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# Attitudes Toward Aging

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# Out lines:

- ❑ Introduction.
- ❑ Definition of attitude.
- ❑ Components of attitude.
- ❑ Factors affecting attitude toward elder.
- ❑ Attitude of the elder .
- ❑ Attitude of the children.
- ❑ Attitude of the nurse.
- ❑ Negative attitude toward elders.
- ❑ Consequences of ageism.
- ❑ Role of the nurse to combat ageism.

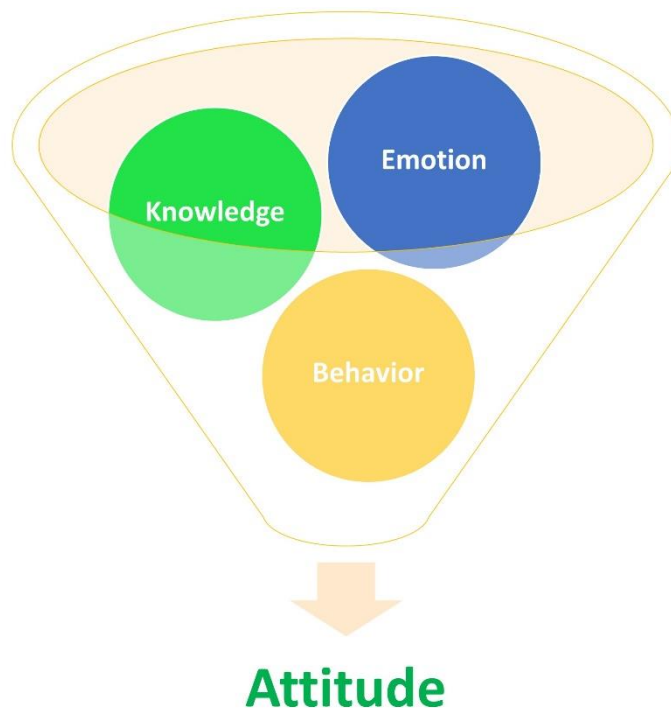
# Introduction

- ❑ Attitudes toward aging are influenced by expected life span, economic conditions, social expectations, media, arts, and literature of the time.
- ❑ Ageist attitudes may be excessively positive or negative, depending on one's tendency to stereotype individuals based on their age.

# Definition

Attitude is a complex mental state involving beliefs, feelings, values and dispositions to act in certain ways.

**Or** a way of looking at life; a way of thinking, feeling or behaving.



# Components of Attitudes

- ☐ Affective component: it consists of the kind of feeling about an object.
- ☐ Cognitive component: it consists of a set of beliefs about an object.
- ☐ Behavioral component: it consists of an intention to act in particular way with respect to a particular object.

# Factors affecting the attitudes toward the elders

- ❑ Social and cultural background.
- ❑ Sex.
- ❑ Level of education.
- ❑ Area of practice.
- ❑ Interest in working with the elders.
- ❑ Years of experience.
- ❑ Type of care facility.
- ❑ Exposure to positive role model of aging.
- ❑ Characteristics of the residents such as functional and sensory deficits.
- ❑ Myths (perpetuating false information, negative images about elders).
- ❑ Influence of mass media.

# Attitudes of Elders

- Attitudes of the aged toward other elders are often more rejecting than those of younger persons.

# Attitudes of Children

- [?] Children are able to interact with old persons and feel comfortable with them in direct proportion to their frequency of contact.
- [?] Those who see elders frequently are more aware of the reality of aging persons.
- [?] Closeness with grandparent is highly correlated with attitudes young people hold toward older persons.



# Attitudes of Nurses

- ❑ Few students or professional set out early on to be gerontology specialists. They enter the field most often by accident, by job opportunity, or through a revered mentor.
- ❑ Often, in nursing, an early experience of a student caring for a physically debilitated or dependent elder was the impression that fostered an interest in the field.

# Negative attitudes towards the elders

- ❑ Ageism: Old age is viewed negatively thus elders are considered a subject of jokes.
- ❑ Ageism has negative consequences not only on elders, but on individuals, families, groups and community levels .

# Consequences of Ageism

- ❑ Not valuing the opinions, contributions and ideas of the elders.
- ❑ Treating the elders with disrespect.
- ❑ Physical care, verbal and nonverbal behaviors exhibited toward them are colored by the beliefs held about them.
- ❑ Ageism can lower or destroy the self-esteem of elders.
- ❑ Limit the degree to which elder's problems are worked up and managed by health professionals.
- ❑ The elders become dependent and unacceptable.
- ❑ Lead to a variety of abusive behaviors about elders.

# Role of nurse to combat ageism

- ☐ Identify and eliminate personal attitudes of ageism by understanding the realities of aging and identifying common misconceptions through contact with individuals, families and community.
- ☐ Help in disseminating accurate information about the needs and characteristics of the aging populations through mass media.
- ☐ Nurses who work with elders should act as role models for staff and advocate for the rights of elders.

- ☐ Providing advice and educating the elders and family about aging process and disabilities associated with aging.
- ☐ Nurses can refer others to agencies that can provide accurate and current information on aging.
- ☐ Informing the family about the importance of involving them in every aspect of their life as this will provide support, show respect and loving.
- ☐ Educating the staff about common changes associated with aging, misconceptions and realities of aging



Q & A