



# FACILITATOR TOOLKIT

---

Developed by Janine Vanderburg for *Changing the Narrative in Colorado*, a partnership of NextFifty Initiative and Rose Community Foundation.  
<https://changingthenarrativeco.org/>

## Welcome

---

Dear host,

Thank you so much for agreeing to host and facilitate a virtual conversation about ageism.

**Any movement requires everyday people to become involved.** Your agreement to host a conversation and to invite friends and colleagues helps to build the movement to end ageism!

### Why are we doing this?

Ageism—the stereotyping, prejudice, and discrimination against people on the basis of their age—is pervasive! It can be directed at younger people or older people. Either way, it reduces opportunities and diminishes us all.

### **The great news is that recent research shows that education and intergenerational connection are effective in reducing ageism.**

When we come together to share our perspectives, our attitudes about age and people of a different age shift. We can discover what we have in common. And we can all participate in changing our biases and taking concrete steps in our lives to reduce ageism.

Our goals with the **on the same pAGE** campaign are to:

- Increase understanding of ageism and its adverse effects
- Have us think about why ageism exists and what we can collectively do to address it
- Motivate people to continue to talk about it, and more importantly, to identify actions that we can take to address it

This toolkit provides you with some activities and guidelines for facilitating the conversations. Feel free to tailor to make them your own, and to reach out with any questions.

Thanks in advance for what you're doing to address ageism,

Janine, Kris and Carmen

## Table of Contents

---

FACILITATOR TOOLKIT .....	1
Welcome.....	2
Table of Contents .....	3
Virtual Facilitation Tips.....	4
Setting expectations and “priming” the conversation.....	4
Checking in with yourself.....	4
Schedule your virtual session .....	4
Welcome to the session.....	5
Start on time .....	5
The opening .....	5
The conversation: Facilitator role .....	5
The closing.....	7
Sharing on social media.....	7
Videos .....	8
Sample Agenda.....	9
Opening Activity.....	10
Introductions: If you knew you were going to live to be 100... ..	10
Questions .....	10
COVID-19 and Isolation.....	10
Stereotyping.....	11
Language .....	11
Intergenerational relationships .....	12
Other Resources .....	12
Appendix A: Sample Emails.....	13
1. Invitation to event .....	13
Virtual Hosting.....	13

Organization email template for inviting constituents to your online OTSP session.....	14
2. Confirmation email ahead of event: .....	15
Appendix B: Other Tools Available on the Action Network Platform .....	16

## Virtual Facilitation Tips

---

### Setting expectations and “priming” the conversation

In this Toolkit, you have two email templates to send to guests: One is an invitation; the other is a confirmation to send a week before your session, letting them know you’re excited to host, and asking them to watch a video or to think about a question prior to the session. This will prime them for the conversation. See samples in Appendix A—feel free to make your own and put in your own voice.

### Checking in with yourself

As the facilitator, your role is to support and guide the conversation. Before leading a conversation, it can be helpful to consider your own identities, beliefs and biases around the topic. Checking in with yourself in this way can help you prepare yourself to facilitate, anticipate your own and your participants’ possible triggers, and center yourself around the intent of the workshop. Some questions to consider:

- How might my own experiences of ageism influence how I facilitate this conversation?
- What are my own thoughts and feelings about ageism – on the entire age spectrum?
- How could my identities (age, gender, race, class, etc.) influence the dynamics in the conversation?

### Schedule your virtual session

Use whichever online platform you’re most comfortable with. If you don’t have an online meeting account, here are some options you can look into:

Zoom: <https://zoom.us/>

Skype: <https://www.skype.com/en/>

Google Hangouts : <https://hangouts.google.com/>

Schedule your session and include the link in your invitation.

## Welcome to the session

Introduce yourself and briefly explain the goals of the session. We DO want people to introduce themselves, and where appropriate, name the organization they are affiliated with. We DON'T want participants to spend time making pitches about their organizations—mostly because it will limit the time available for the main conversation (no pitches or elevator speeches).

