OBJECTIVES

1. To identify one’s attitudes towards aging and its impact on care of older persons and their families.
2. To describe ageism and stereotyping of older persons.

TARGET AUDIENCE

Healthcare professionals and health professions students; older adult groups to discuss ways they may feel disregarded or disenfranchised and/or how they have overcome the sense of loss of personhood

EXERCISE

“Ageism” coined by Robert Butler¹ was described as a process of systematic discrimination and stereotyping of the aged. Stereotypes about older persons and myths about growing older can impact quality of care.

The poem, *The Little Boy and the Old Man* by Shel Silverstein (from *A Light in the Attic*), can be read aloud as a group or read in dyads with one person reading the older lines and the other person reading the boys lines. They can also exchange roles.

Questions for discussion:
   1. How are the older man and boy alike, how do they differ?
   2. What are the themes?
You might comment on: respect, relationships, neglect, humor, and frustration.

Questions for Self Reflection:
   1. Have you ever felt people weren’t paying attention to you?
   2. Are there times in your professional practice you find you aren’t paying attention to clients or colleagues?
   3. How have you been able to be more attentive or intentional in your listening?