

What is ageism?

DELINQUENTS

July 24, 2022

Ageism is a spectrum of oppression that harms, in particular, old people and children. It often looks like elders being discarded when, under capitalism, they are no longer “useful” or how we socially and systemically control young people.

DELINQUENTS stand against all forms of age-oppression and focus on the experiences of children. Young people are legally owned by our parents or guardians. Our bodily autonomy is constantly undermined. Our opinions and voices are disregarded. We exist under the doctrines of “because I said so” and “but you’re a child”.

In an ageist world, childhood is synonymous with disempowerment. We are miseducated/indoctrinated by the school system, punished by our the adults in our lives, and forced to participate in a world within which we have no say or influence. This encourages us to accept hierarchy and abuse throughout our lives.

It re-enforces every oppression we may encounter or experience in our lives: racism, rape culture, anti-queerness, ableism, speciesism, carceral logic and more.

This means ageism is connected to every freedom struggle. If you and your communities are not intentionally including this in your praxis, you are being ageist. Each time you do not consider young people as your community members who must also be included, you weaken our justice movements.

Adult perspectives are always valued over young people because the older you are the more (legal/social) authority you hold. Therefore, adults (by existence) participate in adult supremacy and ageism, holding adult privilege. In every interaction an adult has with a young person, there is a power dynamic at play.

We call for “child” to be recognised as a political identity and for children and teenagers to be recognised as the marginalised community we are.

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