

Draining the Swamp of Ageism: How One State is Changing the Conversation and Reframing Aging

**Robin Lipson, Executive Office of Elder Affairs
Emily Shea, Age Strong Commission**

HCBS Conference

December 3, 2020



Executive Office of Elder Affairs
RESPECT INDEPENDENCE INCLUSION



Reframing Aging at the State Level

Robin Lipson
December 3, 2020



Governor Baker's Challenge



“We need to think differently about aging in Massachusetts. This isn’t just about acknowledging a shift in demographics; it’s about being intentional in our planning to ensure that those who grew up here, raised families and built communities, can continue to contribute their energy experience and talents where they live and make Massachusetts the most age-friendly state.”

– Governor Charles D. Baker, 2018 –

We Started by Listening



- What factors make your community a great place to grow older?
- How can we support families that include one or more older adults?
- How can we promote more human connectedness (reduce loneliness, isolation) in communities?
- What are the top two issues or concerns that create barriers to people being able to age well in their communities?
- How can we accelerate innovation to support and connect older adults?
- How can we change public perceptions about aging?

Ageism in Action

Crossword
Edited by Will Shortz.
PUZZLE BY PATRICK MESSILL

ACROSS

- 1 Cast holder at a casino
- 4 Leaves in a hurry
- 8 Sensation
- 24 Artist's collection
- 16 "Get it, I'm on it!" in radio jingo
- 17 ABCDE
- 18 Wacky fit
- 19 Pasture sound
- 30 Stomach problem
- 31 FDH
- 29 Gross amount
- 24 Change clothes?
- 26 Pronoun in Proverbs
- 28 JKL
- 30 Under Prohibition
- 32 Tolerable
- 33 Who sings "America" in "West Side Story"
- 35 Prized athlete, for short
- 41 ANOP
- 43 Bank stamp abbr.
- 43 Powerbase in cricket
- 44 Doesn't delay
- 44 World champion athlete under two different names
- 46 QRST

DOWN

- 4# Zipper
- 4# Writer Wyoming fits
- 5# Temperature test, of a sort
- 5# UAW
- 5# Foolish
- 5# Long life! Abbr.
- 61 When the Lynd meter shower occurs
- 62 XYZ
- 63 TV character who said "Computers make excellent and efficient servants, but I have no wish to serve under them"
- 64 Commute communally
- 67 Standish on the Mayflower
- 6# Passes
- 6# Rowful
- 27 Some of them come in "pneumatic" and "soprano" varieties, informally
- 28 Developer's purchase
- 31 Specialty of Bad Boy Records
- 34 Modern home of the ancient king Gilgamesh
- 35 They might squawk by
- 36 May marchers
- 37 Covert come-on
- 38 Nice chunk of money
- 40 Cartoon genre
- 41 Image on an Irish euro
- 45 Counsel!
- 47 Accepted appellations
- 48 Staffers
- 49 Uncontrolled jerk
- 50 Small part of a pound?
- 51 Flynn of "Captain Blood"
- 53 Symbol of power
- 54 Sorts
- 57 Douglas, first president of Ireland
- 58 "So long"
- 59 Post Pound
- 60 Kitchen, for a chef
- 63 Common stock topper
- 64 Celery is in it: Abbr.

ANSWER TO PREVIOUS PUZZLE

"Geezers, with 'the' on a flush order deadline"

1. **FLUSH ORDER DEADLINE**
2. **SPONSORS' GIVEAWAYS**
3. **QUALIFYING PHASE**
4. **4, 4, BESELY**
5. **GEEZERS, WITH 'THE' ON A FLUSH ORDER DEADLINE**

Opinion **PAV**

COVID-19 a 'boomer remover' — Why millennials are angry and done with older generation

'OK Boomer' and 'Uncle, please sit' are popular catchphrases to signal an enough-is-enough attitude toward older generations.

SAMIRA SOOD 15 March, 2020 10:52 am IST

THE SILVER TSUNAMI

What Senior Population Growth Means for You

COVID-19

Texas Lt. Governor: Old People Should Volunteer to Die to Save the Economy

According to Dan Patrick "lots of grandparents" are willing to sacrifice themselves for the cause.

BY DESS LEVIN
MARCH 10, 2020

POLITICS

America, the Gerontocracy

Our leaders, our electorate and our hallowed system of government itself are aging. And it shows.

