Reframing Aging: A Primer for Health Care Professionals

A Social Change Endeavor designed to improve the public’s understanding of aging

Original research conducted by the FrameWorks Institute and sponsored by the Leaders of Aging Organizations

Leaders of Aging Organizations (LAO)

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Today's Presenters

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**FrameWorks is on a mission...**

To advance the nonprofit sector’s capacity to frame the public discourse on social and scientific issues

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Reframing Aging: A Primer for Healthcare Professionals

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Vice President of Research Interpretation

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choices in how we present information

how people think/feel/act

framing (really) matters right now

Healthcare professionals are heroes and framers

Communicating for individual behavior change vs.
Framing for policy and systems change
Given the importance of free speech, would you favor allowing a hate group to hold a political rally?

85% in Favor

Given the risk of violence, would you favor allowing a hate group to hold a political rally?

40% in Favor

Framing children’s issues

* = P < .01

You Say...They Think

AAA

BBB

Healthcare Professional

Non-expert

4 ideas for framing ageism now
Framing challenge: people think health outcomes are only about individual choices.

What to do

• tell systems stories
• leave no space in communications for people to blame marginalized groups instead of inequitable systems

Attend to attribution of responsibility.

Before

The higher number of deaths among older Black people and Latinos can be explained by the higher number of underlying health conditions, like obesity and diabetes.

After

When thinking about higher number of deaths among older Black people and Latinos, we need to think about why people get sick in the first place. Who still has to leave their home to work, who has to leave a crowded apartment, get on crowded transport, and go to a crowded workplace? The privilege of working from home is not available to everyone.
Framing challenge: right now people only hear about older people’s vulnerability.

Tell other stories about older people’s experiences during the pandemic.

Tell other stories about older people and the pandemic.
States such as New York and Florida issued calls for retired medical professionals to return to work, and tens of thousands volunteered to do so. Likewise, many older people are caregivers for family members who are frail, disabled, or cognitively impaired.

Framing challenge: people are fatalistic about health outcomes for older people.
#3
find balance between urgency and efficacy

Before
Nursing home populations are at a high risk of being infected by — and dying from — the coronavirus. Covid-19 is known to be particularly lethal to adults in their 60s. And it spreads through facilities, where many people live in a confined environment and workers move from room to room.

After
Nursing home populations are at a high risk of being infected by — and dying from — the coronavirus. Covid-19 is known to be particularly lethal to adults in their 60s. A strong infection prevention and control program, however, can protect residents and healthcare personnel.

Balance urgency and efficacy.

Framing challenge: people dismiss ageism as a serious issue.
#4

Talk about intersectionality instead of comparing “isms.”

Before

Ageism in healthcare settings during the pandemic is just as bad as sexism and racism. We need to combat ageism just like we do other isms.

After

Older people are diverse in many ways including race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, disability, sexual orientation and gender identity. Addressing marginalization and discrimination in the pandemic must focus on these sources of inequity as well as age.

How do I learn more?

Visit the GSA’s Reframing Aging Initiative’s website:

www.reframingaging.org

Sign up for FrameWorks’ Newsletter On Frame:

Thank you!
Let’s continue the conversation.

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Questions

Resources

Response to Covid-19 Webinar Series
Available at www.reframingaging.org

• Reframing Aging: A Primer for Health Care Professionals (August 12)

• Reframing the Response to COVID-19: Applying Reframed Language to Counteract Ageism (April 21)

Caravan, the newsletter of the Reframing Aging Initiative

To subscribe, write to reframingaging@geron.org

What can I do?

Practice using the tips on the Quick Start Guide

Learn about the Swamp of Public Opinion on Aging and other research on the Reframing Aging Initiative webpage (www.reframingaging.org)

Take the Implicit Association Test to measure your implicit bias (https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/education.html)

Call out ageism when you see it or hear it

Request a workshop or presentation for your organization

www.reframingaging.org