Building a Movement
Changing the Narrative for Human Services

Chicago, IL
Community Action Partnership
2019 Annual Convention
August 28, 2019
National Human Services Assembly

Our members reach and support nearly every household in America
FrameWorks Institute

• Strategic Frame Analysis®
  – Evidence-based, multi-disciplinary communications research.
  – Empirically identify the most effective ways to reframe social issues.
  – Grounded in an understanding of cultural models and neuroscience.
What Are Human Services?
Reflection
Mapping the Gaps

Experts

- Services
  - advocacy
  - prevention

- Systemic

- Civic

- Everyone

Public

- Scope of human services

- Causes

- Responsibility

- Beneficiaries

- Direct services

- Individual

- Individual

- Direct recipients

Source: FrameWorks Institute, Handed to them on a Plate: Map the Gaps Report, 2013.
You Say...They Think

In these tough times people need more support, not less! This is no time to cut funding to human service issues.

Source: FrameWorks Institute, You Say They Think, 2014.
Mental Shortcuts

Unfortunately, this is how the brain works:

Sir! We are receiving information that conflicts with the core belief system!

Get rid of it.
Cultural Models
What is well-being?
- Financial Self-Sufficiency
- Physical Health

What threatens well-being?
- Lack of Willpower
- Bad Parents
- Dangerous Communities

Human Services
SWAMP

How do we improve well-being?
- Individuals are Responsible
- Government is Inept and Corrupt
- Informal Networks

What are human services and how do they work?
- Cognitive Hole
- Direct Services
- Kindness and Charity
- Only the Basics and Temporary
How We Cue the Swamp

Individuals/Families vs Conditions

- Vulnerable, At-risk, Needy
- Worthy, All-Star
- Vivid Individual Stories

Overwhelming

- Cycle of Poverty/Massive Problems

Unproductive

- Argue, Snark, Shame
- Myth Promotion
- Charity
- Jargon
Where Does Swamp-Thinking Lead?

- Funding (public and private)
- Contracts (structure, delays, lack of COLAs)
- Policy Development (work reqs, drug testing, sentencing)
- Limited Engagement (advocacy, volunteering)
What cultural models might “eat” this message?

Growing up in poverty increases the chances that an American will continue to live in poverty as an adult. That's of course bad for the people directly affected and also bad for the economy. Furthermore, it casts a long shadow on The American Dream.

The real tragedy here is that we know what programs work to combat intergenerational poverty. We simply fail to support them.

A common response to intergenerational poverty is to scale back forms of direct aid to families — welfare, food stamps, etc. — that are frequently labeled as creating dependency. This position flies in opposition to the facts. Research shows that giving aid to a family increases the chances that a child will not continue to live in poverty as an adult. If we want to end intergenerational poverty in America, we should be giving families more aid — not less.

To state the obvious, money is a big deal. Having more money makes all sorts of things possible — a healthier diet, higher quality child care, a move to a safer environment, a trip to a museum or other experiences that expand a child's world. Kids with access to any of these things are more likely to thrive.
The Solution: Framing
Why does framing matter?

People will respond differently to the same core idea depending on how the idea is described.
A Well-Framed Story Arc:
Answering the public’s big questions about social issues

Why does this matter?
What’s this about? How does this work?
If it’s not working, why not?
What can we do about it?

‣ VALUES
‣ METAPHORS
‣ EXAMPLES
‣ EXPLANATIONS

‣ PRINCIPLES
‣ EFFICACY
‣ SOLUTIONS
Research-based Communications

Sample

4000+ online participants - nationally representative sample

Treatment Groups

1. Frame A
2. Frame B
3. Frame C
4. Control (No Prime)

Analysis

Outcome Measures

- Attitudes
- Knowledge
- Policy Support

Diffs between treatment and control groups (controlling for demographic variability)
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Human Potential:
Human services help everyone to reach our potential, so we can all contribute fully to our communities
Human Potential

Your issue matters because...

“When we support well-being, we make sure that everyone can reach their potential and fully contribute to our communities.”

Redirect public perceptions from:

- Individuals are Responsible
- Well-Being = Financial Self-Sufficiency
- Well-Being = Physical Health

Conveys human services as:

- Applicable to everyone
- When people reach their full potential, everyone benefits
Human Potential

IKEA USA News
@IKEAUSANews

This #HungerActionMonth, join @FeedingAmerica to help people reach their full potential: bit.ly/29JTnv7.
Framed with Crisis and Fatalism

Leading the Conversation

Human Services Council

HSC strengthens the not-for-profit human services sector’s ability to improve the lives of New Yorkers in need.

