

# Middle-Aged Resiliency and Resistance Study (MARRS)

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Middle-Aged Resiliency and Resistance Study

## Introduction

- Midlife has been largely overlooked in the literature on lifespan development (Lachman, 2015).
- Limited literature is mostly focused on the undesirable aspects of midlife (e.g., midlife crises (Wethington, 2000), empty nest syndromes, menopausal transition) and excludes the recognition of desirable aspects that may provide a more complete picture of the middle years (Infurna et al., 2020).
- Ageist beliefs influence how different generations interact with each other (North & Fiske, 2012)

## Key Terms

- **Ageism:** stereotypes, prejudice, or discrimination against individuals due to chronological age (Ayalon & Tesch-Römer, 2017)
- **Self-directed ageism:** negative attitudes and ageist beliefs that individuals hold or perpetrate toward themselves or others (Ayalon, 2022)
- **Other-directed ageism:** negative attitudes and ageist beliefs that individuals hold or direct towards others (Ayalon, 2022)

## Research Questions

### Qualitative

- How do middle-aged Saskatchewan residents experience midlife?
- How do they describe their experiences with ageism and age-inclusivity?

### Quantitative

- Is ageism directed toward other age groups (three age groups) differentially influenced by one's own age?
- Does self-oriented ageism differ by age?
- Which psychosocial factors significantly predict experiences of ageism?
- How much do chronological age and subjective age overlap?

## Results

Variables	Age	Attitude Towards Aging	Intersectional Discrimination Index	Multidimensional Mortality Awareness	Intergroup Anxiety	Aging Semantic Differential Scale
Age	Positive correlation	Positive correlation	Negative correlation	Negative correlation	Positive correlation	Negative correlation

### Multiple Regression Models

#### Other-Directed Ageism:

- Experiencing discrimination ( $\beta = 0.48, p < 0.001$ ) and mortality awareness ( $\beta = 0.25, p = .006$ ) significantly predicted other-directed ageism.

#### Self-Directed Ageism:

- Attitudes toward aging ( $\beta = 0.00, p = <0.001$ ) and mortality awareness ( $\beta = 0.25, p = .004$ ) significantly predicted self-directed ageism.

