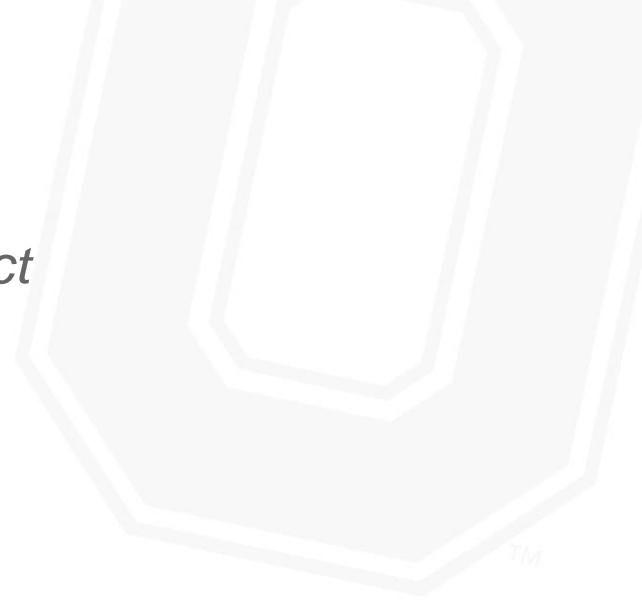


The Next Big Challenge

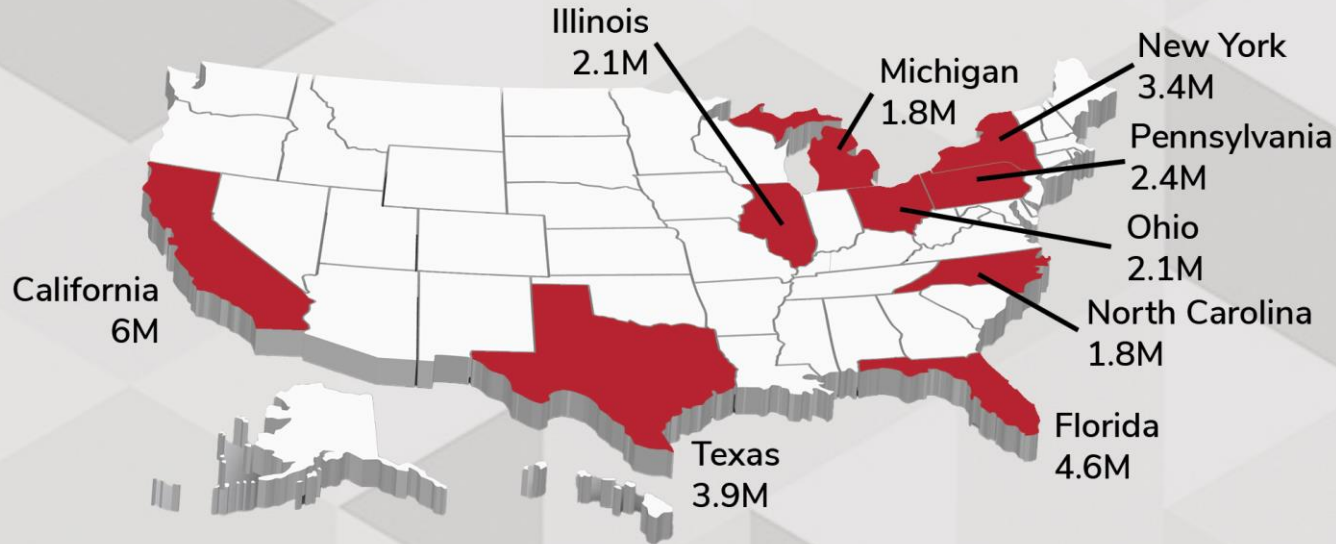
Aging Volunteers and the Opportunity for Impact

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A Coming of Age: Foundation and Future

In 2020, 51% of Americans age 65+ lived in 9 states:



Source: 2021 Profile of Older Americans, Administration for Community Living

A Coming of Age: Ohio – Now and What's Next

Ohio already has the

 **6th LARGEST**

population of older
adults in the country

Source: The Ohio Department of Aging | Aging.Ohio.gov



This decade, Ohio's
population of adults
age 60 and older will
grow **28X MORE** than
the general population

By 2034, the population 65 and older will outnumber 18 and younger for the 1st time ever in U.S. history.

