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my pronouns are she, her and hers

Field Representative

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*An interactive presentation and discussion about the impact of reframing  
messaging pertaining to falls, falls prevention, and aging*

presented to Falls Free CT Coalition

Regular Quarterly Meeting

Monday, September 8, 2025

1-2PM

via Zoom



- I like people and presenting stuff.
- I come from a long line of Fallers.
- I [also] come from a long line of Helpers.
- Sharing is caring.
- Reframing Aging Facilitator since March 2020
- I have young people in my life. I have older people in my life.
- I celebrate birthdays.

# Why Me, Why Now?

*(thank you, Robin & Meghan!)*

- Unintentional falls are the leading cause of non-fatal **injuries for children** in the United States. [\(Safe Kids CT\)](#)
- Falls are the leading cause of non-fatal injuries among **children ages 0-19**, accounting for nearly 28,000 hospital admissions and 1.7 emergency department visits each year. [\(Children's Safety Network\)](#)
- Falls are the leading cause of **fatal and non-fatal injuries** among older adults.
- In 2021, falls caused 38,000 deaths among those age **65+**, and emergency departments reported 3 million visits due to older adult falls [\(NCOA\)](#)

Just a little context....  
For whom was our  
society made for  
  
(according to our  
society?)

Category	Ism	Agent	Target
Ability	Ableism	Temporarily Able (TAP)	Person with a disability
Age	Ageism / Adultism	Adult, Between ages 25 – 60	Older than 60 / Younger than 25
Class	Classism	Rich, Owning, Upper Class	Poor, Working Class
Gender	Genderism / Gender oppression/ Transphobia	Cisgender, Gender conforming	Transgender, Gender non-conforming (TQ+)
Race	Racism	White	Black, Indigenous/Native, Latine, Asian, MENA, Bi/Multi-Racial (BIPOC)
Religion	Religionism/Religious Oppression	Christians	Jewish, Muslim, all other religions, agnostics, atheists
Sex	Sexism	Male	Female, Intersex
Sexual Orientation	Heterosexism	Straight, Heterosexual	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Queer, Asexual (LGBQA+)
Size/Weight	Sizeism/Fatism	Thin	Fat

# What is Ageism?

- This is ageism: the stereotypes (how we think), prejudice (how we feel) and discrimination (how we act) towards others or ourselves based on age. (World Health Organization, 2025)
- Although the *experience* of aging is not universal, the act of getting older is something we all experience, so therefore:
  - Many people do not believe ageism is hurtful, outside of blatant discriminatory acts

**(what are some examples you can think of?)**

What about comments like these?

I'm having a senior moment.

These wrinkles and grey hair have got to go.


You look good for your age.

I'm too old to try that.

Those are just aches and pains from old age.

Sweetie, you don't look a day over 29.

It's time to put her/him out to pasture.



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Ageism **has far-reaching impacts** on all aspects of our **health and well-being** when we are older:

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It is associated with earlier death.

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It is linked to poorer physical health, affecting, among others, our ability to recover from disability and our sexual and reproductive health.

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It increases risky health behaviors (e.g., eating an unhealthy diet, smoking).

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It is associated with poorer mental health, including the onset of depression, increases in depressive symptoms over time and lifetime depression.

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It is associated with a lower quality of life and contributes to social isolation and loneliness.

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Ageism also takes a heavy economic toll on individuals and society and exacerbates other forms of disadvantage.

# What's the relationship to Ableism?

- ▶ Ableism, a value system that considers certain characteristics of body and mind as essential to live a life of value, is often conflated with ageism ([G2121563.pdf \(un.org\)](#))
- ▶ Ageism leads to poorer health, social isolation, earlier deaths and cost economies billions: report calls for swift action to implement effective anti-ageism strategies ([Ageism is a global challenge: UN \(who.int\)](#))
- ▶ **Ageism costs us \$63Billion dollars a year** (according to WHO)
- ▶ Ageism has serious and wide-ranging consequences for people's health and well-being. Among older people, ageism is associated with *poorer physical and mental health, increased social isolation and loneliness, greater financial insecurity, decreased quality of life and premature death*. **An estimated 6.3 million cases of depression globally are estimated to be attributable to ageism.** It intersects and exacerbates other forms of bias and disadvantage including those related to sex, race and disability leading to a negative impact on people's health and well-being.
- ▶ [Understanding ableism and negative reactions to disability \(apa.org\)](#)
- ▶ [How Ableism and Ageism Affect Older Adults | Next Avenue](#)



