Building Well-Being
A New Narrative for Human Services

The Arc Summer Leadership Institute
Palm Springs, CA
18 July 2016
National Human Services Assembly

• The Assembly, a Washington DC association, seeks to cultivate a society that provides the necessary foundation and supports for everyone to reach their full potential across generations and communities.

• Our 80 members, the largest national human service organizations in the U.S., reach and support nearly every household in America.
Creating a New Narrative

- Spark a new & productive dialogue around Human Services
- Create Public Support
Um
I do not know
Job training
Human resources
Health
Human relations
Like Red Cross
Social skills
Mapping the Gaps

Services advocacy prevention
Systemic
Civic
Everyone

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.

In tough economic times, people who get those programs have a better quality of life than the rest of us! Must be nice to have someone else pick up the tab...

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

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
First: Do No Harm

• When we focus on the characters, we see less of the setting

• Making the problem too big to solve

• Vulnerable, Empower Safety Net, Charity
Avoid Correcting Mistakes

**Myth** “The flu isn’t a serious disease.”
**Fact** Influenza (flu) is a serious disease of the nose, throat, and lungs, and it can lead to pneumonia. Each year about 200,000 people in the U.S. are hospitalized and about 36,000 people die because of the flu. Most who die are 65 years and older. But small children less than 2 years old are as likely as those over 65 to have to go to the hospital because of the flu.

**Myth** “The flu shot can cause the flu.”
**Fact** The flu shot cannot cause the flu. Some people get a little soreness or redness where they get the shot. It goes away in a day or two. Serious problems from the flu shot are very rare.

**Myth** “The flu shot does not work.”
**Fact** Most of the time the flu shot will prevent the flu. In scientific studies, the effectiveness of the flu shot has ranged from 70% to 90% when there is a good match between circulating viruses and those in the vaccine. Getting the vaccine is your best protection against this disease.

**Myth** “The side effects are worse than the flu.”
**Fact** The worst side effect you’re likely to get from a shot is a sore arm. The nasal mist flu vaccine might cause nasal congestion, runny nose, sore throat and cough. The risk of a severe allergic reaction is less than 1 in 4 million.

**Myth** “Only older people need a flu vaccine.”
**Fact** Adults and children with conditions like asthma, diabetes, heart disease, and kidney disease need to get a flu shot. Doctors also recommend children 6 months and older get a flu shot every year until their 5th birthday.

**Myth** “You must get the flu vaccine before December.”
**Fact** Flu vaccine can be given before or during the flu season. The best time to get vaccinated is October or November. But you can get vaccinated in December or later.

For more information, ask your healthcare provider or call 800-CDC-INFO (800-232-4636) or go to the website www.cdc.gov/flu.
Avoid Correcting Mistakes

• People misremembered the myths as true.

• Got worse over time.

• Attributed false information to the CDC.

Local agencies providing services to those with developmental and intellectual disabilities are in a crisis due to state funding cuts which could result in their closure and have already created a staffing crisis.

Two of these agencies provide services to thousands of city residents collectively. Many of those receiving services are developmentally disabled, meaning they may have a chronic condition due to mental or physical impairments. One serves more than 2,000 residents, and operations range from 14 group homes for developmentally disabled adults to one children's daycare program for developmentally disabled children.

Vendors receive one third of their funding from the state Legislature and two-thirds from fund-matching from the federal Medicaid program. Back in 2008, provider agencies were reimbursed at 100 percent of the actuarially determined costs. As the Great Recession arose, however, the state Legislature decreased reimbursements by 15 percent.

The majority of the expenses are caregiver wages and many caregivers make only $8-9.25 an hour which resulted in a "massive" staff turnover of 56-75 percent in urban and rural areas respectively and a shortage of direct care professionals.

The impact of the budget cuts has been greatly detrimental, as employees are barely receiving minimum wage and one organization is currently feeding each client on just four dollars a day.
The Solution: Framing
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

Random assignment to a treatment group

Diffs between treatment and control groups (controlling for demographic variability)
### A New Storytelling Structure

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Why does this matter to society?</th>
<th>What kind of support do people need?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tap into a collective benefit - using <strong>Values and Context</strong></td>
<td>Invite the public into expert modeling - using <strong>Explanatory Frame Elements</strong> Like Metaphors and Examples</td>
</tr>
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<th>What impedes well-being?</th>
<th>What do we do to ensure well-being?</th>
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<tr>
<td>Make conditions the bad guy - <strong>Explanatory Metaphors</strong> help</td>
<td>Close with a Policy Solution or other Call to Action.</td>
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A New Frame for Human Services

Why does this matter to society?

