

COMMUNICATING ABOUT NURSING HOMES: FAQs

The following are frequently asked questions about the research behind our recommendations for communicating about nursing homes.

1. What was the methodology for the research behind this work?

To explore the public's mindsets about nursing homes in the U.S., researchers at FrameWorks Institute conducted one-on-one cognitive interviews with members of the public. These interviews consisted of open-ended questions designed to elicit participants' deeply held beliefs and patterns of reasoning about nursing homes.

For these interviews, FrameWorks Institute recruited a diverse sample of participants with variation along multiple demographic and ideological dimensions: age, gender, race and ethnicity, educational background, income, employment status, and political views. The interviews were analyzed to identify implicit ways of thinking about nursing homes and a range of related topics relevant to the field, including aging and care work. The descriptions in this training characterize the underlying assumptions that structure specific patterns of reasoning.

Recommendations are also based on larger research around aging, elder abuse and health equity. More on methodology is available in the full research report [here](#).

2. Does shifting cultural mindsets work? Why don't we go straight to politicians and change makers?

It is true that it can take more than just public thinking to change policy. It is also true that framing is not the only tool in the box, and we also need to be organizing and working on strategy in order to make policy changes.

There are very few moments in history where big changes have happened without a big shift in public mindsets. Shifting public mindsets is instrumental in convincing political institutions to take action, and we can see this in historically successful social movements, for instance the civil rights movement, the labor movement, the women's suffrage movement. As well as other significant areas of policy change, like the ban on smoking.



3. What's the difference between framing and messaging?

Framing research and message testing differ in their time horizon, their usage, and often in their metrics of success.

Framing is the long-term endeavor of shifting public mindsets in a new direction, whereas messaging tends to be targeted at a specific and measurable goal that suits the short-term political moment. Framing needs to be consistent over time to strengthen particular mindsets across society, whereas messaging can be varied across different audiences and settings.

4. Isn't this just spin/marketing?

Spin is a form of propaganda, whereby bias is knowingly wielded to influence public opinion. Often, spin relies on disingenuous, deceptive and manipulative tactics, and it is usually in the service of managing the reputation of a particular organization, political party or public figure.

5. How does this fit with the movement to reframe aging?

The National Center to Reframe Aging's goal is to end ageism by advancing a more equitable and complete story about aging, and the supports and services on which we all rely—including nursing homes. This training was developed by the National Center to Reframe Aging's research partner, the FrameWorks Institute, and funded by the John A. Hartford Foundation. The recommendations in this course are focused specifically on nursing homes and are heavily informed by the principles to reframe aging, which is the foundation of the National Center's work.

6. How does this fit with LeadingAge's Opening Doors to Aging Service initiative?

This work is not part of Opening Doors to Aging Services, which is a research-backed communications initiative focused on the entire spectrum of offerings within the aging services field.

Our recommendations here are focus specifically on nursing homes. That said, our work and Opening Doors to Aging Services align—and can be implemented in tandem.