By TIMOTHY NOAH | September 03, 2019

IN DEFENSE OF AGEISM

Why We Need a Constitutional Age Limit for President

GARY J. SCHMITT

Electing septuagenarians, with all the demands and pressures of the Presidency, is rolling the dice with a constitutional crisis.

Year One Progress Report



Since the conclusion of the period covered by this report, the world has changed a lot... This report offers hope to communities and residents of all ages, as the foundations laid from this work will be essential to navigating to recovery and a "new normal."

Governor Baker
#ReIMagineAging

The work of creating age- and dementia-friendly communities has never been more important.

#ReIMagineAging



ReIMagine Aging
Planning Together to Create an Age-Friendly Future for Massachusetts



Expanded Medicare Savings Program
#EconomicSecurity

ReIMagine Aging

Planning Together to Create an Age-Friendly Future for Massachusetts

2020: YEAR ONE PROGRESS REPORT



INACTIVE

I command attention in every room I enter and look for opportunities to spark change as the state president of AARP Massachusetts. I am a lot of things, and inactive isn't one of them.

This is how I #AgeStrong
-Sandra, 68

How do you change the conversation about aging?
@AgeStrongBoston has some ideas. Read about their efforts in the ReIMagine Aging Year-One Progress Report.

#ReIMagineAging

Springfield, MA first city in U.S. to be designated:
#AgeFriendly
#DementiaFriendly
#AgeFriendly Health System

#ReIMagineAging



The MA Caregiver Coalition launched to help employers support family caregivers.

#ReIMagineAging



ReiMagine Aging

Massachusetts Statewide Age-Friendly Action Plan

Mission

To amplify, align, and coordinate local, regional, and statewide efforts to create a welcoming and livable Commonwealth as residents grow up and grow older together.

Vision

Aging in Massachusetts is reimagined.

The Commonwealth is an accountable partner in supporting communities, embedding aging in all policies, and empowering residents with opportunities to age meaningfully in the communities of their choice.

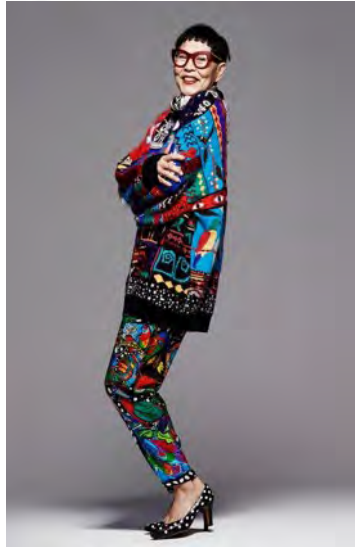
Goals

1. Deepen Community Initiatives
2. Promote Information and Communication
3. **Reframe Aging**
4. Embed Aging in all Policies and Practices
5. Improve Economic Security
6. Create Sustainability

Thinking Differently

The Glamorous Grandmas of Instagram

The subversive cadre of women over 60 prove that “old” is not what it used to be.



“I’m not 20. I don’t want to be 20, but I’m really freaking cool. That’s what I think about when I’m posting a photo.”

<https://www.nytimes.com/2018/06/20/style/instagram-grandmas.html>



CITY of BOSTON



Insights from The FrameWorks Institute Research

- Using us/we language.
(Aging is a shared experience.)
- Countering the belief that tackling ageism is a “zero-sum game.”
- Avoiding metaphors that make aging sound catastrophic (e.g. “Tidal wave,” “tsunami”).)

“America needs an **aging attitude adjustment**. Unless the field of advocates who care about aging issues **cultivates a more visible, more informed conversation on older people**, it will remain difficult to advance the *systemic* changes needed.”

Reframing Aging Training

Words That Do Not Work

- × **Cliff, tsunami, apocalypse, crisis-oriented words**
- × **Burden, vulnerable**
- × **“Them”**

Words That Work

- ✓ **Wisdom, experience, opportunity**
- ✓ **Assets, contributions**
- ✓ **“Us”**

- Tufts Health Plan Foundation has committed \$250,000 over five years to support changing the conversation about aging, ageism and issues important to older people.
- Using a curriculum developed by the Frameworks Institute, a master trainer has begun conducting in-person sessions with key stakeholders. Hosted 20 Reframing Aging trainings 2,000+ people.