Everyone should be able to reach their full potential

What impedes well-being?

Shaky Foundations, Missing Materials, Life’s Storms

What kind of support do people need?

Well-Being Is Built, By a Team, Over Time

What do we ensure well-being?

Life Cycle Examples: Human Services Supports Across the Life Span
Which Value works? That’s an empirical question.

Percentage point increase in policy support vs. control

**Messages**

- **VALUE:** Autonomy
  - Prevention: -1.3
  - Remediation: 3.2
  - Planning and Research: 2.4
  - Importance & Efficacy: 3.9

- **VALUE:** Opportunity for All
  - Prevention: 0.8
  - Remediation: -1.1
  - Planning and Research: 2.5
  - Importance & Efficacy: 3.6

- **VALUE:** Compassion
  - Prevention: 1.3
  - Remediation: 1.3
  - Planning and Research: 2.8
  - Importance & Efficacy: 5.4

- **VALUE:** Human Potential
  - Prevention: 4.4
  - Remediation: 4.4
  - Planning and Research: 2.7
  - Importance & Efficacy: 0.2

* = Statistically Significant p ≤ .10
First plot point: What’s at stake?

Why does this matter to society?

Human Potential

How does this work?

Fill in this Narrative slot with a Value, not “Issue Names” or “Crisis.”

Values are stable, enduring ideals. They orient decision-making.
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.”

Strategic way to redirect public perceptions away 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
As lawmakers wrestle with the budget, funding for vital services are at risk of being gutted. The cuts proposed would shut the door to critical services for hundreds of thousands of individuals and families across the state. But then what? Families in need are not going away. For each proposed cut, some basic questions need to be answered. What is the impact on the family denied access to services and how much will that impact end up costing the state in the long run? How many people losing elder or disability care, for example, would require institutionalization, which is far more expensive? How much more will taxpayers end up having to support in costs associated with increased ER visits and escalated healthcare cases? We need a budget that is prudent, reasonable and doesn’t end up costing more than it saves. Cutting in the dark is never a good idea.

As our policymakers use our most important civic tool for peering into the future - our public budget - we must make it a priority to attend to our nation’s most important asset - our human potential. When we support well-being, we ensure that everyone can contribute to our communities. To do that, we must maintain and protect the initiatives that foster people’s potential. For example, nurse visits for people with disabilities keeps them home and out of institutions, which keeps our communities vibrant. Health and nutrition efforts targeted at families today make sure that children’s talents and gifts will be available to our workforce tomorrow. A good budget meets our needs today and plans for the future - so let’s keep in mind that we need everyone’s potential for the civic, social, and economic well-being of our communities.
Framing Activity

“What do you do?”
We often answer this question with our title or our organization. What if we responded with the WHY of what we do?

Imagine that you’re introducing yourself at a party or networking event.

Set up your work with Human Potential, using the Value before mentioning particulars.

Example: I’m Nancy, and my work makes sure that the gifts and talents of older Americans remain available to our communities after they retire. I run a program that taps their skills for volunteer-run organizations.

Write your introduction on an index card. Then we will share them with the group.
Second Plot Point: How Do We Support Human Potential?

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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.
‘We can’t let the social safety net become a hammock.’
Building Well-Being

Emphasizes *the need for support and reinforcement* throughout a lifetime

Describes well-being as something much *more than meeting basic needs*

Implies a sense of *communal responsibility* (can’t build a house by yourself!)

Source: FrameWorks Institute, Talking Human Services MessageMemo, 2015
Just as building a strong house requires certain materials, building well-being requires community resources, social relationships, and opportunities to thrive. When these materials are not available, people and communities may have difficulty weathering life’s storms.

