

# ReFraming Aging: Changing Misconceptions about Aging

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**Point32Health**

AgeSpan  
Choices for Life's Journey

# Facilitator Disclosure

- Trained as a facilitator by Reframing Aging Initiative
- Work independently, project overseen by Point 32 Health
- Not an employee of the FrameWorks Institute or the National Center to Reframe Aging

**Point32Health**

AgeSpan  
Choices for Life's Journey

## Have you ever?

- Said “you look good for your age”
- Lied about your age
- Thought “I’m too old for that”

**We all have bias; it shows up in many ways.**



# Reframing Aging

A Social Change Endeavor  
designed to improve the  
public's understanding of aging

 @ReframingAging

*Original research conducted by the  
FrameWorks Institute and sponsored by the  
Leaders of Aging Organizations*



# Objectives

- Let's define ageism
- What the public thinks about aging
- Ageism in Healthcare and Policy
- Why reframing matters
- What reframing looks like
- Telling a new story about aging
- Questions/discussion



# Ageism is...

- Prejudice, discrimination and stereotypes towards others or ourselves based on age.
- Considered less serious than other forms of discrimination, something we will all experience.
- Starting to get DEI attention



# Types of Ageism

## **Institutional ageism:**

embedded into laws, rules, policies, social norms



## **Interpersonal ageism:**

occurs between individuals

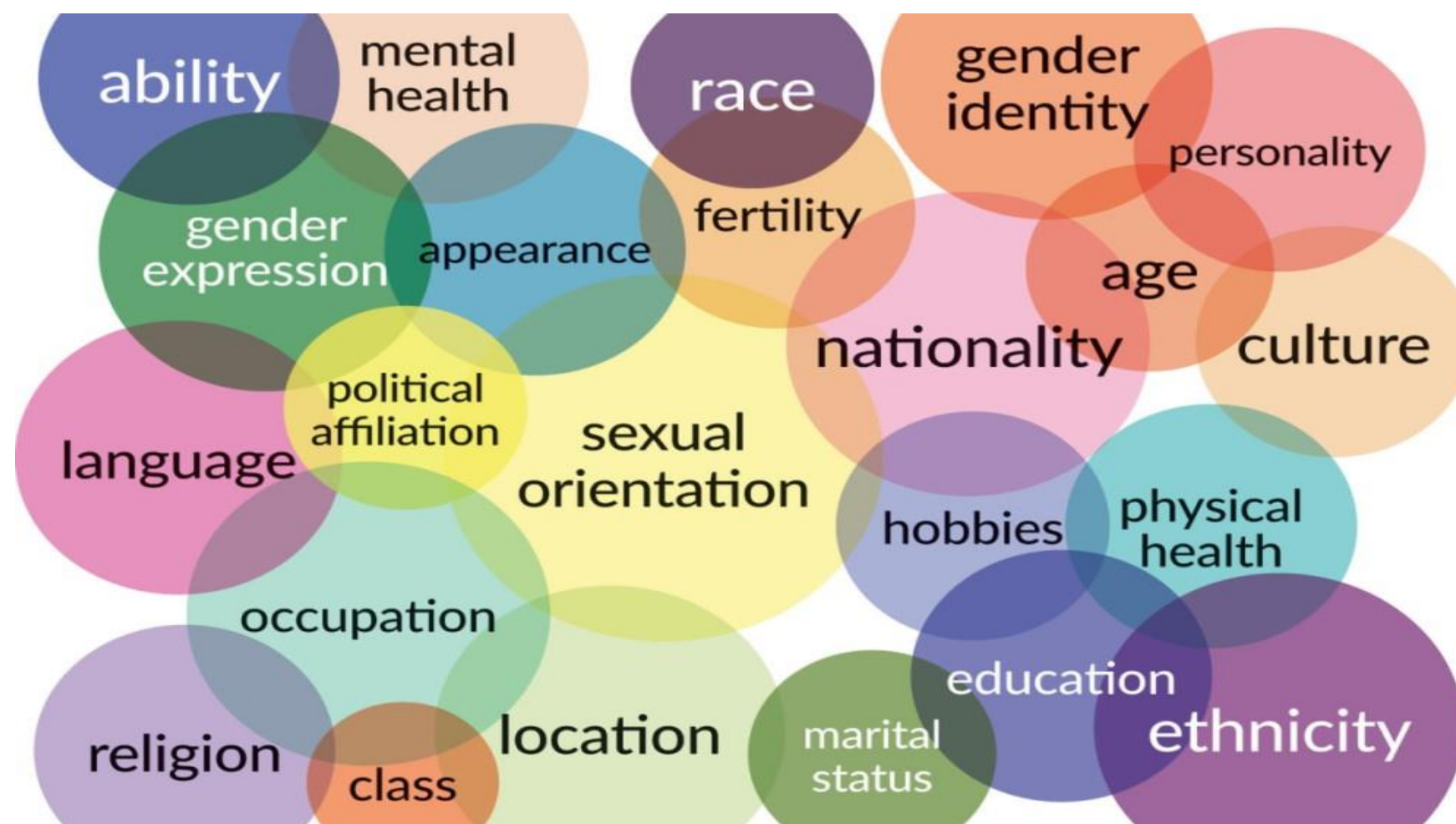


## **Self-directed ageism:**

self imposed ageism



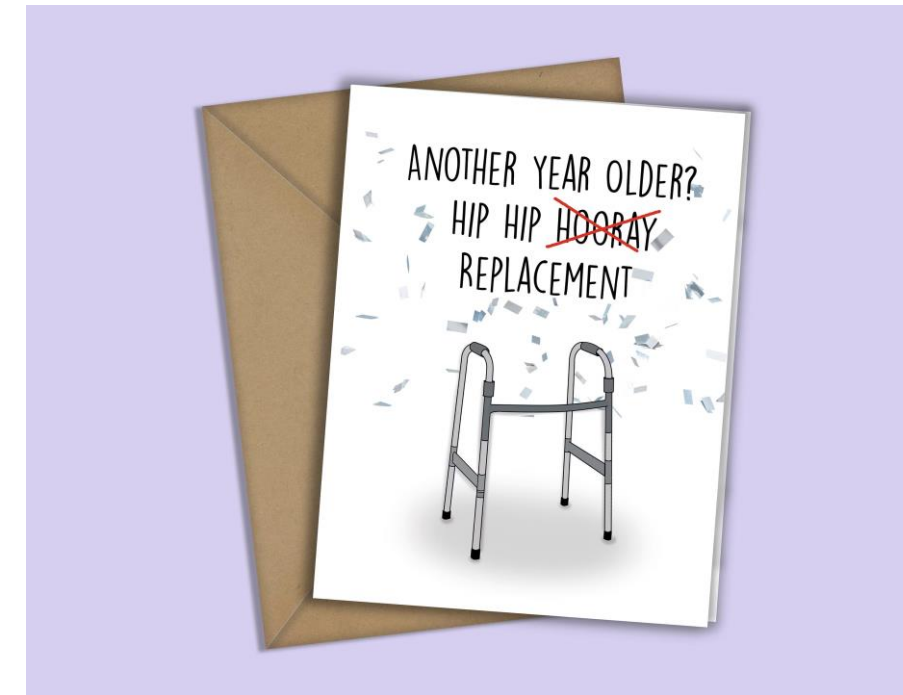
# Intersectionality





# Stereotypes and ageism

- Jokes about getting old
