DIGNITY THROUGH ACTION WORKSHOP

PART 2

Older Peoples’ Challenges
What is an Older Person?

World average life expectancy is about 66 years (Source UN). ‘Old age’ could be considered as being any age beyond this.

Average Britain believes ‘youth’ ends at 35 and ‘old age’ begins at 58. Daily Telegraph 17 March 2010

There is really no clear definition - natural aging process - chronological, biological, physical and psychological measures.

‘I will never be an old man. To me old age is always 15 years older than I am’
(Bernard Baruch, 1870-1965)

Aging:

Some people never feel old and look fit until quite advanced years.

Other people seem to age prematurely due to illness, injury & environment.

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## Aging Population

### In the United Kingdom in 2005

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total Population</th>
<th>State Pension Age</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>60 million</td>
<td>11 Million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>England</td>
<td>9m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scotland</td>
<td>1m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wales</td>
<td>0.6m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern Ireland</td>
<td>0.3m</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Older People Projections

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Total Age Group</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>12 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2026</td>
<td>13 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2031</td>
<td>15 million</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Fastest growing age group = 80 years and older
- Male and females about the same up to about 70 years
- Females outnumber males from about 70 years on (Ratio = 3:1 by the age of 90).
- Spike in the aging population caused by post second World War ‘baby boomers’.
- Only 5% of the aging population is in care homes.
Stereotyping and Prejudice

There is an increasing number of older people due to the **SUCCESS** of improvements to living conditions and health and social care.

**BUT** it can be viewed **negatively** where older people are:

- Not valued for their experience *(Western Society attribute)*
- Not seen as contributing to the economy
- Increasing cost to the employed.

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**But many older people:**

- Contributed through working life
- Work on to afford pensions
- Do not retire – enjoy work
- Care for grandchildren
- Care for even older relatives

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**Older People: Poor Terminology**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ambiguous Terms</th>
<th>Negative Behavioural Terms</th>
<th>Negative Physical Attribute Terms</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aged</td>
<td>Scroungers</td>
<td>Double Chins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boomers</td>
<td>Grumpys</td>
<td>Saggies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seniors</td>
<td>Leakies</td>
<td>Dried up</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elderly</td>
<td>Old fogies</td>
<td>Little old ladies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oldies</td>
<td>Old fools</td>
<td>Slapheads</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Old folks</td>
<td>Old biddys</td>
<td>Baldies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Older people !!!</td>
<td>Grannies</td>
<td>Squinties</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Old codgers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Old geezers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*What other negative terms have you heard in common use?*

*What positive collective terms can we use?*

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What challenges do older people face?
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Older Peoples’ Challenges

- Ageing & Physical
- Medical
- Discrimination (Ageism)
- Neglect
- Mental Health
- Abuse
Physical and Mental Challenges

‘If I knew I was gonna live this long, I’d have taken better of myself’

(Eubie Blake, 1883-1983)
Older Peoples’ Challenges

Ageing & Physical Changes
- Impairments
  - Sight
  - Hearing
  - Speech
- Injury
- Loss of functions
- Decreased intellectual abilities
- Lower span of attention
- Changes in behavior

Medical
- Injury
- Illness
- Concurrent Illnesses
- Neurological
- Cardiovascular
- Respiratory
- Musculoskeletal
- Bladder/Bowels
- Terminal Illnesses

Mental Health
- Depression
- Mental Illnesses
Dignity through Action Workshop: Older People & Vulnerabilities

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Discrimination (Ageism)
- Availability of Resources
- Proper Assessment
- Obtaining diagnosis
- Obtaining treatments
- Access to Services
- Quality of Life
- Resuscitation

Mental Health
- Depression
- Mental Illnesses
DOES AGE DISCRIMINATION REALLY EXIST IN THE CARE OF THE OLDER PERSON?

Witnesses to the UK Joint Committee on Human Rights (2008) quoted:
- Discrimination is less common following NSF for Older People
- 50% of a sample of 85 Doctors said they are influenced by age.
- Patients over 65 are less likely to be referred to a cardiologist.
- Cardiologists are also less likely to recommend operations.

Age Concern's Report on Age Discrimination (2007) quoted:
- Treatment for minor strokes is covertly rationed for people over 80 yrs.
- Doctors less likely to refer angina sufferers to see a specialist – if over 65 yrs.
- National health and social care priorities - restrict targets to under 75 yrs.
- Invitations to breast screening stop for women over 70 yrs.
- Older people tend to be excluded from drug trials.
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### Neglect
- Nutrition
- Mobility
- Foot Care
- Poverty

### Abuse
- Psychological Abuse
- Physical Abuse
- Financial Abuse
- Theft
- Sexual Abuse
- Abuse through Ignorance
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Your ‘thinking framework’ for dignity

Treat older people with dignity
*(respect as a human being with rights)*

&

Preserve the personal dignity of older people
*(to meet their personal needs)*