



# Gendered Aging in the Workplace

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## Research Question

As retirement ages rise and employees remain in the workforce longer, a critical question emerges: **in what ways is aging experienced differently by men and women in professional contexts?**

The experiences of biological aging differ significantly between men and women. These differences manifest physiologically, cognitively, and emotionally in ways such as how they are perceived, stigmatized, and supported within organizational environments. These nuanced dimensions of age and gender's intersectionality demonstrates the need for exploration.

## References



## Literature Review

### Women's aging:

- Older women and those perceived to be near menopause tend to be viewed by colleagues as:
  - Unambitious
  - Rigid
  - Incompetent
  - Unable to handle high-pressure situations
  - Neurotic
  - Unreliable (Ryan & Gattrell, 2024)
- Women's aging experiences, including menopause, are often pathologized (Rottenberg & Gilchrist, 2025)
- Pre-conceived notions of colleagues can hinder promotion and leadership opportunities for aging women (Jyrkinen & McKie, 2012)
- Menopausal women tend to experience increased levels of workplace discrimination (Atkinson et al., 2020)
- Cognitive health changes can be perceived by colleagues as a reduction in competence; Physical health changes often lack accommodations (Brewis et al., 2025; Grandey et al., 2020)
- Biases cause women to conceal their symptoms due to fear of discrimination (Brewis et al., 2025)

### Men's aging:

- Older men are often perceived by colleagues as:
  - Wise
  - Stable
  - Experienced
  - Knowledgeable
  - In alignment with leadership trait norms (Diehl et al., 2023; Eagly & Karau, 2002; Kincaid, 2022)
- Physiological changes in aging occur gradually; changes are also less visible (Fonda et al., 2005)
- Cognitive/Physical health decline may be attributed to stress or dismissed by colleagues (Travison et al., 2007)
- Supportive organizational policies are lacking for men's aging experiences (Fonda et al., 2005)
- Fear of judgement and discrimination may discourage men from speaking up about aging concerns (Travison et al., 2007)

## Proposed Model

The divergent experiences of aging men and aging women create structural and perceptual inequalities that influence advancement opportunities, workplace treatment, and policy design. To address these disparities, we propose the **G-AGE model** (Gendered-Acknowledge-Grow-Embrace).

The previously devised AGE framework (Acknowledge-Grow-Embrace) from Cortijo et al., 2019 describes how organizations, managers, and colleagues can approach aging in the workplace in order to reduce ageism and mitigate the negative organizational outcomes caused by it.

This expanded model encourages a gendered approach where organizations are to consider each aspect of the AGE framework according to gender. This framework provides guidance for organizations, managers, and coworkers to recognize gendered aging dynamics, implement inclusive workplace practices, and proactively address inequities associated with age and gender.

