

# Reframing Falls Prevention

Developed by:

**The Falls Free Wisconsin Coalition**



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# Background

This toolkit was developed by the [Falls Free Wisconsin Coalition](#), which works to prevent falls as we age using a collective impact approach. The Coalition is convened by the [Wisconsin Institute for Healthy Aging](#) (WIHA) and made up of community-based organizations such as Aging & Disability Resource Centers (ADRCs), healthcare providers and systems, emergency medical services (EMS), public health, local falls and injury prevention coalitions, and others.

## Wisconsin's Role in Reframing Aging

The Wisconsin Institute for Healthy Aging is a member of the [Reframing Aging & Disability in Wisconsin](#) initiative. This initiative brings experts from the [National Center to Reframe Aging](#) (NCRA) to provide training and resources to Wisconsin professionals, including partners in the Falls Free Wisconsin Coalition. Over the past couple of years, we have learned how **the way we talk about aging impacts our perception of aging**.

Research shows that shifting our mindset can improve our health. Dr. Becca Levy's research at Yale University demonstrated that older individuals who had more positive self-perceptions of aging were significantly more likely to practice preventive health behaviors. Overall, positive perspectives on aging showed significant increases in both quality and quantity of life.<sup>1</sup>

When people, partners, and policymakers recognize that aging is a shared experience—and that preventing falls is a way to strengthen our communities—more people will get involved and support these efforts.

The Falls Free Wisconsin Coalition has taken the reframing aging principals and applied them to the work that we do in fall prevention education. **As we work to prevent falls as we age, we aim to promote increased mobility, confidence, resiliency, and independence.** This reinforces our message that falls are preventable, not a normal part of aging, and helps us move beyond frightening statistics and negative outcomes to reframe the conversation using a more positive, empowering approach.

# Background

## (Continued)

### A Note About Plain Language

Defined by the [International Plain Language Federation](#), “a communication is in plain language if its wording, structure, and design are so clear that the intended audience can easily find what they need, understand what they find, and use that information”.<sup>2</sup> Plain language is a tool that can be used when framing discussions about preventing falls with older adults. Instead of “This medication may induce cognitive dysfunction and impair postural stability”, try “This medication may make you feel confused and unsteady on your feet. Let’s look at what we can do to avoid that”.

### How to Use this Toolkit

This toolkit will support professionals who work with older adults in a variety of settings by offering guidance, real-world examples, and practical resources for talking about falls as we age. Use the toolkit to:

- **Learn** effective ways to talk about preventing falls with older adults and enhance/reframe messaging.
- **Start** the conversation about reframing with colleagues.
- **Teach** students about reframing and why the way we talk about fall prevention matters.



# Falls Language Quick Guide (1 of 3)

| Language to Consider Using            | Why                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | Putting it Into Practice                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
|---------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Falls resiliency</b>               | We don't just want to <i>prevent</i> falls, but we want to remain resilient as we age! Merriam-Webster's definition of resilience is "An ability to recover from or adjust easily to misfortune or change". <sup>3</sup> If a fall does occur, we want to be able to recover and learn from that fall and make changes so it doesn't happen again. | While we're not going to stop saying "falls prevention", falls resiliency is the goal, i.e., preventing falls is a result of falls resiliency.                                                                                      |
| <b>Reducing fall risk</b>             | Reducing our risk of falling as we age is a step in the journey to prevent falls and build resilience.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | This can be framed in a number of ways - "Wear safe footwear to reduce your fall risk."; or "As we age, we can reduce our risk of falling by installing grab bars in our homes."                                                    |
| <b>Moving from they/them to we/us</b> | Research from the <a href="#">FrameWorks Institute</a> has shown that small shifts in language can make a big difference - after all, we are all aging, and preventing falls benefits everyone. <sup>4</sup>                                                                                                                                       | Instead of saying things like "as <i>they</i> age", try, " <b>We</b> can reduce our risk of falling as <b>we</b> age."; and "Ensuring access to funding for falls prevention programs will help all of <b>us</b> as <b>we</b> age." |
| <b>Independence</b>                   | The Falls Free Wisconsin Coalition conducted key informant interviews in the summer of 2025, and found that older people want to remain independent at home. Independence is important to older adults, and <b>linking independence to falls prevention can be helpful.</b>                                                                        | An example of how to frame this might be: "Using a mobility device like a cane or walker can help us move safely and maintain our independence."                                                                                    |

