



The Power of Words: Reframing Human Services

i2i Spring Conference

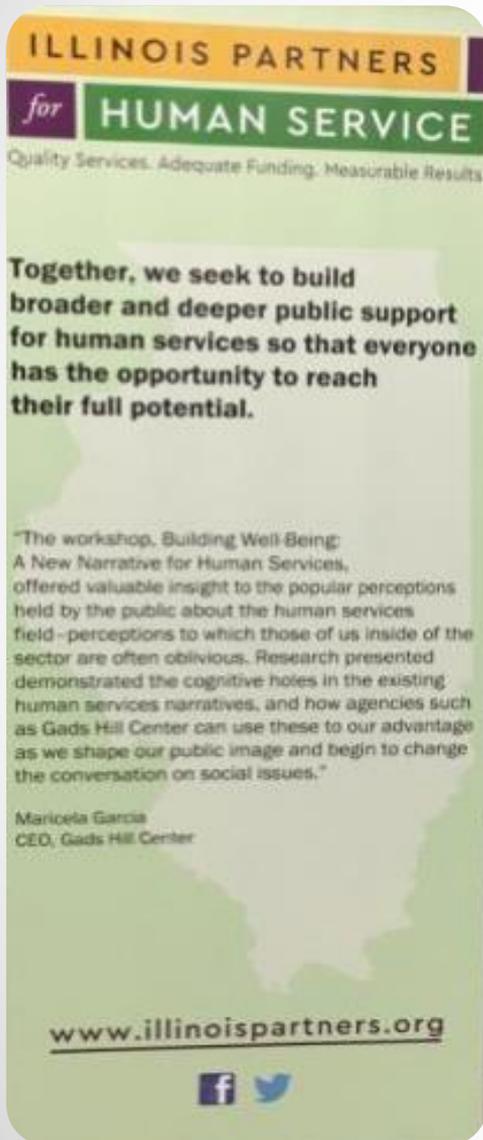
June 10, 2019

We Have an Opportunity

- Change the conversation on human services
- Change the way people think about our sector
- Build broader and deeper public support for human services



We Are Illinois Partners



- Largest voice of human service organizations in Illinois
- Advocate for high quality, evidence-based sustainable approaches to providing human services
- More than 800 coalition partners in every county and legislative district
- Collective advocacy to protect funding and fair policies
- Trusted source of context and information for influential leaders and nonprofits

National Human Services Assembly

Our members reach and support nearly every household in America



The Story We're Telling

“Language exerts hidden power, like the moon on the tides.”

Rita Mae Brown



Government Funds Majority of Human Services

- Dept. of Health and Human Services' roots go back to 1798, when an act was passed for relief of sick and disabled seamen*
- Government remains primary supporter of human services sector in 21st century America**



*HHS.gov

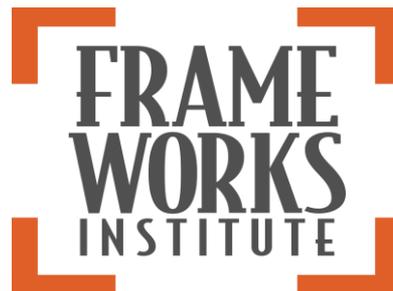
**Government is the Foundation of Well-Being Report

Public View of Our Sector



FrameWorks Institute

- Communications think tank
- 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



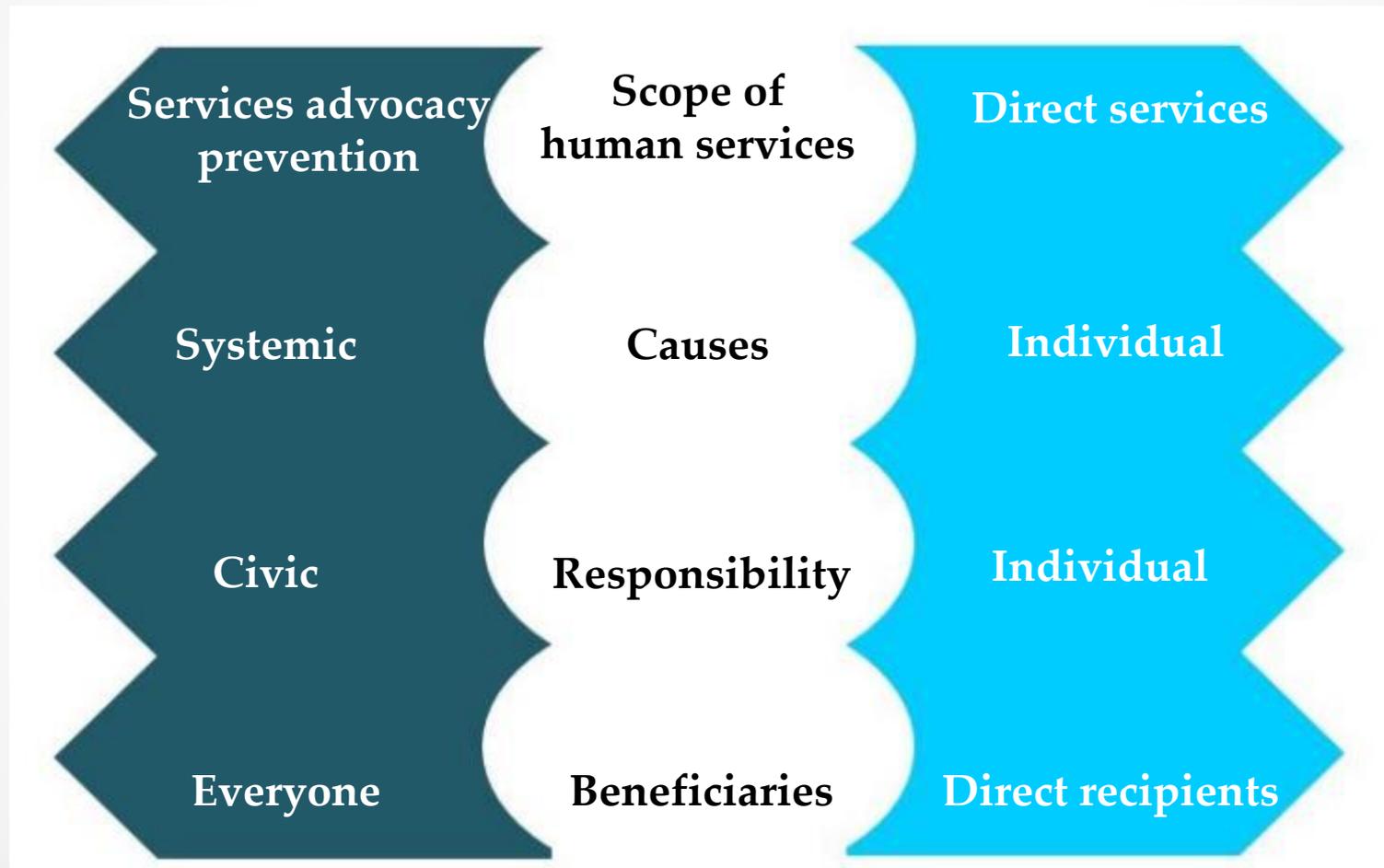
What Are Human Services?

