Reframing Aging

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

@ReframingAging

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

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Reframing Aging

Leaders of Aging Organizations (LAO)

AARP — Real Possibilities

afar — american federation for aging research

AGS — Geriatrics Healthcare Professionals

ASA — American Society on Aging

GIA — Grantmakers In Aging

THE GERONTOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF AMERICA

ncoa — National Council on Aging

NHCOA — NATIONAL HISPANIC COUNCIL ON AGING

Reframing Aging

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FRAME WORKS

Reframing the Response to COVID-19: Applying Reframed Language to Counteract Ageism

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framing =

choices in how we present information

⬇

how people think/feel/act

Given the **importance of free speech,** would you favor allowing a hate group to hold a political rally? ➡ *85% in Favor*
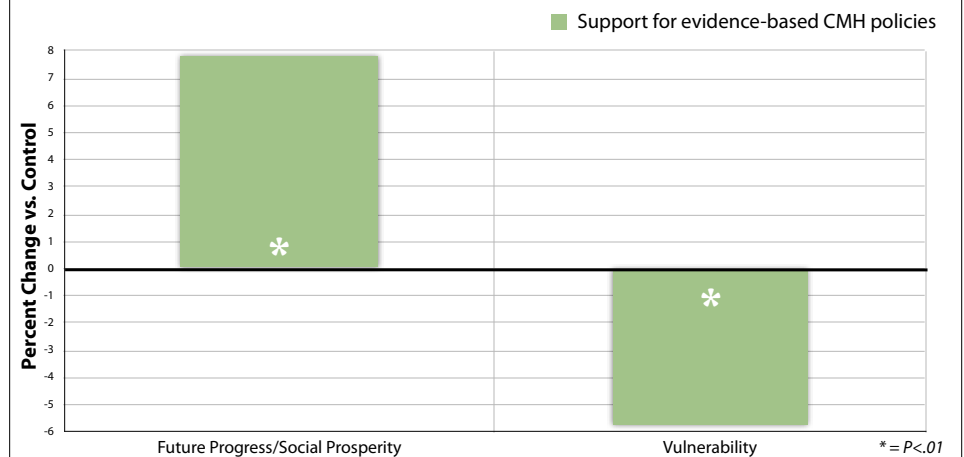
Given the **risk of violence,** would you favor allowing a hate group to hold a political rally? ➡ *40% in Favor*

Sniderman & Theriault, 2004

Framing children's issues

■ Support for evidence-based CMH policies

Percent Change vs. Control: Future Progress/Social Prosperity, Vulnerability

* = P<.01

framing (really) matters right now

"Chinese virus" → fear of other
nationalism
racism

"Draconian measures" → "what an overreaction!"
information resistance
hesitance to act

"Protect the most vulnerable" → instant othering
zero sum thinking
stigma

4 ideas for framing aging and ageism now

#1
find an urgency/efficacy balance

all urgency	➡	fatalism disengagement
all efficacy	➡	message rejection lack of motivation
balance	➡	perceived agency engagement action

What to do

- bring a solution when you can

- explain how it works

- tone matters: don't forget the urgency part of the equation

Balance urgency and efficacy.

Before

"Older people are at the center of the COVID crisis and are disproportionately impacted by the disease."

After

"Because older people are disproportionately impacted by the disease, states are planning community actions to reduce exposures to the virus."

#2
think carefully about how you're positioning groups

Slide 1

"vulnerable" → otherizes
reifies stereotypes

saviors and victims → stigmatizes
zero sum
demands sacrifice

worthiness → invites evaluation
of deservingness

Slide 2

What to do

- interconnection as strength

- responsibility to all

- connect with common experiences

- everyone stepping up/doing the right thing (not sacrificing/saving)

- advance *principle* of targeted universalism not "vulnerable groups"

Slide 3

Thinking carefully about how we position groups.

Before

"Most of us will have a few unpleasant days of aches and fever. But for the elderly neighbor down the street or for our grandparents in nursing homes, it's a different story. Seniors, as well as the disabled, are vulnerable to severe disease. For their sakes, we need to make sacrifices."

After
This virus is highly contagious and people could be spreading it without realizing. When we all stay home today, we see fewer new cases tomorrow. By keeping our physical distance, we slow the spread. This protects people in our communities who are most at risk and the availability of the lifesaving health care we all depend on."