One out of every four 65-year-olds today will live past age 90. (APA)

A Coming of Age: Ageism Impact

Ageism refers to stereotypes (how we think), prejudice (how we feel) and discrimination (how we act) toward others or oneself based on age.

Internalized ageism: How we feel about ourselves as aging people; and ageism in which older adults marginalize and discriminate against other older people.

Implicit ageism: The unconscious bias that includes attitudes, feelings and behaviors toward people of other age groups that operates without conscious awareness or intention.

Interpersonal ageism: Ageist comments and behavior that happen between people when they interact. This can be implicit and unconscious or conscious. This may be negative, but can also come from positive intent, but still be based on stereotypes.

o **Benevolent ageism:** Patronizing, paternalistic beliefs or behaviors that older people need to be protected, because they are no longer able to make decisions for themselves.

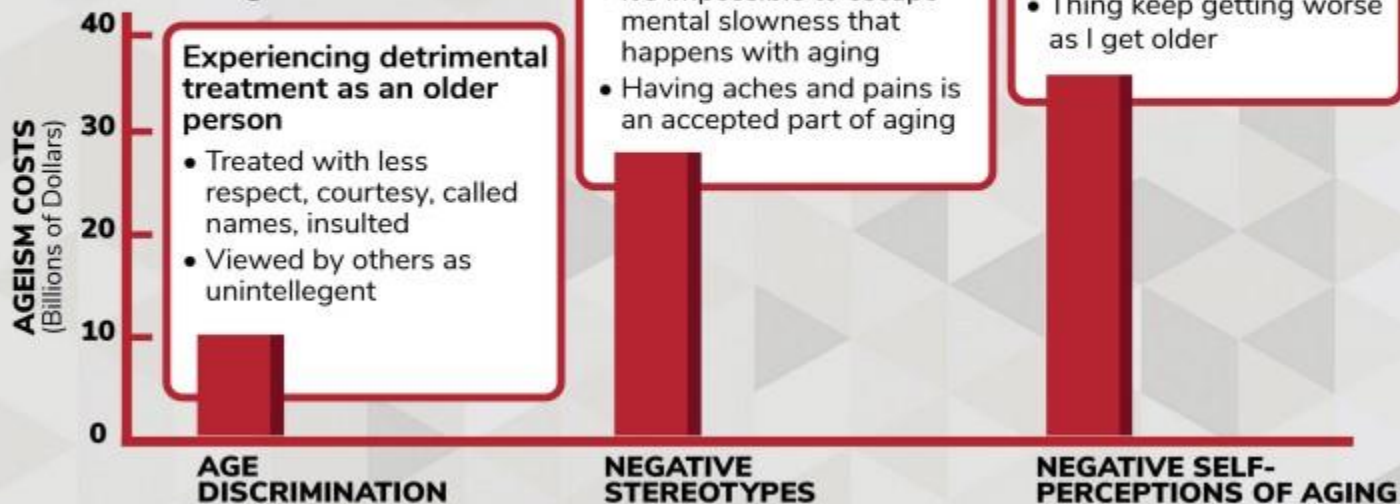
An example of benevolent ageism is **Elderspeak**. This is when an older adult is addressed as if they can't make decisions on their own. People may speak in a higher pitch and speak more slowly, with simple words, as if speaking to a child.

Cultural ageism: The everyday, invisible, profoundly ingrained and normalized negative messages about aging and old people embedded in movies, TV, songs, jokes, *etc.*

A Coming of Age: Negative Impact

\$63 billion in one year.