## Start on time

A key element of a successful discussion is being respectful to the people who are there and ready to get started. So, at the start time, do go ahead and get started. (In the confirmation email, we note that the event will start promptly on time).

## The opening

Really important: NEVER start with logistics—you can always cover that later. We want to draw people into the topic right away.

## The conversation: Facilitator role

Keep in mind this definition of a facilitator:

*“Facilitate: to make easier, aid, assist, smooth the progress of, to make possible, create, compose.”*

*The word ‘facilitate’ is used in a variety of fields to describe the process of guiding, helping, assisting, and creating. Experiential facilitation is an intentional approach to facilitation based on the idea that people learn and change more from the process of working through problems and finding solutions than from being given answers and solutions by a teacher/counselor/leader.”<sup>1</sup>*

**Your role** is to facilitate the conversation, ask questions, draw people out and ask people to summarize conclusions, using the facilitator agendas and questions that we’ve provided.

---

<sup>1</sup> Stanchfield (2007). Tips & Tools: The art of experiential group facilitation. Oklahoma City: Wood ‘N’ Barnes, p.1

Even though we know many of you are passionate about the topic (that's why you volunteered to host)—it's best for facilitators to avoid dominating the conversation, or even interjecting much. The more space the facilitator takes up in a conversation, the less space there is for all participants to explore and engage with the topic at hand. So please, let your guests be the stars of the show.

Set the tone at the outset, letting guests know that we want to hear from everyone, and that you'll be moderating the conversation to make sure that everyone's voices are heard.

Then, it is up to you as a facilitator to make sure that happens. Don't be afraid to cut people off if they are on a 5-minute monologue or to call on people who have not spoken at all. Some helpful phrases to do this are:

- **Cutting People Off:** "(NAME), I'm sorry to cut you off, but for the sake of time, I'm going to ask that we now hear from someone else..."
- **Getting People to Share:** "(NAME) I've noticed that you haven't said much yet, is there something you would like to share." OR "(NAME), I notice that you nodded at what (so & so) said, would you like to add something?"

You can also set the stage for a safe environment and conversation by **setting out group agreements like these:**

- Listen
- Engage
- Share your experiences
- No personal attacks

### ***What to do if:***

#### **Someone is trying to dominate the conversation**

- Interject to cut off the person if necessary, as mentioned above
- Let the person have their "say," but limit time and/or take back to group
- After the person is done speaking, let the group know that you would love to hear from people who haven't shared as much so everyone can hear multiple perspectives

### **Someone is getting off track, starts taking the group in an off-track direction**

- Make a statement that summarizes their thoughts or reflect their thoughts back to them, and maybe jot them down
- Follow this with a restatement of the intended topic or question. Simply state, "It seems like we have gotten a little off topic from our original topic, can we go back to the previous question stated (repeat question if necessary).

In both cases, remind participants gently of the bigger picture of what we are trying to accomplish, and the time limits.

**Be prepared.** Review the activities and questions you've selected, so that you're comfortable with them. Set time limits. Share with participants what to expect from the agenda and timeline. Ask us if you have questions about any of them.

Finally, be yourself.

### **The closing**

Research shows that people remember most the beginning and ending of an event. So, to make your discussion memorable, use the suggested closing in the sample agendas.

### **Sharing on social media**

If you upload photos to social media, use the following hashtags:

#OnTheSamePage

#EndingAgeismTogether

You can also tag Changing the Narrative on Facebook: @ChangeNarrativeCO

Or on LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/company/changing-the-narrative-in-colorado/>

## Videos

---

Here is a sampling of videos to prime event participants for a conversation about ageism. Each addresses ageism in some way.

Pick your favorite and include a link to it in your email to participants, asking them to watch it before the session.

The important thing is that everyone attending has watched the same video, so that it forms the basis for your conversation.