FrameWorks Institute's
On-the-Street Interviews for the
National Human Services Assembly

Mapping the Gaps

Experts

Public

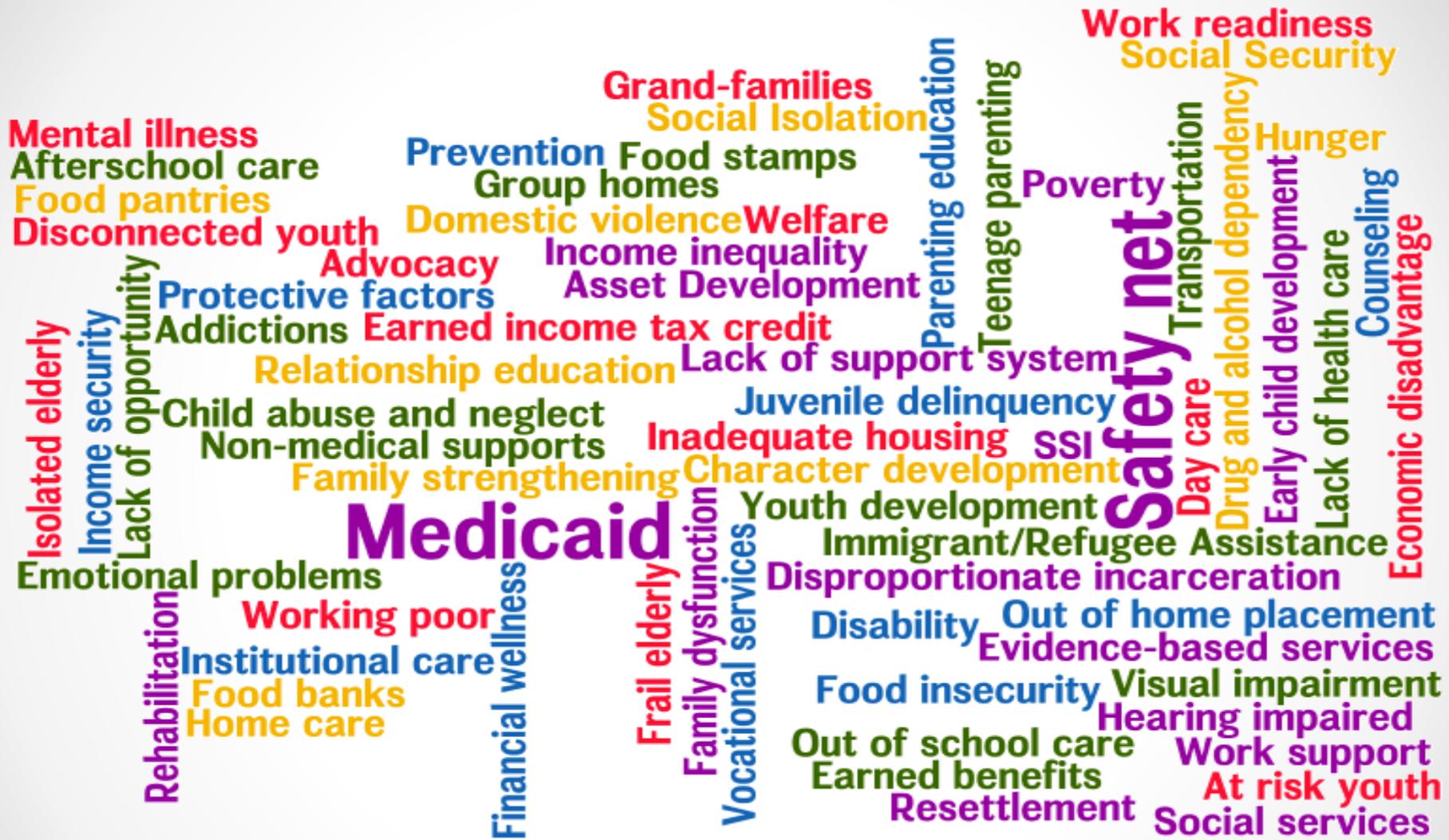


You Say...They Think

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...

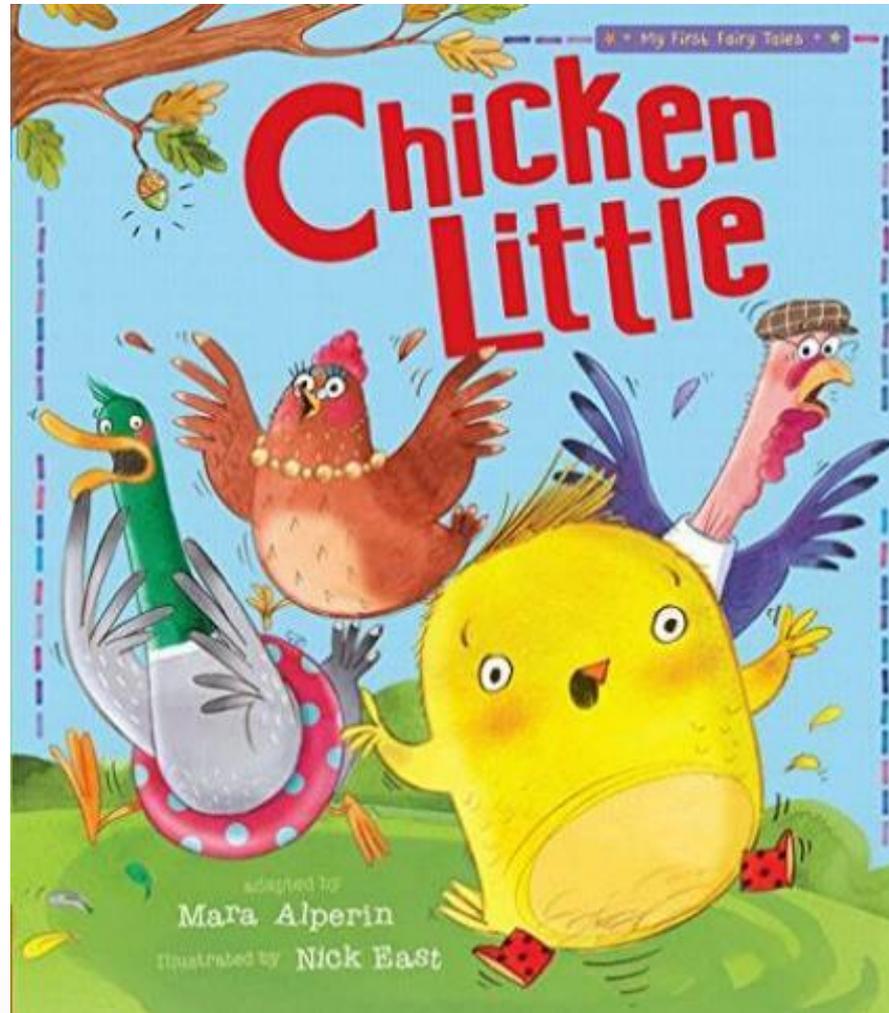




Cultural Models



Fatalism Model



What is well-being?