Potential Reframing Training Audiences:

State Government

Media

Technology &
Innovation
Community

Local Examples

Throughout the Commonwealth, local municipalities and organizations are rebranding and reframing aging to ensure it is viewed as an asset and an opportunity.

Barnstable Adult Community Center

(formerly Barnstable Senior Center)



2Life Communities

(formerly Jewish Community Housing for the Elderly)



Salem for All Ages & Community Life Center

(formerly Salem Senior Center)

City plans special celebrations for new Community Life Center

By John Castelli

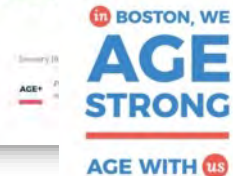


City of Boston Age Strong Commission

(formerly Commission on the Affairs of the Elderly)

**AGE STRONG COMMISSION
ANNOUNCED BY MAYOR
WALSH**

Mayor Walsh announced the launch of the Age Strong Commission previously known as the Commission on Affairs of the Elderly, during his annual State of the City address.





Executive Office of Elder Affairs
RESPECT INDEPENDENCE INCLUSION



Reframing Aging at the State Level

December 3, 2020





THANK YOU

Robin Lipson
robin.lipson@mass.gov

<https://www.mass.gov/doc/reimagine-aging-year-one-progress-report/download>

Age Strong Commission



Rebranding and Ageism Campaign



AGE+

City of Boston
Age Strong Commission
Mayor Martin J. Walsh

Rebranding: why is this important?

- Opportunity to **define and assert** what we value, advocate for, and believe in.
- Chance to tell a new, more **powerful** story about aging well in Boston.

COMMISSION REBRAND 2018

TEAM ROLES



SENIOR BOSTONIANS

OUR REASON AND
PURPOSE



CASSANDRA BAPTISTA

SUBJECT MATTER
EXPERT AND
MARKETER



COMMISSIONER EMILY SHEA

KEY STAKEHOLDER



JEFF MYERS

BRAND ADVISOR

City Department of Innovation and Technology
Digital Team

COMMISSION REBRAND 2018

TEAM ROLES

*And our staff,
who are our brand
ambassadors!*



Research and Methodology

Constituent Feedback

- *Age-Friendly Research*
- *Name Survey*
- *In-depth interviews*
- *Web User Testing*

Staff Engagement

- *Rebrand experiences*
- *Internal research*
- *Constituent Personas*

Industry Trends

- *FrameWorks Institute's Insights*
- *Name audit of cities across the United States*

What Have Constituents Been Saying?

“I hate the term elderly. It makes think of a bent over person shuffling along.”

“strong in experience, morals, good values and in general what life has to offer.”

“I like it when I'm looked on as a strong person physically fit and mentally aware.”

I am a powerful 67 elder woman. Strong, Experienced and Advanced. walk along with me. I have no fear.

It was a pleasure knowing someone finally gave me a chance to ask me questions about how I view myself!

Conversations with Staff!

- 22 people from the shuttle
- 31 people at City Hall
- 8 one-on-ones with people who couldn't make it

= 10+ hours of staff conversations



Naming Criteria

Short/simple	Findable/Clear	Contains Commission	Available on Social Media	Has a positive point of view (preferred)	Alternative meanings or problematic acronyms?	Too trendy?	Active or Passive
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AGE+



*Age Strong
Commission*

**THE ● ● ●
ELDERLY
COMMISSION
IS NOW**



**AGE
STRONG
COMMISSION**

boston.gov/age-strong

*For us, **strength** comes in many forms.
Strength of community. Of cultures.
Of experiences. Strength to embrace new
chapters and opportunities.
We believe that Bostonians who are 55+
make our City strong and vibrant.*

What's in a name?

AGE+



*Age Strong
Commission*

- Better reflects who we serve
- Better captures our work
- Connotes a bold societal shift
- Distinctly Boston



Our Name!



Our Vision Statement: *A City that Embraces Aging*



Our Values (*Respect, Inclusivity, Patience, Integrity, Joy*)



Our Website



Our Social Media Handles (@AgeStrongBos)



Our Mission Statement

What's Improved?

AGE+



Age Strong
Commission

Our mission is to enhance the lives of people 55+ with meaningful programs, resources, and connections so **together** we can age strong in Boston.

