

# THE STORY OF REFRAMING AGING



## Society should treat older people as equals

One of our society's strengths is our belief in justice. A just society ensures that everyone, regardless of age, can participate and contribute in meaningful ways. Too often, we limit opportunities for older people and minimize their contributions. This is unjust to older people and a loss to our communities. To live up to our ideals, we must confront the injustice of ageism.

## Ageism harms us *all*

Ageism is discrimination or unjust treatment of older people based on stereotypes.

Starting at an early age, ageism shapes the way we think about ourselves and others as we grow older.

Underlying ageism is implicit bias – the unconscious attitudes and beliefs that lead to snap judgments about older people.

Ageism is bad for our health, making us sicker and costing our nation billions in avoidable health care costs.

Ageism stifles the economy by limiting the participation of older workers, despite their years of experience.



### **This is what ageism sounds like:**

I'm having a senior moment.

These wrinkles and grey hair have got to go.

I'm too old to try that.

You look good for your age.

It's time to put her/him out to pasture.

Those are just aches and pains from old age.

Sweetie, you don't look a day over 29.



## The solution: confront ageism by telling a new story

The Reframing Aging Initiative is generating a groundswell for change – from local efforts to national leaders – to tell a more balanced story of aging.

This story explains that good ideas know no age limit, and that experience and wisdom can be tapped to benefit us all.

**Our words matter.** Changing the way we talk will change attitudes about aging, and ultimately, will advance policies and programs that support us at every age and stage of life.

This initiative is powered by research and proven to change how people think about aging.

**What we need is you!**

JOIN US IN TELLING A  
NEW STORY ABOUT AGING!

[www.reframingaging.org](http://www.reframingaging.org)



Practice using the tips on the Quick Start Guide



Learn about the public's understanding of aging at [www.reframingaging.org](http://www.reframingaging.org)



Take the Implicit Association Test to measure your implicit bias ([www.implicit.harvard.edu](http://www.implicit.harvard.edu))



Call out ageism when you see it or hear it



Request a workshop or presentation for your organization



Subscribe to *Caravan*, the newsletter of the Reframing Aging Initiative

## Quick Start Guide

### Our Words Matter

Here Are Tips on How to Choose Them Well

Instead of these words and cues:	Try:
"Tidal wave," "tsunami," and similarly catastrophic terms for the growing population of older people	Talking affirmatively about changing demographics: "As Americans live longer and healthier lives..."
"Choice," "planning," "control," and other individual determinants of aging outcomes	Emphasizing how to improve social contexts: "Let's find creative solutions to ensure we can all thrive as we age."
"Seniors," "elderly," "aging dependents," and similar "other-ing" terms that stoke stereotypes	Using more neutral ("older people/Americans") and inclusive ("we" and "us") terms
"Struggle," "battle," "fight" and similar conflict oriented words to describe aging experiences	The Building Momentum metaphor: "Aging is a dynamic process that leads to new abilities and knowledge we can share with our communities."
Using the word "ageism" without explanation	Defining ageism: "Ageism is discrimination against older people due to negative and inaccurate stereotypes."
Making generic appeals to the need to "do something" about aging	Using concrete examples like intergenerational community centers to illustrate inventive solutions