Translating Science, Mobilizing Change

An Introduction to Framing

Sponsored by the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education (AASHE) and the New Jersey Higher Education Partnership for Sustainability (NJHEPS)

Presented in partnership with the National Network of Ocean and Climate Change Interpretation (NNOCCI)

July 29, 2020

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FrameWorks is on a mission...

to advance the mission driven sector's capacity
to translate relevant expertise and enhance public
discourse on social issues.

A Few of Our Issue Areas

- Public Health
- Climate Change
- Mental Health
- Immigration
- Human Services
- Food & Farming
- Aging & Demographic Change
- Criminal Justice Reform
- Affordable Housing
- Government
- Education
- Early Childhood & Adolescent Development

Agenda

- Introduction to framing
- What does it take to reframe an issue?
  - What we're up against
  - What we can do about it
- Let’s talk about Climate Change...
A Brief Introduction to Framing

Framing Involves a Set of Choices

Sniderman & Theriault, 2004

Frames Affect How Messages are Received

Given the risk of violence, would you favor allowing a hate group to hold a political rally?

40% in Favor

Given the importance of free speech, would you favor allowing a hate group to hold a political rally?

85% in Favor

Frames Can Enhance Public Understanding

(BEFORE) “Toxic Stress”
What doesn’t kill you makes you stronger.

(AFTER) Trauma wears down our ability to bounce back.
Framing Can Unite a Field

(Re)Framing Can Create Social Change

What Does it Take to Reframe an Issue?

The Reframing Process, in 3 Steps

1. Chart the terrain
2. Design & test frames
3. Build a caravan

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Experiences and Expectations

Cultural Models
The Ecosystem of Public Thinking

- Cognitive “short-cuts”: taken-for-granted assumptions
- Widely shared: accessible across the culture
- Durable: remain largely constant over time
- Multiple: coexisting and even conflicting
- Activated by association: cued up by various stimuli

Cultural Models
The Ecosystem of Public Thinking

Individualism
“Other”ism
Fatalism

A Sampling of Our Research Methods

Descriptive
- Media Content & Field Frame Analysis
- Expert Interviews
- Public Interviews

Prescriptive
- Tool Design
- On-the-Street Interviews
- Controlled Experiments
- Persistence Trials
The Reframing Process, in 3 Steps

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Which Frame Works?
- Enhance public knowledge
- Shift public attitudes
- Build support for policy solutions

Communications Tools
- Tone
- Values
- Metaphors
- Messengers
- Narrative
- Examples
- Context
- Order
- Explanatory Chains
- Solutions
- Numbers
- Visuals

Shared Value
(A Priming Tool)
- Orient listeners to why an issue matters
- Establishes a collective orientation
- Inspires a “common good” mindset
- Taps emotions that facilitate policy thinking: curiosity, concern, and can-do
**Metaphor**  
(A Translation Tool)

The effects of severe or chronic stress on early brain development: Toxic Stress

Strong Solutions  
(A Mobilizing Tool)

- **Concrete**: specific
- **Collective**: systemic
- **Causal**: logical
- **Conceivable**: feasible
- **Credible**: disinterested

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Thank You!  
Stay safe, and be well

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