



## Caravan

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE REFRAMING AGING INITIATIVE

Welcome to the latest edition of *Caravan*. This bi-monthly newsletter shares information, ideas, and inspiration to help our fellow travelers on our journey to improve the public's understanding of what aging means and the contributions older people bring to society.



## News + Articles

### Simple Ways to Improve Your Story of Aging!



Would you like to boost the impact of your communication? Our new guide, "[Communication Best Practices: Reframing Aging Initiative Guide to Telling a More Complete Story of Aging](#)" can help! Using evidence-informed findings from the Reframing Aging Initiative and best practices guidance from the APA, AMA, and AP style guides, this free, [comprehensive guide](#) shows you how to **apply age-inclusive, bias-free language** in your communications, makes it easier to **identify wording that can be improved**, and offers **terms to avoid and terms to advance**. Use the *Communication Best Practices* guide when crafting presentations, press releases, academic papers, letters to the editor, websites, publications, consumer materials, speeches, and other communications. All ten of the Leaders of Aging Organizations are incorporating principles of this guide in their work. Together, we can change narratives about aging nation-wide!

## Nursing Homes: Not What People Think!

Do any of these beliefs sound familiar? “Only rich people can afford a decent nursing home.” “Nursing home staff just need to be caring people.” “Nursing homes are impersonal.” What can we say when faced with these beliefs?



On April 11, 2022, RAI's research partner FrameWorks Institute released a [brief on findings and recommendations for communicating about nursing homes](#). The report is based on research examining what the public believes about nursing homes and what those in the field understand. According to FrameWorks, “The problems affecting nursing homes existed long before COVID-19, but the narratives surrounding these problems have impeded the very policies that could improve conditions for residents and caregivers alike.”

The [report](#) provides initial recommendations for changing how we communicate about nursing homes and care workers. The RAI grant renewal includes partnering with FrameWorks Institute to develop specific activities to assist in disseminating this work. Keep watching for more information!



## LeadingAge: Opening Doors to Aging Services

“Americans have never needed aging services more, but our sector is not well understood by the general public. Now is the time for us to reset the narrative, proactively telling the story of aging services.” So says LeadingAge, a member of the Leaders of Aging Organizations, the collaborative that created the Reframing Aging Initiative, and host of the LeadingAge Leadership Summit. We couldn't agree more! At the 2022 Summit, March 28-30, 2022, RAI Facilitator Donna Satterthwaite took part in a panel to discuss the importance of using well-framed language in messages about aging. Panelists included Susan Donley, Senior VP at LeadingAge and RAI National Advisory Board member, and Nat Kendall-Taylor, CEO of FrameWorks Institute and RAI National Advisory Board member. LeadingAge understands the power of communication, and its initiative [Opening Doors](#) uses evidence-based strategies to introduce aging services to the public.

## Volunteering: Caravan Survey Results

We know older adults bring significant life experience and skills to their volunteer roles, yet misperceptions of older people abound. We asked: “What one underappreciated or overlooked characteristic do you think older volunteers contribute?” The majority of the 248 responses about what older volunteers contribute were divided among Ability to Think Big Picture (21%), Experience Working in Multiple Industries / Settings (23%), and Capacity for Mentoring Younger People (20%).

Here are some of your thoughts:

*“Large networks of resources, professional and personal connections.”*

*“Older adults are opened minded, flexible and can adapt to technologies and new ways of being and doing things within the community as well as across generations. They can bridge the gaps.”*

*“Older adults are contributors! Many orgs “serve” older adults and they are passive recipients and not seen as individuals that can and want to contribute. Almost anything you might provide to an older adult, an older adult can provide to others.”*

Wise words we should repeat in our communications!

## What We're Reading

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The National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine just released a report, [The National Imperative to Improve Nursing Home Quality: Honoring Our Commitment to Residents, Families, and Staff](#), which analyzes how the US delivers, finances, regulates, and measures the quality of nursing home care. The John A. Hartford Foundation's President, Terry Fulmer, talks about how the pandemic increased the urgency of this issue in [this video](#) describing the report.

Gerontologists M. Aaron Guest, PhD, and Allie Peckham, PhD, both of Arizona State University, cited the Reframing Aging Initiative in the *Journal of Communication in Healthcare*, [Identifying Better Communication Practices for Older Adults During the Next Pandemic: Recommendations from the COVID-19 experience](#). They noted that during the pandemic, public health messaging has emphasized vulnerability and susceptibility to the SARS-CoV-2 virus. Some of this messaging “devolved into generalizable claims regarding large swaths of the population, including older adults.” The authors assert, “The use of affirming and age-friendly language must extend beyond communication intended for older adults, but to the environments older persons are in and their engagement with communication strategies.”

[Aging is Still One of Biology's Greatest Mysteries](#), a story in *Discover Magazine*, was written by Jeanne Erdmann with the support of a journalism fellowship from The Gerontological Society of America, The Journalists Network on Generations, and The John A. Hartford Foundation. It reviews what we know about the aging process and quotes our own Trish D’Antonio: “The more we understand about aging, the more the public will understand, and the more we will see support for aging. We are not falling off a cliff because our society is aging.”

Last but not least: please follow us on Twitter to learn more [@ReframingAging](#).

## Resources

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Pressed for time? A new 2-minute video from RAI offers simple ideas to “flip the frame” from falling into communication traps to starting strong with shared vision and collective benefits. This video helps drive the point home that we can change perceptions by being intentional in how we talk about aging. **[“Frame of Mind: Starting Strong, Avoiding Traps”](#)** is third in a [series](#) designed for advocates, teachers, and communicators who serve and care about older people.

June 15th is World Elder Abuse Awareness Day (WEAAD). Here are some [tools from the Reframing Elder Abuse project](#) at the National Center on Elder Abuse to engage audiences in efforts to combat elder abuse and promote WEAAD.



The [Reframing Aging Initiative](#) is led by [The Gerontological Society of America \(GSA\)](#) on behalf of the [Leaders of Aging Organizations](#) and is currently funded by [Archstone Foundation](#), [The John A. Hartford Foundation](#), [RRF Foundation for Aging](#), and [The SCAN Foundation](#), with additional support from [Fan Fox and Leslie R. Samuels Foundation](#), [New Hampshire Endowment for Health](#), [NextFifty Initiative](#), [Rose Community Foundation](#), [San Antonio Area Foundation](#), and [Tufts Health Plan Foundation](#).

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