

## Appendix 15N

# Early Memories of Ageism and Adultism

Introduce this activity by referring to the introductory points that all of us have experienced adultism, have observed ageism, and have the potential to experience ageism if we live to become elders. This activity provides an opportunity to examine early memories of ageism and adultism. Through this examination, we can increase our capacity to identify behaviors, attitudes, and beliefs that perpetuate ageism and adultism, discover the roots of our own beliefs and attitudes rooted in ageism and adultism, and understand some of the ways that ageism and adultism is transmitted in the culture.

In groups of three, ask participants to respond to the following questions. Each person should have 5 minutes to respond to these questions. The group should follow the phenomenological listening guidelines. The facilitator should keep time and let participants know when their time is finished and the next person should begin.

1. How do you describe your age-based social identity?
2. What is your earliest memory of experiencing or observing any of the following: (What happened? What do you remember thinking, feeling, saying, and doing?)
  - a. Someone made decisions for you because of your age.
  - b. Someone assumed that you could not understand because of your age.
  - c. You were ignored or left on your own because of your age.
  - d. Your personal privacy was invaded because of your age.
  - e. Someone withheld affection, closeness, and approval to secure your compliance with their wishes.
  - f. Someone assumed that you were incompetent because of your age.
  - g. You were teased, yelled at or touched against your will because of your age.
3. How do these early experiences affect how you think about and treat young people in the present time?
4. How do these early experiences affect how you think about and treat elders in the present time?

After each participant has completed their 5 minutes, ask participants to return to the circle. Summarize and conclude the activity by asking participants to first share any feelings about this exercise and then to share any thoughts they have about how ageism and adultism are perpetuated.