



Age Knowble Human Rights Principles Framework (Version 3.0 – June 2026)

An Enduring Framework for Understanding, Interpreting, Implementing, and Advancing the Human Rights of Older Persons

The Age Knowble Human Rights Principles Framework (Version 3.0) provides an enduring, principle-based approach for understanding, interpreting, implementing, and advancing the human rights of older persons. It recognises the diversity of older age and offers a coherent framework that remains applicable across different identities, circumstances, and structural conditions, while remaining responsive to emerging knowledge, evolving realities, and the progressive development of international human rights standards.

The Framework comprises eight principles. Each principle identifies a human rights consideration that matters to older persons and includes a name, principle statement, and definition. Each principle is further interpreted through three complementary dimensions: Rights Realisation in Everyday Life, which describes what the principle looks like when rights are experienced in practice; Convention and State Application, which identifies implications for a United Nations Convention and State implementation; and Rights-Enabling Ecosystem Transformation, which uses “current reality → rights-enabling future” statements to illustrate the broader shifts needed to make rights real in practice.

Version 3.0 reflects a validation exercise that revisited one of the [original evidence sources](#) that is intersectionally based to validate Version 2.0 of the Framework (June Call for Input submission). The exercise confirmed the framework’s robustness and enduring relevance, resulting in only modest refinements that strengthened the universal expression of Principles 1 to 3 and one interpretive dimension.

Key Learnings from Validation

The validation exercise yielded several important learnings for the stewardship of enduring human rights frameworks:

- diverse experiences and populations strengthen the universal expression of human right principles rather than rewrite it;
- enduring frameworks should evolve through modest and deliberate refinement, with disciplined and justified changes, rather than continual redesign;
- conceptual coherence and stability are themselves indicators of increasing maturity and enduring relevance; and
- validation is an ongoing process of stewardship that helps ensure frameworks remain responsive to emerging knowledge and changing realities.

The Architecture of the Eight General Principles

The Principles move through four connected dimensions:

Part I — The Person: Who I am and my inherent human worth

The first three Principles establish the individual as a rights-holder before considering relationships, services, or institutions.

1. Dignity and Equal Worth

I matter. Every older person possesses inherent dignity and equal worth simply by being human. This is the moral foundation from which every other principle flows.

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2. Personhood and Self-Determination

My life remains my own. I remain a full person and rights-holder, entitled to direct my own life, exercise legal agency, and make decisions according to my own will, preferences, and values, with appropriate support where needed.

This establishes agency.

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3. Equality and Non-Discrimination

I am treated fairly. My age should never diminish my equal enjoyment of human rights. Equality requires removing barriers and responding fairly to diverse circumstances.

This establishes equal standing.

Part II — Living a Human Life

Once dignity, personhood, and equality are established, the Framework turns to the lived experience of older age. The fourth, fifth, and sixth Principles outlines how an individual live, connect, flourish, and experience everyday life.

4. Participation and Relational Belonging

I belong. I remain connected, included, recognised, and an active participant in the relationships and communities that give life meaning. This establishes belonging.

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5. Protection and Security

I can live safely and securely. I am protected from harm while receiving the safeguards and supports needed to live with dignity, security, and self-determination.

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6. Possibilities and Choice

My future remains open. Older age should never close off opportunities. Human rights should keep possibilities open so I can continue pursuing the life I value.

Part III — The Systems Around Me

Human rights depend not only on individuals but also on the institutions, services, laws, and systems that enable them. The seventh principle is on how society makes rights real.

7. Accountability and Rights-Realising Systems

The systems around me make my rights real. Laws, institutions, services, environments, and remedies should work together so that human rights are realised consistently in everyday life. This establishes implementation and accountability.

Part IV — Across Time

The final Principle recognises that societies and environment change, but human rights must continue to guide action and endure.

8. Future Readiness and Enduring Relevance

This Human Rights Principles Framework continues to guide the understanding, interpretation, implementation, and advancement of human rights as the world changes. The interpretation and application of human rights, through these Principles, should remain responsive to changing contexts, proactive in anticipating emerging realities, and grounded in enduring human rights values and standards. This establishes continuity, adaptability, and enduring relevance.

Outline of Principles:

The following is an outline of the eight principles, their definitions and their complementary dimensions.

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Principle 1. Dignity and Equal Worth

Principle Statement

Every older person possesses inherent dignity and equal worth throughout older age.

