

Let's Talk About Aging in Vermont

What's the problem? Aging is not the problem, but the way we talk about aging is. Most people, without even thinking of it, use language that describes aging as a negative experience. Unfortunately, this language contributes to "Ageism" in our culture, which is a stereotyping or discrimination of a person or group of people because of their age. This is a serious challenge in our culture and communities, manifesting in the unconscious thoughts we have, the actions we take, and the social policies, institutions and systems we create.

Reframing Aging in Vermont ~

As Vermonters live longer, healthier lives, we are building momentum towards strong and vibrant communities by contributing time, talents and accumulated wisdom in so many ways - through work, artistic creation, civic engagement, and volunteering to name a few. Older Vermonters are our small business owners and workers, citizen legislators, Meals on Wheels drivers, educators and mentors, and so much more. Our state is enriched by the incredible value older people bring to every community. There is much to consider as we envision a Vermont that embraces aging at a systems level, and with growing demand for services and supports amid limited resources, the challenges are very real. But Vermonters are not daunted by challenge. We are a community of problem-solvers. Young and old, we will roll up our sleeves, tackling any challenges our changing demographics may bring with enthusiasm, skill and collaborative spirit. Let's work together to create the kind of Vermont where we all, regardless of age, feel welcomed, valued, supported, and able to thrive. Let's start right now.

Learn more about what you can do to change the conversation on aging ~

<https://www.frameworksinstitute.org/reframing-aging/> /
<https://www.aarp.org/disrupt-aging/> /
<https://www.thischairrocks.com> Follow the reframing work in Vermont at <https://www.asd.vermont.gov>.

What's the solution? To change the way our society thinks and acts about aging, we must begin to change the way we talk. Reframing aging using common language that celebrates our collective experience as we all age helps contribute to solutions. The language we use truly matters.

Encourage These Words / Phrases	Avoid These Words / Phrases
Older Vermonter / older person or people	Elderly / Senior / Senior citizen
We / all of us (inclusive)	They / them (othering)
Accumulation of wisdom / knowledge / experience	Decline / deterioration / loss
Problem solving (sense of ingenuity)	Nothing can be done (sense of fatalism)
Changing demographics	Silver tsunami
Building momentum	Getting old / battling aging