### **Ashton Applewhite TED Talk: Let's end ageism**

[https://www.ted.com/talks/ashton\\_applewhite\\_let\\_s\\_end\\_ageism](https://www.ted.com/talks/ashton_applewhite_let_s_end_ageism)

### **Soul Pancake: Why you should stop giving this compliment**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bQwJNYYIkQA>

### **The Beignet Truck**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UYCxAlqjyCA>



## Sample Agenda

---

Below, you'll find a sample—feel free to customize to make your own. Reach out if you would like help talking through. The agenda has pre-session things to pay attention to, an opening, a series of questions, and a conclusion/call to action.

Time allocated	Activity	Notes
3-10 minutes	<b>Opening Activity</b>	See description in Opening Activities below
2 minutes	<b>Logistics and Instructions</b>	Explain how the conversation will work, i.e., we will discuss these questions (share questions that will be discussed). Explain ground rules or agreements if desired (more important typically in larger groups)
40 minutes	<b>Conversation</b>	Select no more than 3-4 questions to discuss from list of questions below. For each, ask the question, pause, and ask people to start sharing thoughts.
5 minutes	<b>Closing and call to action</b>	Ask everyone to write down one thing that they will commit to doing in the next month to address ageism. Take a screen shot of the group holding up their statements. Ending Ageism form is in Appendix B.
3 minutes	<b>Thank you and next steps</b>	Thank everyone for participating. Let them know there are resources on Changing the Narrative's website if they're interested in becoming more involved with ending ageism. Evaluation link can be sent to guests and each month we'll draw names from completed evaluations for free gift cards.

## Opening Activity

---

Depending on how many guests you have, you don't want to spend more than 10 minutes on your opening. The goals are to:

- Have everyone introduce themselves
- Build a sense of connection among each other and to the topic of ageism

### **Introductions: If you knew you were going to live to be 100...**

*GIVE THE INSTRUCTION:* Please share your name and answer this question: If you knew you were going to live to be 100, what would you start learning or doing now?

After everyone has shared, state: "Demographers predict that someone born today has a 50-50 chance of living to be 100 years old. But persistent ageism and the idea that people have an "expiration date" can stop us from learning or doing new things." Thank you for joining us for this conversation on ageism, so that we can discuss how to change ageist stereotypes and allow all of us to build on our strengths throughout our lifespan.

## Questions

---

*Note: We've grouped some of these questions together, but feel free to mix and match, and to encourage people as they are responding to questions to share their experiences and stories.*

*After each question, summarize key themes back to the group.*

### **COVID-19 and Isolation**

*Lead with: Physical distancing mandates have impacted all of us in nearly every aspect of our daily lives. What are some of the ways COVID-19 has impacted your life or the lives of people you know?*

1. What messaging have you seen in the media about age groups and COVID-19?
2. How has social or physical distancing impacted your life?
3. Share some strategies you have used to combat isolation.
4. Describe ways we can all be more supportive of one another – across all generations.

*CONCLUSION: Have people brainstorm a list of responses to question 4. After they do, go to the closing activity and ask people to make a commitment to do one thing in the next 30 days.*

## Stereotyping

*Lead with: Ageism is prejudice, stereotyping and discrimination based on age. Stereotyping occurs when, instead of looking at a person as an individual, we assume that they have—or don't have—characteristics based on our assumptions about people in the group they belong to.*

1. What stereotypes do you think that people have about people your age? How might, or have, they affected you?
  
2. Research shows that experiencing stereotypes often affects us negatively. We internalize ageism, and may stop ourselves from doing something we are capable of doing, or from trying something new. Can you share stories of where that might have happened to you, a friend or family member?
  
3. Often stereotypes about age involve whether we yet know enough (usually directed at younger people) or, whether we are still willing to learn (usually directed at older people). Can you each share an example of something that you've learned in the last year?
  
4. What are things that we might do to address ageist stereotypes in ourselves, our workplace or community?

*CONCLUSION: Have people brainstorm a list of responses to question 4. After they do, go to the closing activity and ask people to make a commitment to do one thing in the next 30 days.*

## Language

1. How do you feel when someone says: "You look great for your age"? How did the video you watched before this conversation affect your thinking?
  