Definition

Older persons are entitled to equal dignity, respect, and recognition throughout older age. Their dignity and worth are inherent, universal, and unconditional and do not depend on age, productivity, health status, disability, dependency, cognitive change, income, or social role. The need for support or care must never diminish their equal status, rights, respect, or recognition as valued members of society. Older age should be recognised not as diminished human status, but as a continuing stage of equal human dignity and worth within our shared human future.

A. Rights Realisation in Everyday Life

- respect in everyday interactions
- being seen, heard, and taken seriously
- privacy across homes, hospitals, care, and services
- support without shame, pity, or loss of standing
- freedom from burden narratives or devaluing treatment
- recognition of identity, culture, faith, language, and life history
- confidence that their lives continue to matter

B. Convention and State Application

- affirm inherent dignity and equal worth in all settings
- prohibit degrading, humiliating, dehumanising, or age-based disrespectful treatment
- require dignity-centred standards in healthcare, care, housing, detention, emergency response, and other public services
- provide accessible remedies where dignity is violated
- challenge ageist and devaluing narratives in laws, institutions, services, and society

C. Rights-Enabling Ecosystem Transformation

- valuing people by productivity → valuing people by humanity
- burden narratives → equal social worth
- invisibility → recognition
- dependency stigma → dignity across interdependence
- institutional convenience → person-centred respect
- older age as decline → older age as continuing human value

Principle 2. Personhood and Self-Determination

Principle Statement

Every older person remains a full person and rights-holder throughout older age, with the right to direct their own life according to their will, preferences, and values.

Definition

Older persons remain full persons and rights-holders throughout older age, including where disability, dependency, or cognitive change is present. Personhood must not only endure; it must continue to be recognised, respected, and acted upon by others. Older persons are entitled to self-determination: to direct their own lives, express their will and preferences, make personal decisions, and continue pursuing meaning, relationships, contribution, work, service, creativity, learning, and personal development. Self-determination includes the exercise of legal agency, with appropriate support where needed, while remaining guided by the older person's own will, preferences, and values. Equal legal agency and decision-making rights, including legal capacity on an equal basis with others, should be recognised and protected.

A. Rights Realisation in Everyday Life

- control over daily lives, routines, and priorities
- respect for will and preferences
- support to make personal decisions where needed
- being listened to in healthcare, housing, financial, care, and family matters
- choices about where and with whom to live, where possible
- opportunities for meaning, purpose, growth, and contribution
- recognition that their lives remain their own

B. Convention and State Application

- affirm continuing personhood and equal rights-holder status
- recognise equal legal agency and decision-making rights, including legal capacity on an equal basis with others
- require supported decision-making guided by will and preferences
- prohibit age- or diagnosis-based exclusion from decisions
- protect free and informed consent
- ensure communication and decision supports where needed

C. Rights-Enabling Ecosystem Transformation

- substituted control → supported self-determination
- independence-only ideals → supported decision-making
- decline narratives → continuing personhood and development
- speaking for older persons → listening to and being guided by older persons

- care as compliance → care as partnership
- passive dependency → continued agency, purpose, and contribution

Principle 3. Equality and Non-Discrimination

Principle Statement

Every older person is entitled to equality before and under the law, and to the equal enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms without discrimination.

Definition

Equality requires more than identical treatment. It requires substantive equality through fair, responsive, and inclusive measures that remove barriers, address disadvantage across the diverse circumstances of older age, and recognise each older person as an individual rather than through assumptions, stereotypes, or generalisations. Equality requires not only equal recognition before and under the law, but also the equal enjoyment of rights in law, policy, institutions, work, services, and everyday life.

A. Rights Realisation in Everyday Life

- fair treatment in healthcare, employment, housing, banking, insurance, transport, and services
- opportunities to work, volunteer, learn, and participate without arbitrary age barriers
- decisions based on individual circumstances rather than stereotypes
- equal access to information, technology, justice, and participation
- barriers removed where systems create or reinforce disadvantage
- being believed and taken seriously when asserting concerns or rights

B. Convention and State Application

- prohibit direct, indirect, multiple, and intersectional age discrimination
- guarantee equality before and under the law, and equal enjoyment of rights in practice
- require accessibility, accommodation, and barrier removal where needed
- review unjustified age limits and discriminatory exclusions
- ensure equal access to justice, remedies, and complaints mechanisms
- address ageism in institutions, markets, and services

C. Rights-Enabling Ecosystem Transformation

- formal equality → substantive equality
- neutral rules with unequal effects → fair and responsive systems
- tolerated ageism → equality cultures
- exclusion by design → inclusion by design
- discounted older voices → authoritative participation
- hidden discrimination → visible accountability

Principle 4. Participation and Relational Belonging

Principle Statement

Every older person has the right to remain connected, included, and an active participant in the relationships and communities that give life meaning.