- Everything is falling apart
- Forgetful, senile
- Birthday cards
- Over the hill
- Normalized messaging



# Stereotypes and ageism

## Elder speak

- Cutie
- Sweetie
- Hunny
- Young man/young lady

The aging field can be ageist!



# Stereotypes and ageism

## Beauty industry

- You look good for your age
- Anti-aging messages “battle”
- Youth obsessed
- Wrinkles/gray hair=bad
- View aging as binary



# Stereotypes and ageism

## 100<sup>th</sup> day of school

- What is supposed to be fun is demeaning and damaging
- Plenty of older adults and centenarians dance, volunteer, paint etc.
- Ageist thoughts start in childhood



# Aging is individual

*“The longer we live the more different from one another we become” Ashton Applewhite*



Pandemic didn't make ageism worse- it exposed it!

- Public discourse during COVID-19 devalued older adults
- Ageism thrived during the pandemic
- “Old person’s disease”
- Social isolation and loneliness



- WHO found 1 in 2 people in the world is prejudice towards older adults
- According to WHO children as young as 4 internalize the negative stereotypes our culture has towards aging.
- 65% of older adults report commonly experiencing ageism



# Ageism in Healthcare

1 in every 7 dollars spent in healthcare, roughly equates to \$63 billion dollars per year, can be attributed to ageism

- How we think about aging affects how we heal
- Ageism leads to worse mental, physical, and cognitive health
- Decreases our lives by 7.5 years
- Medical training lacks geriatric training
- Over and under treat
- Patient may not seek treatment, blame it on "age"



