



Rethinking Aging & Ageism

AgeSpan and its Healthy Aging Center of Excellence want to change the way we talk about and view aging no matter people’s ability. Thanks to the Point32 Health Foundation, we are part of the ReFraming Aging Initiative and Massachusetts’ Age-Friendly network. Our mission is to ensure everyone’s choice to lead fulfilling lives as they age, and our vision is a future where everyone can choose to live and age well, in communities that support them.

WHAT IS AGEISM?

Ageism is stereotypes (how we think), discrimination (how we act), and prejudice (how we feel) towards others or ourselves based on age.

WHY IS AGEISM HARMFUL?

Ageism has a detrimental impact on all aspects of our health and quality of life. Ageism is embedded into our systems and policies and takes an economic toll on individuals and society. Ageism has been normalized in our society; from a young age we form negative thoughts associated with aging.

WHAT DOES AGEISM SOUND LIKE?

- I’m having a senior moment
- I’m too old to try that
- Young man, you look so good for your age
- Those aches and pains are because of your age
- With those wrinkles and gray hair, you’ll never get that job

AGING IS CHANGING

Americans are living longer, working, and

volunteering later in life, and we need to stop limiting the opportunities for older adults in our communities.

WHAT CAN I DO?

The National Center to ReFrame Aging created an initiative to combat ageism by changing the way we talk about aging, our words matter. Here are some suggestions:

- Explain what ageism is and how it works
- Use inclusive language such as older adults and avoid terms that stoke stereotypes such as “seniors” and “the elderly.”
- Avoid focusing on the negatives of the aging experience (silver tsunami, anti-aging) and focus on the full experience of living

HOW WE CAN HELP

To learn about ageism, get resources, or schedule a training, contact Melissa Donegan, LSW, Director of the Healthy Aging Center of Excellence and ReFraming Aging Facilitator.

Phone: 978-946-1338

Email: MDonegan@agespan.org