# Falls Language Quick Guide (2 of 3)

| Language to Consider Using                                                 | Why                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | Putting it Into Practice                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Mobility</b>                                                            | As we age, we want to remain mobile to keep doing the things we love. In healthcare, one of the <a href="#">4Ms Framework of an Age-Friendly Health System</a> is <u>M</u> obility (the other “Ms” are What <u>M</u> atters, <u>M</u> edication, and <u>M</u> entation). This is important, as it relates to What <u>M</u> atters, and research indicates that what matters to older adults are social activities and connection. <sup>5</sup> | Instead of saying “Practice balance and strength exercises to prevent falls.”, this can be framed as, “Practicing balance and strength exercises can help people of all abilities stay engaged in our communities and engage in social activities.” While this doesn’t explicitly call out preventing falls, remaining active and socially connected are protective factors to prevent falls, and may resonate more to the older person. |
| <b>Confidence</b>                                                          | Research shows that a fear of falling can actually increase the risk of falls. <sup>6</sup> Instilling confidence that there are ways to reduce our risk of falling as we age is important to avoid this cycle.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | For example: “Practicing balance and strength exercises can help improve our confidence to get out and about as we age.”                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| <b>Falls are common, but they don’t have to be a normal part of aging.</b> | Many older adults believe that falls are inevitable and just something that we deal with as we get older.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | By acknowledging that while falls are common, they can be prevented, empowers older people, families, and caregivers to invest in actions that can reduce falls risk and increase resiliency.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |

# Falls Language Quick Guide (3 of 3)

| Language to Consider Using                                                                                                                                                                                               | Why                                                                                                                          | Putting it Into Practice                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p><b>There are simple things that we can do that make a huge difference in helping us reduce our risk of falls as we age.</b></p> <p>or</p> <p><b>Simple steps can be taken to maintain our mobility as we age.</b></p> | <p>Preventing falls can be daunting, but it doesn't have to mean an entire home remodel or super strict exercise regime.</p> | <p>Share simple messages like, "Talk to your healthcare provider about your <a href="#">medications</a> at your next appointment."; or "Invest in <a href="#">safe footwear</a>!" as examples of things we can do can help break falls prevention into tangible activities.</p> <p>Use the Falls Free Wisconsin Coalition's <a href="#">Annual Media Engagement Calendar</a> for additional ideas on how to message and frame falls prevention around simple steps and everyday activities year-round.</p> |

## How We Talk About Falls Prevention & Exercise Classes/Programs

We often include language about age when promoting classes. We may do this for a few reasons:

- To help community members know there is a target audience
- To alert people to the physical rigor of the class; or
- Because grant funding may be tied to serving a certain population.

However, **we should all be practicing and engaging in activities that will increase our falls resiliency, no matter our age.** Upstream prevention encourages not waiting until it's more difficult to employ effective falls resiliency practices.

**Unless funding requires it, consider promoting classes without an age attached.**

Examples may include "Gentle Strength & Balance Exercise" or "Tai Chi for Beginners" as ways to convey messages about class rigor **without making assumptions that age is the predictor of physical ability.**

# Framing the Data

## How We Talk About Data

While data is important to collect and share, when talking about falls prevention it's important to **lead with solutions**—ways that we can reduce our risk of falling as we age. Framing data and avoiding fatalism, defined by the [FrameWorks Institute](#) as “the idea that the world’s biggest problems are intractable and there’s nothing we can do to address them”<sup>7</sup> (i.e. falls are inevitable and there’s nothing I can do to reduce my risk as I age) is essential. For example, here are a few real Wisconsin news article titles about older adult falls that fall into the fatalism trap:

| Article Title                                                                                    | Fatalism Trap                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <i>“Wisconsin ranks first in fall-related deaths among elderly.”</i>                             | Presenting the issue this way can feel overwhelming and difficult to process, making it harder for people to see clear, practical solutions.                                                                                                     |
| <i>“Winter falls can turn deadly fast. Why Wisconsin seniors face a higher risk.”</i>            | This framing emphasizes danger and inevitability without offering a sense of control or solutions. Phrases like “can turn deadly fast” and “higher risk” spotlight worst-case outcomes and suggest that harm is both likely and hard to prevent. |
| <i>“Wisconsin leads nation in deadly falls among elderly as experts say it could get worse.”</i> | This framing stacks multiple signals of inevitability and decline without offering a path forward.                                                                                                                                               |