# Ageism and Policy

- Policy makers not thinking of older adults
- Zero sum thinking- if we give money to the old, kids get none
- Crisis messaging around older adults
- During covid politicians suggested older adults burdensome, less valuable

# Not saying aging is easy...

Aging is a process of change

- Physical health
- Cognitive health
- Losses

Aging is multidimensional

Age does not equal ability

Age brings new opportunities

Positive outlook on aging increases life expectancy

# You Say...They Think

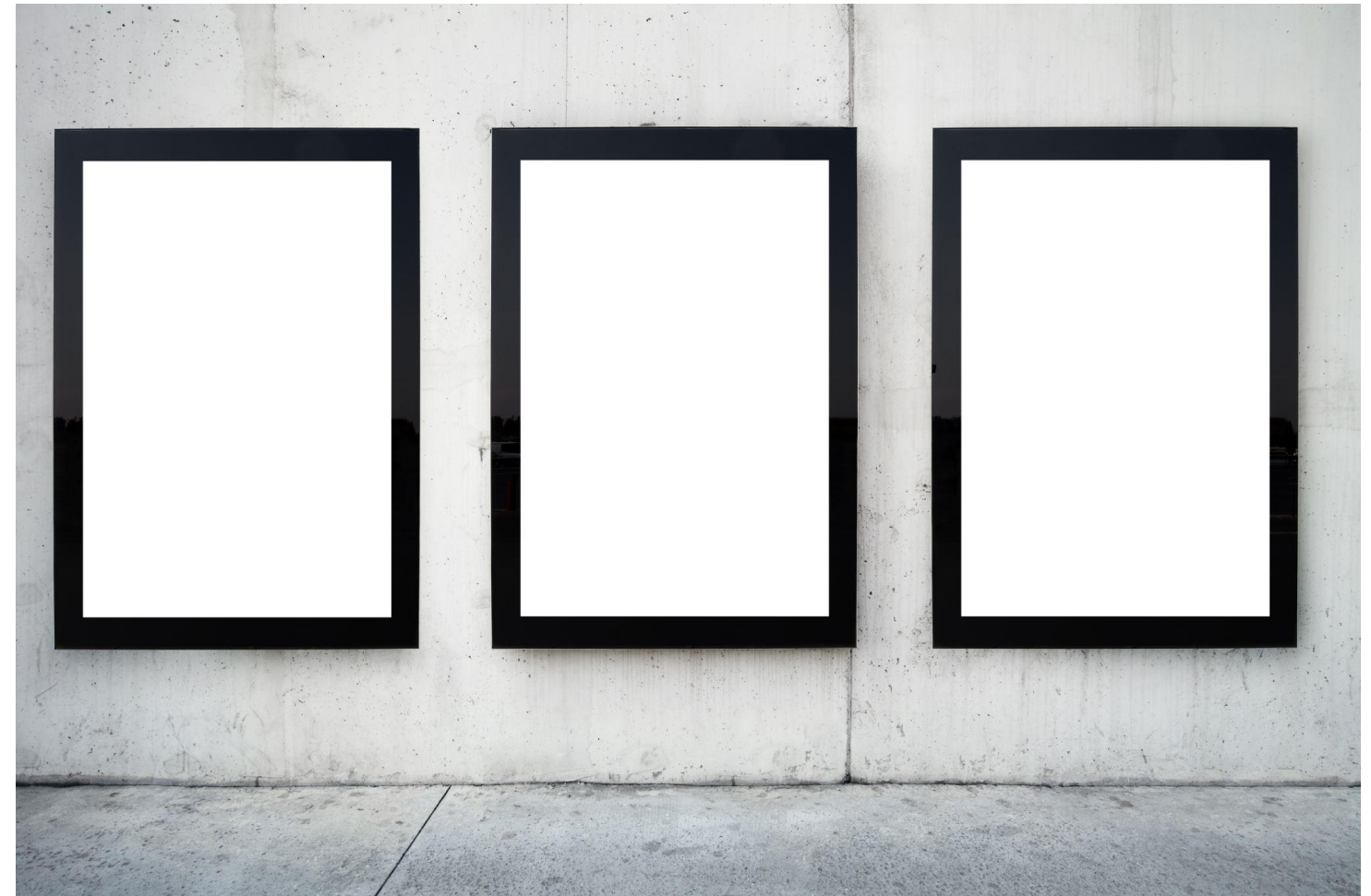
# Pop

# What is framing?

How we present  
information



Affects attitudes,  
understandings, actions



# Why we need to ReFrame Aging

Aging Field		Public
Embrace	How should we approach aging?	Battle
Environments	What determines outcomes and who is responsible?	Individuals
Important concern	How big of a concern is ageism?	Absent from thinking
Plenty	What can be done to ensure well-being in older age?	Nothing much
Central	What is the role of public policy?	Limited role