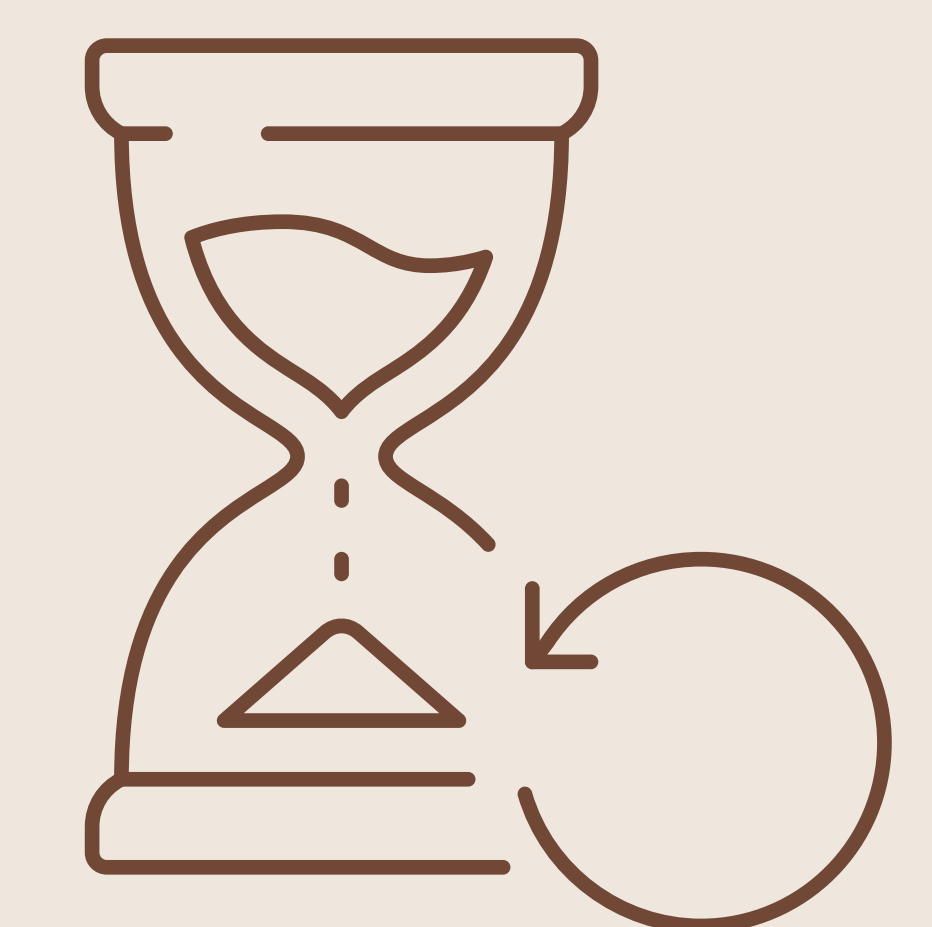
## Methods

### Qualitative

- 17 participants aged 45-64 years in Saskatchewan
- 60-minute interviews
- Semi-structured on the midlife years, ageism, and age-inclusivity
- Advisory council formed and engaged throughout
- Codebook thematic analysis

### Quantitative

- 375 participants throughout Canada
- 233 younger adults (25-44 years)
- 94 middle-aged adults (45-64 years)
- 48 older adults (65+ years)
- The Aging Questionnaire Short Form
- 9-item Intersectional Discrimination Index -Day-to-Day
- 19-item Australian Ageing Semantic Differential
- Multidimensional Mortality Awareness Measure
- Subjective age



## Discussion

### Qualitative

- The midlife experience consists of diverse experiences, constant change, and increased prejudice and stereotypes rather than discrimination.
- Participants mentioned many ways we need to address ageism.

