning** - Find evidence-based resources, read and engage with information and reach out to allies for support.

**Make a Commitment** - Commit to being part of the change in your community.

**Take action** - Put these strategies into action to address inequalities and discrimination in your everyday life.



Want to learn more?

Office for Ageing Well

[www.sahealth.sa.gov.au/officeforageingwell](http://www.sahealth.sa.gov.au/officeforageingwell)

Check out your goodie bag for more info



# Thank you

Please complete the post-workshop survey



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