Definition

Older persons have the right to participate meaningfully in family, community, civic, cultural, economic, and public life, and to remain connected, recognised, and included in the relationships and communities through which dignity, identity, wellbeing, citizenship, and contribution are sustained. Meaningful participation includes opportunities to contribute, influence decisions, maintain valued relationships, and continue belonging throughout older age.

A. Rights Realisation in Everyday Life

- meaningful contact with family, friends, peers, and trusted networks
- opportunities to work, volunteer, mentor, care, learn, worship, create, and contribute where desired
- support to participate despite disability, language, mobility, sensory, or digital barriers
- continuity of valued relationships during illness, relocation, bereavement, or care transitions
- being welcomed and included rather than isolated or socially erased
- opportunities to share knowledge, skills, leadership, culture, and lived experience

B. Convention and State Application

- ensure meaningful participation of older persons in decision-making, design, implementation, and review
- establish consultation mechanisms through which views genuinely influence outcomes
- protect family life, visitation, communication, and continuity of relationships
- support community living and prevent unnecessary segregation or isolation
- promote age-friendly communities, housing, transport, and digital environments
- recognise the civic, cultural, caregiving, economic, and social contributions of older persons

C. Rights-Enabling Ecosystem Transformation

- consultation without influence → shared decision-making
- isolation cultures → belonging ecosystems
- segregation → community connection
- ageing at the margins → active social citizenship
- older persons as recipients → workers, carers, mentors, creators, and community builders
- loneliness as a private issue → shared public responsibility

Principle 5. Protection and Security

Principle Statement

Every older person has the right to live safely and securely, free from abuse, neglect, violence, exploitation, coercion, abandonment, degrading treatment, and arbitrary deprivation of liberty.

Definition

Older persons are entitled to the protection, safeguards, and supports necessary to live safely and securely throughout older age. This includes timely, appropriate, accessible, affordable, and rights-respecting supports that uphold dignity, self-determination, participation, wellbeing, and security across all aspects of life, including social, economic, housing, care, and relational security. Protection should never diminish rights, voice, autonomy, or community connection.

A. Rights Realisation in Everyday Life

- freedom from abuse, neglect, violence, coercion, abandonment, and degrading treatment
- support that preserves dignity, choice, privacy, and relationships
- timely assistance with care, housing, mobility, communication, finances, or daily living

- confidence that needed income, housing, care, and support will not suddenly disappear
- safety without loss of voice, autonomy, or community connection
- access to trusted help, advocacy, and remedies when harm occurs

B. Convention and State Application

- prevent, investigate, punish, and remedy abuse, neglect, violence, exploitation, coercion, and abandonment
- regulate institutions and care settings to prevent confinement, restraint, and rights violations
- ensure accessible community-based supports that reduce abandonment, homelessness, and unnecessary institutionalisation
- support social protection, income security, affordable housing, and essential care supports
- require least restrictive, lawful, necessary, and proportionate measures where intervention is needed
- establish accessible complaints, advocacy, oversight, and remedies mechanisms

C. Rights-Enabling Ecosystem Transformation

- protection as control → rights-enabling support
- insecurity and crisis dependence → dependable security across later life
- risk elimination → dignity of risk
- abuse-only responses → preventing abuse and structural neglect
- care as compliance → care as partnership
- passive recipients of protection → rights-holders entitled to safe, secure, and supported lives

Principle 6. Possibilities and Choice

Principle Statement

Every older person has the right to continue pursuing a life of possibilities and choice throughout older age.

Definition

Human rights should keep possibilities open throughout older age. Older age should never be treated as a barrier to continued learning, relationships, creativity, contribution, enjoyment, exploration, spirituality, or personal fulfilment. Every older person should remain free to shape their own path according to their aspirations, circumstances, values, and preferences. Human rights should expand—not limit—the possibilities available throughout older age so that every person can continue pursuing the life they value.