### Quantitative

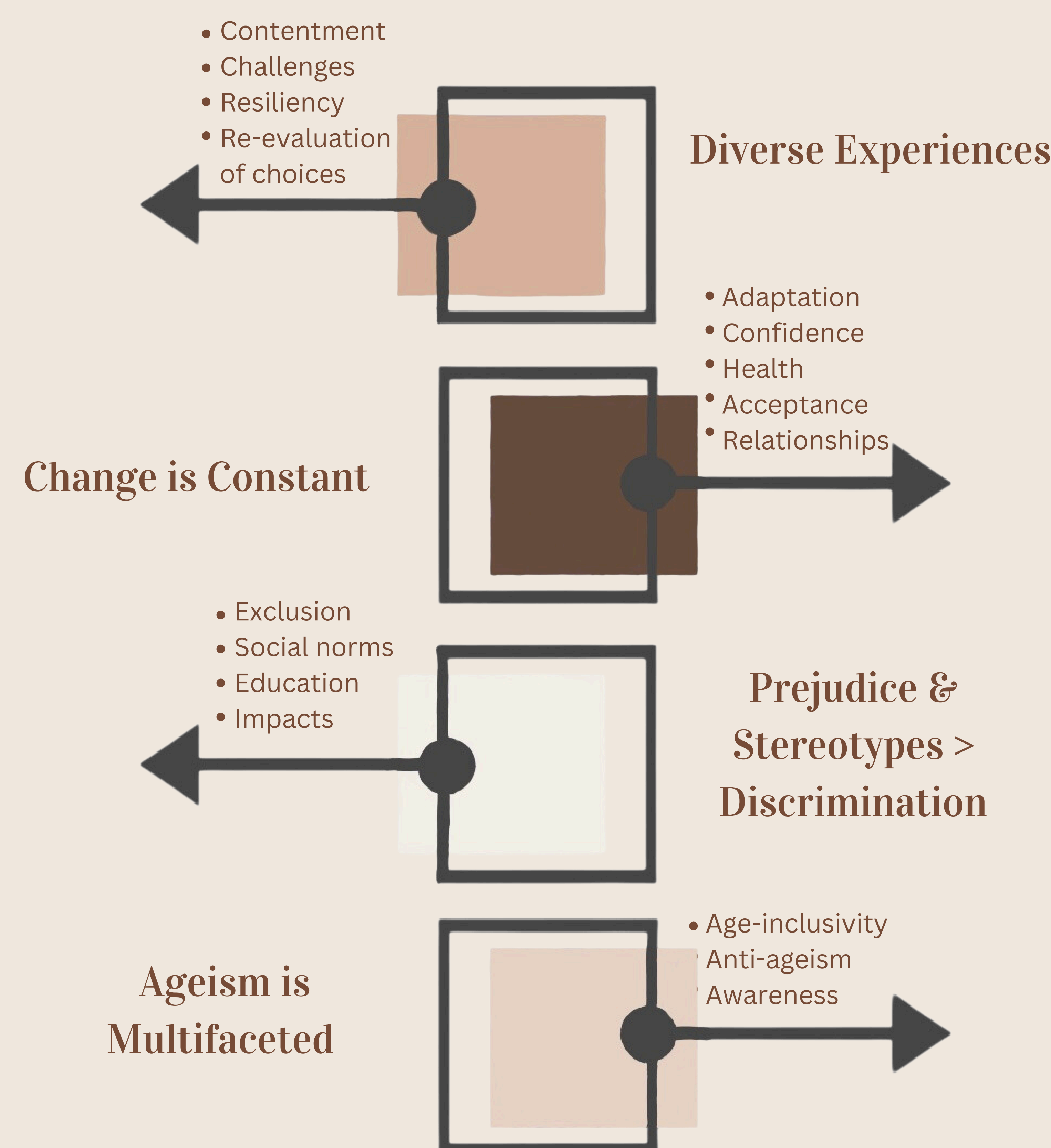
- One's age influenced levels of other-directed ageism
- Younger adults reported contributing to higher levels of other-directed ageism toward other age groups
- Other-directed ageism was significantly greater toward older adults compared to middle-aged adults
- Psychosocial factors:
  - mortality awareness contributed to other-directed ageism.
  - intergroup anxiety contributed to self-directed ageism.
- Self-directed ageism did not differ across age groups

"[A] couple of years ago I got my knees replaced and, [...] I ended up getting some blood clots after the surgery that went right to my lungs. So, I lived alone [...] It was a stark reality of, Hey, maybe I should be looking at the lifestyle I live and maybe it's time I started to appreciate, [...] the people in my life more."

"I think you're probably less influenced by things [than] when you were younger. So, probably popularity and looks and all those kinds of things that are important when you're younger you care less about and you can be more yourself, more authentic."

"Ageism is [...] either an implicit or direct bias against people based on their age. There're assumptions that people can't do things [...], they're excluded from doing things because of a perception of age"

"Well, age inclusivity means regardless of age, you would have included a person. So, you have a group. And whether it doesn't matter if that person's 12, or if they're 60, even if the majority of you are 45, are you going to include them? And if you don't, why aren't you going to include them?"



"[M]y circle of people that I choose to surround myself [with] is much smaller than what it would've been in my twenties and thirties [...] as I've gotten older, [...] there's only certain people I choose to give my time to and they're valuable relationships."

"My relationships with my husband and my daughters that changed too. I went from being more of a parent in my forties because they were teenagers coming up to that timeframe [...] but I don't need to mom them as much as I used to. It's a different relationship now."

"It's like what have I worked this hard for to be unemployed or underemployed because that's just as bad as to have somebody with credentials and the capacity and the ability, and they can't utilize it because they're not being given the opportunity."

"[W]hen I say appearance, I mean, there's advertisements out there about how to stay young [...] that's all ageism to me. And so, I'm wondering how that can be eradicated. And so, I think books need to be written. I think we need to get more interviews out there in the media, talking about it."

