



## Strategies to Prevent Age Discrimination

Strategies for preventing age discrimination behaviors may include both proactive and reactive measures.

- Proactive strategies include creating and enforcing policies, providing rigorous and unique training/ learning opportunities, and reinforcing positive behaviors.
- Reactive strategies include providing immediate support to targets of inappropriate behaviors and holding offenders appropriately accountable for their actions.

Prevention strategies are divided into three categories: Primary, Secondary, and Tertiary. The overarching goal is to prevent future occurrences.

- **Primary Prevention Strategies** can mitigate behaviors before they become problematic.
- **Secondary Prevention Strategies** efforts focus on responding immediately after the occurrence, while supporting the target; holding the perpetrators accountable, and setting the expectation that such behavior is unacceptable.
- **Tertiary Prevention Strategies** aim to mitigate the lasting effects of behaviors and prevent future occurrences.

### Examples of Primary Prevention Strategies

- Conduct facilitated training tailored to the target audience. Training should focus on:
  - Defining key terms associated with age discrimination, such as ageism, ageist behaviors, prejudice, and discrimination.
  - Ensuring a thorough understanding of reporting procedures.
  - Discuss causes of age discrimination and how to prevent them from impacting the workplace. Find resources in the Center of Excellence Portal on [deomi.mil](http://deomi.mil) to understand these causes:
    - Socialization
    - Diversity without Inclusion
  - Identifying age discrimination behaviors and providing opportunities for members to practice what to do if they observe or experience ageist behaviors.
- Mandate leader presence in all workplace settings; educate leaders and hold them accountable for preventing inappropriate behavior.
- Conduct climate assessments (per Service requirements) to:
  - Identify weaknesses and opportunities for improvement in current measures.
  - Develop, improve, and implement proactive measures.
- Discuss the impacts of age discrimination on individuals and the organization.





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- Display and frequently discuss policies to prevent age discrimination behaviors.
- Create opportunities for members of all ages to work, train, learn, live, eat, and compete in a diverse environment together.

### **Examples of Secondary Prevention Strategies**

- Respond with sincerity to all reports of age discrimination.
- Take appropriate actions to resolve complaints, including responding in a timely manner and without bias and holding offenders appropriately accountable.
- Inform leaders higher up the chain of ageist comments and complaints.
- Remain neutral and professional by ensuring all members are treated with dignity and respect throughout the investigation process; targets, suspected perpetrators, and members participating in the investigating process alike.
- Identify why the age discrimination occurred (e.g., lack of policy, education, enforcement of the rules).
- Provide resources and support (e.g., spiritual, medical, legal) to all involved members.
- Separate non-conforming members from employment as required/directed.

### **Examples of Tertiary Prevention Strategies**

- Develop and consistently reinforce strong organizational values.
- Monitor trends (e.g., monthly, quarterly), identify patterns, and as needed, revise your plan of action to prevent discriminatory behaviors.
- Conduct follow-up assessments (on formal and informal complaints) 45-60 days after complaint resolution to ensure the complaint is resolved and ensure no retaliation has occurred.
- Leverage lessons learned from past experiences to further inform and develop prevention training and prevent possible future harassment events.
- Conduct organizational activities that build group inclusion, cohesion, trust, and respect through participation in a unified goal or experience.
- Review current policies and revise them as needed.
- Outline the leader's prevention philosophy at open forums with other leaders: discuss ageism, ageist behaviors, and the actions leaders will take to ensure offenders are held accountable.
- Ensure required climate assessments are completed (based on Service requirements/or as directed).
- Work with community members to leverage resources available for DoD employees.