- Financial Self-Sufficiency
- Physical Health



Human Services SWAMP

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



How We Cue the Swamp



- **Vivid Individual Stories**
- **Argue, Snark, Shame**
- **Repeating the Myth**



The Solution: Framing



Framing a New Narrative

“This is a time of purpose. We are on a mighty crusade.”

What a refreshing change from the anger and lament.

In psychology, there’s a concept known as ‘reframing.’ It involves turning a problem into a challenge, looking for words and ways to view something bad or difficult in a more useful light.

Reframing is not the same as delusion. Delusion is a failure to grasp reality. When you reframe, you see reality but understand that it has many angles.

You acknowledge that what you perceive depends on where you look, on where you stand, on how you name what you see and feel.”

Chicago Tribune, October 26, 2018



Research-based Communication

Public vs. Expert Story

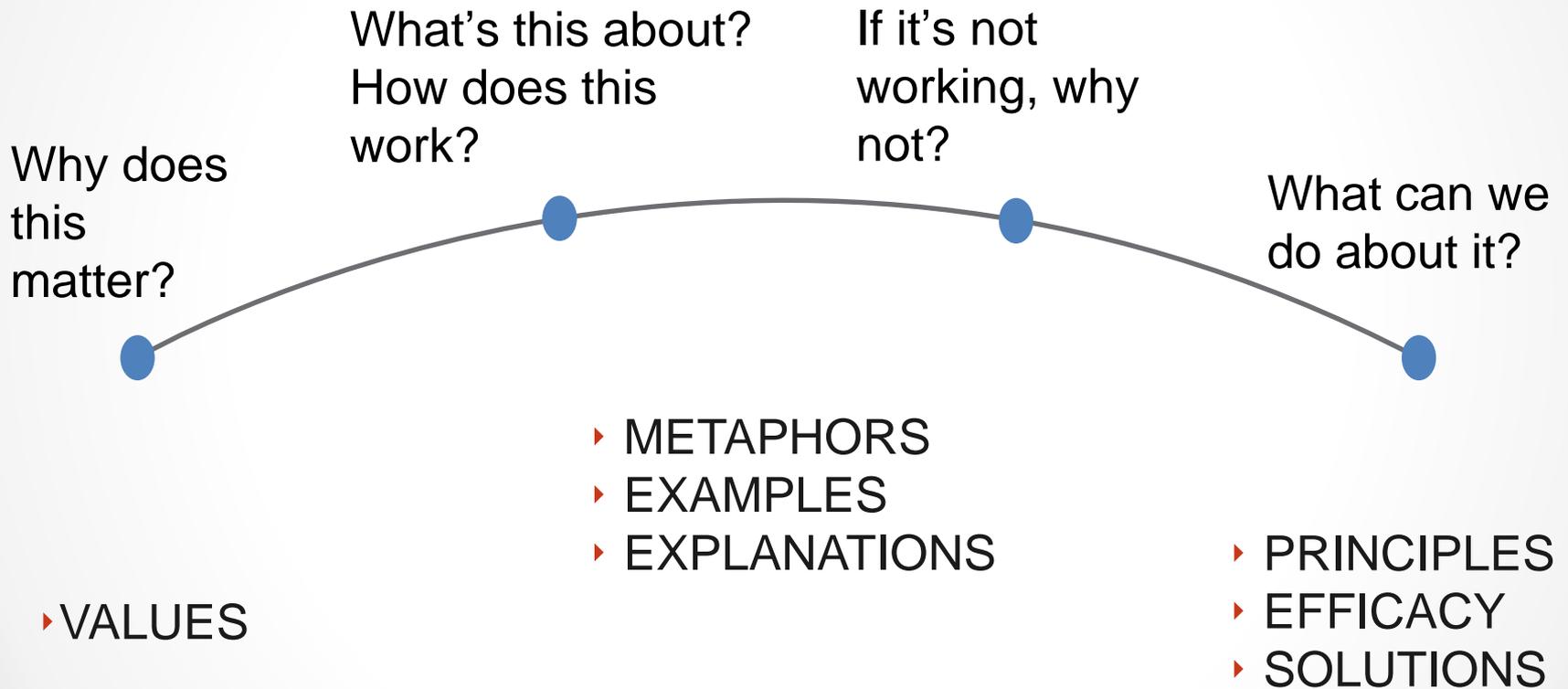
- Expert interviews conducted with leaders in the field of human services sector
- Cultural models interviews in three states to analyze dominant thinking

REFRAMING Research

- On-the-street interviews (quickly tests and winnows candidate reframes)
- Large-scale survey experiment (tests candidate reframing strategies against each other)
- Persistence trials (small-group sessions used to check effectiveness of best-performing strategies from experiment)

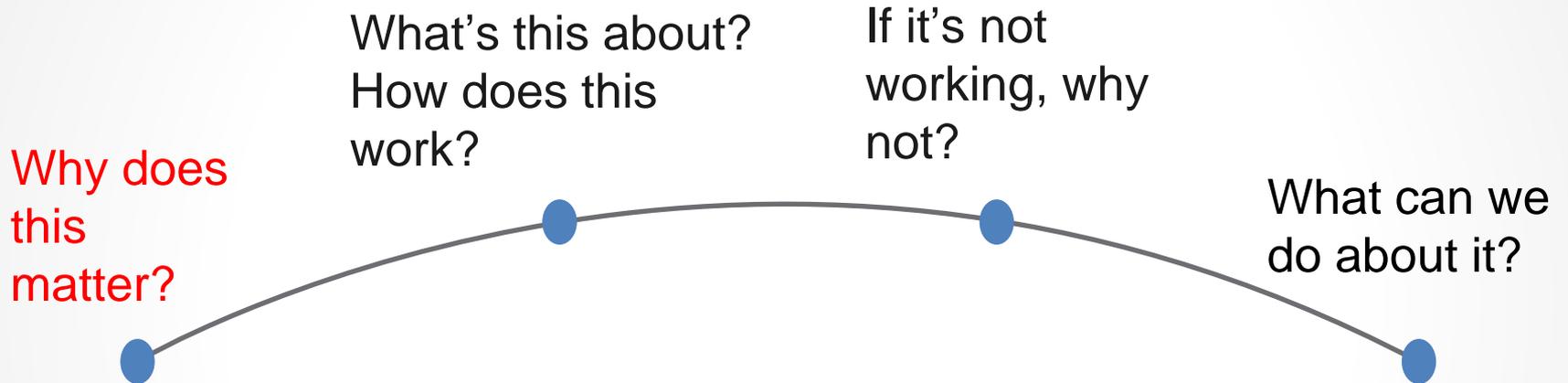
A Well-Framed Story Arc

Answering the public's big questions about social issues



A Well-Framed Story Arc

Answering the public's big questions about social issues



Human Potential:
Human services help everyone 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

Leading the Conversation

Framed with Vulnerable

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

Leading the Conversation

Framed with Vulnerable

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Reframed with Human Potential

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

Austin Mayor Steve Adler on National Mayor's Mental Health Day of Action

“Our community is so much stronger when everyone has access to the tools and the support that they need, so that everybody can contribute to their fullest potential to our city and to our community.”



