YOU AS THE LEADERS
In Reframing Aging & Ending Ageism

CHANGING THE NARRATIVE
A campaign of Next 50 Initiative

**OUR GOALS**
- Older adults have improved quality of life.
- Organizations serving older adults have the resources they need to succeed.
- New and innovative approaches to aging are identified, supported, and replicated.
- Ageism is reduced.
AGEISM

Prejudice  
*(how we feel)*

Stereotyping  
*(how we think)*

Discrimination  
*(how we act)*

BASUED ON AGE
How likely is it that your clients or constituents have experienced ageism?

- **38%**
  Of hiring managers admit to screening out applications based on age
  [Resume Builder, 2022]

- **93%**
  Say workplace age discrimination is common
  [AARP, 2022]

- **56%**
  Of those entering 50s employment pushed out or laid off
  [Urban Institute, 2018]

- **93%**
  Experienced one of more forms of ageism in day-to-day lives
  [Allen et al., 2022]
AGEISM NEGATIVELY AFFECTS US

- Economic security
- Physical and mental health
- Memory
- How long we live
AND OUR COMMUNITIES AND OUR ECONOMY

- Less support for age-friendly policies and systems
- Lowered funding for older adult programs
- $63 billion in annual health care costs
- Workplace age discrimination that costs economy $850 billion
THINKING POSITIVELY ABOUT AGING IS LINKED TO:

- Increased longevity (7.5 years)
- Improved health
- Greater ability to recover
- Reduced likelihood of dementia (by almost half)
- Improved memory and reversing cognitive decline

*Source: Dr. Becca Levy, Yale School of Public Health*
ENDING AGEISM WILL BENEFIT GENERATIONS TO COME

From Pyramid to Pillar: A Century of Change
Population of the United States

1960

2060

Ages

85+
80-84
75-79
70-74
65-69
60-64
55-59
50-54
45-49
40-44
35-39
30-34
25-29
20-24
15-19
10-14
5-9
0-4

Millions of people

Source: National Population Projections, 2017
www.census.gov/programs-surveys/popproj.html
RESEARCH-BASED STRATEGIES TO COMBAT AGEISM

1. Education about ageism and implicit bias
2. Intergenerational connection and education
3. Laws and policy

Source: Global Campaign to End Ageism Report, 2021
1. EDUCATE OURSELVES ABOUT AGEISM AND IMPLICIT BIAS

“Because of the messages our brains receive from childhood on, we subconsciously form negative judgments about people based on their age, but just being aware of these biases makes us less likely to act on them and more likely to treat people fairly.”
START WITH YOURSELF

Take the Implicit Association Test

Learn about the AgeSmartInventory©
Host a Becca Levy Book Club Event

Changing the Narrative: Ending Ageism Together

Becca Levy Book Club Toolkit

Breaking the Age Code
How Your Beliefs About Aging Determine How Long & Well You Live

Becca Levy, Ph.D.
2. FOSTER INTERGENERATIONAL CONNECTION

On the same page intergenerational conversation toolkit
3. SUPPORT PUBLIC POLICY SOLUTIONS

- Eliminate *graduation dates* from applications
- Encourage use of workforce dollars to upskill older workers
- Strengthen age discrimination laws
- Champion caregiver support
- Remove age as triage criteria in crisis standards of care
WHERE DOES REFRAMING FIT IN?

Narrative change supports social change strategies

- **Marriage equality**
  "Love is love"

- **Access to health care**
  "Health care is a right, not a privilege"

- **Opioid crisis**
  From individual addiction problem to a public health crisis
YOU—AS THE TRUSTED MESSANGER
FRAMEWORKS INSTITUTE GAVE US A ROADMAP TO TELL DIFFERENT STORIES

- Conducted research
- Mapped messages and language that give us a path forward:
  - Improved attitudes about aging
  - Decreased implicit bias against older adults
  - Increased understanding of need, and support for public policy
RESEARCH FINDINGS: FIVE PATTERNS OF THINKING ABOUT AGING

Frameworks Institute, 2017

Ideal vs. perceived real
Us vs. them
Individualism
Nostalgia and threat of modernity
Solutions: individual, education, none
STORIES TO ADVANCE

We are all made of stories.
“Widen the lens” on our stories to provide a systems view

- An individual job seeker pushed out—workplace age discrimination and need for retraining/upskilling
- An eviction—a lack of affordable housing options for people of all ages
- Caretaker stress—need for caretaking infrastructure
- Digital divide—in many communities
TALK ABOUT CONCRETE, COLLECTIVE SOLUTIONS

NOT, DYEING HAIR & SHAVING YEARS OFF RESUME

REMOVE GRADUATION DATES FROM JOB APPLICATIONS
The story to advance:

Value: We need to apply our spirit of ingenuity to address the hiring challenges our local businesses are facing.

Building momentum metaphor: Older workers have insight, experience, strong communications skills and connections.

Solution: Employers can bring on older workers to help address their talent shortages and "profit from experience."
Justice requires recognizing all members of society are equal.
Right now our society is not treating older people as equals—we are marginalizing participation and minimizing contributions of all of us as we age.
To live up to our ideals, we must confront the injustice of ageism and work to reshape our society so that all of us are fully included in our communities as we age.
INSTEAD OF...

With social distancing in place, vulnerable seniors without technology are isolated and can't access health care.

TRY THIS...

*Value*: In our community, we believe everyone should have access to opportunity.

*Explanation*: Because of digital divides, some people have a harder time than others accessing health care, K-12 education and being able to work remotely.

*Solution*: We can help to close the digital divide by ensuring all our communities have access to broadband, and those who need it have access to technology and training.
STORIES TO AVOID

“Super senior” stories

Demographic crisis: Silver tsunami

The other “ism” | comparing to civil rights

Compassionate ageism
# Talking About Older Adults and Aging

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Avoid</th>
<th>Instead Use</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Elderly, senior, senior citizen</td>
<td>Use older adults</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>They and them</td>
<td>Us and we</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Battling&quot; aging, anti-aging</td>
<td>Acknowledge that aging is a normal, dynamic process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Choice, better planning, control</td>
<td>Improve social context</td>
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TALKING ABOUT AGEISM

AVOID

Using the term without defining it

Comparing ageism to other isms

INSTEAD

Always define and explain how it works

Talk about ageism as a matter of justice
TALKING ABOUT DEMOGRAPHIC CHANGE

AVOID

Silver tsunami, grey wave, going off the demographic cliff

Finite resources | zero sum

INSTEAD USE

People are living longer and mostly healthier lives
Birth rates are declining

Let's use our ingenuity | re-envision what's possible | create new policies and programs to address a changing world
WHAT'S NEXT?

Who are your audiences?
What are your platforms?
Where and how can you change the stories you tell?
WE'RE HERE TO HELP!

- bit.ly/EndAgeismTogether
- info@changingthenarrativeco.org
- changingthenarrativeco.org/
- @encore_janine
- ChangeNarrativeUS
- changing-the-narrative-co