

Myths or Fact

Discussion Starters

These statements are based on the experiences of the old and young in Canada.

Myths vs. facts about young people

Myth

Young people are the major cause of violence in this country.

Fact

Youth are less likely to be charged with violent crime than adults. In 2000–2001, 46% of all youth charged with an offence were charged with property related offences while 22% were charged with violent offences.

Myth

The elderly are more likely to be victims of youth crime.

Fact

While victimisation studies and national polls have shown an underlining perception of increasing crime sensed by certain, the elderly continue to be a low risk age group. The most likely victim of youth violence are other youths (56%), and male youth in particular. Six in ten victims of youth violence were male.

Myth

Locking up all young offenders is the smartest way to deal with juvenile crime.

Fact

While it is necessary for some young people to serve some time in custody, ultimately all young people are going to return to their communities.

Myth

Youth get into trouble because they are “destructive” and “bad”.

Fact

Many youth are likely to commit criminal activity because of elements like: family situation, school environment, the kids they hang out with, or a lack of constructive activities to participate in. “The more risk factors in a youth’s life, the greater their chance of them coming into conflict with the law”.



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Myths or Fact

Myth

Most teenagers are lazy and don't want to help their communities.

Fact

Six out of ten young people already volunteer with community agencies. Almost nine out of ten teenagers would volunteer to take part in programs to help prevent crime if they knew how to get involved with their communities.

Myth

The most likely victims of youth crime are older adults

Fact

The most likely victim of youth violence are other youths, and male youth in particular.

Myths vs. facts about older adults

Myth

Older people are "all the same".

Fact

Older people are more diverse than any other age group. Each generation of older people brings its unique historical and cultural experiences with them as they age. As in the rest of society, older people have different backgrounds and beliefs and like to be treated as individuals.

Myth

Older people are generally alone and lonely.

Fact

Most older adults maintain close contact with family.



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Myth

Older People are a burden to society.

Fact

Older people contribute in a positive way. Research has shown that they are more likely to provide financial and practical assistance to families than to receive it. Older people are also active in their communities. 24% of people aged 55 and over contribute their time as volunteers. Nearly 38% of people aged 55+ care for children, or frail or ill relatives and friends. 11.8% of people aged 60 and over continue in paid employment.

Myth

Ageing means inevitable physical and mental decline.

Fact

Physically ageing is a slow, gradual, life-long process. The greatest decline in the human body occurs between 30-40 years of age. Disabilities, sensory loss, and chronic diseases increase with age but are not inevitable ageing conditions.

Myth

Older people need looking after.

Fact

Contrary to popular stereotypes, most seniors older adults live in their own homes and enjoy a measure of independence. Many older adults compensate for these down-sides of the aging process through hobbies, travel, volunteer activities, and meaningful relationships with family and friends. Only about 5% of people 65+ actually live in nursing homes.

Myth

All older people eventually become "senile"

Fact

The majority of older people do not experience significant memory loss. Alzheimer's disease and other dementias affect less than 1% of people aged 60-64 and less than 3% of people aged 70-74. The incidence of these conditions only increases significantly in people over 85 years.

Do you think that UK experiences are different?

<http://www.stthomasu.ca/research/youth/manual/one.htm>



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