

fig&sass

story | culture | strategy



YOUTH CALIFORNIA

Messages that Move
February 21st. 2023

Welcome Back!



Michaela



Meredith



Introductions

Please drop into the chat and share:

- Name
- Organization
- Location
- What's a great meal or dish you've eaten in 2023?



Communications Series with Fig + Sass

90 Minute Training Webinars

Communicate the Change
January

Messages That Move
Today

Working with Media
March 28th

Digital Engagement
April 25th

The Power of Story
May 16th

60 Minute Technical Assistance Workshops

- Small group, hands-on workshop that customize webinar learnings for your organization + context
- Fig + Sass coaching and peer workshopping of your work-in-progress
- Offered at multiple times following each webinar



Today's Agenda

- Welcome & Introductions
- Warm Up Activity
- Why Message Matters
- Messaging Best Practices
- Message Tools
- Discussion, Wrap up, and Closing



Warm Up: Pitch Your Org

- Join another participant in a breakout room
- You have three minutes to introduce your organization or campaign
- After you share, your partner will tell you what is sticking out to them the most out of everything you shared
- Switch, and repeat!



Review: Strategic Communications

Start with your Goal



- What do you want to achieve?
- The SMARTer the better:
 - Specific
 - Measurable
 - Achievable
 - Relevant
 - Time-bound

Determine your Audience



- Who are the specific people without whom you cannot achieve your goal?

Target your Audience



- What do they care about?
- What could be their blocks?
- Who influences them?
- Where do they get their information?
- Who will they identify with?
- What frameworks do they have?
- What are they feeling when they interact with your content?
- What do they need to feel to take the action you need?