Mission Statement

AGE+



*Age Strong
Commission*

Creation of Materials

- Logo
- Website text
- Folder
- Brochure
- Banners
- Staff shirts
- Giveaways (bags, journals, grippers)





Before



After

Age Strong Shuttle Redesign

What Older Bostonians Are Saying...

“I **love** the new name.
Age Strong...***that's me!***”



in BOSTON, WE

**AGE
STRONG**

AGE WITH **us**

AGE STRONG PUBLIC AWARENESS CAMPAIGN

LAUNCHED IN OCTOBER 2019

What is this public awareness campaign?



Goal:

***To challenge stereotypes
about aging through print and
digital advertising***

Audiences:

- The primary audience is the general public to help people identify their own implicit biases so that they can change them.
- The secondary audience is older Bostonians, who hopefully will feel more confident about this life stage.

Organizing an Ageism Public Awareness Campaign



- **Landing on the idea.** We knew we wanted it to be disruptive, so we went for a bold, unexpected choice; we also wanted a call to action that reinforced our new name. We also considered what can Boston do or say that no other city can?
- **Identifying where we would want these ads featured** (because that can dictate how you go about producing it). We knew we wanted to have it in a lot of different mediums and formats, and that influenced how we directed the photoshoot.
- **Selecting the photographer and the setting** (criteria: find a partner who is better than we can afford because the right fit was going to *want* to work on this). Setting: we did the entire shoot in one day to save money.
- **Process of selecting the models** How do we tell Boston's story as best as we can with authentic voices?
- **Be open to editing (and know when to stop).** We had a few partners we trusted review the stories and give feedback.

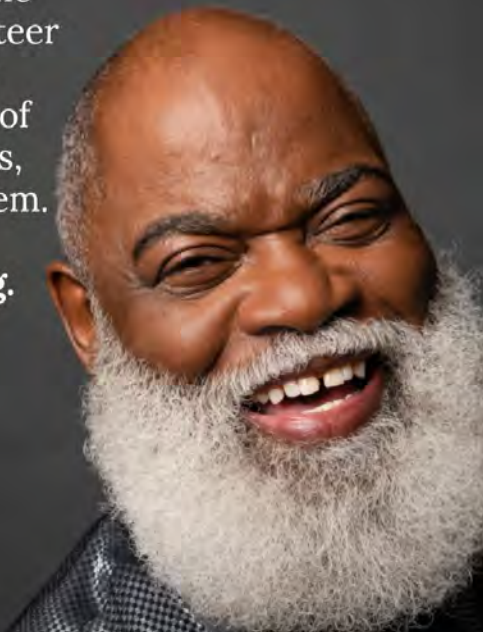
What is the Strategy Behind this Concept

CRANKY

I love my family, and I'm the life of every party. I volunteer to help others as a Senior Companion with the City of Boston. I am a lot of things, and cranky isn't one of them.

This is how I #AgeStrong.

-Harry, 67



- To spark change, the statement needs to be bold and powerful
- Creates interest with the dissonance and tension
- Labels reveal our implicit biases
- Authenticity with Boston stories
- Call to action to continue the convo on social media

Behind the Scenes of the Photoshoot

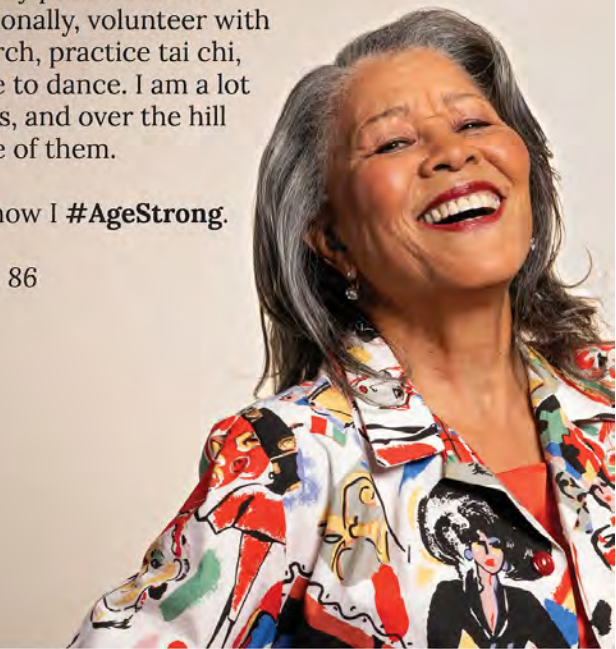


OVER *the* HILL

I am in my prime. I model professionally, volunteer with my church, practice tai chi, and love to dance. I am a lot of things, and over the hill isn't one of them.

