

## **Ageism: What Can Congregations Do?**

### **Suggestions for actions to counter ageism**

*With thoughts from Awit Marcelino and Angel Luis Agosto Rivera*

#### Bring older and younger people together for connection and community:

Have the youth and young adults connect with the older adults in your church through learning together.

ie: how to make jams and preserves using fresh fruit from the store or garden – a skill that younger people don't have but older folks do.

Offer a tech session where the younger folks teach older folks how to use the apps or settings on their phone so they can feel more comfortable staying connected with their friends and family.

Include older adults *and* young people in leadership and decision-making.

Seek to balance the age-range representation on each of your church's governing and working bodies.

#### Schedule a discussion about church and organizational responsibility:

*Churches are not just service providers. They are moral communities called to practice care that is compassionate in relationships and accountable in structure.*

Discussion: What can ministries do that is both compassionate and responsible?

Listen across age and cultural differences, recognizing that complexity exists.

List the ideas, then work to prioritize them by greatest, or most important need.

#### Create partnerships with area professionals:

Discuss ways to cooperatively support the needs of your community.

What does it mean to shift from charity to justice by focusing on individuals' need for dignity and belonging?

#### Build program ideas which speak *with* people, not just *about* them:

Ask not just "How do we help?" but "How can we best accompany and support?"

Invite area professionals to offer trainings for laity and clergy.

See where the dialogue leads and where the Spirit calls you to act!

*Tell us about your experiences: [oam@nbacares.org](mailto:oam@nbacares.org)*

*Older Adult Ministries in partnership with the NBA Christian Church Disciples of Christ:*

*[www.NBACares.org/olderadults](http://www.NBACares.org/olderadults)*