Slide 4

#3
explanation is power

Slide 1

"do what we say" → rejection disengagement

"see how this works…" → solutions support efficacy engagement

Slide 2

What to do

- explain why problems exist

- show what actions/solutions do

Slide 3

Explanation is power.

Before

"Ageism in our healthcare system has always been a problem and it is becoming a crisis during this pandemic."

After

"Under stressful conditions, healthcare providers are likely to make snap decisions about people solely based on their age that will determine the quality of care they receive. We need to make sure our standards of care do not discriminate on the basis of age."

Slide 4

#4
how we frame now affects what's possible later
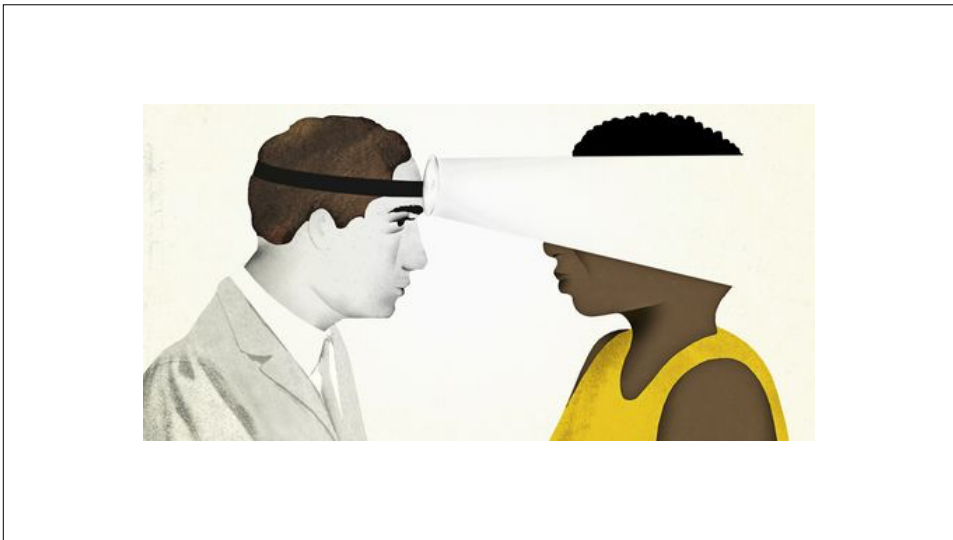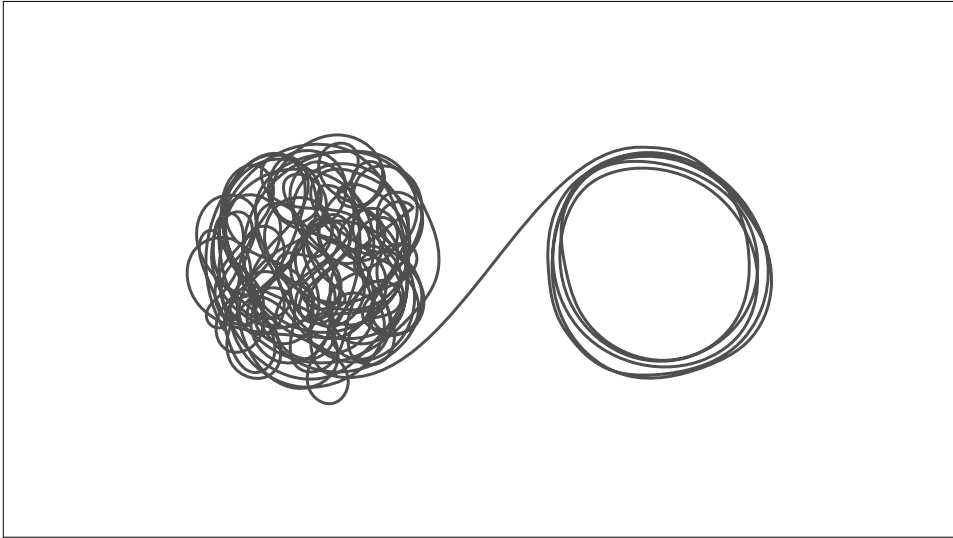
How do I learn more?

Visit the GSA's *Reframing Aging Initiative's* website:

www.reframingaging.org

Sign up for FrameWorks' *Framing COVID-19 Newsletter*:

http://www.frameworksinstitute.org/framing-covid-19.html

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