While it is true that, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Wisconsin has the highest rate of injury-related falls deaths among older adults (aged 65+) in the United States<sup>8</sup>, that information is nuanced and doesn't paint the whole picture. Rather than leading with those, albeit, attention-grabbing statistics, research shows that sharing positive messages that include actionable strategies for change are more effective at creating positive behavior change.<sup>9</sup>



# Framing the Data

## (Continued)

### How We Talk About Data (Continued)

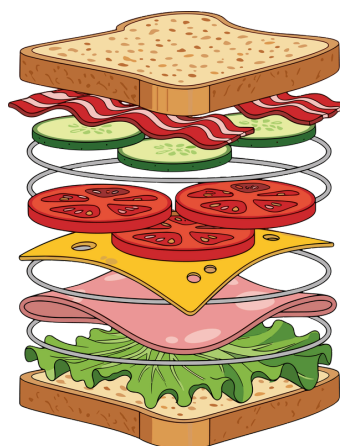
Now look at these news article titles that reframe the narrative and put the focus on prevention and strategies to reduce the risk of falling:

| Article Title                                                                             | Why This Works                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <i>“New vibration technology helps Fond du Lac seniors improve strength and balance.”</i> | Building strength and improving balance are essential to staying steady, active, and resilient. That’s why it’s so important to share strategies that help people incorporate these habits into their daily lives. |
| <i>“Older adults can cut fall risk by over 30% with this Portage County program.”</i>     | Rather than centering on statistics about injury or death, this shifts the focus to a proactive solution—highlighting a program older people can participate in to reduce falls risk.                              |
| <i>“Four ways to reduce your fall risk from medications.”</i>                             | This gives readers something concrete they can use right away—a practical, actionable resource to help prevent falls.                                                                                              |

# Data & Storytelling

## How We Talk About Data (Continued)

In practice, think about a “sandwich” technique. Instead of leading with “Wisconsin ranks the highest in older adult falls” or “1 in 4 adults falls each year (CDC)”, begin with ways that we can prevent falls as we age, like by practicing balance and strength exercises or talking with our healthcare provider about our medications. You can still share the data, but think of it as your “meat/toppings”, rather than the “bread” of the message.



We can prevent falls as we age! Ask your healthcare provider for a falls risk assessment!

More than 1 in 4 older adults falls each year and less than half tell their doctor.

Your doctor can refer you to Physical or Occupational Therapy and other resources.

## Combine Data With Storytelling

When making the case for falls prevention, we want to communicate the effectiveness and need for policies, programs, and services in a format that engages the audience into participating in the solution.

- Presenting statistics alone can unintentionally lead to fatalistic thinking, reinforce “us vs. them” perspectives, or place blame on individuals. Storytelling is an essential component of data presentation. Our goal is to connect numbers with meaning and action. Most people do not have the same level of knowledge as professionals in the field, so simply presenting statistics is not enough. Instead, **using images, personal stories, and lived experiences alongside data helps make information more relatable and impactful.**
- To be effective, data should be embedded within a broader narrative that explains its meaning and highlights impact. Framing matters! Shifting language from individual responsibility to systemic context (e.g. from “X people fall” to “community falls prevention programs are underfunded and not available in all communities”) can influence how audiences understand issues and solutions.<sup>10</sup>

**Overall, the key message is that “numbers need narrative” and solutions should be part of the story. Data is most powerful when it is thoughtfully framed, contextualized, and connected to real-life experiences and solutions.**

# Reframing Imagery

**The right image can make all the difference.** Visuals are often the first thing people notice—they can either draw someone in or turn them away. Too often, falls prevention messages rely on images of people on the ground in pain. While these images reflect real risks, they can unintentionally push people away. Many viewers think, “That won’t happen to me.”

Instead, show what’s possible. **Use images of active, confident, and varied groups of older adults who are engaged in their communities and enjoying life.** Positive, relatable visuals help people see themselves in the message—and inspire them to take steps to stay safe and independent.<sup>11</sup>

The next few pages include examples of types of images to consider using and *why*.