# What can we do?

## Avoid

- **They/them pronouns and older people as “other”**
- **Crisis talk “silver tsunami” for growing number of older adults**
- **Elderly, senior citizens**
- **Only focusing on negative**
- **Just another “ism”**

## Advance

- **Use “as we age”, We are all better off by being inclusive (think Age Friendly MA!)**
- **Aging is living, as we live longer, healthier lives**
- **Older people, older adult, neutral terms**
- **Positive story of aging, shared knowledge and lived experience,**
- **How ageism works, define it**

# Spark more accurate and complete conversations on aging



# What's next?

- Shift thinking to aging as an opportunity
- Education- integrate conversations about ageism and aging
- Personal Reflection on your aging
- Policies that support well-being as we age
- Contexts and environments matter
- Research
- Ageism is a problem to solve





# Reflection

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## Let's Dismantle Ageism!

- Two things I will keep doing
- Two things I will start doing
- Two things I will stop doing

empower aging  
active limitless  
change thinking  
advocate  
learning acceptance  
living stories  
celebrate  
wisdom knowledge

**Check out [www.reframingaging.org](http://www.reframingaging.org)**



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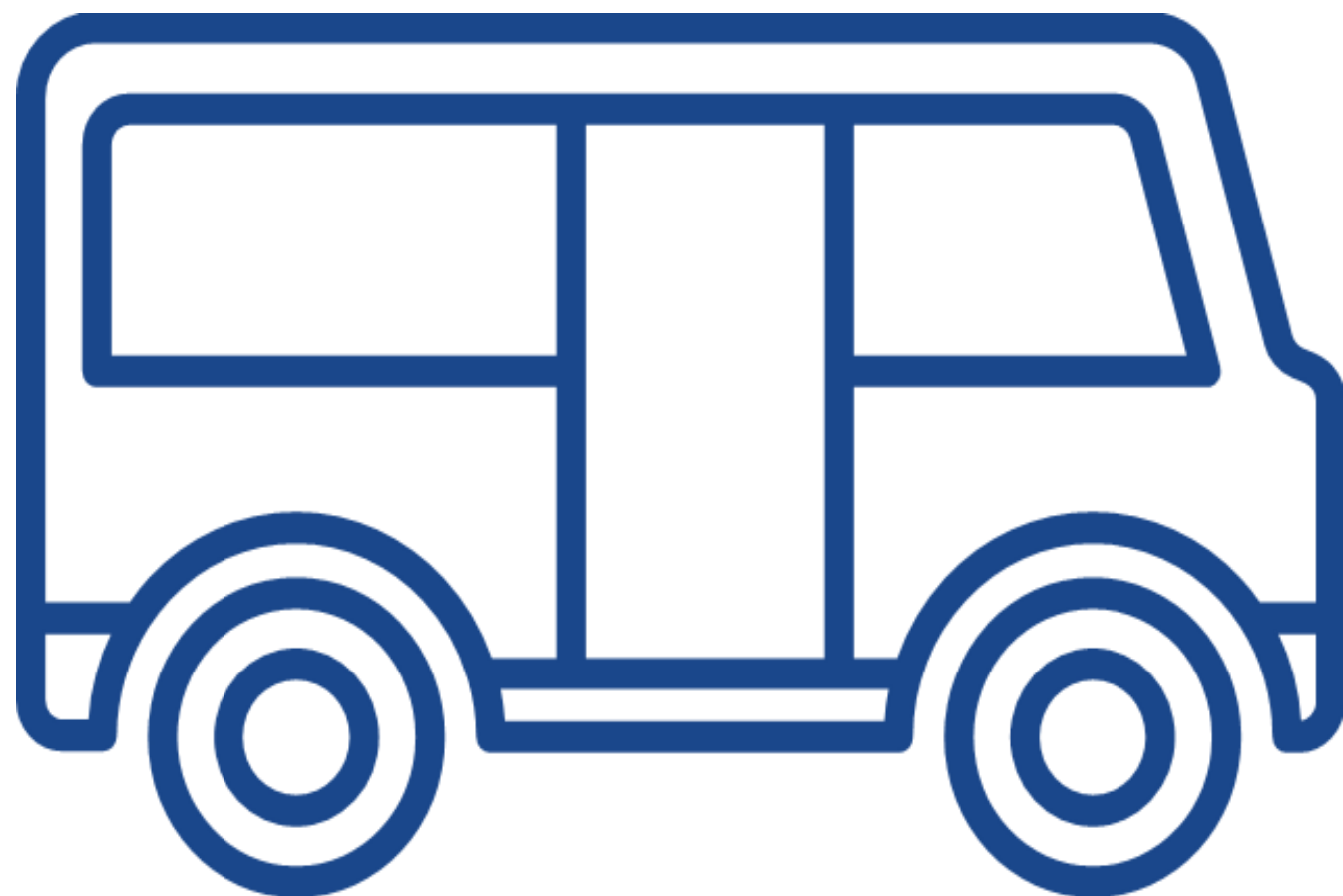
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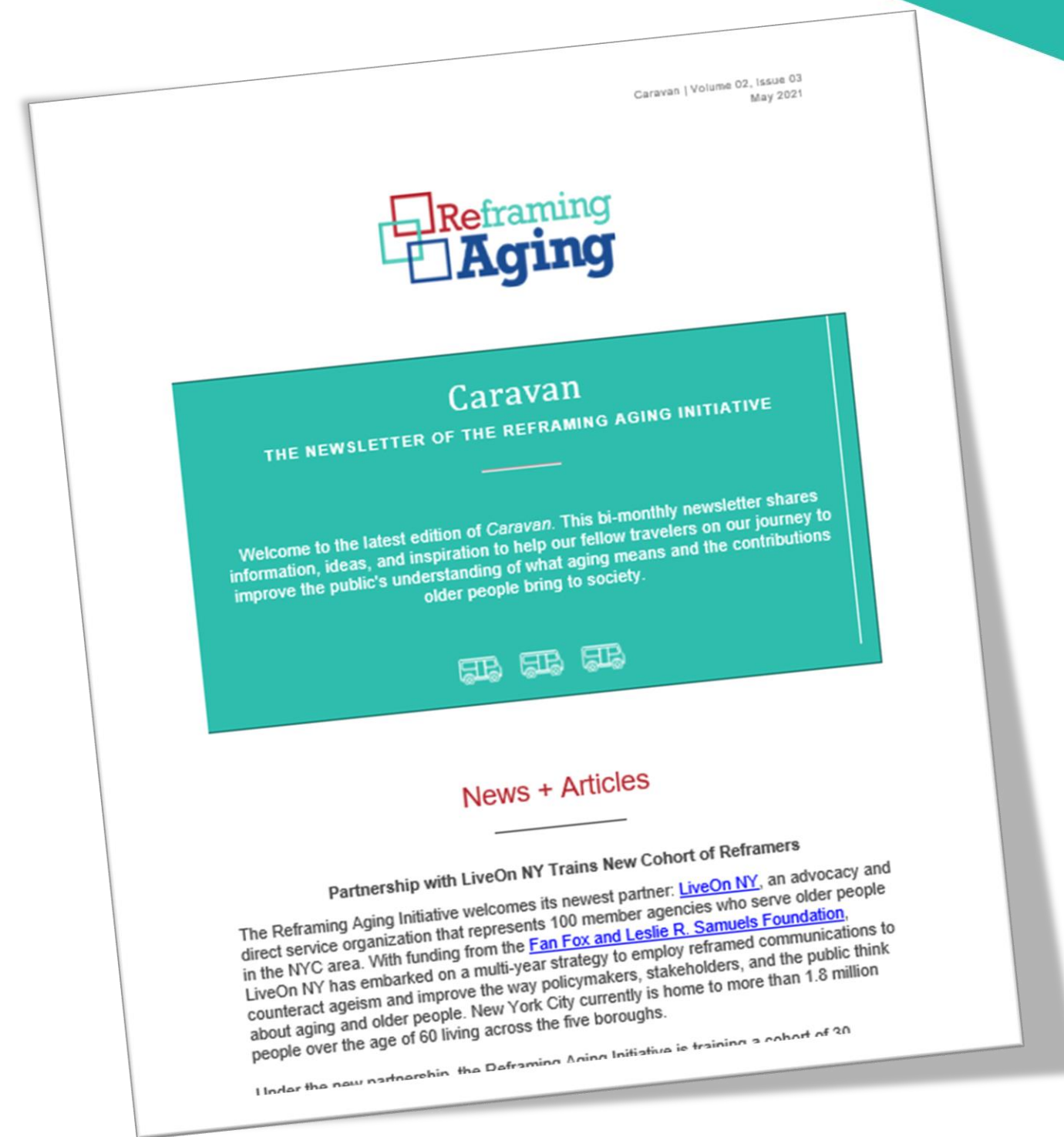
**REFRAMING AGING INITIATIVE**  
COUNTERING AGEISM BY CHANGING  
HOW WE TALK ABOUT AGING



