

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 2022 for educational purposes only.

The Reframing Aging Initiative is a long-term social change endeavor designed to improve the public's understanding of what aging means and the many ways that older people contribute to our society. This greater understanding will counter ageism and guide our nation's approach to ensuring supportive policies and programs for us all as we move through the life course.

For more information, visit www.reframingaging.org