Quick Start Guide

Framing is the process of making choices about what to emphasize and what to leave unsaid.
Here’s a quick tour of themes to avoid and alternatives to advance.

Instead of these words and cues:

“Tidal wave,” “tsunami,” and similarly catastrophic terms for the growing population of older people

“Choice,” “planning,” “control,” and other individual determinants of aging outcomes

“Seniors,” “elderly,” “aging dependents,” and similar “other-ing” terms that stoke stereotypes

“Struggle,” “battle,” “fight,” and similar conflict-oriented words to describe aging experiences

Using the word “ageism” without explanation

Making generic appeals to the need to “do something” about aging

Try:

Talking affirmatively about changing demographics: “As Americans live longer and healthier lives . . .”

Emphasizing how to improve social contexts: “Let’s find creative solutions to ensure we can all thrive as we age.”

Using more neutral (“older people/Americans”) and inclusive (“we” and “us”) terms

The Building Momentum metaphor: “Aging is a dynamic process that leads to new abilities and knowledge we can share with our communities.”

Defining ageism: “Ageism is discrimination against older people due to negative and inaccurate stereotypes.”

Using concrete examples like intergenerational community centers to illustrate inventive solutions

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The National Center to Reframe Aging is dedicated to ending ageism by advancing an equitable and complete story about aging in America. The center is the trusted source for proven communication strategies and tools to effectively frame aging issues. It is the nation’s leading organization, cultivating an active community of individuals and organizations to spread awareness of implicit bias toward older people and influence policies and programs that benefit us all as we age.