This is how I **#AgeStrong**.

-Smiler, 86



How do you #AgeStrong?

Learn more at:
boston.gov/agestrong
[@AgeStrongBOS](https://twitter.com/AgeStrongBOS)

AGE+



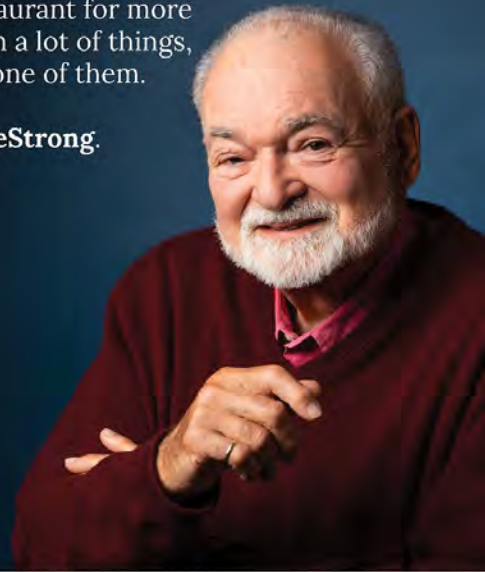
City of Boston
Age Strong Commission
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CHILDISH

I am a business owner, gardener, and chef. I've been cooking up Mexican cuisine at my restaurant for more than 45 years. I am a lot of things, and childish isn't one of them.

This is how I **#AgeStrong**.

-Leo, 84



How do you #AgeStrong?

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SENILE

You think I'm out of touch?
Whatevah! I use a smartphone,
paint every day, play Sudoku on
my tablet, and spend time with
my boyfriend. I am a lot of things,
and senile isn't one of them.

This is how I **#AgeStrong**.

-Irene, 103



How do you #AgeStrong?

Learn more at:
boston.gov/agestrong
[@AgeStrongBOS](https://twitter.com/AgeStrongBOS)

AGE+



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FRAIL

I'm a long-time boxer, and I can still pack a punch. I hit the heavy bag at the gym and swim laps every day. I am a lot of things, and frail isn't one of them.

This is how I **#AgeStrong**.

-Vinny, 83



How do you #AgeStrong?

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AGE+



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INACTIVE

I command attention in every room I enter and look for opportunities to spark change as the state president of AARP Massachusetts. I am a lot of things, and inactive isn't one of them.

This is how I **#AgeStrong**.

-Sandra, 68



How do you #AgeStrong?

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AGE+



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FRUMPY

I am a risk-taker, trendsetter, and fashionista. I collect unique accessories wherever I go. My fashion philosophy is less is never more. I am a lot of things, and frumpy isn't one of them.

This is how I **#AgeStrong**.

-Judy, 70



How do you #AgeStrong?

Learn more at:
boston.gov/agestrong
[@AgeStrongBOS](https://twitter.com/AgeStrongBOS)

AGE+



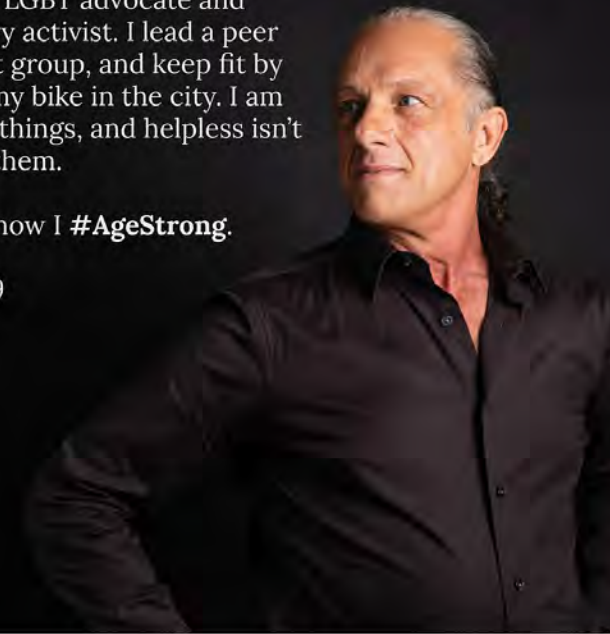
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HELPLESS

I am an LGBT advocate and recovery activist. I lead a peer support group, and keep fit by riding my bike in the city. I am a lot of things, and helpless isn't one of them.