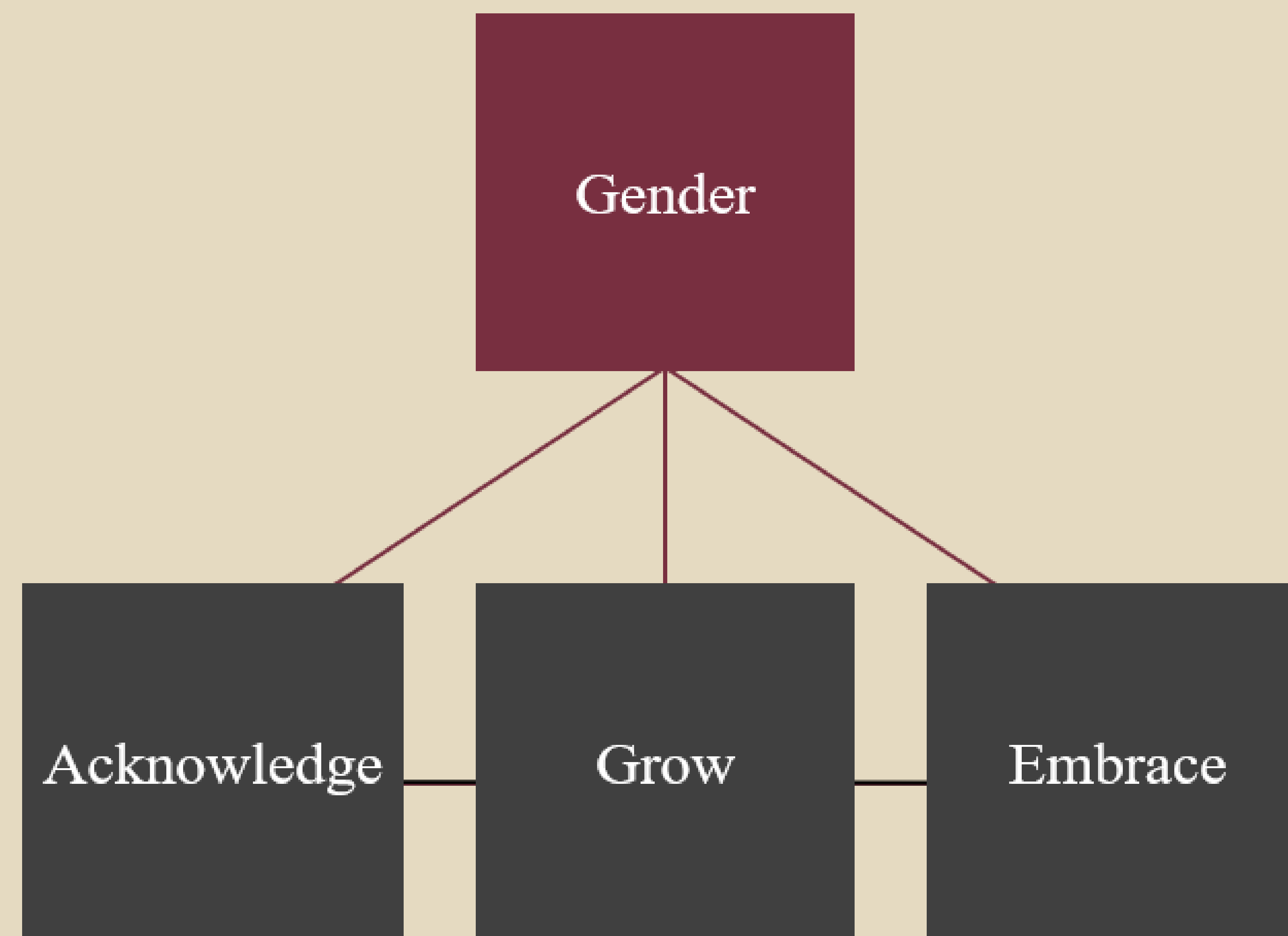


Figure 1. G-AGE Model

The box and lines colored in garnet represent the conceptual additions while those colored in grey represent the original AGE framework.

## Expansion

**Acknowledge:** *an organization needs to acknowledge that they may be perpetuating, encouraging, or simply allowing ageism to exist.*

We add that organizations must also acknowledge that this perpetuation, encouragement, or passivity may manifest differently for men and women.

**Grow:** *where an organization should aim to increase their understanding of ageism.*

We add that organizations should also aim to grow their knowledge on the differing gendered experiences.

**Embrace:** *where organizations encourage, value, and leverage employees of all ages.*

We add that this embracement should account for the differences aging men and women experience

## Future Directions

- Model Validation:** There is a pressing need for empirical investigations that directly compare aging men's and aging women's workplace experiences using the G-AGE framework
- Theory Congruity:** Research could investigate how role congruity theory, identity theory, and other theories operate in aging contexts with the G-AGE framework
- Intersectionality:** Future studies could research how other elements (e.g. race, socio-economic level, sexual orientation, and disability) intersect with gender and age
- Longitudinal Research:** Crucial insights could be found about how aging develops differently based on organizational frameworks by tracking how men and women experience career advancement, burnout, or disengagement over time