Welcome! The program will start promptly at 10:30 a.m.

While you’re waiting, chat in your name and two words that describe how the general public thinks about aging in the U.S.
Welcome and Introduction of Presenter
Rachel Ohlhausen
Jewish Family Services
Age Positive 2020 Planning Committee Member

Reframing Aging During COVID-19
Janine Vanderburg
Director, Changing the Narrative in Colorado

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REFRAMING AGING DURING COVID-19

next 50 INITIATIVE

ROSE COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

CO

CHANGING THE NARRATIVE
Ending Ageism. Together.
LET'S HEAR FROM YOU

What roles do you play?

What platforms do you have to communicate with?
PURPOSE AND AGENDA

1. Why reframe aging, why now and why you?
2. What is framing and why do it?
3. What to AVOID
4. What to ADVANCE
5. Ideas to ACTION
WHY REFRAME AGING, WHY NOW AND WHY YOU?
WHAT IS AGEISM?

- Prejudice
- Stereotyping
- Discrimination
IS AGEISM REALLY A THING?

- 82%
  Experienced one of more forms of ageism in day-to-day lives [UMich, 2020]

- 2/3
  Experienced or witnessed age discrimination in workplace [AARP, 2019]

- 56%
  Of those entering 50s employment pushed out or laid off [Urban Institute, 2018]
WHY NOW?
COVID-19 HAS EXPOSED AGEISM AROUND THE WORLD

- Not taken seriously: “Old person's disease”
- #Hashtag horrors
- Older people should sacrifice for economy
- PPE prioritization
- Critical care standards moving older people back to triage line
- Policy decisions that increase social isolation
WHY YOU?

- Money
  - $63 billion annual health care costs
  - $850 billion cost to U.S. economy

- Outcomes

- Demographics
WE ARE THE LEADERS WE'VE BEEN WAITING FOR
NEGATIVE OUTCOMES RELATED TO AGEISM

- Decreased financial security
- Loss of job = loss of health insurance
- Decreased physical and mental health
- Memory
- Shortened life span
AGEISM AMPLIFIES SYSTEMIC HEALTH INEQUITIES

Double click to zoom into the map. Hover over a county for details.
DEMOGRAPHICS: THE WORLD IS CHANGING
WHAT IS FRAMING AND WHY DO WE DO IT?
MANY VOICES, ONE CHOIR
WHAT IS FRAMING?

A set of choices about how information is presented

• What to emphasize
• What to leave unsaid
• How to explain it
• Cue a specific response
EXAMPLE OF FRAMING EFFECT

Given the **importance of free speech**, would you favor allowing a hate group to hold a political rally?

- **85% in Favor**

Given the **risk of violence**, would you favor allowing a hate group to hold a political rally?

- **40% in Favor**
In aging, framing had these results:

- Changed **attitudes**
- Increased **policy support**
- Decreased **implicit bias**

12,185 sample size
AAA: A FORMULA FOR THINKING ABOUT FRAMING AGING RIGHT NOW

AVOID
Certain words and messages

ADVANCE
Alternative language
Research-based messages

ACT
YOU decide!
LET'S HEAR FROM YOU

Questions about what you've heard so far?
WHAT DO WE WANT TO AVOID?
HOW THE PUBLIC THINKS ABOUT AGING IN THE US

• Ideal vs. Perceived Real
• Us vs. Them
• Individualism
• Nostalgia and Threat of Modernity
• Solutions: Individual, Education, Fatalism

FrameWorks Institute, 2017
EXAMPLES OF HOW THESE HAVE PLAYED OUT DURING THE PANDEMIC

Ideal vs. Perceived Real
“Weak, vulnerable elderly”

Us vs. Them
Older people vs. the economy

Individualism
People's choices instead of systemic health disparities
LANGUAGE TO MOVE AWAY FROM

- Avoid elderly, senior, senior citizen; use older people or be specific about age levels
- Avoid weak, vulnerable; talk about people with greater risk factors
- Instead of “nursing home residents”; talk about people in congregate living
MESSAGES TO MOVE AWAY FROM

- Avoid pitting one group against another; talk about our need for interconnectedness

- Avoid sacrifice messages; talk about our common goals

- Avoid crisis messages without explanation; ALWAYS EXPLAIN how a problem works, and talk about specific solutions.
EXAMPLE 1.

- AVOID
  These Crisis Standards of Care are ageist and will move older people and people of color to the back of triage lines.

