

Using Reframed Language in Opinion Pieces

Opinion pieces and letters to the editor are constructive ways to spread awareness of an issue impacting us as we age and to utilize reframed messaging in our advocacy.

- An op-ed is a short opinion piece expressing a viewpoint on a timely news topic.
- A letter to the editor is a very short response to an article or editorial that has recently appeared in a newspaper, magazine or digital publication.

When you draft one of these pieces be sure to (1) be timely, (2) know the word limit, (3) start and end strong, (4) avoid jargon, and (5) make a specific recommendation.

Once you have submitted your op-ed or letter to the editor, maximize this opportunity by sharing a link to it across your social channels, in your newsletter and/or to your organizational partners. Don't forget to use #ReframingAging on your social media post.

The following are examples of how the principles to reframe aging from the [National Center to Reframe Aging's Quick Start Guide](#) can be utilized in your submissions. To learn more about tips to writing a reframed op-ed or letter to the editor, check out the [Responding to Ageist Election Coverage in the Media Guide](#).

Example

The Columbus Dispatch

LETTERS | Opinion *This piece expresses the views of its author(s), separate from those of this publication.*

SNAP benefits to be slashed soon. Elderly will turn to food pantries to stay fed.

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If our communities learned anything from the pandemic, it's that we can come together to support each other in tough times. We made new connections and tried new ideas. Older adults in our communities were impacted most severely by the pandemic; it prevented many from being connected and engaged in their communities as they sought to stay safe. Our Area Agency on Aging network quickly realized how fortunate our communities are to have so many older adults serving as volunteers as they stopped being able to contribute out of concern for their own safety.

One of the supports Ohioans rely on is the food assistance program known as SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program). During the pandemic, programs such as SNAP have responded to the greater need. An increase in monthly SNAP benefits has had a significant positive impact for older Ohioans.

The enhanced benefits will soon end, but the need will continue. Older Ohioans will soon represent close to a quarter of all food pantry visits statewide. We need Ohio's leaders to consider immediate investments so we are prepared when these enhanced benefits end. For the longer term, we need sound public policy and innovative approaches to improve how our society supports us all as we age. We are all aging, and this is important to us all.

Beth Kowalczyk, Chief Policy Officer, Ohio Association of Area Agencies on Aging, Columbus

Letters: Elderly turn to food pantries when SNAP benefits are cut. (2022, June 13). The Columbus Dispatch. <https://www.dispatch.com/story/opinion/letters/2022/06/13/letters-elderly-turn-food-pantries-when-snap-benefits-cut/7572425001/>

Start by talking affirmatively about the issue. In this example we can see the piece began with the idea that we can come together!

Tell a positive developmental story about aging. Here the writer points to the positive contributions older adults make to the community.

Use concrete examples like the example of SNAP used in this piece. The program, its benefits, and the need for it are all outlined in this statement.

Emphasize how to improve social contexts. This sentence points out how this issue is a systemic concern impacting us all.

Use neutral and inclusive terms to create a sense of inclusivity.

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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 all of us as we age. Led by The Gerontological Society of America (GSA), the National Center acts on behalf of and amplifies efforts of the ten Leaders of Aging Organizations.