There are organizations in our country that are set up to help everyone build support in life. They are called “human services.” Human services are set up not only to repair well-being when it starts to break down, but also to construct a strong foundation to maintain this strength over time.
The whole community benefits when working people can turn their financial tightrope into a stable pathway to success. A key component of success in building financial stability is ensuring that hardworking families can have access to two proven tax credits that have been immensely successful in moving Americans from welfare to work while reducing poverty: the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) and Child Tax Credit (CTC). Together, the EITC and CTC help low and moderate-income working families make ends meet lifting more than 9 million people – more than half of them children – out of poverty in 2013. The EITC is the nation's most effective anti-poverty program. Studies show that the EITC encourages work, reduces poverty, helps families meet basic needs and improves children's academic achievement.

To ensure that everyone can fulfill their potential and contribute fully to our economy and our communities, we need policies that bolster people’s physical, social, and financial well-being. Two policies that have long been successful tools for building well-being are the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) and Child Tax Credit (CTC). Together, these credits increase financial stability in low and moderate-income families, stabilizing families and shoring up children’s foundations, establishing a sturdy structure for the long term. In fact, studies show that these tax credits have led to multiple benefits that make our communities stronger including improving children’s academic progress and generating significant local economic activity. By reauthorizing them, and updating them to include more Americans, Congress can extend and expand their role in creating vibrant communities across the country.
Framing Activity

Your table will be assigned a broad area of human services work.

Work together to “map” different examples of that work to the Construction metaphor. Try to come up with about 5 examples and how you might describe them using this tested Explanatory Metaphor.

*Early childhood programs = establishing a strong foundation*

*Basic needs assistance = essential materials for building a sturdy structure*

Bonus points for creativity! Double bonus points for using the Reframe Card!

Work for ten minutes, then we’ll share out.
### Tension in the plot: If things go wrong, why?

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Our nonprofit organization is dedicated to helping those in need live healthy, productive lives. Since 1899, we have supported and empowered America’s most vulnerable groups, including veterans, seniors, people with disabilities, the homeless, those recovering from addictions, and other at-risk individuals. In collaboration with other nonprofits, we are able to advocate for the most vulnerable among us.

Reframed with Construction/Life’s Storms

Our nonprofit organization provides the bricks and mortar of sturdy well-being: social relationships, opportunities to maintain physical fitness, access to counseling or other supports for mental health. When these materials aren’t available, people may have difficulty weathering the life storms that can affect all of us - a layoff, the loss of a loved one, a lingering health concern. Since 1899, we have helped to shore up the foundations of well-being, through advocacy, research, and direct services.
Why does this matter to society?

Human Potential

What impedes it?

Construction:
Shaky Foundations, Missing Materials, Life’s Storms

What promotes it?

Life Cycle Examples:
Human Services Supports Across the Life Span

Solutions: Your Policy Asks Here!

How does this work?

Construction:
Well-Being Is Built, By a Team, Over Time

Satisfying conclusion: What can we do to improve the situation?
Examples Help You Navigate the Swamp

Illustrate particular facets of an issue, focusing on those that deepen understanding, motivate engagement, and drive policy support.
**Life Cycle Examples**

Human services provide supports for well-being throughout life.

In childhood, human services support people by doing things like looking at how childcare affects children later in life, pushing for high-quality education for all children, and offering programs that support adolescent development programs.

In adulthood, human services support people by doing things like studying what affects people’s mental health, working to make housing safe, and providing literacy programs for adults who cannot read.

Human services support older adults by doing things like exploring how social isolation affects people’s well-being, setting up tutoring or mentoring programs so older people can remain engaged in their communities, and providing meals to older people who can’t leave their home.
Which of these *Life Cycle* Examples is framed most strategically?

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, build on it through youth development, and shore it up through opportunities to stay engaged throughout adulthood and later life, we make sure that our communities remain healthy and vibrant.

c) Children who participate in early learning 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.
Reframing is Most Effective with a Complete Narrative

Percentage Point Increase in Policy Support vs. Control

Statistical Significance

\[ p \leq 0.05 = * \]

Messages

- VALUE: Human Potential
- EXPLANATORY METAPHOR: Construction
- NARRATIVE: Building Well-Being

Source: FrameWorks Institute, Talking Human Services MessageMemo, 2015
Get Started on Reframing

Talking Points  FAQs  Message Cards

http://frameworksinstitute.org/toolkits/humanservices
Learn More

- www.nassembly.org
- www.frameworksinstitute.org
- iflanagan@nassembly.org