Reframed with Potential

HSC strengthens New York’s nonprofit human services sector, ensuring all New Yorkers, across diverse neighborhoods, cultures, and generations reach their full potential.
Metaphors Help You Navigate the Swamp

Uses the power of analogy to channel attention to certain features of an issue - and redirect attention away from others.
A Well-Framed Story Arc:
Answering the public’s big questions about social issues

**Why does this matter?**

**Construction:**
Well-being is built, by a team, over time

**Human Potential:**
Human services help everyone to reach our potential, so we can all contribute fully to our communities

**What’s this about?**
How does this work?

**Construction:**
Shaky foundations, missing materials, life’s storms can all negatively impact wellbeing

**If it’s not working, why not?**

**What can we do about it?**
Building Well-Being

Source: FrameWorks Institute, Talking Human Services MessageMemo, 2015
‘We can’t let the social safety net become a hammock.’
Building A Greater Community
Community well-being is the set of values, principles, policies and programs which enable everyone to reach their potential and fully contribute to a community.
The mission of the Human Services Collaborative is to build a greater Peoria area by recognizing the impact of—and leveraging support for—everyone’s well-being.

Well-being is built just like a home is built.
A home is not a collection of boards and nails and shingles. It contains all those pieces and more, but it doesn’t become a great place to live until everything is correctly fastened together. Similarly, a community provides well-being when everyone can access economic stability as well as educational, cultural and social opportunities; everyone has medical care; and everyone feels cared for and safe. Only then can individuals reach their full potential.
Caritas of Austin believes that when every person has a stable place to call home, they can realize their full potential and contribute to our community. We build wellbeing by making sure that people have a safe home, access to healthy groceries, jobs that provide a reliable living wage, and educational opportunities to learn life skills. All of us need a sturdy foundation and layers of support in our lives to thrive; that’s what creates a strong community. Our innovative, personalized and proven approach to building wellbeing and ending homelessness creates a more vibrant Austin for everyone.
A Well-Framed Story Arc:
Answering the public’s big questions about social issues

**Human Potential:**
Human services help everyone to reach our potential, so we can all contribute fully to our communities.

**Why does this matter?**

**Construction:**
Well-being is built, by a team, over time.

**What’s this about? How does this work?**

**Construction:**
Well-being is about planning and maintenance.

**If it’s not working, why not?**

**Construction:**
Shaky foundations, missing materials, life’s storms can all negatively impact wellbeing.

**What can we do about it?**

**Life Cycle Examples**
Demonstrate how programs support well-being throughout life, show the scope of human services, and highlight prevention.
Life Cycle Examples
New York State relies on nonprofits to build and support well-being so that New Yorkers have what they need at every stage of life to do well socially, emotionally, financially, and physically.

This includes delivering services in early childhood that establish a solid foundation for health and development, providing the safe places and social resources that teenagers need to thrive, making sure that adults have access to good jobs and affordable homes, and ensuring that older adults are able to remain connected to their communities.
a) Violence threatens Americans in every stage of life: infant neglect, childhood sexual trauma, and elder abuse are all occurring at epidemic proportions in our society.

b) When we establish a strong foundation for well-being through early learning programs, build on it through advocacy for youth development, and shore it up through opportunities to stay engaged throughout adulthood and later life, we make sure that our communities remain safe and vibrant.

c) Children who participate in early learning programs have benefits throughout their lifespan, from academic gains in elementary school, to decreased absences from school as adolescents, to reduced involvement in crime as adults.

Which of these *Life Cycle* Examples is framed most strategically?
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a) Violence threatens Americans in every stage of life: infant neglect, childhood sexual trauma, and elder abuse are all occurring at epidemic proportions in our society.

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Putting it All Together

A Blueprint for Strong Families and Communities
Public Policy Platform

alliance1.org
The Alliance for Strong Families and Communities believes that our country thrives when everyone is able to reach their full potential. Our strategic action network of hundreds of social sector organizations across the nation works with millions of people each day to help them build, maintain, and restore their physical, emotional, social, and economic well-being...

To guide our policy focus and collective advocacy efforts, the Alliance network launched a series of conversations to identify the foundational and structural building blocks that all families and communities need to foster well-being over the lifespan...

The following represents the building blocks that are essential for creating and sustaining the well-being of families and communities...
A Blueprint for Strong Families and Communities

The following represents the building blocks that are essential for creating and sustaining the well-being of families and communities:

- Employment that provides sustainable income, economic mobility, and comprehensive workforce supports

- Affordable, preventive, fully integrated health care, regardless of income

- Healthy, livable homes in safe, secure neighborhoods

- Safe, stable, nurturing relationships and environments, including quality care options across the lifespan

- Educational success that begins with nurturing and supportive families and continues with early childhood development through post-secondary advancement
AVOID

Leaving “human services” for the public to define narrowly

Charity work

Safety net for the vulnerable

PROBLEM

problem

solution?

