

## NEWS RELEASE

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### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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#### **British Columbians share experiences with ageism and age discrimination**

VICTORIA – A survey launched by the Office of the Seniors Advocate found 84% of 9,200 respondents believe ageism is an issue in B.C. and 54% reported being directly impacted by ageism.

In November and December 2024, the Office of the Seniors Advocate asked British Columbians of all ages to share their perceptions and experiences with ageism, and whether it has impacted their lives. The survey asked:

- Do you think ageism is an issue in B.C.?
- Have you been directly impacted by ageism?
- If yes, briefly describe your experience.

Today, BC Seniors Advocate Dan Levitt released a report ‘Reframing Ageing: British Columbians’ Thoughts on Ageism’ outlining the survey findings. The report summarizes the feedback through five themes: social inclusion, employment, health care, the media, and safety, and includes the experiences shared by British Columbians.

“I didn’t have any expectations about how many people would respond to the survey and wasn’t sure what they would say about ageism in B.C.,” said Levitt. “I was surprised by the high number of responses and found the stories submitted to be disheartening and out of step with what British Columbians tell me they want the ageing experience to be. It’s clear there’s work to be done to reduce ageism and instances of age discrimination in our province.”

Ageism and ageist attitudes are noticed most often in the workplace; exclusion in social situations; in society through age-related jokes and insults; making decisions for, instead of with, older people; stereotypes in advertising, movies or media; or abuse through fraud or being denied care. Many older people report feeling dismissed and invisible.

“Ageism and age discrimination are very real challenges facing older people across Canada and its negative effects on their health and well-being have the potential to affect many more of us as our population ages,” said Dr. Samir Sinha, Geriatrician and Director of Health Policy Research, National Institute on Ageing. “The stories outlined in the ‘Reframing Ageing’ report are unfortunately typical of what we hear from many older Canadians. It’s incumbent on all of us as individuals to address our own biases and prejudices, as well as organizations to examine potential systemic issues affecting older people, so we can better work to collectively end ageism.”

The report suggests some next steps for individuals, organizations and governments to begin to address ageism including:

- increasing public awareness and education and working to dispel negative stereotypes;
- encouraging all levels of government to ensure laws and policies protect and enable older people to live in dignity and security;
- implementing education and training to ensure health care providers are promoting age-inclusive practices; and
- creating opportunities for positive inter-generational activities and programs to increase understanding between people of all ages.

“With the rising seniors’ population in B.C., it’s time for everyone to check our biases and prejudices about older people. Seniors are a diverse population and while many are struggling, many others are living vibrant lives and making significant contributions in their families, in the workforce and in communities,” said Levitt. “It’s important to challenge ageist attitudes and promote inclusivity and respect for people of every age.”

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Quick Link:

- Reframing Ageing: British Columbians’ Thoughts on Ageism’ Report:  
<https://www.seniorsadvocatebc.ca/reports/>

The Office of the Seniors Advocate is an independent office of the provincial government with a mandate of monitoring seniors’ services and reporting on systemic issues affecting seniors. The office also provides information and referral to seniors and their caregivers by calling toll-free 1 877 952-3181, BC211, via email at [info@seniorsadvocatebc.ca](mailto:info@seniorsadvocatebc.ca), Canada Post and the OSA web site <https://www.seniorsadvocatebc.ca/>.

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