



**The invitation of  
today's session is to  
practice anti-ageism  
together**

**What is humour and  
what has it got to do  
with ageism?**

# Physical Health Benefits of Laughing

**Stimulates Organs:** Laughter enhances the intake of oxygen-rich air.

**Boosts Immune System:** Positive thoughts and laughter can improve your resistance to disease.

**Relieves Pain:** The body produces natural painkillers (endorphins) during laughter.

**Improves Cardiovascular Health:** Laughter improves the function of blood vessels.

**Soothes Tension:** A good laugh can stimulate circulation and aid muscle relaxation.

**Burns Calories:** laughing for 10 to 15 minutes a day can burn approximately 40 calories.

**Improves Sleep:** Some studies on older adults suggest that laughter therapy can help reduce insomnia.

# Mental and Emotional Health Benefits

**Stress Relief:** Laughter cools down the stress response, lowering levels of stress hormones creating a relaxed feeling and helps you cope with difficult situations.

**Mood Improvement:** Laughter can help lessen stress, depression, and anxiety by triggering the release of "feel-good" hormones.

**Enhances Resilience:** Humor helps people better cope with challenges and difficult news by providing perspective and making situations seem less overwhelming.

**Improves Memory and Creativity:** Laughter can enhance memory, creative thinking, and motivation, helping you solve problems more effectively.

# Social Benefits

**Strengthens Relationships:** Sharing a laugh is an effective way to form and strengthen bonds with others, fostering a sense of connection, safety, and warmth.

**Diffuses Conflict:** Humor can lighten heavy situations and diffuse disagreements and tension in personal and professional relationships, helping to move past confrontations.

**Attracts Others:** Laughter is contagious, drawing people together and helping you connect with new people.

**LAUGHING IS VERY  
GOOD FOR HEALTH  
AND WELLBEING**



**Ageism**—discrimination based on age—has severe, wide-ranging impacts, causing increased premature mortality, poorer physical/mental health, and social isolation. It manifests through internalised stereotypes, interpersonal bias, and institutional discrimination, **reducing life expectancy by an average of 7.5 years for those holding negative views on ageing.**



**AGEISM IS VERY  
BAD FOR HEALTH  
AND WELLBEING**

**So how should we respond  
to humour which reinforces  
ageist stereotypes?**

**Does it depend on the  
context?**

# Power Dynamics behind humour

**Punching Up:** Criticising or mocking individuals or groups with higher status, eg politicians, celebrities, or CEOs. Generally viewed as acceptable and is often used to hold powerful people accountable.

**Punching Down:** Mocking or criticizing people in a lower, marginalised, or less powerful position. Generally frowned upon as it can appear bullying or reinforce negative stereotypes.

**Punching Sideways:** Mocking oneself, people with similar status, or one's own community. This is often self-deprecating or serves as an "inside joke".

# Session Overview

**Workshop style: lots of space to develop your own ideas and chat with others.**

- Explore together what we think about ageist humour its benefits and its harms.
- Get playful: what can we do? Generate ideas about age-related humour that undermines ageist stereotypes