Human Potential

 **Annie E. Casey Fdn**
@AECFNews Following

For America to reach its full economic and moral potential, all kids must have the opportunity to thrive: bit.ly/2i28S7d



CLICK HERE

#RACEFORRESULTS

 THE ANNIE E. CASEY FOUNDATION

6:05 PM - 30 Oct 2017

35 Retweets 40 Likes 

  35  40 

Human Potential

 **IKEA USA News** 
@IKEAUSANews Follow

This [#HungerActionMonth](#), join [@FeedingAmerica](#) to help people reach their full potential: bit.ly/29JTnv7.



7:54 AM - 15 Sep 2016

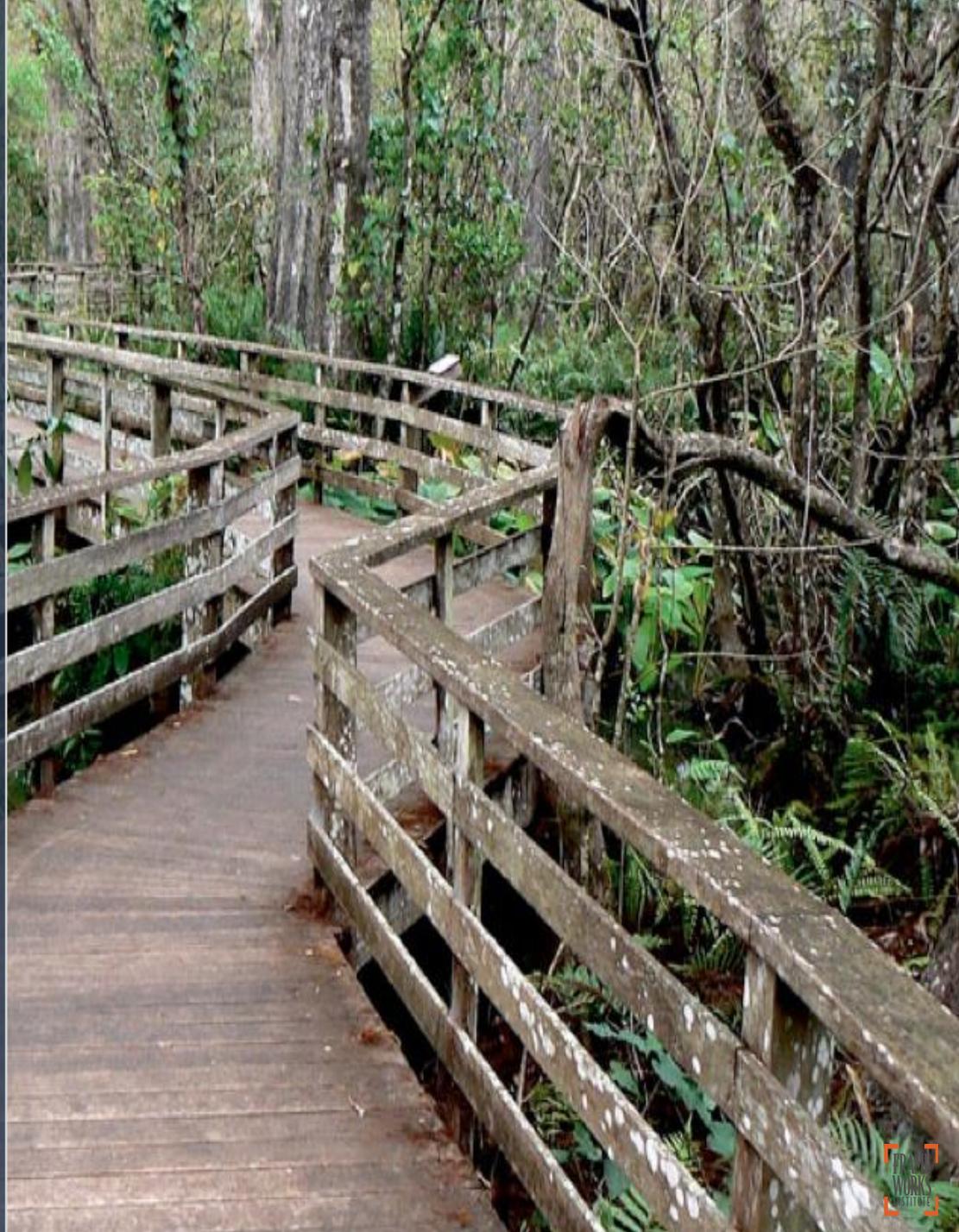
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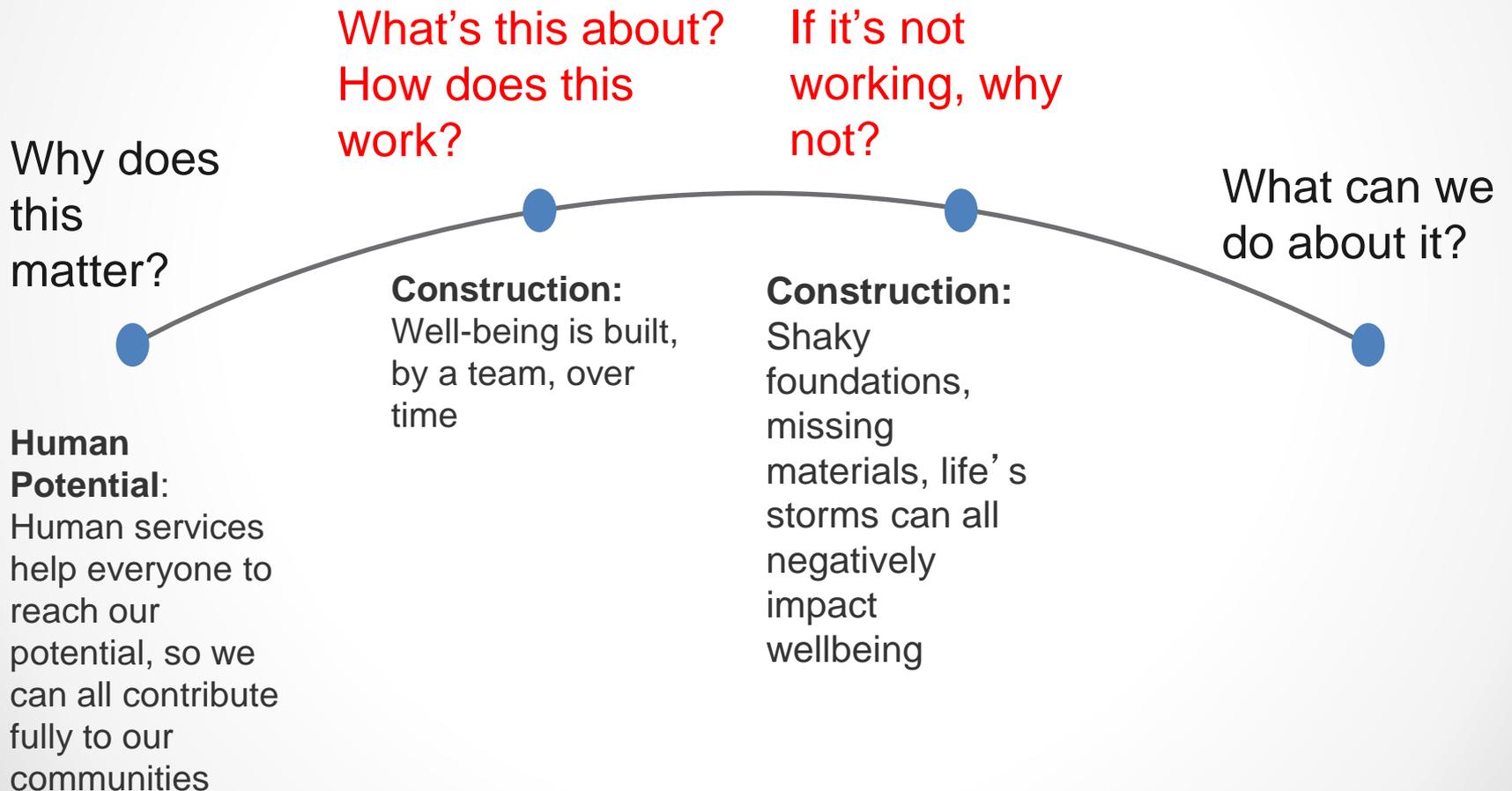
Metaphors Help You Navigate the Swamp

