



Presents

Age Bias in the Legal Field

March 20, 2024
6:30 pm – 7:30 pm

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I. GENERATIONAL BIAS

Currently in the legal profession, the age range of attorneys working in this field is extraordinarily diverse beginning with the Silent Generation and ending with Gen Z.

- a. How are Generations Defined?
 - i. What are the generations that we are familiar with?
 - ii. Who belongs to the Silent Generation?
 - iii. Who belongs to Generation Z?
 - iv. Are there other generations?
- b. Cross Generational Collaboration
 - i. What is cross generational collaboration?
 - ii. The benefits of cross generational collaboration and how it helps create new sustainable work environments.
 - iii. Cooperation may help create new sustainable work environments that not only accommodate all individuals regardless of their age difference but also cultivate a supportive professional system aimed to benefit everyone

Resources: <https://hbr.org/2022/03/harnessing-the-power-of-age-diversity>

II. AGE BIAS AND ITS DETRIMENTS

- a. What is Age Bias?
 - i. Age bias or ageism is often associated as a form of implicit bias,
- b. What is Implicit Bias
 - i. Biases that unconsciously influence our beliefs and decision making
 - ii. It becomes imperative for us to take an active role in not only identifying these personal biases but also ensuring that they do not negatively affect the workplace.
- c. Ageism Against Young Attorneys

- i. May occur in situations where these individuals are interrupted or having their ideas dismissed during discussions with older colleagues. Age related biases and stereotypes may also manifest in other negative ways, such as distorting a young legal professional's sense of self-worth with regards to their competency to work in this profession.
- d. Ageism Against Older Attorneys
 - i. Older attorneys may be led to believe that they are too old to learn new skills.
- e. Effects of Ageism Overall: age bias and stereotyping induce profoundly negative effects on all individuals by limiting their professional development.

III. ADDRESSING IMPLICIT BIAS

- a. Examples of Implicit Bias
- b. Identify Your Own Biases: Research and try to identify whether you may have your own biases.
 - i. Take the opportunity to educate yourself and continued to do so to better understand the types of effects these biases have beyond those associated with work.
 - ii. Take the Harvard Implicit Association Test
- c. Actively Reflect
 - i. Everyone is susceptible to biased thinking, But when you find yourself caught up with these kinds of thoughts, try to redirect yourself into thinking and ask exactly why you may be having these thoughts
 - ii. Try to pinpoint where these ideas originate from and whether these beliefs influence other preconceived notions that you may have.
- d. Broaden Your Circle
 - i. Diversify your social circle!
 - ii. Spend more time with people of all ages

- iii. This allows you to get a better sense of the different kinds of perspectives, opinions, and mindsets of individuals from a variety of age groups.

Resources: <https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/takeatest.html>

IV. METHODS TO DEAL WITH EFFECTS OF AGEISM

Age bias affects both young aspiring attorneys, as well as seasoned professionals in the field.

V. ASSISTING NEW LAWYERS

- a. Extend a Hand to Young Lawyers
 - i. Create and give more professional development opportunities to the newer members of your organization.
 - ii. Proactively give young attorneys opportunities to learn and advance their careers by assigning them onto projects, delegating them with tasks such as interacting with clients and allowing them to shadow senior attorneys.
- b. Taking Direct Action
 - i. Include younger lawyers in important decisions made within your organization as well as opportunities to take on leadership roles.
 - ii. Try to actively listen and consider the thoughts and ideas of these individuals, even if these suggestions contradict the status quo or may seem unconventional at first glance.

VI. TIPS FOR NEW LAWYERS

- a. Networking
 - i. How does it help?
 - ii. Inquire with your senior peers about possibility of promotion or how one can become a partner at firm.
 - iii. Assess your own capabilities.
 - iv. Have you consistently demonstrated that you are competent in your current role?

- v. Which of your achievements supports this belief?
- b. Preparation to Support Ideas
- i. Do your due diligence by conducting ample research in support of your ideas.
 - ii. Fully developed proposals have a higher chance of being considered.
 - iii. Take opposing ideas and opinions into consideration when drafting your proposal so that you are better prepared to address possible opposition to your ideas.
- c. Broaden Horizons
- i. Expand your knowledge and your skill set.
 - ii. Investigate other legal opportunities in this field by doing some research.
 - iii. Reach out to individuals working in other types of legal careers
 - iv. Take the opportunity to learn more about other career paths
 - v. Expand your professional network.
- d. Take Perspectives from Older Attorneys but Prepare to Take a Stance
- i. Many experienced attorneys, especially those who founded the law firm, practicing law is an integral part of their identity. The firm is their “child” of sorts. This may explain reluctance to give up control.
 - ii. Consider pursuing other opportunities to profess your professional development outside of the firm

Additional Resources

- https://www.americanbar.org/groups/gpsolo/publications/gpsolo_ereport/2021/november-2021/creating-law-firm-of-the-future-combating-age-bias/