**Bonus tip:** Nonprofits can get *free* access to [Canva Pro](#) and its premium features, including the image library (where the images below came from)!

**Before**



**After**



**Why:** Research shows that many older adults think that falls are something that happens to “other people”. Instead of using images of people falling that older people may not resonate with, choose images of older adults that are active and connected to their communities and families.



# Reframing Imagery

(Continued)

Before



After



**Why:** The image on the left shows a solemn-looking older person who may not be happy about using their walker. The images on the right show active older people out and about and portrays the walker use in a positive light.

Before



After

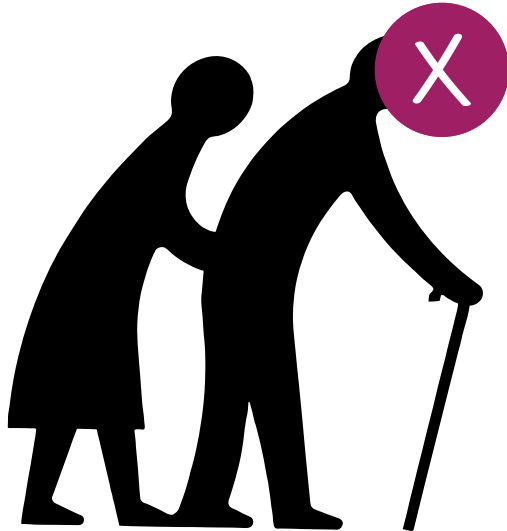


**Why:** Images of active older adults are great! But try not to use images that show older adults doing activities that might be outside the norm, like running marathons or participating in “extreme” sports. As research from the FrameWorks Institute indicates, “don’t rely on ‘super senior’ stories of late-life athletic prowess to bust the myth that frailty is inevitable”.<sup>11</sup>

# Reframing Imagery

(Continued)

Before



After



**Why:** Older adults prefer real pictures instead of graphics. Additionally, the cane is being used incorrectly in the graphic image and portrays the person as more frail. Instead, share images where the older person is using the cane correctly.

**Bonus tip:** Findings from our key informant interviews suggest that images with walking sticks resonate more with tribal elders.

Before



After



**Why:** The image on the left shows an older adult appearing confused or frustrated while using a phone. Many older adults use technology to access helpful resources and stay connected. Choose positive images like the one on the right that better reflects this.



# Reframing in Practice

## (Examples)

### Presentation (Safe Communities' Falls Free Dane Coalition)

- After learning about the reframing aging principles, the Falls Free Dane Coalition revised their presentation for community member education and moved the slides about falls data from the beginning of the presentation to near the end - it was that simple!
- Another Falls Free Dane Coalition initiative includes the **Balance Stamp of Approval** (BSOA). They developed a **video** to promote the BSOA that includes a testimonial from a participant who shared, "I was so afraid of falling. I don't have that fear anymore. It's a difference between living in fear and living with intention and mindfulness and not being afraid." They chose to frame a participant testimonial in a positive way, rather than sharing a story of someone who has fallen and the negative impacts the fall had.

### Social Media (Aging & Disability Resource Center of Brown County)

#### Before

##### Falls Are Increasing in Older Adults

Did you know that **1 in 4 adults over age 65 experiences a fall each year?** Falls are the leading cause of both fatal and non-fatal injuries for older adults. As we age, our risk of falling increases due to changes in balance, strength, and vision.

Falls are not a normal part of aging—and they can be prevented. With the right steps like staying active, getting regular health checkups, reviewing medications, and making your home safer, you can lower your risk.



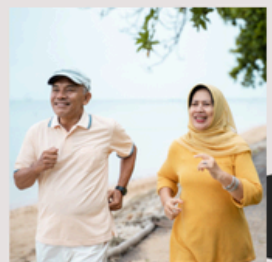
#### After

##### Staying Steady, Staying Strong

As we grow older, we may notice changes in our balance, strength, or vision that make us feel a little less steady. **The great news is that falling doesn't have to be part of aging.**

Together, we can take steps to stay confident on our feet—like keeping active, checking in on our health, and making small safety changes at home.