ADVANCE

Broader, fuller picture of the sector: research, advocacy, direct services

Skilled, essential profession

Varying supports for all kinds of people

SOLUTIONS SOLUTIONS SOLUTIONS
Reframing is Most Effective with a Complete Narrative

Percentage Point Increase in Policy Support vs. Control

Statistical Significance: \( p \leq .05 = * \)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Value: Human Potential</th>
<th>Explanatory Metaphor Construction</th>
<th>Narrative: Building Well-Being</th>
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- **Value:** Human Potential
  - Prevention: 4.7
  - Remediation: 5.3
  - Planning and Research: 4.4 (significant)
  - Importance & Efficacy: -0.7

- **Explanatory Metaphor Construction**
  - Prevention: 6.2
  - Remediation: 7.6 (significant)
  - Planning and Research: 8.2 (significant)
  - Importance & Efficacy: 2.2 (significant)

- **Narrative:** Building Well-Being
  - Prevention: 10.9 (significant)
  - Remediation: 10.4 (significant)
  - Planning and Research: 8.8 (significant)
  - Importance & Efficacy: 6.7 (significant)

Source: FrameWorks Institute, Talking Human Services MessageMemo, 2015
Real World Results
Statewide Advocacy Campaign

Who:
• 350 Human Service Providers

Goal:
• Increased State Investments in Workforce & Infrastructure

Reframing:
• Campaign Name
• Key Messages
• Style Guide
New York State is at its best when all New Yorkers are able to live up to their potential and contribute their diverse gifts and talents to our communities.

New York State relies on nonprofits to build and support well-being so that New Yorkers have what they need at every stage of life to do well socially, emotionally, financially, and physically.

This includes delivering services in early childhood that establish a solid foundation for health and development, providing the safe places and social resources that teenagers need to thrive, making sure that adults have access to good jobs and affordable homes, and ensuring that older adults are able to remain connected to their communities.

Nonprofit human services providers are integral to the strength of our communities, in achieving equity, and in building the economy.
Campaign Results

Campaign Goal:

• Increased State Investments in Workforce & Infrastructure

Workforce Results:

• $15 million to fund minimum wage increase

Infrastructure Results:

• Newly eligible for $385 million of State and Municipal Facilities funding
Campaign Goal:
• Adjust human service contracts annually for inflation

Reframing Strategies:
• Reframed Key Messages
• Trained Coalition Members in Reframing
Maintain what we have built together.

Seattle's ability to thrive now and in the future is dependent upon our ability to foster economic, emotional, physical, developmental, and social well-being for all of our community members. From youth development to senior centers, community clinics, domestic violence and sexual assault prevention and response, food banks and meal programs, homeless shelters, housing, and prevention, human services build wellbeing. We provide the support for Seattle residents to reach their full potential.

Our community has worked together to build the infrastructure to provide services that strengthen our communities. Facilities as well as skilled workers with different areas of expertise are all needed to work together to reach the vision and priorities we all share for a just and thriving community.

Like physical infrastructure, we must sustain this infrastructure as well: We need to keep up our investment in the quality materials and skilled workers needed to reach the outcomes we aim for. We undermine our capacity to reach our goals when costs to provide services rise, but investment does not.
Campaign Goal:
• Adjust human service contracts annually for inflation

Results:
• Ordinance passed unanimously by City Council and approved by the Mayor.
Tips for Successful Reframing Implementation
Tip #1: Mind the Swamp

What is well-being?
- Financial Self-Sufficiency
- Physical Health

What threatens well-being?
- Lack of Willpower
- Bad Parents
- Dangerous Communities

Human Services SWAMP

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- Government is Inept and Corrupt
- Informal Networks

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Tip #2: Commit to the Full Narrative Arc

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Answering the public’s big questions about social issues

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- What's this about? How does this work?
- If it's not working, why not?
- What can we do about it?

Human Potential:
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Construction:
- Well-being is built, by a team, over time.
- Well-being is about planning and maintenance.

Life Cycle Examples:
Demonstrate how programs support well-being throughout life, show the scope of human services, and highlight prevention.

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Statistical Significance
p ≤ 0.05

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- * * * *
- * * * *
Tip #3: Get Organizational Buy-In

- CEO
- Board
- Communications Staff
- Policy Staff
- Fundraisers
Tip #4: Prioritize the Basics

- About Us
- Brochures
- Mission Statement
- Boilerplate
Tip #5: Pace it Out

What’s in the Pipeline?

• Fundraising Appeals
• Community Events
• Social Media Campaigns
• Marketing Materials
Tip #6: Don’t Go it Alone

http://frameworksinstitute.org/toolkits/humanservices
Tip #6 (cont.): Don’t Go it Alone

• Join the Reframing Network Newsletter
• Visit NHSA’s Reframing Implementation Guide
• Workshops, Presentations, Technical Assistance

www.nationalassembly.org
Framing Activity
Plan your Next Steps

Step 1: Identify Upcoming Communications Opportunities
  • What’s in the pipeline for you? Your org?
  • What is the #1 most important comms piece that your org should prioritize?

Step 2: Make a Commitment
  • What is one thing you can do this month to stay involved with Reframing?
  • What is one thing you can do this month to bring Reframing to your org?
Questions?
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