# Reframing Aging

## *a long-term social change endeavor*

- [Reframing Aging Website](#) (sign up for their CARAVAN Newsletter)
- Designed to improve the general public's understanding of aging and the many ways that older adults contribute to society
  - Define Ageism and call it out
  - Changing language
  - Telling a different story
- Research done by the [Frame Works Institute](#) *(you want to check out all the work that these folks are doing)*
- Funded by [Point32Health](#) (formerly Tufts Health) Foundation





## **Frame of Mind:**

**Starting Strong, Avoiding Traps**



# Tell the Story!

## ...just, tell it a bit differently

- Use the concept of JUSTICE (a concept that appeals widely to Americans)
  - Ie: Every American should have access to affordable healthcare
- Use the illustration of MOMENTUM
  - Ie: When every American has access to affordable healthcare, there is no stopping us as a flourishing community, as everyone can better contribute when they are healthy
- Stay away from the “traps”
  - Using fear will only inspire fear in people and a sense of FATALISM
  - Telling the FANTASTICAL story about a person or group without context is going to be misunderstood
  - Don’t FALSE START- start with the idea that your audience will embrace, versus a boring statistic we’ve all heard
- Take out the “Us versus Them” in how you speak, the language you use, and the stories you tell

# Reframing in Action: Older Americans' Month 2025

## ***FLIP THE SCRIPT ON AGING: MILTON'S SUCCESS STORY***

After a stroke, Milton had to move to an accessible apartment far away from family and friends, but he didn't let that slow him down!

With the help of our **Bridging the Digital Divide** program, Milton now has the assistive technology he needs to stay connected.

**Learn more about Bridging the Digital Divide and our assistive technology offerings at our website (see caption)!**



## ***FLIP THE SCRIPT ON AGING: MILTON'S SUCCESS STORY***

After a stroke that limited his mobility, Milton decided to move to an accessible apartment. Though it was far away from family and friends, he refused to lose connection with his community!

Milton worked with our **Bridging the Digital Divide** program and has gained a feeling of independence since learning to use assistive technology to stay connected.

**Learn more about Bridging the Digital Divide and our assistive technology offerings at our website (see caption)!**



# Don't Fall into those traps during/for FALLS PREVENTION WEEK

## DO

- Show images of individuals using durable medical equipment
- Start off with a concept we all can agree on (ex: we all know someone who has fallen; every person deserves to feel safe in their neighborhood...)
- Be specific as to who you are talking about
- Assume that people will blame the person falling, unless you tell them not to
- Showcase success stories- but remember to CONNECT THE DOTS
- Appeal to a wider audience
- Share resources/videos from National Council on Aging
- Feel free to share/highlight other resources/fun stuff that IS reframed, or helps to highlight ASPECTS of falls prevention (like Senior Center Month resources/videos/images)

## DO NOT

- Show images of individuals with durable medical equipment alone
- Start off with a statistic
- Use terms like “the elderly”, “older people” or “seniors”
- Assume that people know how bad a fall can be
- Scare people explicitly
- Use acronyms, or any medical words
- Use “they”. When we are talking about falls prevention, we are talking about all of us doing our part to prevent falls, and to do what we can to stay safe and secure
- Perpetuate shame around falls, or around getting older
- Perpetuate the idea that older age = falls.
- Do nothing. This week is a chance to educate, empower, and to make an impact



September is [also]  
Senior Center  
Month  
this year's theme:

***Powering  
Possibilities:  
Flipping the  
Script on Aging***

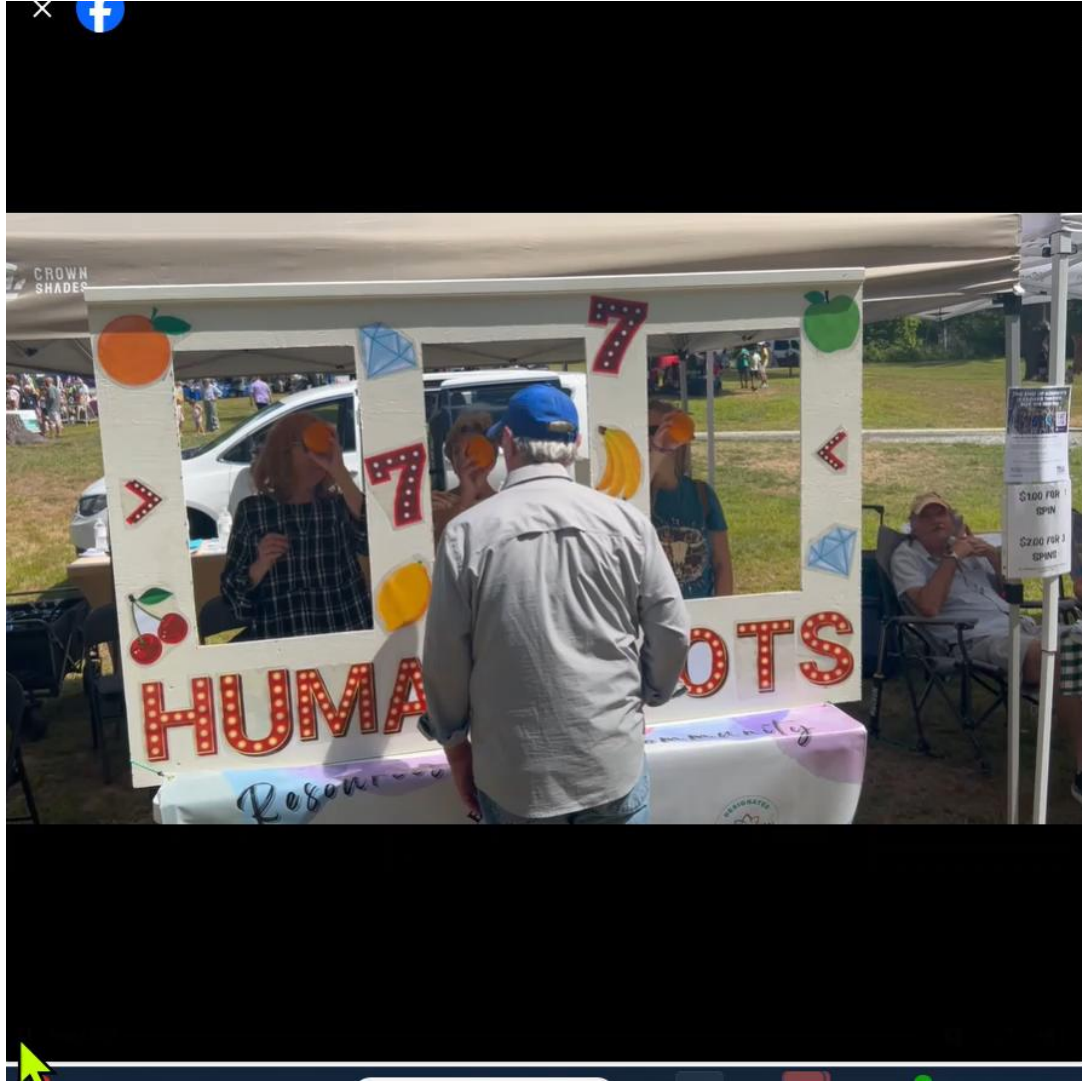
Senior Center. #stamfordseniorcenter #seniorcenters #ncoaging #poweringp... See more

Another happy member!



  Claire Côté and 16 others

3 comments 2 shares



Game on! Who says retirement isn't competitive. Defying aging one pickleball match at a time!

[#seniorcenterfun](#)

[#FlipTheScriptOnAging](#)

[#FlipTheScriptOnAging](#)



You and 34 others

1 comment 5 shares

# What Can I Do?

- Commit to not giving Ageist/Ableist Birthday Cards
- Simple language changes can make a world of difference
- Use images that show the diversity of people who are different ages and have differing abilities
- Use affirmative language when talking about getting older and trends associated with aging
- Try to advocate for/support policies & procedures that support EVERYONE



## 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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# CONNECTICUT

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Listserv!!**

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