When we support each other, we build a safer, stronger community where we can all keep moving forward with confidence.



### Activity (UW-Madison Schools of Pharmacy & Nursing)

- Before: students used a handout with a cartoon portrayal of different rooms in a home or apartment to help older adults spot fall risks.
- After: designed a simulated apartment with real fall risks in each room for older adult participants to identify during a scavenger hunt activity. A display board highlighted what fall risks could have been identified in the apartment and how to seek services to manage them. Older adults responded more positively to this fun, real-life activity.



# Reframing in Practice

(Advocacy Issue Brief)

## Advocacy Issue Brief (Wisconsin Institute for Healthy Aging)

### Falls Free Wisconsin

A Comprehensive, Coordinated Initiative to Reduce Falls Among Older Adults

Wisconsin has the highest rate of deadly falls among older adults in the country. Falls are responsible for substantial costs to individuals, families, emergency responders, insurers and the state. The good news is that falls are not an inevitable part of old age. They can be prevented. The Falls Free Wisconsin Center with its statewide network of partners is prepared to carry the banner.

The Falls Free Wisconsin (FFWI) Center was created through a one-year federal grant to: 1) raise awareness of the incidence and cost of falls, 2) help older people and their families reduce their falls risk, 3) deliver evidence-based education and interventions across the state, and 4) provide resources and support to decrease the burden of falls on emergency services and health systems.

To continue its momentum and redirect Wisconsin's costly trajectory, the FFWI Center needs state support.

#### The Incidence and Cost of Older Adult Falls

##### Scope:

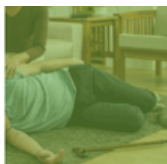
- One in four older adults has a fall each year.<sup>1</sup>
- Wisconsin has the nation's highest rate of deadly falls most of them occurring in the home.<sup>1</sup>
- From 2018-2020, there were 4,986 deaths due to falls among the 65+ population in Wisconsin – nearly triple the number of people of all ages who died in motor vehicle accidents.<sup>2</sup>

##### Health impact, cost and strain on emergency services:

Falls are a common cause of injury, disability, loss of mobility and resulting need for assistance with daily living tasks.

- 95% of hip fractures – a common cause of nursing home admissions – are due to falls.<sup>3</sup>
- An estimated \$1 billion is spent annually on falls in Wisconsin which includes both Medicaid and out-of-pocket expenses.<sup>3</sup>
- Older adult falls represent an increasing percentage of 911 calls taxing local EMS and emergency department capacity to respond to urgent community needs.
- Nationally, older adult falls accounted for 17% of 911 calls. Some required transport to a hospital while others needed help getting up from the fall.<sup>4</sup> Half of the calls requiring lift-assist resulted in a second lift-assist call within two weeks. Several Wisconsin fire departments have reported the percentage of fall-related calls to be 20-40%.

Wisconsin Institute for Healthy Aging | wihealthyaging.org



#### Our Request:

**\$756,000**

a biennial state investment in the Falls Free Wisconsin Center.

**#1**

Wisconsin has the highest death rate due to falls in the country among older adults (CDC)

**1 in 4**

Older adults has a fall each year (CDC)

**95%**

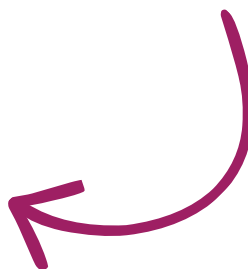
of hip fractures are caused by falling (CDC)

**20%**

of people admitted to a nursing home had a fall in the 30 days prior to admission. (Wisconsin DHS)

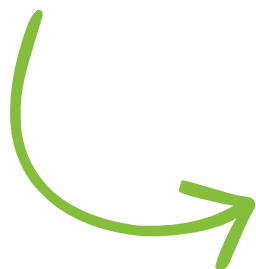
### Before

Note the fatalism and focus on the injury, fatality, and cost data.



### After

While the data is still important, it's not the main message. Instead, this issue brief focuses on how proven programs can prevent falls and the importance of investing in falls prevention to support Wisconsinites as we age.



### Healthy Aging Grants

Reducing falls. Managing chronic conditions. Reducing costs.

