



# National Reframing Initiative: Human Service Messaging During the COVID-19 Crisis

April 29, 2020

# Agenda

1

Communications Landscape

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2

Recommendations

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3

Resources

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4

Q&A

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# REFRAMING HUMAN SERVICES NETWORK

*Bringing new clarity to human needs  
and human services.*

## FrameWorks Institute's Strategic Frame Analysis<sup>®</sup>

### Phase 1

Uncovered widely shared misperceptions

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### Phase 2

Identified a more productive narrative

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# Existing Communications Challenges



# Individualism



Photo by [Benjamin Davies](#) on [Unsplash](#)

# Vulnerable Other



# Fatalism





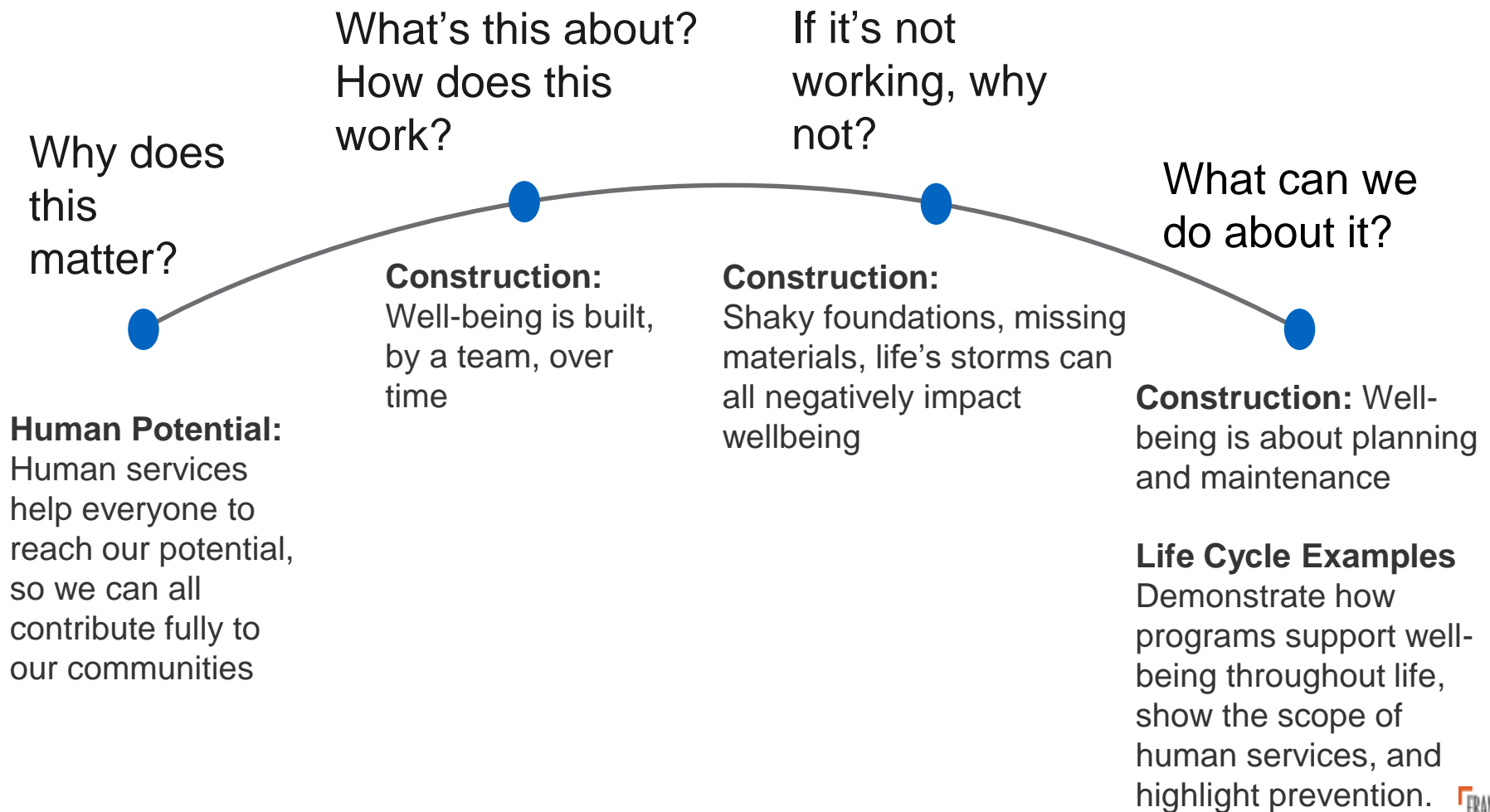
# Framing Human Services





# A Well-Framed Story Arc:

Answering the public's big questions about social issues





# A Blueprint for Strong Families and Communities

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...



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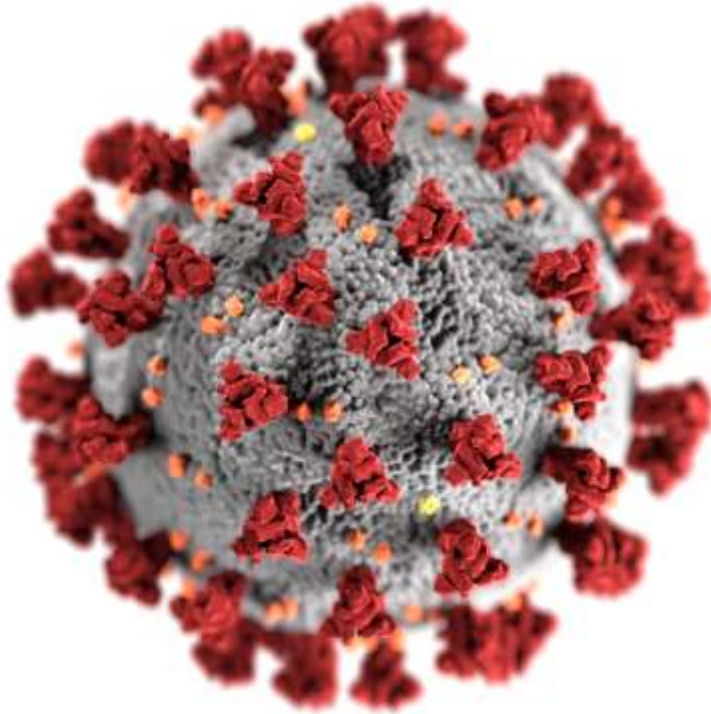
The following represents the building blocks that are essential for creating and sustaining the well-being of families and communities:

- 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

# Adapting to this Moment



# Put Public Health First



- Reinforce public health guidelines
- Avoid making physical distancing the culprit
- Advance solutions to mitigate negative consequences like social isolation

# We're in this Together



- Our well-being is interconnected
- All responsible, all doing our part for our community
- Solidarity as a signal to leaders
- Call public officials to action

# We're in this Together (cont)



- We, Us, Everyone
- Avoid labeling people or groups as “vulnerable”
- Rely on person-first language

# Human Services Council

## Framed with Vulnerable Other

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

## ***Reframed with We, Us Everyone***

HSC strengthens New York's nonprofit human services sector, ensuring all New Yorkers, across diverse neighborhoods, cultures, and generations reach their full potential.



# We are Impacted Differently



- Fill in the gaps for the public
- Point to conditions, policies
- Avoid focusing on individual behaviors
- Don't just name, explain

# Sample Message

While we are all weathering this storm together, the effects are intensified for people who were already on shaky ground prior to the pandemic because of things like low wages, high housing costs, or a lack of health insurance. People of color are more likely to have been left out of our health, financial, and social systems, which is why COVID-19 is proving especially devastating to communities of color.

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# Balance Urgency & Action



- Include solutions
- Stay grounded in reality
- Allow for a process

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Human service organizations are buffering against some of the most serious health, mental health, economic, and social consequences for our community members. We are calling on our policymakers to include human services in COVID-19 response efforts by adequately funding our work in the face of increased demand and by engaging our skills and expertise in a rebuilding process that repairs the gaps in our systems exposed by the pandemic.



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# Use the Construction Metaphor



- Foundation, building blocks, blueprints, special skills
- Bad weather, shaky foundations, missing materials
- Reminder: the metaphor is not the message

# Human Services Collaborative of Greater Peoria



**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.



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# Prime for Future Needs



- Not just the immediate crisis
- Stabilize now while also...
- Planning for the future we want to see



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Our policymakers must make a meaningful and sustained commitment to bolstering the community's health and human service infrastructure through adequate funding and must ensure that human service leaders have a seat at the table as important decisions are made about our community's response now and in the future.



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# Putting it All Together



- Put Public Health First
- We're All in this Together
- We are Impacted Differently
- Balance Urgency with Action
- Use the Construction Metaphor
- Prime for Future Needs

# Putting it All Together

Having a safe and stable place to live is at the very foundation of overall health and well-being and it's [Organization's] goal to make this a reality for everyone in our community. The COVID-19 pandemic is creating a health and economic environment that is rapidly destabilizing this foundation for our community members at levels that we have never seen before. The effects are intensified for people who were already on shaky ground prior to the pandemic because of things like low wages and high housing costs.

[Organization] is working hard to shore up our community during this crisis, but we need your help to continue this work over the coming months. There are now more people in our community who are unable to pay their rent due to lost income and more people who cannot leave their homes for essentials like food and prescriptions. Meanwhile, the highly transmissible nature of the virus means that our shelters have had to reduce the number of people living in each facility in order to create safe distances. It also means that our staff and volunteers must now wear personal protective equipment to do their work safely and responsibly.



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With your support, we can help our community weather this storm by:

- Providing rental and mortgage assistance so that people who have lost their job and a reliable income do not lose their home.
- Delivering groceries and prepared meals, assisting with personal care and hygiene practices, and making sure that health and mental health needs are being met for our many community members who need additional support to be able to live healthy at home.
- Offering a safe and nurturing place to live for people who do not have a home, are unable to live on their own due to a disability or a health or mental health challenge, or are not safe in their home due to issues such as domestic violence.
- Partnering with our community leaders and policymakers to identify spaces that can be repurposed to shelter unhoused people while maintaining appropriate distances that reduce the likelihood of COVID-19 transmission.
- Purchasing the protective gear, disinfectants, and cleaning products that will keep our staff and the people we serve safe.

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- Purchasing the protective gear, disinfectants, and cleaning products that will keep our staff and the people we serve safe.

# Putting it All Together

With your support, we can help our community weather this storm by:

- Providing rental and mortgage assistance so that people who have lost their job and a reliable income do not lose their home.
- Delivering groceries and prepared meals, assisting with personal care and hygiene practices, and making sure that health and mental health needs are being met for our many community members who need additional support to be able to live healthy at home.
- Offering a safe and nurturing place to live for people who do not have a home, are unable to live on their own due to a disability or a health or mental health challenge, or are not safe in their home due to issues such as domestic violence.
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# REFRAMING HUMAN SERVICES NETWORK

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*Bringing new clarity to human needs  
and human services.*

- NEW: COVID-19 Sample Messages
- NEW: Individualism and Fatalism Tip Sheets
- Reframing Network Newsletter
- Reframing Human Services Implementation Guide
- Workshops & Presentations

[www.nationalassembly.org/reframinghs](http://www.nationalassembly.org/reframinghs)

*NHSA's National Reframing Human Services Initiative is generously funded  
by The Kresge Foundation*





- NEW: Framing COVID-19 Series
- Communications Toolkit: Building A New Narrative on Human Services

<http://www.frameworksinstitute.org/framing-covid-19.html>

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