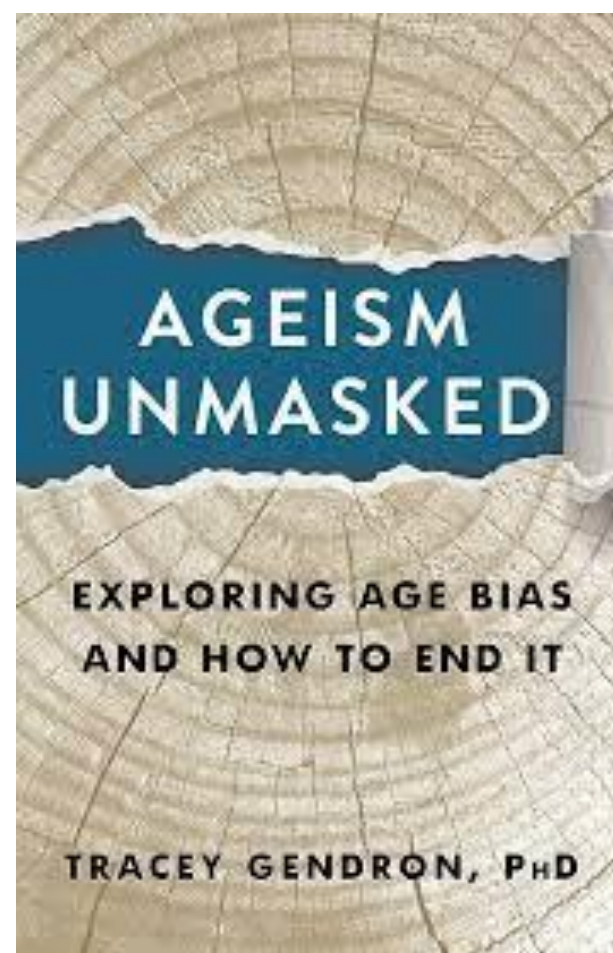
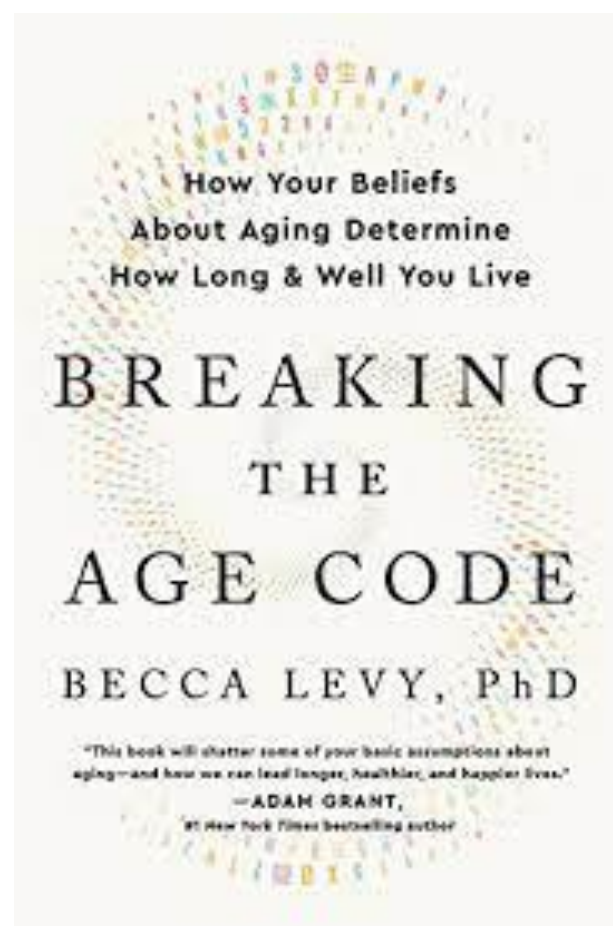
# Caravan newsletter



<https://www.reframingaging.org/Join-Us>



## Book Recommendations-





Do the best you can until you know  
better. Then when you know better,  
do better.

— *Maya Angelou* —

**Thank you!**  
**Questions/Discussion**



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