Aging is a lifelong process that connects us all. Today, one in four Wisconsinites is age 60 or older—and by 2040, it will be one in three. Now is the time to invest in systems that promote health, connection, and independence throughout our lives—strengthening the foundation for well-being in every community.

#### Healthy Aging Grants can do just that!

Research has demonstrated that no matter our age, we can learn and carry out effective strategies to reduce our falls risk, better manage chronic health problems, increase physical activity, and improve overall wellness.

The Wisconsin Institute for Healthy Aging (WIHA) and its community partners support legislation to fund the researched and proven strategies that give older adults, families, and caregivers the tools to protect our own health and wellness in these key areas:

#### Preventing Older Adult Falls

Falls are the number one cause of injuries as we age and are a key driver of emergency department (ED) visits, hospitalizations, and nursing home admissions. One in four older adults has a fall each year and, sadly, Wisconsin has the highest rate of deadly falls in the nation.<sup>1</sup> Yet, there is no state investment in falls prevention.

- \$1 billion is spent annually on falls-related health costs in Wisconsin which includes Medicare, Medicaid, and out-of-pocket expenses.<sup>2</sup>
- Falls have a major impact on emergency medical service (EMS) and health care providers. EMS providers responded to over 140,000 falls across the state making falls the top injury response in 2024, with over 10,000 more than in 2023. Over 20% of EMS responses were for older adult falls in 2024. The majority of these falls happened in the home.<sup>3</sup>
- More than 51,000 older people went to the emergency department due to a fall in 2023; over 11,000 were hospitalized.<sup>4</sup>

The **good news** is that while common, falls are not inevitable as we age. Many can be prevented with state investment in prevention efforts.



**\$450,000**

per year in annual state investment for Healthy Aging Grants to:

Improve health and quality of life through evidence-based programs proven to reduce falls, manage chronic conditions, and increase physical activity

**31%**

Reduction in falls for Stepping On program participants

**\$2M**

average healthcare cost savings per year through Wisconsin's evidence-based health promotion programs

# Reframing in Practice

(Fall Prevention Program Flyer)

**Stepping On** Fall Prevention Program Flyer (Wisconsin Institute for Healthy Aging)

**One in four people age 65 or older has a fall each year.**



## Before

Note the fatalism and use of a graphic of someone falling instead of an image of real people.

### Take a Stepping On Workshop!

Stepping On can help you avoid a dangerous and costly fall so you can keep doing the things you love to do. In just seven weeks, you'll learn:

- ▶ To identify and remove or avoid fall hazards both inside and outside your home
- ▶ How vision, hearing, medication, and footwear affect your risk of falling
- ▶ Strength and balance exercises you can adapt to your individual level
- ▶ To get back on your feet the right way if you do fall



**Stepping On has been researched and proven to reduce falls by 31%!**



**Falls may be common, but they don't have to be a normal part of aging!**

**Stay Strong. Stay Independent. Stay Steady with Stepping On!**

**Stepping On** is a fun, 7-week workshop that helps us stay steady and independent. **Studies show it can reduce falls by 31%!** Here's what you will learn:

- ✓ How to spot and avoid fall hazards at home and in your community
- ✓ How vision, medications, and footwear affect your balance
- ✓ Easy at-home exercises to build strength and improve balance
- ✓ How to safely get back up if you ever take a tumble

### Upcoming Workshop:



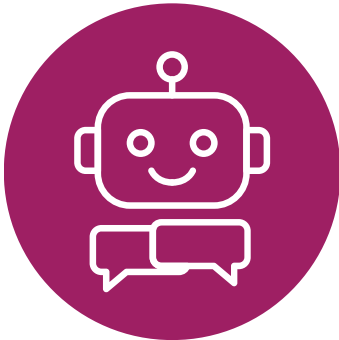
## After

Reframed, the main message is that this program is fun and can help us remain independent and steady as we age.

# Notes & Lessons Learned



**It doesn't have to be all or nothing!** If you don't have the time or capacity to develop an entirely new presentation or social media campaign, think about changing the little things - like changing the language to we/us from they/them, or starting with the ways we can prevent falls, not the crisis data.



**Artificial Intelligence (AI)** tools like ChatGPT or Microsoft Copilot can be helpful when reframing messaging and using plain language, but **should be used with caution**. Always double-check any messages reframed using AI.