\$1 out of every \$7 spent by Medicare on healthcare for 8 conditions was attributable to ageism.



Becca R Levy, PhD, Martin D Slade, MPH, E-Shien Chang, MA, Sneha Kannooh, MPH, Shi-Yi Wang, MD, PhD, Ageism Amplifies Cost and Prevalence of Health Conditions, *The Gerontologist*, Volume 60, Issue 1, February 2020, Pages 174-181, <https://doi.org/10.1093/geront/gny131>

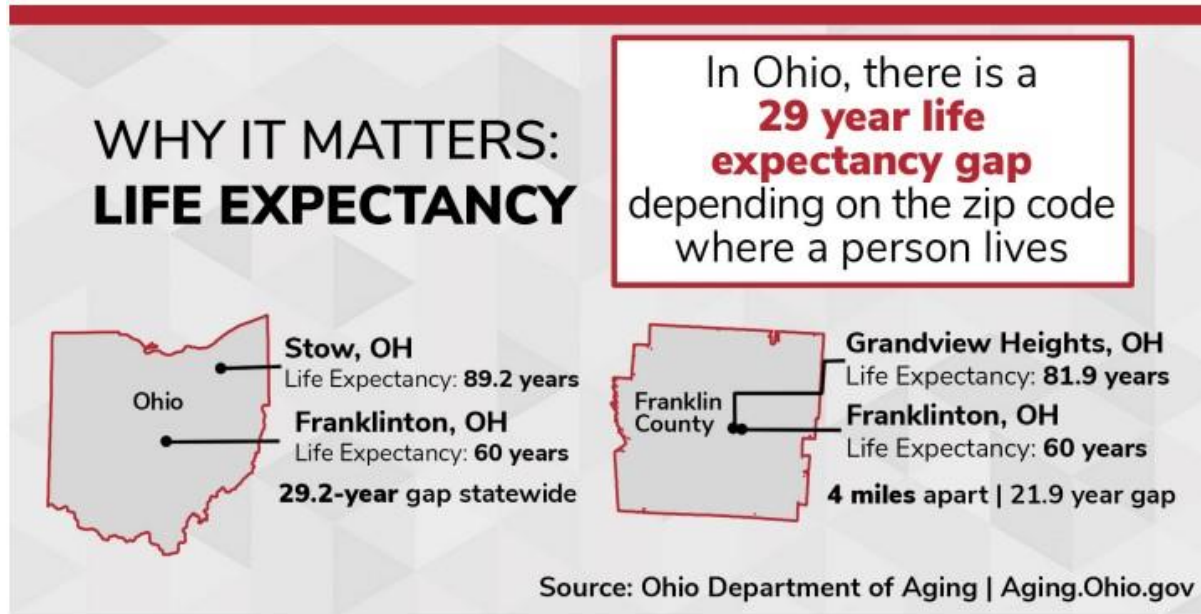
A Coming of Age: Positive Impact

**WE CAN LIVE
7.6 YEARS
LONGER WHEN WE
HAVE POSITIVE
SELF-PERCEPTIONS
OF AGING**

Source: Becca R. Levy, PhD, Martin D. Slade, MPH, Suzanne R. Kunkle, Stanislav Kasl, Longevity Increased by Positive Self-Perceptions of Aging, The Journal of Social Psychology, Volume 83, Issue 2, 2002, Pages 261-270

The more comfortable we are with our own aging, the less stigma and bias we will apply to other people who are aging.

A Coming of Age: Why it Matters



If our exposure to older adults is limited, then our understanding of the realities of aging will be limited as well.

Myths and Realities of Aging

The greatest myth of all: All older people are alike!

What is your definition of “old”?

- When we generalize, we lose our understanding of the diversity of our culture.
- Think about this – would you think of a 10 yr. old and a 30 yr. old as having the same needs, personality traits, habits, etc.? The same goes for comparing someone who is 65 to someone who is 85.

