

## Exploring Ageism Within The Family: A New Frontier in Ageism Research

Stacey Gordon, DSW, & Ernest Gonzales, PhD

Ageism is well documented in the workplace, health care settings, higher education, social media and advertisement, as well as in the broader community. Yet, the manifestation of ageism within families is understudied and not well understood, despite significant implications for the wellbeing of older adults and families.

**We argue that ageism within the family is an overlooked socio-ecological domain when considering structural ageism: intrapersonal, interpersonal, and institutional factors.**

Similar to other forms of discrimination, ageist behaviors in the family can span from microaggressions to avoidance, explicit discrimination, physical harm and attacks. Table 1 provides definitions and examples of microaggressions in the family.

Internalized ageist beliefs held by older adults and their families may interact in complex ways to limit choices and opportunities for older adults to age well, and for families to optimize healthy and strong social bonds (Table 2). Internalized ageism held by older adults combined with the family's biased stereotypes about aging, can likely result in microaggressions, diminished health, and corrosive family relations.

### Next Steps:

- Present a tripartite model of ageism and how it operates in conjunction with implicit ageism and stereotype embodiment within older adults and families.
- Discuss research and practice implications for transdisciplinary teams and helping professions.

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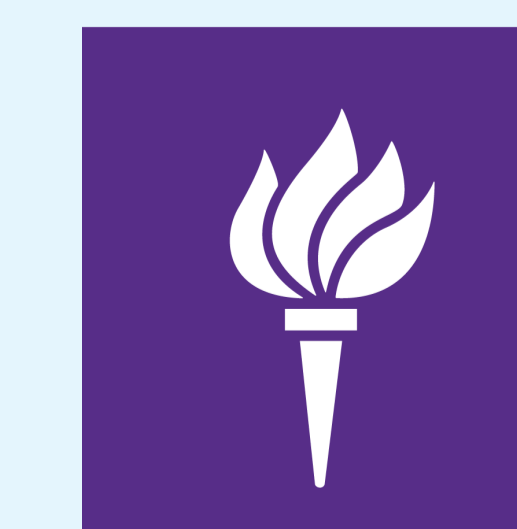
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	Definitions	Examples
<b>Micro-assaults</b>	A conscious and explicitly derogatory verbal or non-verbal attack with the intention of causing harm to a person. This form of microaggression most closely resembles traditional types of discrimination.	<i>Mom, you're way too old for that job. Give it up already! You'll never get hired anyway. Someone half your age could do the job way better than you.</i>
<b>Microinsult</b>	Comments or gestures which convey rudeness and insensitivity toward a person because of their social identity.	<i>Dad, c'mon, you don't need to look in the mirror anymore. No one is interested in how an old man looks anyway.</i>
<b>Microinvalidation</b>	A negative comment made without awareness of its impact, that causes a person to question their own thoughts, feelings or experiences.	<i>Said to a sibling in the presence of an older Mother: Hey, can you believe mom called me AGAIN to figure out how to turn off her cell phone ringer? No one over 75 should have an iPhone. Old people are completely incompetent around technology.</i>

		Internalized Ageist Beliefs Held by an Older Parent	
		Pro-Aging Beliefs	Negative Aging Beliefs
Family Perspective on Ageism	Prohibits Ageism	Little or no discrimination	Covert discrimination
	Permits Ageism	Covert discrimination	Overt discrimination



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