

# Anticipating Implicit Bias

Implicit biases are subconscious attitudes or stereotypes that can affect how service providers perceive and interact with older women. These are 8 common biases to watch for:



## 1 Physical Frailty

### Bias:

"Older women are physically weak, fragile, or incapable of performing certain tasks."

### Impact:

Can lead to unnecessary assistance, limiting independence, or exclusion from physical activities or opportunities that require physical effort.



## 2 Asexuality

### Bias:

"Older women are not interested in or capable of having romantic or sexual relationships."

### Impact:

Can obscure older women's sexuality and issues of sexual violence, making it more difficult to talk about or to disclose.



## 3 Diminished Professional Value

### Bias:

"Older women are less competent, adaptable, or productive in the workplace compared to their younger counterparts."

### Impact:

Can result in being passed over for promotions, forced into early retirement, or excluded from professional development opportunities.



## 5 Invisibility in Media and Society

### Bias:

"Older women are not relevant or interesting."

### Impact:

Can reinforce the notion that older women's contributions are less valuable. Lack of representation in media supports social isolation and invisibility of older women in society.



## 7 Cultural Discomfort with Female Aging

### Bias:

"Older women should be quiet and retiring, not asserting authority or taking up space."

### Impact:

Can affirm the belief that women have no value once they move beyond roles defined by youth, appearance and service to others.



## 4 Caretaker Stereotypes

### Bias:

"It is natural for women to be the caregiver and to put the needs of others first."

### Impact:

Can lead to expectations of unlimited, unpaid care, sacrifice of self care, burn-out, financial instability, loss of personal autonomy.



## 6 Cognitive Decline

### Bias:

"Older women are less mentally sharp and more prone to memory loss simply because of their age."

### Impact:

Can lead to patronizing behavior, such as not taking their opinions seriously or excluding them from decision-making processes.



## 8 Perceived Lack of Technological Competence

### Bias:

"Older women are not capable of using modern technology or are resistant to learning new technological skills."

### Impact:

Can lead to exclusion from digital communication or professional opportunities that require technological proficiency.