A. Rights Realisation in Everyday Life

- opportunities to pursue new interests, aspirations, and experiences throughout older age
- opportunities to continue learning, growing, creating, and discovering
- opportunities to contribute according to one's interests, abilities, and aspirations
- opportunities for social, cultural, recreational, and community participation
- opportunities to enjoy recreation, leisure, travel, culture, and spirituality
- confidence that new possibilities remain open regardless of age or changing circumstances
- freedom to imagine and pursue new goals and aspirations throughout older age

B. Convention and State Application

- remove unnecessary age-based barriers that limit possibilities and life choices
- promote lifelong opportunities for learning, work, volunteering, creativity, recreation, and civic participation

- ensure equitable access to opportunities regardless of age, disability, income, geography, culture, language, gender, or support needs
- invest in accessible environments, information, transport, technology, and services that expand possibilities throughout older age
- recognise that aspirations, goals, and interests continue to evolve throughout later life
- support diverse pathways for living well, recognising there is no single model of successful ageing

C. Rights-Enabling Ecosystem Transformation

- age-based limitation → lifelong possibilities
- assumptions of decline → continuing possibilities
- prescribed pathways → expanded opportunities and choices
- fixed life expectations → evolving aspirations
- preparing for retirement → investing in later-life possibilities
- one model of ageing well → many ways of living a valued later life

Principle 7. Accountability and Rights-Realising Systems

Principle Statement

Every older person is entitled to laws, institutions, services, systems, and remedies that make human rights real in everyday life.

Definition

Human rights become meaningful only when they can be exercised in practice. Older persons are entitled to laws, institutions, services, age-friendly environments, communities, and remedies that are accessible, coordinated, responsive, and accountable. Rights should not depend on where a person lives, what services they can navigate, or whether they are able to overcome unnecessary barriers. Systems should uphold rights consistently, fairly, and effectively throughout older age.

A. Rights Realisation in Everyday Life

- understandable, reachable, and easy-to-navigate services
- timely and respectful responses when help is needed
- continuity of income, housing, care, transport, and community supports
- real options to challenge unfair decisions and seek remedies
- systems that work equally for people who are offline, isolated, poor, disabled, rural, migrant, or living with cognitive change
- confidence that public institutions act fairly and consistently

B. Convention and State Application

- align laws, budgets, institutions, and services with Convention rights
- establish accountability, complaints, remedies, and independent oversight
- coordinate health, housing, income, care, transport, justice, and community systems
- ensure systems are accessible, multilingual, navigable, and not digital-only
- involve older persons in design, delivery, monitoring, and review
- ensure adequately resourced, skilled, and rights-based workforces across services

C. Rights-Enabling Ecosystem Transformation

- fragmented services → coordinated systems built around people's lives
- bureaucratic gatekeeping → rights-guided access
- complaint-only accountability → accountability by design
- expert-only governance → co-governance with older persons

- digital exclusion → inclusive service ecosystems
- hidden system failures → visible and clear accountability

Principle 8. Future Readiness and Enduring Relevance

Principle Statement

The interpretation and application of human rights should remain responsive to changing contexts, proactive in anticipating emerging realities, and grounded in enduring human rights principles.

Definition

As societies, technologies, institutions, and experiences of ageing continue to evolve, the interpretation and application of human rights should remain informed by lived experience, emerging knowledge, evolving evidence, and the clarification, progressive development, and emergence of international human rights standards. This enables the Framework to respond thoughtfully to changing realities while preserving its enduring human rights foundation. In this way, the Framework remains an enduring guide for understanding, interpreting, implementing, and advancing the human rights of current and future generations of older persons across diverse experiences and changing contexts.

A. Rights Realisation in Everyday Life

- confidence that human rights remain relevant and effective as circumstances change
- protection from new and emerging forms of exclusion, discrimination, and inequality
- continued enjoyment of human rights across changing technologies, services, environments, and social conditions
- confidence that innovation promotes inclusion rather than creating new barriers
- recognition that human rights continue to respond to longer, more diverse, and evolving later lives
- trust that current and future generations of older persons will enjoy equal protection and effective enjoyment of their human rights

B. Convention and State Application

- interpret and apply Convention rights in ways that remain responsive to changing contexts and emerging realities
- periodically review laws, policies, guidance, and implementation to ensure their continuing relevance and effectiveness
- anticipate and respond to emerging forms of exclusion, discrimination, and inequality arising from technological, environmental, demographic, humanitarian, and societal change
- strengthen interpretation and implementation through continuous learning from lived experience, emerging knowledge, evolving evidence, and the clarification, progressive development, and emergence of international human rights standards
- use foresight, evidence, and the meaningful participation of older persons to inform future interpretation, implementation, and review

C. Rights-Enabling Ecosystem Transformation

- static interpretation → living interpretation grounded in enduring principles
- reactive implementation → proactive and anticipatory implementation
- responding to yesterday's realities → preparing for tomorrow's realities
- fixed assumptions about ageing → evolving understanding informed by lived experience
- isolated learning → continuous learning and improvement
- fixed understanding of human rights → evolving interpretation informed by developing international human rights standards