Towards a New Frame for Healthy Aging

Massachusetts Health Policy Forum
September 27, 2010
1. One Minute on Framing
2. Changing the Frame on Older Adults
3. Towards a Campaign
Framing 101

All communications starts with a frame.

- Frames are “thought organizers.”
- Messages get filed according to previously held mental models, stories or frames.
- Images, language, messengers, context all cue us toward what the communication is about.

- Frames define an issue or problem. They create the lens.
- Frames are stronger than facts.
Changing the Frame

Two popular (and unhelpful) frames for older adults

Â Downward Slider
  o Doddering
  o Batty
  o Dependent

Â Super-Athlete
  o Heroic
  o Unbelievable
Changing the Frame

Creating a Better Frame

What do (real) healthy older adults look like?
Changing the Frame

Creating a Better Frame

What do (real) healthy older adults do?

- Care for one another, for their families
- Work, volunteer, get involved
- Go to church, synagogue or mosque
- Walk, swim, dance
- Eat well (and with others)
- Play (mostly low impact) sports
- Go to the movies or theatre or museum or ball game
- Have fun
Changing the Frame

Creating a Better Frame

- Get real, stay aspirational.
- Pay attention to language.
  - Program that will improve your health
  vs.
  - Program that will help you take control of your health
- Find the right messengers.
- Offer concrete solutions.
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Changing the Frame

Find the Right Messengers

- Professionals
- Friends and family
- Program alumni
- Clinical and other boundary spanners
  - Discharge planners
  - Care transitions coaches
  - Medical home coordinators
  - ADRCs
Offer Concrete Solutions

- Simple, direct ideas and tips (it’s doable)
- Access to resources
- Evidence-based programs
Towards a Campaign

Single Brand, Multiple Platforms

• Overcoming resource constraints beyond advertising
• Connecting to existing campaigns
• Mobilizing all of our networks
Towards a Campaign

It’s not all about health. It’s about life.