This is how I **#AgeStrong**.

-Rob, 59



How do you #AgeStrong?

Learn more at:
boston.gov/agestrong
[@AgeStrongBOS](https://twitter.com/AgeStrongBOS)

AGE+



City of Boston
Age Strong Commission
Mayor Martin J. Walsh

SMILER, 86

I've been called many things.

Our Campaign Assets Include:

- [Commercial](#) (*Comcast, BNN, City TV*)
- 60 bus shelters (*Oct. and Nov.*)
- Digital signage (*at City Hall, South Station, + Logan airport via Massport*)
- Pop-up banners (*at BPL branches + events*)
- Bookmarks
- Social Media ([toolkit here](#))
- Mayor's letter in neighborhood papers
- Website (boston.gov/age-strong-campaign)
- Boston Seniority magazine issue
- New gallery in City Hall



How the Campaign Adapted to Different Mediums

6ft Banner

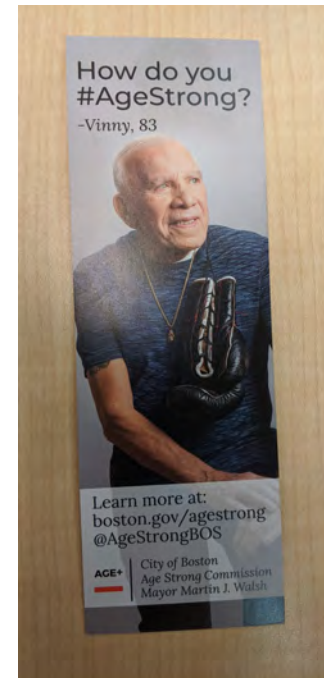


Bus Shelter



Digital Screen

Bookmark



What People Are Saying



dbulkeley You go, Smiler! You are an inspiration. I #AgeStrong by appreciating everything this wonderful city offers; volunteering for several organizations, and living a healthy lifestyle.



erinmicoz Irene, you are #goals!! 🙌

2w 1 like Reply

Chairman of the Milken Institute Center for the Future of Aging



Paul Irving @Paul_Irving1 · 13h
#Boston rocks. And @marty_walsh is addressing the challenges and opportunities of an #aging #population . Does your mayor measure up?

#AgeStrong @MIaging @AARP
#olderadults #ageism #ageing @AgeStrongBos #communities



Mayor Marty Walsh @marty_walsh · Sep 24
Boston's older residents are strong in so many different ways -- with strong experiences, cultures, and voices. Check out our @AgeStrongBos public awareness campaign at [bostonglobe.com/metro/2019/09/...](https://www.bostonglobe.com/metro/2019/09/...) How do you #AgeStrong?



Measuring Success



- **16k+** views online of our commercial
- **35k+** views of AARP's Disrupt Aging video about our campaign
- **Finalist** for the Adobe Government Creative Awards

	"I'm a long-time boxer, and I can still pack a punch. I hit the heavy bag at			12.3K		14%	
	"I am in my prime. I model professionally, volunteer with my			13.5K		5%	
	Check out today's great piece in The Boston Globe about our #AgeStrong			123		17%	
	The Bostonians featured in the #AgeStrong campaign challenge			1.9K		11%	
	In Boston, we defy aging stereotypes. That's why we're proud to launch the			7.5K		5%	

Media Earned

The Boston Globe

In a pioneering campaign, Boston's new Age Strong Commission takes on ageism

By Robert Weisman Globe Staff, Updated September 24, 2019, 12:01 a.m.



W B Z 1030
NEWS RADIO

SAMPAN 舢舨

The Rainbow Times
NEW ENGLAND'S LARGEST LGBTQ NEWSPAPER SINCE 2006



Tips to for Reframing Your Organization

- Listen to your community
- Do your research
- Gather your team (*and continuously bring them along*)
- Identify your tools
- Create criteria (*be specific*)
- Hone in on your uniqueness (*think: what will resonate in your community?*)
- Remember it's about longevity (*not speed*)

THANK YOU