Myth: When you get old everything falls apart.

- The physical condition of an older adult is reflective of their physical activity when they were younger.
 - Older adults who are physically active are less depressed.
 - Physical activity helps to prevent cognitive decline such as dementia.

Older adults who have a lot of friends are more likely to be the ones who are adventurous. Do the friendships encourage the fun activities, or do the older adults who do the exciting activities attract more friends because they are just more fun to be around?

What is Brain Health?

Brain health refers to how well a person's brain functions across several areas. Aspects of brain health include:

- **Cognitive health** — how well you think, learn, and remember
- **Motor function** — how well you make and control movements, including balance
- **Emotional function** — how well you interpret and respond to emotions (both pleasant and unpleasant)
- **Tactile function** — how well you feel and respond to sensations of touch — including pressure, pain, and temperature

Brain health can be affected by age-related changes in the brain, injuries such as stroke or traumatic brain injury, mood disorders such as depression, substance use disorder or addiction, and diseases such as Alzheimer's disease.

While some factors affecting brain health cannot be changed, there are many lifestyle changes that might make a difference.

The Brain-Body Connection

- Two-way impact: Changes in brain affect thinking, but changes in physical health affect our brains.
- NIA- funded study of almost 3,000 older adults showed impact of healthy lifestyle factors:
 - physical activity
 - not smoking
 - not drinking heavily
 - Mediterranean-style diet
 - Engaging in mentally stimulating activities
- People who engaged in four or five of these behaviors had a 60% lower risk of developing Alzheimer's compared to those who only followed one or none.
- People who followed two or three of the activities had a 37% lower risk.

Successful aging in people requires more than longevity. It requires the maintenance of physical, cognitive, and social function. (Lowry, Vallejo and Studenski, 2012)

How the Aging Brain Affects Thinking

- The brain controls many aspects of thinking:
 - Remembering
 - Planning and organizing
 - Making decisions, etc.
 - These cognitive abilities affect how well we do everyday tasks and whether we can live independently

Normal changes in thinking as we age:

Slower to find words and recall names

Problems with multitasking

Experience mild decreases in the ability to pay attention

Positive cognitive changes as we age:

Older adults have larger vocabularies

Accumulated knowledge and experiences

Triumph triggers- learn something new everyday

Types of Decision Making

Routine Decision Making

- Simple and familiar decisions that rely on prior experience. Older adults may excel due to accumulated knowledge and experience.

Strategic decision making

- Complex decisions that require cognitive effort and planning. Older adults may struggle with processing and integrating complex information but may avoid risky choices based on prior experiences.

Intuitive decision making

- Based on gut feelings or hunches. Older adults may perform as well as younger adults and even have an advantage due to accumulated knowledge and experience.

Factors that Influence Decision Making

External factors include social support and physical health.

- Social support positively impacts decision-making, while social isolation negatively impacts it.
- Chronic health conditions and medications can also negatively impact decision-making abilities.

Internal factors include cognitive impairment, depression, and anxiety, negatively impacting decision-making.

Emotional regulation skills and cognitive training programs can positively impact decision-making.

One of the BEST benefits of aging is the development of resilience.

- Resilience is the ability to “roll with the punches.”
- Older adults have experienced more emotional ups and downs in their life = development of more coping mechanism to deal with negative experiences.
- Older adults process thoughts slower than younger adults. As we age, our greater processing time actually protects us from the “fight or flight” quick response that happens during a heated conversation.

Types and Risk Factors

Cognitive Impairment: A decline in cognitive functioning that affects an individual's ability to process and integrate information, plan and execute decisions, and evaluate potential outcomes.

Emotional Impairment: A difficulty in regulating emotions, such as anxiety, depression, or impulsivity, can affect an individual's ability to make rational decisions and objectively evaluate potential outcomes.

