



UNDERSTANDING AGEISM AND AGE DISCRIMINATION

Have you ever encountered comments such as...

“Are you sure you can handle this job? It takes a lot of energy and enthusiasm, and we are looking for someone with career potential.”

“You don't need this training program. At your age, what would the benefit be?”

“We're looking for a more mature candidate to handle the responsibilities of this position”

“Students are noisy and unreliable tenants.”

Such comments reflect **ageism** – attitudes and labels that make assumptions about persons and their abilities based on their age. Ageism also includes a tendency to view and design society on the basis that everyone is young. However, people may experience age discrimination at any time in their lives, and certain age groups tend to face different forms of discrimination.

YOU ARE PROTECTED FROM AGE DISCRIMINATION

Age is a protected ground under the Ontario *Human Rights Code* (the “Code”), This means that you cannot be discriminated against because of your age where you work or live, or go to get a service. In the *Code*, age is defined as

being 18 years or older, or age 16 or older in housing if you have withdrawn from parental control. Some special programs and benefits, such as seniors' discounts or youth employment programs, exist to address genuine age-related needs. However, when you are unjustifiably treated differently because of your age, that's age discrimination.

IN PRINCIPLE,

As a person over 18:

- You have the right to be offered the same opportunities in employment as everyone else. Your age should not be used to deny hiring, training or promotion opportunities, or to force you to retire. With very few exceptions, mandatory retirement is illegal in Ontario.
- You have the right to the same level of services as everyone else, such as in medical treatment and other health care services. As an older person, you can expect landlords or housing providers to make practical modifications to living spaces that respond to your age-related needs.

As an employer:

- You cannot refuse to hire, train or promote people simply because of age-based assumptions.
- You should not target older workers, or other age groups, when it comes to workplace downsizing or reorganization activities.

- You are responsible for making sure that your workplace is free from discrimination, is inclusive, and respects and supports the needs of all its workers, including older employees.

As a provider of services to the public:

- You cannot refuse either directly or indirectly to serve people based on age.
- You are responsible for meeting the particular needs of older persons. For example, some may require more of your time be it in a doctor's office, a store, or in using public transit services.

As a landlord or housing provider:

- You cannot evict older tenants who may be paying lower rent, or refuse to rent to younger people because you assume they won't be good tenants.
- You may be responsible for making practical modifications, such as installing ramps, visual fire alarms and doorbells, different sized door handles or lower counters that make housing more accessible for older persons with disability-related needs.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

The Ontario Human Rights Commission's *Policy on Discrimination Against Older Persons Because of Age* and other publications are available at www.ohrc.on.ca.

To file an application please contact the Human Rights Tribunal of Ontario at:
Toll Free: 1-866-598-0322
TTY Toll Free: 1-866-607-1240
Website: www.hrto.ca

To discuss your rights or if you need legal help please contact the Human Rights Legal Support Centre at:
Toll Free: 1-866-625-5179
TTY Toll Free: 1-866-612-8627
Website: www.hrlsc.on.ca