

# PROGRAMME DETAILS

## Keynote Talk: Growing Older as an Experience by Suzanne Biewinga, Ph.D.



Suzanne Biewinga (1954), trained in guiding emancipation processes, worked professionally as a support worker for national patient organizations and as a coordinator of a hospice. After her working life, she studied philosophy at Radboud University in Nijmegen, specializing in ethical questions about growing older.

In the following years, she developed a methodology in her philosophy workshop to conduct a philosophical dialogue with older people, aimed at finding a suitable way of thinking and speaking about growing older. This resulted in a PhD research project at the University of Amsterdam. She received her PhD in January 2025.

## Panel Sessions

### **Panel 1:** Working Together

*Panelists:*

**Cat Tottie** (Cohort 4)  
**Jack Robertson** (Cohort 3)  
**Emilie McSwiggan** (Cohort 2)  
**Victoria Barber-Fleming** (Cohort 1)

### **Panel 2:** Technology and the Person

*Panelists:*

**Melody Wang** (Cohort 3)  
**Junyu Yan** (Cohort 3)  
**David Vaca** (Cohort 2)  
**Sumetha Uthayakumar** (Cohort 2)

# Think Tank Breakout Groups

## Ageism: An Enduring Problem

(Noah Hurton & Elaine Addington)

What does ageing mean to you? Often framed as a biological inevitability, the way society perceives it profoundly shapes how we live at different stages of life. Across a range of contexts – workplaces, healthcare, the media – older adults face barriers rooted in negative stereotypes of decline and dependency. Despite being raised as an issue as far back as the 1960s, however, ageism remains one of the most overlooked forms of discrimination today.

This think tank will focus on how ageism manifests in daily life and its consequences for individuals' health and wellbeing. We will discuss the challenges of addressing it within interdisciplinary frameworks, where differing perspectives – such as biomedical and social models – can complicate cohesive solutions. We will also explore how arts and cultural approaches can reshape public perceptions and challenge ageist stereotypes. By bringing together a range of perspectives, this session aims to generate innovative routes to a more age-inclusive society.

## A Healthy Lifestyle for Better Ageing: Promise or Trap?

(Michaela Gilarova & Sam Andres)

We are constantly surrounded by messages promoting a healthy lifestyle, yet navigating this space can be anything but straightforward. Which instructions can we trust, and which are driven more by commercial interests or moralistic ideals?

This think tank invites you to critically reflect on the intersection of lifestyle, longevity, and inequality.

Dominant narratives tend to emphasise youthfulness, independence, and productivity, often sidelining the experiences of older adults living with illness, disability, or frailty. Such ideals risk framing health as a personal virtue rather than as a complex interaction between biology, environment, and social context.

Together, we will explore how we can 'invest' in our health throughout the life course in inclusive and sustainable ways. Equally, we will challenge attitudes toward disability and discuss our interdependence. Our lifestyle shapes how we live and age, but what is deemed 'healthy' and by whom warrants closer reflection.

## Ageing in Place: What Can We Do Together?

(Melody Wang, Deniz Hepdogan & Junyu Yan)

Technological products are increasingly entering people's homes and everyday lives, with the promise to support ageing and care (e.g., monitoring cameras, sensors, smart speakers, robots). However, many of them were designed with a "techno-solutionism" mindset that assumes a unidirectional care relation, framing older adults as merely passive recipients of care. This often leads to a power imbalance between the carers and the one being cared for, posing an "ageing gaze" towards older adults and causing them not to engage with the technology.

This think tank invites anyone interested in ageing in place to discuss together: 1) the gap between existing technologies and people's everyday care needs, desires, and practices at home from your observation; 2) potential ways to bridge this gap, and designing technology centred on older adults' perspectives and roles in their care networks; 3) the unique contributions your discipline/field/experience could bring to this topic, and the collaboration needed for change to happen.

## Can Robots Care? Exploring the Multifaceted Dimensions of Robot-Assisted Care

(Eilidh Bowman, Max Ries & Jack Robertson)

According to the United Nations Population Division global life expectancy has improved from 46.5 years in 1950 to 71.7 years in 2022. This is projected to rise to 77.3 by 2050 (Richter, 2023). Many assistive technologies are being developed to help the older population age in a healthy way, including care robots. These robots can positively impact older adults in a number of ways, including helping with daily activities, improving cognitive function and providing emotional support and companionship. However, deploying these technologies in care settings is complex and there are many different ethical dimensions that must be considered including potentially negative consequences relating to reduced autonomy, objectification and deception.

Through an interdisciplinary dialogue this think tank will explore the challenges and potential opportunities relating to the deployment of robots in care and will aim to provide recommendations to ensure these technologies are used to enhance, rather than compromise the well-being of older adults.

## Holistic Care and Research

(Ellie Falkingham & Tahira Ali)

Numerous health and social care organisations and professionals espouse the aim of providing care that is holistic (NMC 2018, HPCP, 2025, NHS 2013, WHO 2023) – But what does 'holistic' really mean and is it ever achieved in reality?

This session explores these questions and their implications for research in the context of later life. Starting by exploring what is meant by 'holistic', it seeks to unpack the usefulness and limitations of this term. It examines the different domains of care and stakeholders involved in the delivery of care, how these may shift in different health and social care landscapes, and the various barriers and facilitators to achieving care that is 'holistic'. Finally, it turns to examine how our approaches to research in this area may best consider and support a valid and meaningful analysis of these questions.