Uses the power of analogy to channel attention to certain features of an issue – focusing on those that deepen understanding, motivate engagement and drive policy support.



A Well-Framed Story Arc

Answering the public's big questions about social issues



Building Well-Being

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

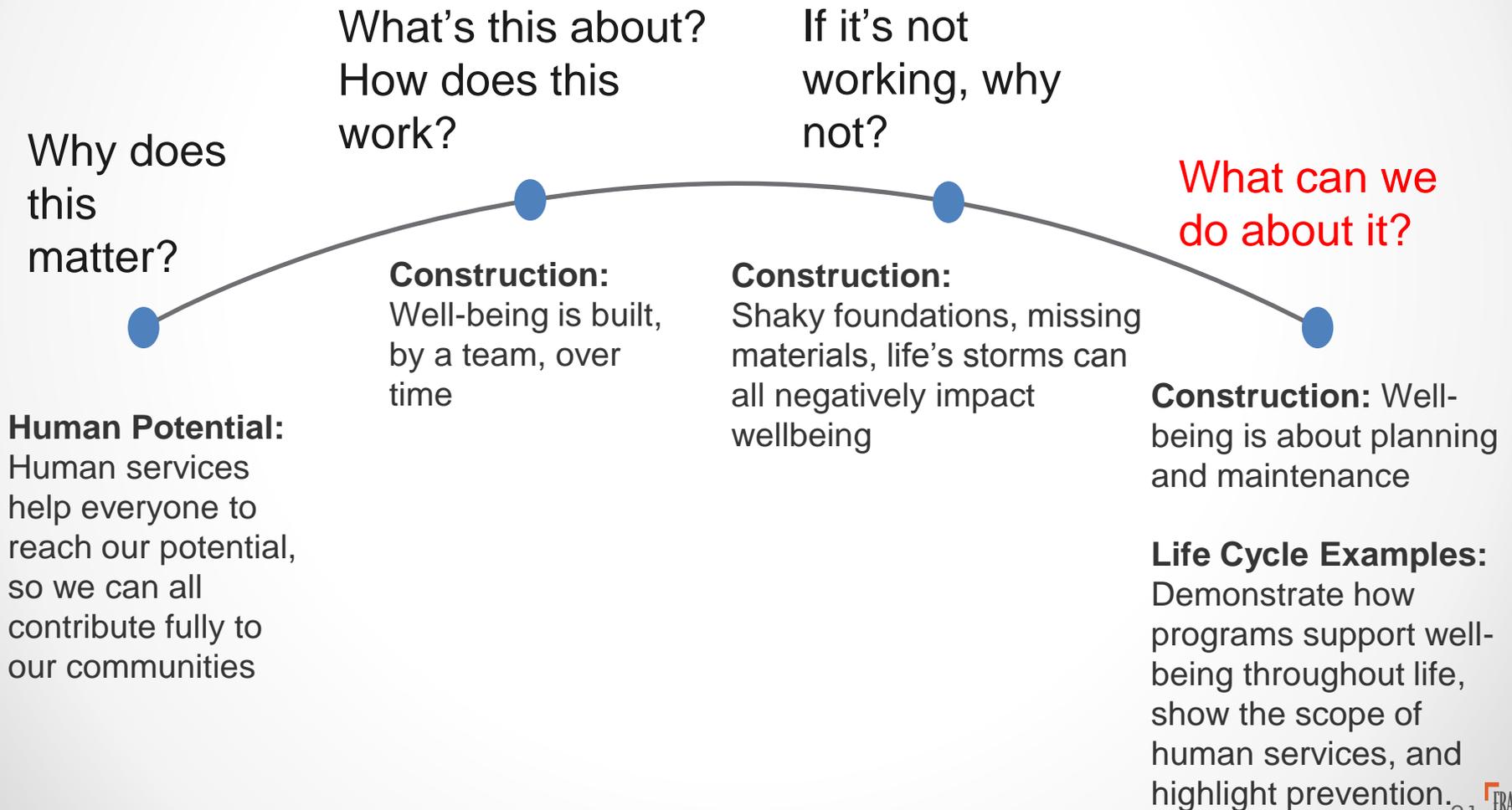
Describes well-being as **supports and foundation**, not bootstraps

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



A Well-Framed Story Arc

Answering the public's big questions about social issues



Life Cycle Examples

- ***Be specific.*** Drop jargon.
- ***Provide examples of planning, prevention, and remediation.***
- ***Emphasize a diverse array of recipients.*** Use examples to illustrate how we ***ALL*** rely and benefit from human services at points in our lives.

One Voice Central TX

Framed with *Vulnerable Populations*

ABOUT US

One Voice Central Texas is a coalition of the leadership of over 85 nonprofit health and human service organizations unified by the common value that people come first. We represent the community's support network for children and the elderly, opportunity youth, the hungry and the homeless, persons with disabilities, those who are illiterate, those who are immigrants, and victims of violence. We are also the voice for all of the rapidly growing populations in our community who are unable to access a standard of living that supports their health, safety, security, and general welfare.

OUR MISSION:

The mission of One Voice Central Texas is to convey the human service needs of the Austin area community to policy makers and the public and to support member organizations in meeting these needs.

Reframed with *Life Cycle*

WHO WE ARE

One Voice Central Texas is a coalition of the leadership of almost one hundred nonprofit health and human service organizations working to make sure that everyone can contribute to our community and thrive. We represent the integrated network of human services that connects everyone of all ages and circumstances to social resources, opportunities, and support so that each person can reach their highest potential. We are the voice for those in the community who may have difficulty weathering the life storms that affect all of us.

OUR MISSION:

One Voice Central Texas influences and educates policy makers and the public about what it takes for everyone in our community to thrive, and ensures our members have the tools and resources to be effective.

Episodic vs. Thematic

- About Individuals
- Events-oriented
- Psychological
- Defines Issues as Private
- Appeal to Consumers
- Better Information

Fix the Person

- About Issues
- Trends-oriented
- Political/Environmental
- Defines Issues as Public
- Appeal to Citizens
- Better Policies

Fix the Condition

Widen the Lens: Systemic Challenges



Widen the Lens: Collective Triumph



AVOID

- Leaving “human services” for the public to define narrowly
- Charity work
- Safety net for vulnerable
- **PROBLEM, PROBLEM, PROBLEM**

Solution?

ADVANCE

- Broad, full picture of sector: research, advocacy, direct services
- Skilled, experts, essential profession
- Varying supports for people of all ages at every phase of life
- PROBLEM
- **SOLUTION, SOLUTION, SOLUTION**

Applying the Reframe to Human Services



ILLINOIS PARTNERS

for

HUMAN SERVICE

Applying the Reframe

Promote the value of human potential

BEFORE

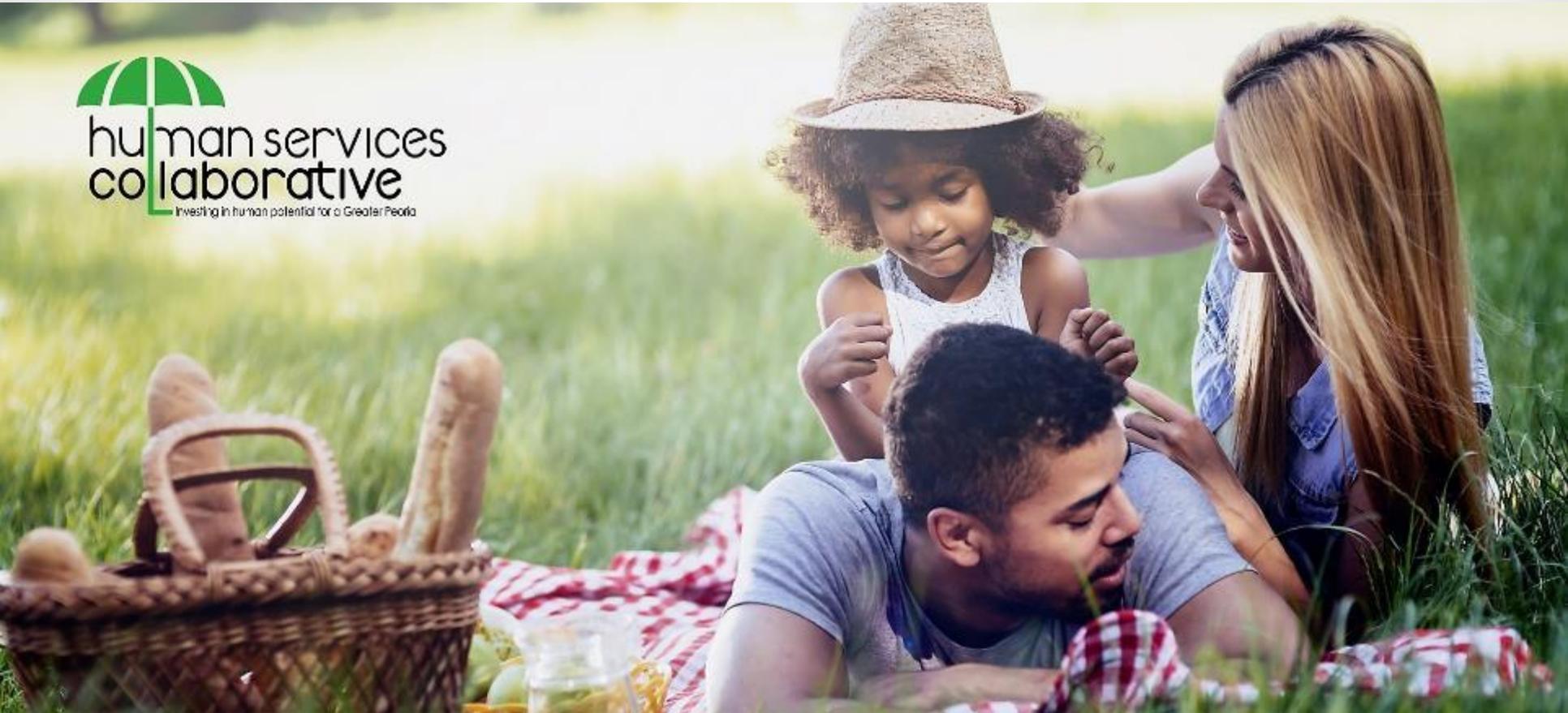


AFTER



Human Services Collaborative

Investing in human potential for a Greater Peoria



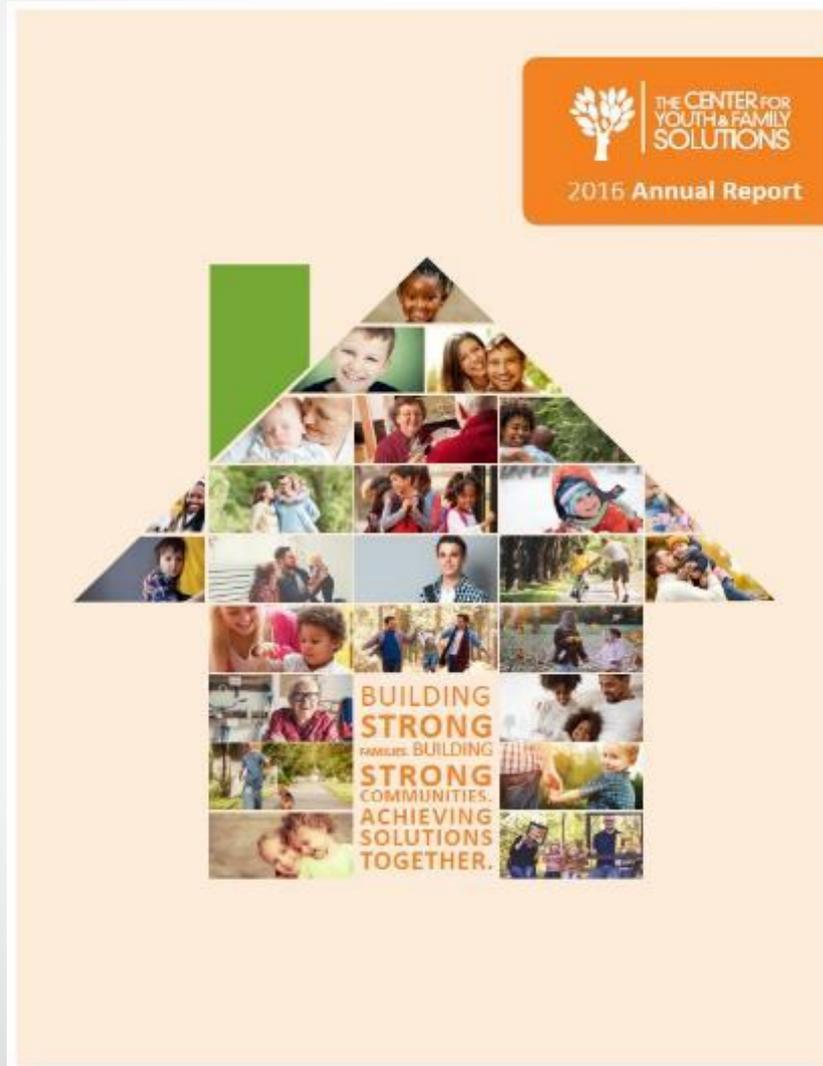
ILLINOIS PARTNERS

for

HUMAN SERVICE

Applying the Reframe

Use the construction metaphor to explain how



“Architects. Carpenters. Electricians. Plumbers. Roofers. Constructing a house requires a team of specialists; the same holds true when building strong families and strong communities. Caseworkers, family advocates, crisis intervention specialists, therapists and other Center for Youth and Family Solutions (CYFS) staff all work together to help children, families and seniors heal from trauma; strengthen and restore families; and provide infants, children and youth with loving adoptive families. In FY’16, the agency helped more than 18,000 people build the foundations necessary to get through life’s challenges while developing lasting coping skills...”

Applying the Reframe

Focus on the common good



ILLINOIS PARTNERS
for HUMAN SERVICE

Applying the Reframe

Use life cycle examples

The screenshot displays the website for Illinois Partners for Human Service. At the top right, there are social media icons for Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, and RSS, along with a red 'DONATE' button. The main header features the organization's logo: 'ILLINOIS PARTNERS for HUMAN SERVICE' in a yellow and green box, followed by the tagline 'Quality Services. Adequate Funding. Measurable Results.' in a purple box. Below the header is a navigation menu with links for 'ABOUT', 'NEWS AND UPDATES', 'RESOURCES', 'AWARENESS CAMPAIGN', 'ISSUES', 'RESEARCH', and 'CONTACT'. The central visual is a collage of ten photographs of diverse individuals of various ages and ethnicities. A yellow banner across the middle of the collage reads 'our shared human story'. Below the collage are three purple boxes with white text, each containing a section title and a brief description with a 'Learn more...' link.

Who We Are
We are a collective voice in Springfield to ensure that all Illinoisans can reach their potential and fully engage in our communities. [Learn more...](#)

What We Do
We advocate for the entire human service sector, protect funding and fair policies and make sure providers have a seat at the table. [Learn more...](#)

Why We Do It
We believe that a strong human services infrastructure improves well-being and benefits all members of society at every phase of life. [Join us...](#)



ILLINOIS PARTNERS

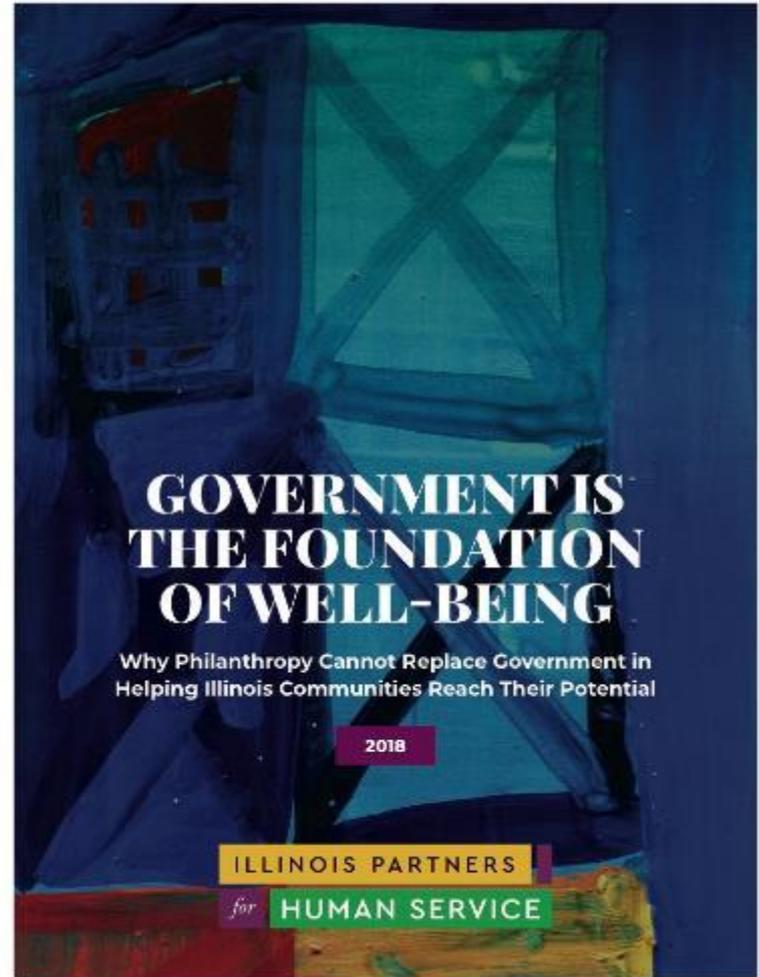
for

HUMAN SERVICE

Applying the Reframe

*Promote the value
of building well-being and
human potential*

Recognized by the National
Assembly for “real world
applications of reframing”



Putting it all Together

Human Potential

Construction

Life Cycle



Board of Directors Advocacy Day – Talking Points
February 13, 2018

The following are talking points that will guide your discussion with legislators. As background, below is an explanation of human services set in the reframe. The goal of this narrative is to change the way we talk about the sector in order to change the perception of human services.

WHAT IS HUMAN SERVICE?

- Human services play an intrinsic part in fostering the potential that we all have to offer by providing an infrastructure of well-being that supports *all* members of society.
- This includes ensuring that we have the essential elements needed to build and maintain our physical, emotional, and economic well-being at every phase of life.

HUMAN SERVICE IN ILLINOIS

- Well-being is built. It needs a sturdy foundation at the start to keep it standing through all kinds of weather.
- Just as poor construction can make a house unstable, the well-being of people who haven't received enough support in life can be threatened when they don't have the resources to weather life's storms.
- Human service professionals design and implement services that create the sturdy foundation for well-being, maintain it over time, and repair the foundation if it breaks down.

Human services in Illinois include:

- Early childhood services that foster healthy growth and development, including child care and home visiting programs.
- After school programs that provide mentoring, safe spaces and social resources for young children and teens.]
- Job training and workforce development initiatives that help adults acquire the skills they need to find and keep good jobs.
- Support that helps older adults remain healthy and connected to their communities.
- Services to ensure people with physical and mental disabilities have the support they need to do well in life.
- Providing and advocating for the resources everyone needs to thrive, such as safe and stable homes, good nutrition, and health and mental health services.

