



Age-Friendly Language Tip Sheet

Age-friendly language means framing age as an asset and aging as part of our shared story. It's about choosing words that celebrate experience, emphasize inclusion and connection, and reflect the reality that we are all aging—together.

Consider these updates

- Spotlight our older population in Western Pennsylvania—where about 1 in 5 people are ages 65+—as a unique asset: more people with diverse skills, interests and community ties.
- Talk affirmatively about changing demographics: "As we live longer and healthier lives..."
- Avoid catastrophic terms like "gray wave" and "tsunami," which suggest our region will be overwhelmed with older people.
- Say "as our population ages" rather than "the aging population" to avoid othering and underscore how we are all aging.
- Skip generic appeals to "do something" about aging.
- Sub out "elderly" and "seniors," and replace with "older" adults, people or neighbors. "Older" is relative and more neutral.
- Use words like "grow," "adapt" and "change" which show aging to be a dynamic process. Avoid describing aging with conflict-oriented words like "struggle," "battle" and "fight."
- Steer clear of infantilizing adjectives like "cute" or "adorable."
- Don't imply age as a qualification ("new talent," "digital native," "seasoned professional").
- Avoid "still" when talking about an activity (e.g., "She's *still* working"), phrases like "act your age" and other judgements about age.
- Nix stories of "exceptional aging" (e.g., 85-year-old running a marathon) or making age the center of the story.
- A picture is worth 1,000 words. Use free-to-download images from our **Age-Inclusive Photo Bank** in your next article or presentation.



Who is Age-Friendly Greater Pittsburgh?

Age-Friendly Greater Pittsburgh is dedicated to making our region more inclusive and respectful of all ages. We bring generations together to reimagine how our communities are built, and to advance equity through advocacy, education and innovation. Learn more at agefriendlypgh.org.

For more guidance on age-inclusive communication, please refer to the American Society on Aging Age-Friendly Communication Guide and the Miami University Editorial Style Guidelines on Age.