- ADVANCE
  The current CSC have a scoring index that assigns higher scores as you get older, and also scores for co-morbidities more frequently found among people of color. By removing that scoring index and using systems like other states have adopted, we can treat everyone more fairly as they seek emergency care.
EXAMPLE 2.

- **AVOID**
  With social distancing in place, vulnerable seniors without technology are lonely and isolated.

- **ADVANCE**
  In our community, we care about opportunity for everyone. Right now, because of digital divides, some people are having a harder time than others accessing health care, online services and K-12 education. We can close the digital divide with solutions like PCs for People.
WHAT DO WE WANT TO ADVANCE?
TELLING A DIFFERENT STORY
ALWAYS EXPLAIN

- How the problem works and why it exists
  Systemic, not individual

- What actions and solutions can do
A SOCIAL ISSUE NARRATIVE

Increases understanding, shifts opinions, generates support for solutions

1. Values
   Why does this matter?

2. Metaphors, explanations, examples
   How does this work?
   If it doesn't work, why not?

3. Solutions
   What can we do?
   Concrete, Causal, Collective, Credible, Conceivable
TWO SOCIAL ISSUE NARRATIVES SHIFT PUBLIC OPINION AND HELP THE PUBLIC BETTER UNDERSTAND THE FULL PICTURE.

1. Embracing the Dynamic: Older adults have value; the aging of America is an opportunity.

2. Confronting Injustice: Ageism is unjust
TALKING ABOUT AGEISM: THE CONFRONTING INJUSTICE NARRATIVE
Step 1. Lead with **justice**.

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.
CONFRONTING INJUSTICE: EXPLANATION

Step 2. Explain ageism and its effects.

- Ageism is prejudice, stereotypes and discrimination based on age.
- When directed at older people, it often involves assumptions that older people are less competent, capable, attractive.
- Ageism has tremendously negative impacts on older people, affecting every aspect of our lives as we age, and also has negative effects on community and society.
- Use WORKPLACE DISCRIMINATION as an example.

If You’re Over 50, Chances Are the Decision to Leave a Job Won’t be Yours
Step 3. Explain 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.”

To address ageism in the workplace head on, we can:

— Eliminate graduation dates from applications
— Train managers on implicit bias
— Establish better rules and systems for hiring
— Educate companies on the business case for hiring older workers
— Strengthen age discrimination laws.

To address ageism head on, we can:
— Train those working in health on implicit bias and ageism
— Include older people in clinical trials
— Expose students to older adults during their professional training
— Include older adults in health equity discussions
— Eliminate age and co-morbidities as scoring criteria for triage decisions
TALKING ABOUT INCREASED LONGEVITY AND DEMOGRAPHIC CHANGE:
EMBRACING THE DYNAMIC
Step 1. Lead with *ingenuity*

Americans are problem-solvers. When we see an opportunity, we figure out how to seize it. When we see that something isn’t working, we rethink our approach.

Replacing outdated practices with new, smarter ways of doing things is the key to our nation’s ingenuity.
EXAMPLE OF LEADING WITH THE VALUE OF **INGENUITY**

“Let's use our *ingenuity* to re-imagine how our communities can use the talents of older adults to help us address the pandemic.”
Step 2. Use the metaphor of building momentum

Getting older is a dynamic process that involves constant and continuous change. As we age, we gather momentum through the build-up of experiences and insights. This momentum can add power and force to moving our communities forward—and so, as a society, we should do all we can to support it and make the most of it.
“As we grow older, we've built up a network of connections, and an understanding of how to make things come together. Councilwoman Ortega used her experience and connections to form the Colorado Sewing Coalition, simultaneously creating jobs and masks.”
EMBRACING THE DYNAMIC NARRATIVE: SOLUTION

Step 3. Offer a concrete solution, e.g. intergenerational, reciprocal mentoring
IDEAS TO ACTION:

What struck you? What is an idea that you can apply?
How might you change your language/the way you think, talk or act about aging and older people?
What questions do you have?
RESOURCES AND TOOLS

- http://changingthenarrativeco.org/

- Resources we'll send you:
  A pdf of this presentation
  Reframing Aging Checklist
  Quick Start guides to Reframing Aging and Reframing COVID-19
  Additional slides

- Join the movement!
REACH OUT

@ janine@encoreroadmap.com
🌐 changingthenarrativeco.org
🌐 @ChangeNarrativeCO
Thank you for attending!

Look for an email with a link to a participant evaluation immediately following this session.

Tweet about this event at #AgePositiveKC