Review: Strategic Communications

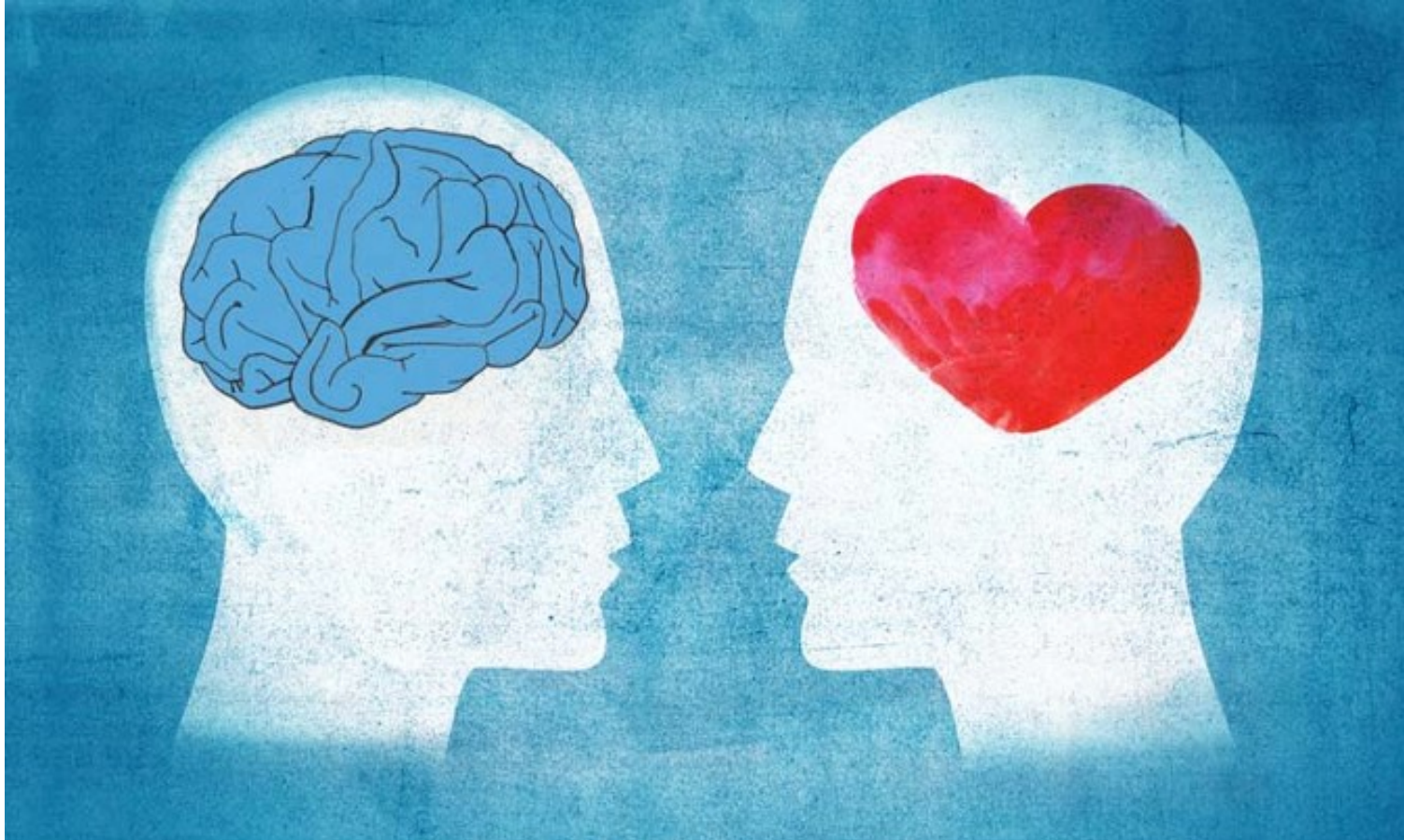
~~What do I want to say?~~



What does my audience need to hear?



Why Message Matters



Why Message Matters



Why Message Matters

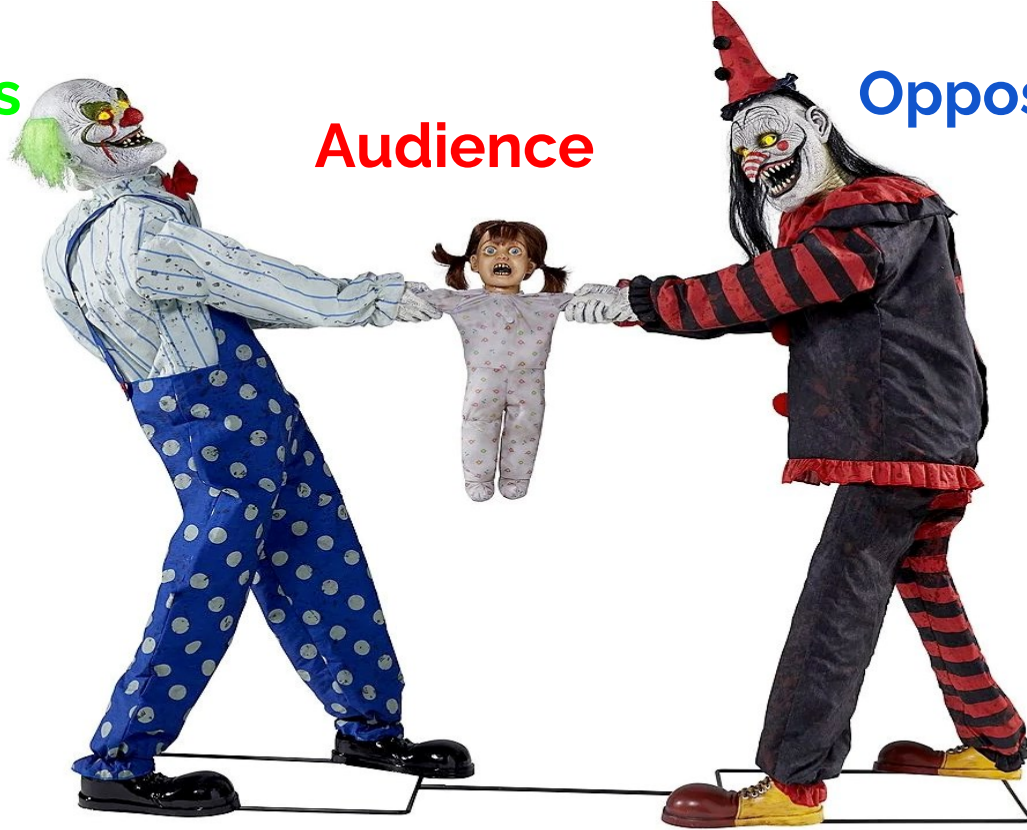


Why Message Matters

Advocates

Audience

Opposition



Medical Aid in Dying



Why Message Matters: Case Study



ALLOW

**End needless
suffering**



PROHIBIT

**Christian
beliefs**

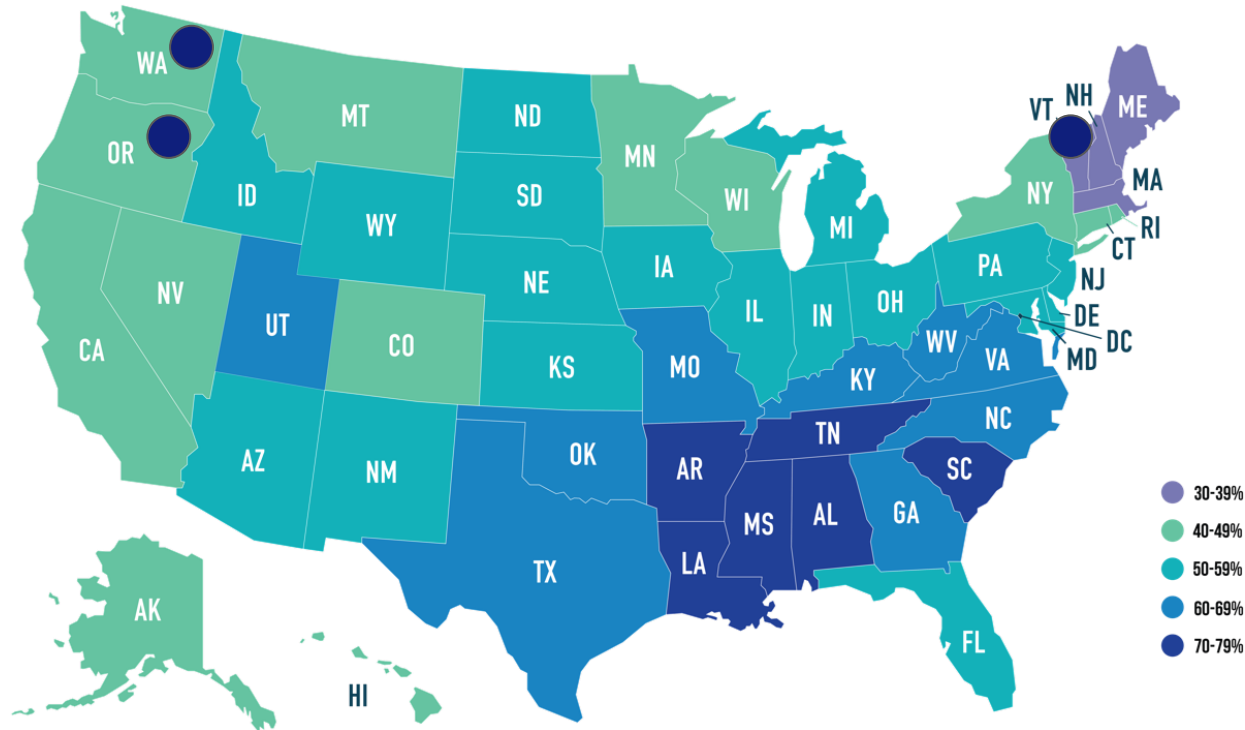
**Unintended
consequences**

vs.



Why Message Matters: Case Study

Religiosity in the United States



Why Message Matters: Case Study

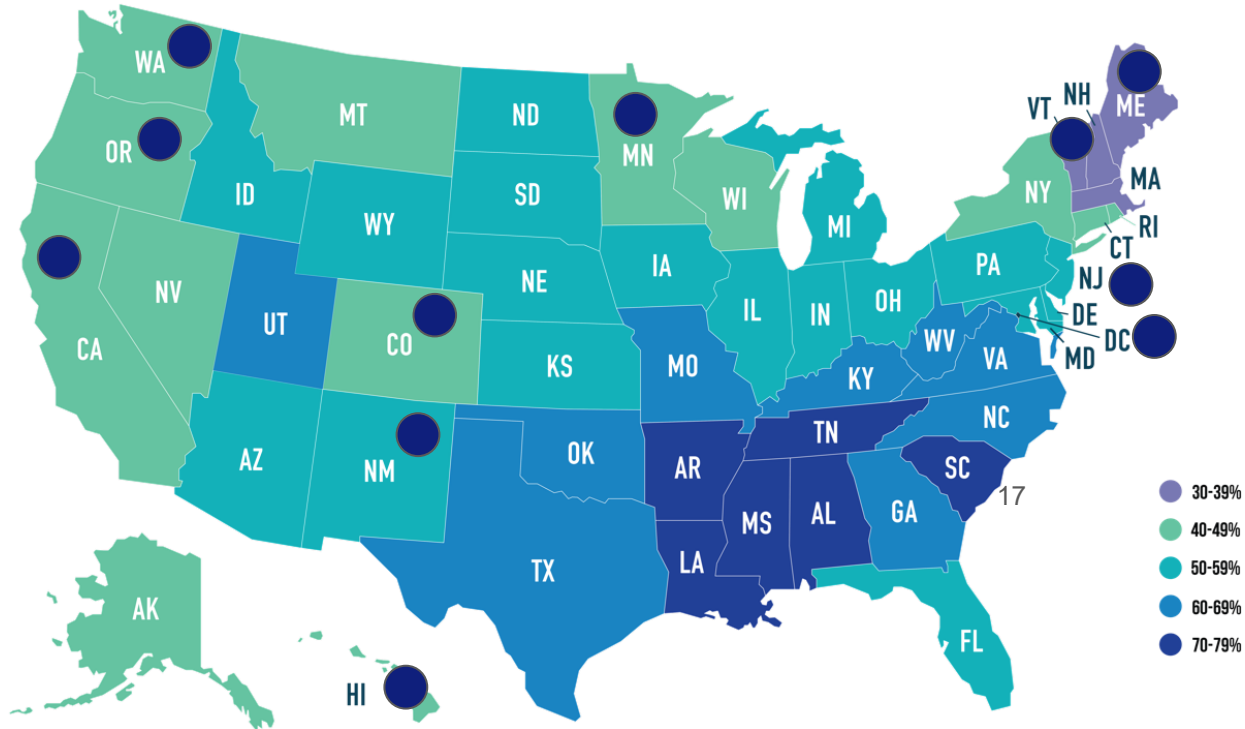


- Patient or Person?
- Medical Aid in Dying or Physician Assisted Suicide?



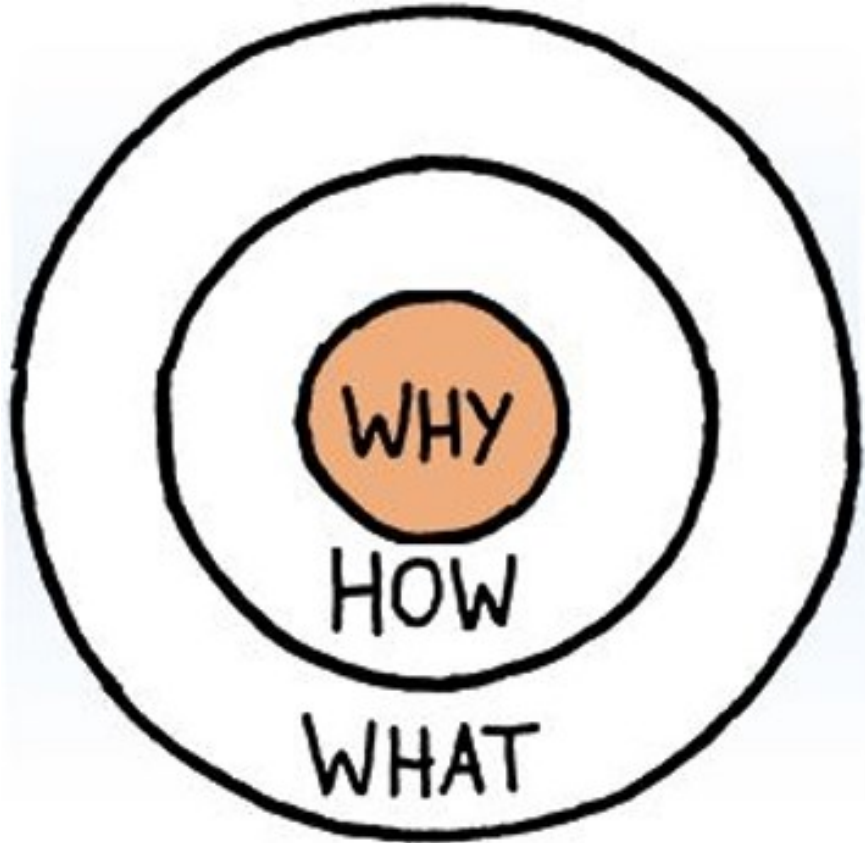
Why Message Matters: Case Study

Places where medical aid-in-dying is now legal





Message Best Practices: Start with the Why



Message Best Practices: Focus



Message Best Practices: Make your Message “Sticky”



Nothing
stops
a bullet
like
a job.



&

Message Best Practices: Repetition



***repetition
repetition
repetition
repetition***



Message Best Practices: Translate Jargon

WE NEED SOME NEW JARGON,
THE PUBLIC ARE STARTING TO
UNDERSTAND WHAT WE'RE
TALKING ABOUT!



building plan
mission
empower
report
donor
daf
stakeholder
annual
logic
intermediary
grasstops
at-risk
direct
capacity
model
vision
high-risk
philanthropy
vulnerable
grassroots
civic
disadvantaged
charity
theory
agenda
check-in
ngo
non-profit
strategic
empowerment
change
engagement
youth



Message Best Practices: Paint a Picture

Details that show . . .



Sights



Sounds



Smells



Tastes



Textures



Dialogue

Details that tell . . .



Facts



Statistics



Examples



Definitions



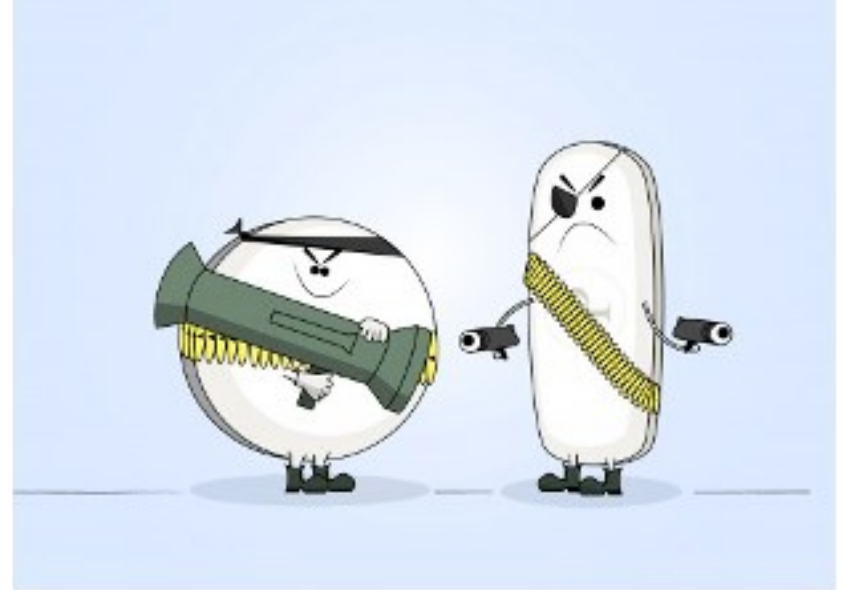
Reasons



Comparisons



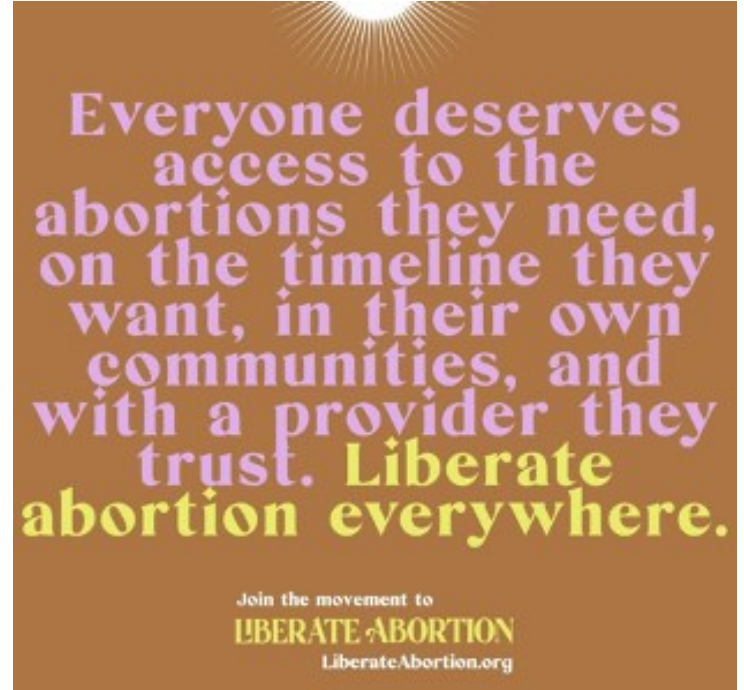
Message Best Practices: Convey Urgency



Are you a vitamin or a painkiller?



Message Best Practices: Say what you are for, not just what you oppose



Message Best Practices: [Asset Framing](#)



Message Best Practices: Asset Framing- EXAMPLE

“the homeless”

“homeless people”

“formerly homeless”



People move through a homeless encampment lining the sides of the Cesar Chavez Bike Bridge, often referred to as the “Hairball,” near San Francisco’s Potrero Hill neighborhood Friday, June 30, 2017. (Jessica Christian/S.F. Examiner)

“people experiencing homelessness”

“people who experience homelessness”



Message Best Practices: Asset Framing- EXAMPLE

Deficit framing:

Our program helps at-risk youth in low-income neighborhoods stay on track to graduate.

Asset-framing:

Our program provides tutors to young people so they can graduate from high school and overcome the historical disinvestment in Southeast Fresno to achieve their dreams for themselves and society.



Message Best Practices: **Call out Villains**

Example 1:

A: "This representative voted to block health care"

VS

B: "Our community has been deprived of care"

Example 2:

A: "Our schools are under-resourced"

VS

B: "Large corporations have tirelessly lobbied to avoid paying taxes which has robbed our local schools of the resources they need to give every student a fantastic education."



Message Best Practices- A note on data

- Feelings > Facts
- Facts are the punctuation to your message or story, not the headline.
- Facts are hard to remember, but provide validation.
- Data can show the scale of an issue.
- Try to use facts that don't require people to do math in their heads.
- Can you 'storyify' your data?



Message Best Practices- A note on data



ZIP CODE
90002
LIFE EXPECTANCY
73

ZIP CODE
92661
LIFE EXPECTANCY
88

Your **ZIP Code** shouldn't
predict **how long you'll live.**



Message Best Practices- Activity: Deconstruct a Message

Join a small group to deconstruct the sample organizational pitch. Discuss:

- What do you notice?
- What opportunities to do you see to adopt best practices?
- How is/isn't this pitch meeting audience needs?
- How might you edit this pitch?

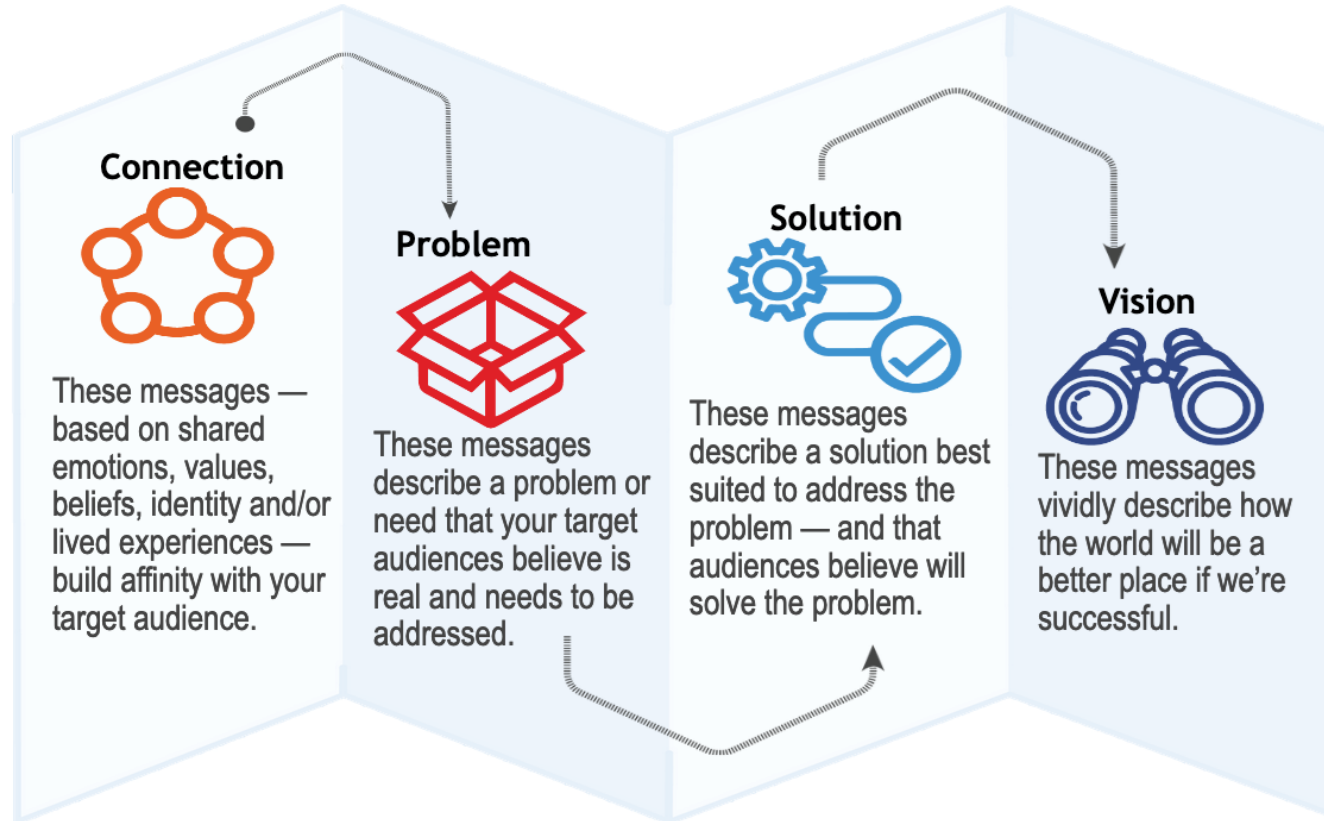
Restore Charlotte is a survivor-led, intergenerational racial justice organization in Charlotte. At the heart of RC's organizing is the development of grassroots leadership to build collective power to achieve racial justice and transformative social change. With this approach, RC focuses on advancing affordable housing, health equity, education justice, youth investment, immigrant rights, and shifting resources from the criminal justice and juvenile justice systems into restorative justice alternatives. RC develops community leadership to build a shared root cause analysis of problems impacting their communities, to develop and advance innovative power-building strategies, and to engage in creating transformative systems change.



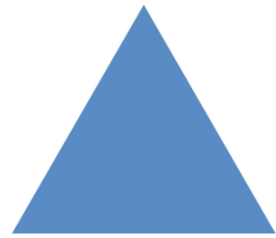
Message Tool



Message Tool- Core Narrative



Core Narrative Example: **The Hood Incubator**



The Hood
Incubator

Core Narrative Example: **The Hood Incubator**

Connection



We want to live in a world that is just. We know that the liberation and self-determination of Black people and healing the legacy of racism in America are critical for the health and prosperity of all people.

Core Narrative Example: **The Hood Incubator**

Problem/ Need



Since the founding of this country, Black people have survived policies and systems ranging from chattel slavery to Jim Crow laws, put into place by politicians and the wealthy elite to hoard resources and protect their own power. The war on drugs is just one of the most recent strategies for wreaking havoc in Black communities by ripping families apart, divesting from neighborhoods, dismantling Black political power, and perpetuating cycles of poverty and incarceration.

Core Narrative Example: **The Hood Incubator**

Solution



As the stigma and status of cannabis shifts, we have a generational opportunity to disrupt the harms of racism by using the legal cannabis industry as a model for healing and equity. The Hood Incubator builds a movement for cannabis justice that ultimately seeks to create a world where every Black person can generate wealth, health, political power, and prosperity for their families and communities.

Core Narrative Example: **The Hood Incubator**

Vision



By ensuring that people harmed by the drug war can benefit from the cannabis industry and organizing them around a political agenda for justice, the Hood Incubator activates our community in the fight for Black liberation.

Core Narrative Example: Transgender Youth and the Freedom to Be Ourselves Message Guidance



Core Narrative Example: Transgender Youth and the Freedom to Be Ourselves Message Guidance

Connection



Whether we are Black or white, Native or newcomer, transgender or not, we want the freedom to be ourselves.

Core Narrative Example: Transgender Youth and the Freedom to Be Ourselves Message Guidance

Problem/ Need



But some people try to get and hold onto power by putting us in boxes based on what we look like, where we're from, or our genders. We see this in how schools tell Black kids how to keep their hair or send girls home for the clothes they wear. We now see it in how certain politicians are attempting to exclude trans kids from healthcare, school, or sports. They stoke fear so we turn against one another instead of demanding what our families need.

Core Narrative Example: Transgender Youth and the Freedom to Be Ourselves Message Guidance

Connection

Solution



Solution: We have to speak out against {Name of Law} which {explain law attacking transgender people}.

Core Narrative Example: Transgender Youth and the Freedom to Be Ourselves Message Guidance

Vision



By joining together, we can make this a place where we all support one another for who we are, so that all of us can thrive.

Try It On- Core Narrative Framework



- Use the worksheet provided to begin to develop a core narrative framework for your organization, issue, or campaign
- Try and incorporate some of the key practices we reviewed today to meet your audience needs



Discussion - How did it go?



- How did it go?
- What questions came up?
- What are you wrestling with as you think about applying this tool?



Next Steps & Closing

- Message Strategy Workshops this week!
 - Develop your Core Narrative or other message strategies
 - Bring your work-in-progress worksheet to the session
 - Discuss questions, challenges, and opportunities
- Next Session: Working with Media - 3/28/23
 - Using the media strategically
 - Cultivating relationships with reporters
 - Development of press materials



Next Steps & Closing: Evaluation



Next Steps & Closing



Please share in the chat:

- *What is one idea or aha that you will take with you from this session?*



THANK YOU!

Michaela Leslie-Rule - michaela.leslie.rule@gmail.com

Meredith Fenton - merefenton@gmail.com

fig&sass