2. What do you think of the term "ageless"? How about "anti-aging"?
  
3. What ageist phrases and terms have you heard that you would like people to stop using? Are there any that you use about yourself?

LAST: How might you respond to a person using a term you find offensive? That is generally offensive to older people? How might you encourage others to respond?

*CONCLUSION: Have people brainstorm a list of responses to the last question. After they do, go to the closing activity and ask people to make a commitment to do one thing in the next 30 days.*

## **Intergenerational relationships**

1. What is something you've learned from someone of another generation? What is something that someone from another generation has learned from you?

2. Tell us about a friendship or other type of relationship you have with someone of another generation. How did you discover what you had in common?

3. There is a lot of "Millennial vs. Boomer" narrative out there. Who do you think benefits by pitting generations against each other?

LAST: What are things that we can do to counter generational warfare themes when we see them?

*CONCLUSION: Have people brainstorm a list of responses to the last question. After they do, go to the closing activity and ask people to make a commitment to do one thing in the next 30 days.*

## **Other Resources**

Ashton Applewhite has an excellent "consciousness-raising" toolkit on her website, with lots of questions to spur discussions about ageism. You might browse through and find some questions that you'll find relevant to the group you're facilitating.

<https://thischairrocks.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/ConsciousnessRaisingBooklet.pdf>

## Appendix A: Sample Emails

---

### 1. Invitation to event

#### Virtual Hosting

*Subject line:* Please join a virtual session on DATE/TIME for a conversation about ageism

*Text*

Dear friends,

As part of Changing the Narrative in Colorado's on the same pAGE campaign, I'm hosting a virtual session about ageism on DATE/ TIME. I'd love you have you attend.

Why am I doing this? Ageism—the stereotyping, prejudice, and discrimination against people on the basis of their age—is pervasive! It can be directed at younger people or older people. Either way, it reduces opportunities and diminishes us all.

HERE, IF YOU LIKE, YOU CAN ADD A SENTENCE ABOUT WHY YOU CARE ABOUT THE ISSUE OF AGEISM.

So, let's connect and talk—about ageism, about how it affects us and our community, and what we can do to end it.

I promise you it will be lively and fun!

Let me know if you can participate by emailing or calling me at XXX.

I hope you can join us!

Name

## **Organization email template for inviting constituents to your online OTSP session**

*Subject line:* You're invited to a conversation about ageism

*Text:* As part of Changing the Narrative in Colorado's on the same pAGE campaign, NAME OF YOUR ORGANIZATION is hosting a virtual session about ageism on DATE/ TIME.

Why are we doing this? Ageism—the stereotyping, prejudice, and discrimination against people on the basis of their age—is pervasive! It can be directed at younger people or older people. Either way, it reduces opportunities and diminishes us all.

The good news: Research shows that education and intergenerational connection are effective in reducing ageism.

When we come together to share our perspectives, people's attitudes about age shift. Collectively, we can all participate in changing our biases and reducing ageism.

IF DESIRED, ADD YOUR OWN SENTENCE ABOUT WHY THIS TOPIC IS IMPORTANT TO YOU/YOUR ORGANIZATION.

Want to participate? It's easy—just register for the online session at the link below.

ADD REGISTRATION LINK.

Thank you so much and we look forward to seeing you on DATE.

Your signature

## **2. Confirmation email ahead of event:**

*Note: You can send this out about 5-7 days before your event*

Dear friends and colleagues,

We are so excited to see you on DATE/TIME to talk about the important topic of ageism and how it affects us all.

To get us ready for the conversation, can I/we ask you to watch the following before the session? It will only take a few minutes of your time, and we'll be discussing the themes that come up.

HERE, PICK ONE OF THE VIDEOS

We will be starting promptly at START TIME.

Thanks so much, and can't wait to see you!

Name

## Appendix B: Other Tools Available on the Action Network Platform

---

- FrameWorks Institute Quick Start Guide
- An Ending Ageism Together card for participants to write their commitments on

You can find each of these at this link:

<https://actionnetwork.org/groups/changing-the-narrative-in-colorado/files/35201>