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Beyond the Pledge: Building a Culture of Age Inclusivity with the University of Utah

An Example from an Age-Friendly University

Is your institution's age-friendly commitment reflected in the everyday work of your faculty and staff?

How could reframing aging equip your team with the tools and language to move from age-friendly commitments to action?

How can you partner with the National Center to Reframe Aging to build a culture of age inclusivity within your institution?

The College of Nursing at the University of Utah is demonstrating what it looks like to turn age-friendly commitments into real institutional change. After completing a college-wide assessment of age inclusivity, they partnered with the National Center to Reframe Aging as a central part of their strategy, recognizing that becoming an Age Friendly University needed to mean more than a designation on paper.

In Spring 2025, they launched the Excellence Across the Lifespan Champions program, selecting twelve faculty and staff to serve as Lifespan Champions. Diverse in age and role, participants completed the Core Elements to Reframe Aging course

and then applied what they learned by designing and implementing mini-projects to improve age inclusivity within their own areas of work.

What started as one training bloomed into twelve meaningful projects. Researchers rethought how they communicate about older adults in their studies. Staff revised materials for incoming nursing students to better reflect the diverse ages and experiences learners bring. A media team member identified opportunities to diversify imagery across college websites and program materials. Each project reflects a simple but powerful truth: reframing aging is a lens that, once adopted, changes how people see and do their work.

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



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/>



AGE INCLUSIVITY IN HIGHER EDUCATION Quick Start Guide

TRY	INSTEAD OF
Creating messages that show that higher education is not age specific, such as “Our programs welcome learners at all stages of life and career.”	Always focusing on younger students such as “Our programs are designed for recent high school grads ready to start their journey.”
Asking questions with a personal focus, such as “What inspired you to pursue your education at this time?”	Asking questions around age, such as “What made you decide to go back to school at your age?”
Speaking with people with a natural tone and volume, and using their preferred name or title	Speaking too slowly, too loudly, or with an exaggerated tone
Using age-neutral language that focuses on skills, qualifications, and contributions, not age or generation.	Using specific age references, such as “Looking for a cultural fit with a young, dynamic team,” or “seasoned employee,”
Using descriptive, age-neutral language instead of generational labels when referring to younger or older groups.	Using generational references and descriptions like “boomers,” “Gen Z work ethic,” or “millennial mindset.”
Using the terms “students,” “all students,” “students of any age,” “students across the life course.”	Using the terms “lifelong learners,” “nontraditionally aged students,” “seasoned learners.”

Access the complete Age Inclusivity in Higher Education Quick Start Guide at <https://gsaenrich.geron.org/age-inclusivity-in-higher-education>



Learn more at www.reframingaging.org