Behavioral Impairment: A difficulty in controlling behavior and impulses, such as impulsivity or disinhibition, can affect an individual's ability to consider the consequences of their actions and make decisions that align with their goals and values.

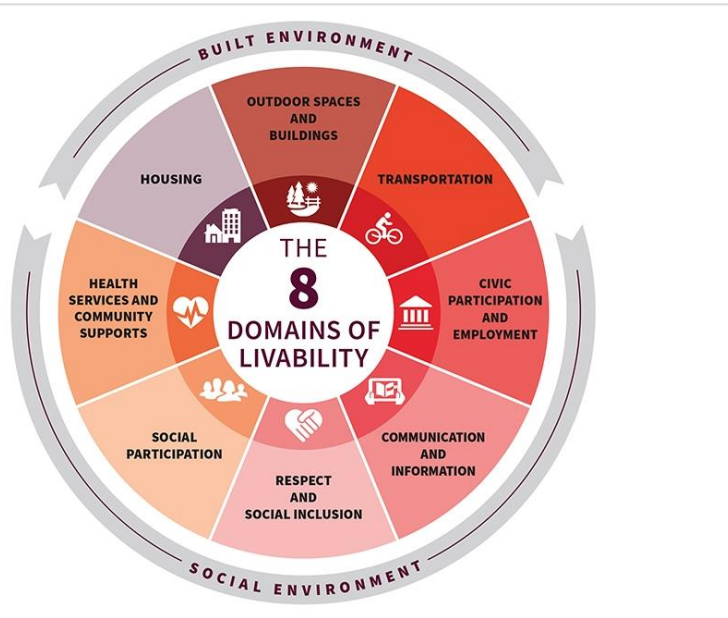
Risk Factors for decision-making impairment in older adults:

- Social isolation can lead to cognitive decline and poorer decision-making abilities
- Physical activity can have a positive effect on cognitive functioning and improve decision-making performance
- Poor nutrition, such as a diet high in saturated fats, is associated with cognitive decline in older adults.

Risk Management Do's and Don'ts Handout

Consider the 8 Domains of Livability for Healthy Aging

AARP Network of Age-Friendly States and Communities



aarp.org/livable

1. **Outdoor Spaces and Buildings** (People need public places to gather.)
2. **Transportation** (Driving shouldn't be the only way to get around.)
3. **Housing** (suitable for differing incomes, ages and life stages)
4. **Social Participation** (loneliness is often as debilitating a health condition as having a chronic illness or disease.)
5. **Respect and Social Inclusion** (Intergenerational programming focused on learning from one another and honoring what other has to offer)
6. **Work and Civic Engagement** (active engagement in work or volunteerism)
7. **Communication and Information** (variety of sharing methods)
8. **Community and Health Services** (access and affordability)

Consider the Blue Zones



<https://www.bluezones.com/>

Diet: Primarily eat a 95% plant-based diet (Meat around 5 xs per month)

- They follow the 80% rule (reduced calorie intake and fasting)
Eating slower helps you feel fuller

Consume alcohol in moderation i.e. red wine

- Antioxidants help prevent damage to DNA that can contribute to aging, may help prevent heart disease

Exercise is built into daily life

They get enough **sleep** (Naps no longer than 30 minutes)

Being religious or spiritual (social support and reduced depression)

Having a life purpose (“ikigai”/Okinawa – “plan de vida”/Nicoya)

Older and younger people living together: Grandparents who look after their grandchildren have a lower risk of death.

A healthy social network:

Intergenerational Opportunity: Full Circle

Mentorship

- Diffuses resistance between mentor/mentee

Recruitment

- Succession planning
- School engagement at all levels
 - Elementary, high school, college

Remember your WHY

“It is the ultimate luxury to combine passion and contribution. It's also a very clear path to happiness.” —Sheryl Sandberg

Thank You

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aging.osu.edu