**Think about your target audience and message that should be portrayed.** If you're advocating for funding for falls prevention, for example, start by sharing about the evidence-based ways in which falls can be prevented and the return on investment data.



**Tailor messaging to your community.** Consider holding key informant interviews with different groups of older adults in your service area to see what language and messages resonate with them.



# Resources

## [National Center to Reframe Aging \(NCRA\)](#)

The NCRA is dedicated to ending ageism by advancing an equitable and complete story about aging in America. NCRA collaborates with FrameWorks Institute to collect information and examine what people think about aging.

## [FrameWorks Institute](#)

FrameWorks partners with advocates, researchers, storytellers, and coalitions to reframe social issues. Through rigorous research on culture, cognition, and communications, they help build framing and narrative strategies that deepen understanding of complex problems and catalyze action to make our world more just.

## [Reframing Aging & Disability in Wisconsin](#)

The Reframing Aging & Disability in Wisconsin initiative brings experts from the NCRA to provide training and resources to Wisconsin professionals. Professionals have the opportunity to learn how the way we talk about aging impacts the perception of aging and how we all have a responsibility to change the way people think about aging.

## [Falls Free Wisconsin \(FFWI\) Coalition](#)

The FFWI Coalition develops and disseminates best practices for professionals throughout the state and beyond, provides education for community members, and more. Engage by attending our State Falls Prevention Quarterly Collaborative meetings and/or signing up for our newsletter. [Find your local coalition.](#)



# Appendix A

## Toolkit Development

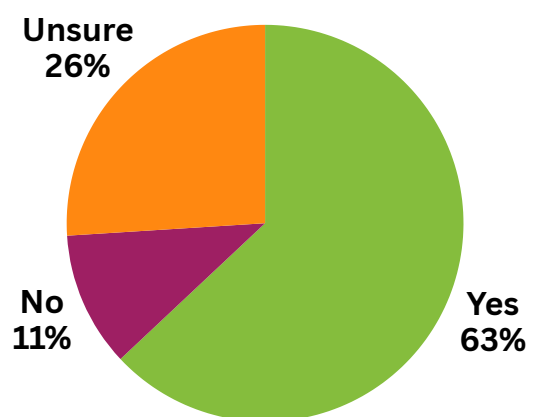
In January of 2026, the Falls Free Wisconsin Coalition formed a **Reframing Committee**. Members of the Reframing Committee included:

- **Amy Staniforth**, *Prevention and Program Supervisor*, Aging & Disability Resource Center of Brown County
- **Ashley Hillman**, *Director of Program Partnerships*, Safe Communities
- **Beth Martin, RPh; PhD, FAPhA**, *Professor (CHS) and Chair, Clinical Practice, Innovation, and Research Division & Assistant Dean for Teaching & Learning*, UW-Madison School of Pharmacy
- **Candy Hoyt**, *Stepping On Peer Facilitator*, Volunteer
- **Jill Renken, CHES**, *Executive Director*, Wisconsin Institute for Healthy Aging
- **Malik Terrab**, *Intern*, Wisconsin Institute for Healthy Aging
- **Paul Mross**, *Senior Community Partnership Specialist*, TMG
- **Suzanne Morley, CHES**, *Health Promotion Program Coordinator*, Wisconsin Institute for Healthy Aging

The Reframing Committee surveyed the Falls Free Wisconsin Coalition in February of 2026 to gather insights on the way that organizations are reframing the way they talk about aging and preventing falls. Alongside the survey, a 2.5-minute [video](#) from the National Center to Reframe Aging and an example of a reframed social media post (see page 14) were shared.

Nineteen responses to the 2-question survey were recorded.

**Question 1:** *Have you thought about reframing aging/falls prevention in the way you talk about/work to prevent falls as we age?*



# Appendix A

## Toolkit Development (Continued)

**Question 2a:** *If you answered “yes” to the question above, how have you reframed the way you talk about aging/falls and what tools have you utilized? Please provide specific examples.*

- Responses to this question suggested this topic is already on people’s radar, with many beginning to make small but meaningful shifts—like rethinking the language they use when talking about falls prevention. At the same time, it was clear this is an ongoing effort, with more progress to come.

