

AARP DISRUPT AGING CLASSROOM: CHANGING THE CONVERSATION ABOUT AGING



We're entering a new era of aging. People are living and working longer, and experiencing more while doing it. Statistics show:

- By 2035, there will be more people age 65 and older than under age 18.¹
- A child who's age 10 now has a 50 percent chance of living to age 104.²
- In the U.S., 56 cents of every dollar is spent by adults age 50 and older – and this number is only expected to rise.³

With older adults as the fastest growing demographic, opportunities abound for innovation. Consumers need expanded health care services, creative designs and adaptive technologies. Companies must grow and update policies to embrace a multi-generational workforce.

Unfortunately, most college graduates lack aging knowledge and experience with older adults outside of their own families – causing them to miss key areas for success. Disrupt Aging Classroom seeks to change that trend.

HIGHER EDUCATION AND AGING

Institutions of higher education play a critical role in helping students become more age-inclusive through broadening understanding and interactions.

- New professionals entering the workforce need to understand how to work and interact across generations, no matter their industry.
- Many young adults will be caregivers earlier than they may expect – today, more than 10 million millennials find themselves in this role, caring for an aging parent or grandparent.³
- Students also need to recognize how their aging perceptions and mind and body care will affect how they age later.

DISRUPT AGING CLASSROOM

Disrupt Aging Classroom is a 2.5-hour, interactive curriculum that challenges students to examine their aging perceptions and think about how the growing aging population is relevant to their personal lives and future careers.

The curriculum is presented by AARP volunteer facilitators, who are trained extensively on the content and effective delivery. Facilitators can present either in the classroom or virtually through a live video presentation. The curriculum complements any course of study and can be presented across disciplines at university campuses. **It's offered at no cost to higher education institutions.**

DISRUPT AGING CLASSROOM LEARNING OBJECTIVES

The curriculum covers five themes and includes interactive activities:

- Describe demographic trends in aging.
- Define and discuss examples of ageism.
- Recognize older adults as multi-dimensional individuals.
- Examine your personal stake in the aging trend.
- Identify opportunities stemming from the aging trend.

1 Arigoni, Danielle. "Preparing for an Aging Population." AARP Liveable Communities, May 2018.

2 "The Longevity Economy® Outlook: How people age 50 and older are fueling economic growth, stimulating jobs, and creating opportunities for all." AARP, December 2019.

3 Jenkins, Jo Ann. "Millennials and Caregiving? Yes, It's a Thing." AARP, May 29, 2018.

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“Students in my managerial communications classes are initially surprised that I want them to learn about aging. But, after they experience Disrupt Aging Classroom, they end up surprised at how many ways this information will help throughout their personal lives and their careers.”

— Connie Yan
Adjunct Professor, School of Business
Central Connecticut State University

REAL RESULTS

Disrupt Aging Classroom facilitators survey participants before and immediately after the curriculum is presented. Additionally, students are asked to complete a survey about two weeks after their semester ends. The goal is to capture any changes in aging perceptions.

SHIFTING STUDENT ATTITUDES ON AGING: PRE- AND POST-SURVEY RESULTS

- **+12%** privilege to grow old
- **+17%** want to socialize more with other generations
- **+17%** interest in learning more about aging
- **+21%** say it's very important for their peers to learn about aging

N=107, Disrupt Aging Classroom volunteer replication pilot

LEARNINGS RETAINED BY STUDENTS: ONLINE SURVEY – TWO WEEKS AFTER END OF SEMESTER

- **84%** noticed signs of ageism (schools, stores, businesses, media)
- **80%** thought differently about aging/older adults
- **68%** acted differently toward older adults
- **48%** had new thoughts about working with older adults in their careers
- **48%** have taken steps to learn more about older adults/aging

36% response rate; N=107, Disrupt Aging Classroom volunteer replication pilot

“Disrupt Aging Classroom was a great way to learn you shouldn't be scared to get older – you should be excited.”

— Giulia Capicotto
Sociology major

LET'S CONTINUE THE CONVERSATION!

TO LEARN MORE ABOUT DISRUPT AGING CLASSROOM OR BRING THE CURRICULUM TO YOUR CAMPUS,
PLEASE CONTACT...

NAME:

EMAIL: