

QUICK START GUIDE - STARTING WITH

Framing is the process of making choices about what to emphasize and what to leave unsaid. Here's a quick tour of themes to avoid and alternatives to advance

Why?

Try:	Instead of these words and cues:	This matters because:
Talking affirmatively about changing demographics: "As Americans live longer and healthier lives . . ."	"Tidal wave," "tsunami," and similarly catastrophic terms for the growing population of older people	Catastrophic language generates fears of irreparable doom and stifles motivation to work toward solutions. Focusing on realistic steps we can take to address the opportunities and challenges that comes from a growing population generates the momentum we seek.
Emphasizing how to improve social contexts: "Let's find creative solutions to ensure we can all thrive as we age."	"Choice," "planning," "control," and other individual determinants of aging outcomes	Individual language suggests that everyone has the same options and that making those choices leads to good outcomes. Recognizing that context, environment, socioeconomics and racial/ethnic identities influence outcomes differently allows us to talk about systemic options that will help us all.
Using neutral ("older people/Americans") and inclusive ("we" and "us") terms	"Seniors," "elderly," "aging dependents," and similar "other-ing" terms that stoke stereotypes	Inclusive language reflects the reality that we are all aging – there is no "them" and "they."
The Building Momentum metaphor: "Aging is a dynamic process that leads to new abilities and knowledge we can share with our communities."	"Struggle," "battle," "fight," and similar conflict-oriented words to describe aging experiences	Conflict-laden language generates fear and dread about aging, as though battling aging is the only path forward. Acknowledging that we continue to grow and change throughout the life course allows for engaging all of us in solutions as we all age.
Defining ageism: "Ageism is discrimination against older people due to negative and inaccurate stereotypes."	Using the word "ageism" without explanation	Clarity allows for discussion on an even foundation of understanding of the systemic societal bias against older adults.
Using concrete examples like intergenerational community centers to illustrate inventive solutions	Making generic appeals to the need to "do something" about aging	Offering specific solutions to specific challenges generates creativity and empowers action to benefit us all, along with recognizing that systemic solutions are possible and benefit us all.

This document was created in partnership with the FrameWorks Institute and E4 Center 2023 for educational purposes only.

The National Center to Reframe Aging is dedicated to ending ageism by advancing an equitable and complete story about aging in America. The center is the trusted source for proven communication strategies and tools to effectively frame aging issues. It is the nation's leading organization, cultivating an active community of individuals and organizations to spread awareness of implicit bias toward older people and influence policies and programs that benefit us all of us as we age.

For more information, visit www.reframingaging.org