**Question 2b:** *If you answered “no” or “unsure” to the question above, what information do you think would be helpful to start to think about it?*

- Responses to this question indicated that even brief exposure to reframing concepts, like the resources shared before the survey, was helpful. Many respondents also expressed interest in going further and asked for additional tools, guidance, and best practices to strengthen their approach.

The Falls Free Wisconsin Coalition used information gathered from this survey, national research, and key informant interviews to develop this toolkit. Members of the Falls Free Wisconsin Coalition’s Steering and Reframing Committees, and Wisconsin’s Reframing Project Management Team reviewed its content and assisted with revisions.

**We greatly appreciate our partner’s engagement to support and advance this work.**

# Appendix B

## Sample Social Media Posts

### Suggested text for social media post:

Keep moving with confidence!

Walking poles and other mobility devices aren't about slowing down—they're about staying active and independent. Whether you're out for a walk, or just running errands, a little extra support can help us stay steady and enjoy every step.

Using tools like walking poles, canes or walkers, can improve balance, reduce strain, and give us the confidence to keep doing the things we love.

Discover more tips, tools, and resources at [FallsFreeWI.org](https://fallsfreewi.org). #FallsFreeWI



### Stay Active **Stay Independent**



[FallsFreeWI.org](https://fallsfreewi.org)

### Suggested text for social media post:

Practicing balance and strength exercises can help us maintain our mobility and move confidently as we age, so we can continue to do the things we love.

Simple exercises keep our muscles strong, our steps balanced, and improves our resilience.

Find exercises to incorporate into your routine at <https://fallsfreewi.org/prevent-falls/balance-strength/>. #FallsFreeWI

# Appendix C

## Sample Newsletter Article or Press Release

### Stay Mobile & Independent With Confidence!

We all want to stay mobile, independent, and able to do the things we enjoy as we age. One way to do that is by lowering our risk of falls. **Falls may be common, but they are not a normal part of aging.** There are simple steps we can take to stay steady and confident.

**Practice Balance & Strength Exercises:** Doing balance exercises every day and strength exercises a few times a week can help us move safely. Strong muscles and good balance make daily activities—like walking, getting out of bed, or playing with grandkids—easier and safer.

**Improve Safety at Home:** Small changes can make a big difference. Keep walkways clear, add good lighting, secure loose rugs, and install grab bars in places like the bathroom.

**Use Assistive Devices:** Tools like canes, walkers, and walking poles can help us stay steady. They give us extra support so we can move with confidence and make daily tasks easier.

**Manage Your Medications:** Ask your doctor or pharmacist to review your medications at least once a year, or anytime something changes. Some medicines can affect your balance or make you feel dizzy.

**Wear Safe Footwear:** Choose shoes that fit well and support your feet. Look for shoes with laces, a non-slip sole, and a closed heel. To prevent slips and trips, avoid flip-flops, loose sandals, high heels, and slippers.

**Pay Attention to Your Surroundings:** Watch where you're walking and look ahead for uneven ground or obstacles. Take your time and move carefully to stay safe.

**Consider Vision Changes:** Our vision may change as we age. Get your eyes checked every year. If you get a new prescription, give yourself time to adjust and be extra careful at first.



# Appendix C

## Sample Newsletter Article or Press Release (Continued)

If you have had a fall, you are not alone. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), more than 1 in 4 adults aged 65 and older fall each year. The good news is there are steps we can take to stay safe as we age. Use the tips above to stay strong, steady, and independent.

Visit [FallsFreeWI.org](https://FallsFreeWI.org) to find helpful tools and resources, including a falls risk check-up, balance and strength exercise guide, an interactive Home Safety Challenge, and more.

###

**Bonus tip:** Make it your own by highlighting local resources that can help people take action. Consider including:

- Falls prevention and exercise programs in your community
- Organizations that offer home safety assessments or modifications
- Places to explore or try assistive devices like canes or walkers
- Retailers that provide professional shoe fittings for better support
- Community screenings for fall risk, balance, or vision
- And more!

Adding these details makes your message more practical, relevant, and actionable for your audience.

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*This document was supported by the Administration for Community Living (ACL), U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) as part of a financial assistance award totaling \$149,957 with 100 percent funding by ACL/HHS. The contents are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily represent the official views of, nor an endorsement, by ACL/HHS, or the U.S. Government.*