

NEWS RELEASE

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Let's tackle myths about ageing in 2026

VICTORIA – BC Seniors Advocate Dan Levitt is calling on British Columbians to challenge persistent myths about ageing and confront ageism in 2026.

“I meet with thousands of older people throughout the province who are making significant contributions to their families and communities through volunteering and caregiving, and living active, full lives,” said Levitt. “Many older adults are frustrated with persistent, discriminatory beliefs that make them feel excluded and overlooked in society.”

Despite some recent progress, many myths about ageing persist. Here are common stereotypes and the facts to disprove them:

Myth 1: Most older people are grumpy and unhappy

Fact: Research shows happiness increases later in life.

The ‘U-curve of happiness’ shows that satisfaction is high when we’re young, falls midlife, then increases after age 55. Statistics Canada data from 2025 shows 60.5% of Canadians aged 65+ rated their life satisfaction between 8 and 10 out of 10, compared to 46% of people aged 15-24.

Myth 2: Most older people are wealthy

Fact: Most B.C. seniors live on low to moderate incomes.

In B.C., about 25% of seniors live on annual incomes less than \$23,800, and half of seniors live on under \$37,000 a year. Community-based service providers report record numbers of seniors using food banks and meal programs, and seniors are one of the fastest-growing segments of the homeless population in B.C.

Myth 3: Most older people can't use or adapt to technology

Fact: Seniors are more tech-savvy than ever.

In 2022, 83% of Canadians 65+ (and 72% of people 75+) used the internet, with B.C. leading at 90%. A 2020 poll of Canadian seniors found that during the pandemic, 88% of seniors were using the internet daily, more than half had cell phones, and 72% reported feeling confident using technology. Some of the major barriers to older people using technology are the costs related to purchasing equipment and ongoing internet access, as well as knowledge required to use specific online services such as completing application forms and creating appointments.

Myth 4: Older workers are not as effective as younger workers

Fact: Research shows intellectual capacity and the ability to perform routine or repetitive tasks is not dependent on age. However, physical strength can decrease as we grow older which is a consideration for people in active professions.

Many people continue working for a variety of reasons including personal fulfillment, lack of retirement savings, increasing cost of living, or unforeseen expenses. In 2024, 15% of people aged 65+ in B.C. were employed, up from 12% in 2014 - higher than the Canadian average (14%). Unfortunately, many group insurance plans are no longer available to workers 65+ and people can no longer contribute to many pensions plans after a certain age. The Seniors Advocate believes limiting access to these programs based solely on age is discriminatory.

Myth 5: Most older people have dementia or memory loss

Fact: Reduced cognitive function and loss of memory are not a normal part of ageing. In B.C., 5% of people 65+ have dementia and this rate has remained steady for the last decade.

“I’m encouraging people to reflect on their own attitudes and beliefs about older adults and be mindful of the language that may perpetuate stereotypes,” said Levitt. “Be open to having conversations about ageing and age discrimination to increase awareness and create a more inclusive and respectful society. Ageing isn’t a problem – ageism is.”

Learn More:

- 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.
- [“Reframing Ageing: British Columbians’ Thoughts on Ageism” Report \(March 2025\)](#)
- Ageism refers to stereotypes (how we think), prejudices (how we feel), and discrimination (how we act) towards others and ourselves based on age. The World Health Organization says ageism negatively impacts health, well-being and human rights.

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The Office of the Seniors Advocate is an independent office of the provincial government with a mandate to monitor seniors’ services and reporting on systemic issues. The office also provides information and referral to seniors and caregivers by calling toll-free 1 877 952-3181, emailing info@seniorsadvocatebc.ca, Canada Post and visiting www.seniorsadvocatebc.ca.

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