Implicit Ageism

Ageism manifests both explicitly and implicitly, distinguished by intentionality. *Explicit ageism* occurs when there is a conscious awareness, intention or control in the thoughts, feelings or actions of an institution, law or person in regards to the treatment or consideration of an older adult. Conversely, implicit ageism includes thoughts, feelings and actions toward older adults that exist and operate without conscious awareness, intention or control (Levy & Banaji, 2004). It is believed that when a culture's ageist stereotypes are internalized, they become part of a sub-conscious framework of society, which is expressed through implicit ageism (Levy, 2001).

As people age into being perceived as "older adults," by the external forces of social interaction, formal policy qualifications (Medicare enrollment, e.g.) and self-perception, implicit ageism becomes self-referential (Levy, 2009). Ageist concepts previously directed at others are now relevant to the self and are an inextricable part of the perceived trajectory of one's own aging process.

Further Reading

Theories of Ageism

Sociological Levels of Analysis Applied to Ageism

Works Cited

Levy, B. (2001). Eradication of Ageism Requires Addressing the Enemy Within. The Gerontologist , 578-579.
Levy, B. (2009). Stereotype Embodiment : A Psychosocial Approach to Aging. Current Directions in Psychological Science , 332-336.
Levy, B., & Banaji, M. R. (2004). Implicit Ageism. In T. Nelson, Ageism (p. 51). Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press.