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# How Does Transformative Change Happen?

## An Example from a Health Care Organization

**WHAT ARE THE** everyday ways you can address ageist language in your work?

**WHAT EVENTS AND** projects present opportunities for you to reframe aging?

**WHO ARE THE** allies and partners that are likely to support a change in the conversation about aging?

**HOW CAN THE TOOLS** from the National Center to Reframe Aging help you to change the way you talk about aging?

In 2020, Rush University received funding from SAMHSA for the E4 Center of Excellence for Behavioral Health Disparities in Aging, incorporating the National Center to Reframe Aging's principles to address ageist language. This strategic decision initiated a cultural shift in how the E4 Center and its partners communicate about aging. Led by Erin Emery-Tiburcio, PhD, and Robyn Golden, LCSW, the center leverages research-based tools to influence healthcare professionals and emphasizes the power of language in shaping the aging experience.

Through SAMHSA's grant, the E4 Center and 18 partner organizations participated in National Center to Reframe Aging's training on the principles to reframe aging. This

training guided internal changes such as developing guidelines to ensure all E4 Center speakers use language that empowers older adults. It also led to broader impact, influencing organizations like the Illinois Partners for Human Service and the national Age-Friendly Health Systems movement.

Erin emphasizes that culture change is gradual and requires persistent conversations and dedicated ownership within organizations. While the E4 Center's staff is small, Erin notes that their strength lies in their partnerships. Thanks to funding, strong leadership, and evidence-based practices, the principles to reframe aging are now integrated into the E4 Center and embraced by a growing number of partners.

**JOIN US IN TELLING A NEW STORY ABOUT AGING!**

# What Can I Do?



Practice using the tips on the Quick Start Guide



Partner with the National Center, connect with us at [reframingaging@geron.org](mailto:reframingaging@geron.org)



Subscribe to *Caravan*, the newsletter of the National Center to Reframe Aging



Access tools and resources via our Learning center at <https://learning.reframingaging.org/>



## 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 "othering" 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

Learn more at [www.reframingaging.org](http://www.reframingaging.org)