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# Leading the Way into the Longevity Era

## How Maryland's State Unit on Aging Made Reframing the Foundation of Its Strategic Plan

What strategic initiatives,  
such as an MPA, are  
underway in your state?

How can you leverage  
strategic efforts to reset the  
tone about aging and older  
people in your communities?

How can you partner with  
the National Center to  
Reframe Aging to improve  
understanding about aging  
in your state?

**If “we don’t have the whole  
picture (of aging) and we’re not  
telling the whole story, we are  
limiting ourselves.”**

- CARMEL ROQUES  
*Maryland Secretary of Aging*

To promote healthy aging, Maryland is focusing on longevity – emphasizing not just longer lives, but also quality of life at every age. That meant the Maryland Department of Aging (MDOA) needed to engage leaders across state government, as Secretary Roques knew, “the reframing of aging itself was foundational.”

Before Maryland could create its first 10-year multisector plan, MDOA engaged

the National Center to Reframe Aging to educate communicators from across state agencies on the principles to reframe aging. This opened interagency dialogue and broadened the table of professionals invested in improving the tone about aging. Additional work was done to educate other key partners from the aging services, philanthropy, and advocacy sectors.

Working with the National Center to Reframe Aging equipped Maryland for the Longevity Era – with a well-framed multisector plan (Longevity Ready Maryland), a toolbox of resources to reframe aging, and framing partners across state government.

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

# What Can I Do?



Practice using the tips on the Quick Start Guide

## Quick Start Guide

### Our Words Matter

Here Are Tips on How to Choose Them Well



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/>



| 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)