Change the Conversation



**It Matters
to All of
Us**

**Construction
Metaphor**

**Collective
Voice**

**Human
Service
Professionals**

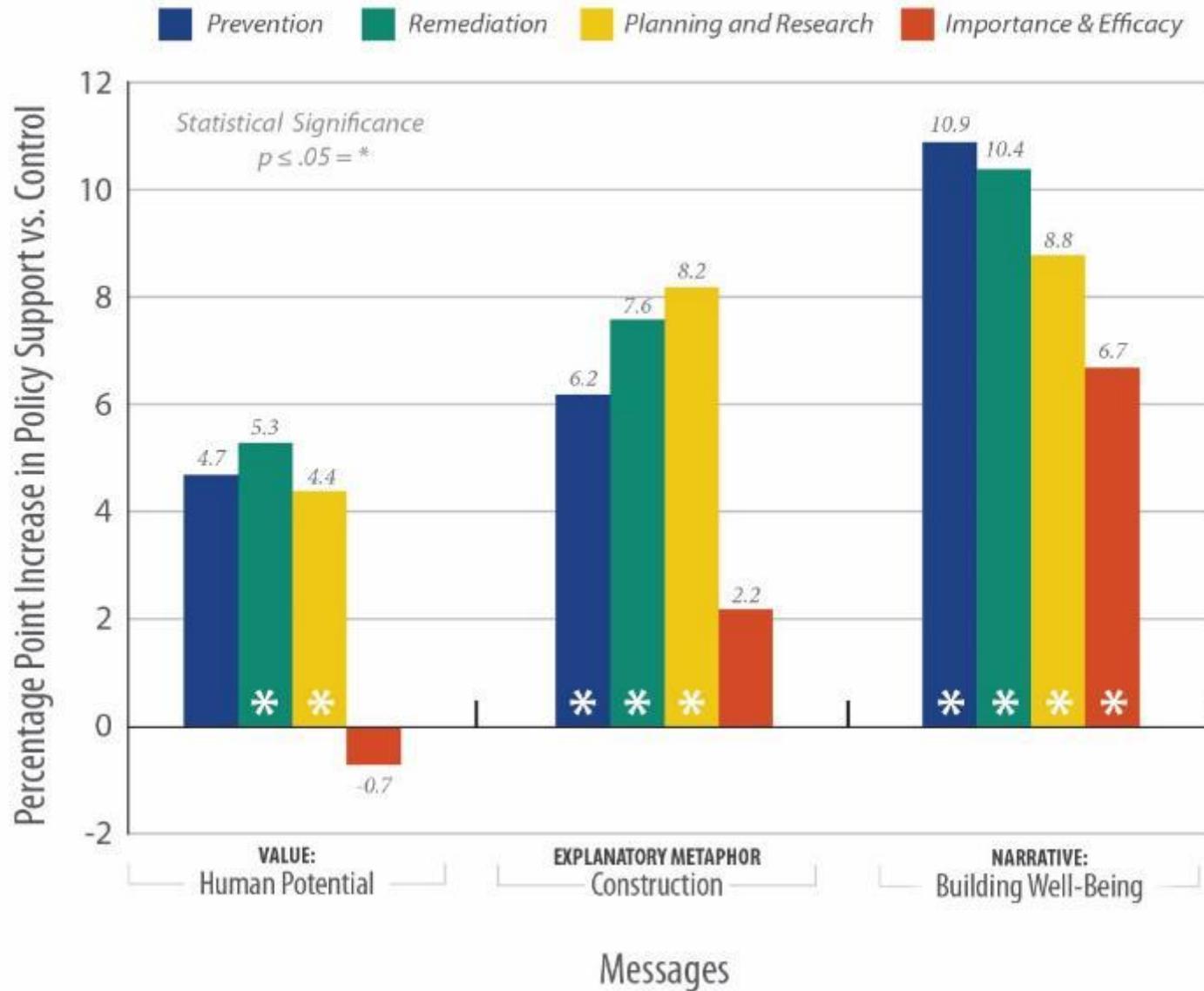
**Human
Potential**

**Building
Well-Being**

**Life Cycle
Examples**

- **Use:**
 - human potential, building well-being
 - Need for strong foundation
 - Support for life's storms
 - Support at every phase of life
- **Emphasize expertise**
- **Provide solutions**

Reframing is Most Effective with a Complete Narrative



Reframing Resources

Tools from the National Assembly:

- **Aging**
- **Budget & Taxes**
- **Children & Youth**
- **Education**
- **Health**
- **Housing**
- **Immigration**
- **Juvenile Justice**

Nationalassembly.org/initiatives

'This is a Time of Purpose.'

Redirect your own thinking today

- *Identify cultural models people use to understand human services*
 - *Lack of willpower*
 - *Government is inept*
 - *Human service is a charity*
 - *Individualism*
- *Identify opportunities to reframe in the new narrative*
- *Lead your stories with a value*
- *Explain your complex work with metaphors (used to spread ideas)*
- *Try to use the entire frame together (human potential, well-being, construction, life cycle)*

5 Tips for Successful Reframing

Organizational Level

1. Commit to the Building Well-Being Narrative

- Mind the Swamp
- Engage with Potential, Explain with Construction, Normalize with Life Cycle

2. Start with the Basics

- About Us, Boilerplate, Mission Statement

3. Get Organizational Buy-in

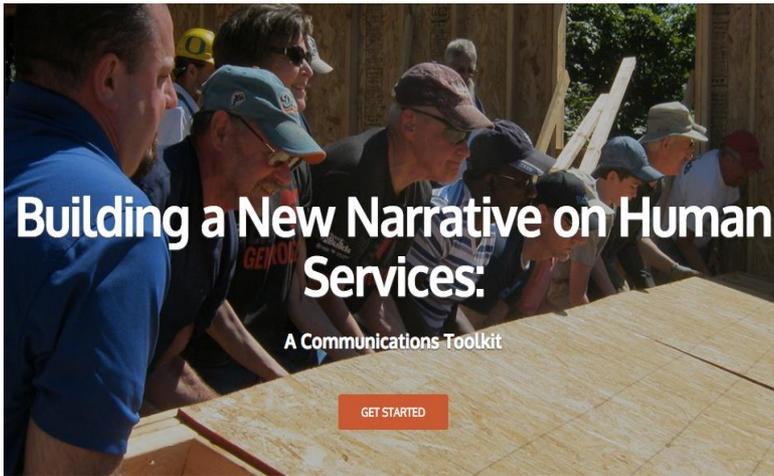
- Executive Director, Board
- Communications, Development, Advocacy Staff

4. Institutionalize

- Brand Guidelines
- Communications, Fundraising, Advocacy Strategies AND Procedures
- Staff/Board Onboarding

5. Embrace the Awkward *(it gets easier)*

Tip #6 (cont.): Don't Go It Alone



Talking Points



FAQs



Message Cards

<http://frameworksinstitute.org/toolkits/humanservices>



Quality Services. Adequate Funding. Measurable Results.

Judith Gethner, Executive Director

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Follow Us:  

THANK YOU!