

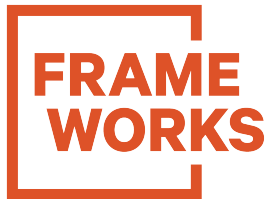
# Shifting Mindsets, Unrigging Systems

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*How Research Findings Can Inform Messaging and  
Supercharge Storytelling*

Jessica Moyer, PhD  
*Senior Principal Strategist*

November 6, 2025



Created for the **CONNECT 2025** summit  
in partnership with the Alliance for Early Success

# FrameWorks is On a Mission

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... to help mission-driven organizations ***frame the public discourse*** and ***build public will*** for positive social change.

# Agenda for Today

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*Warm-up & Introductions*

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**1) What are we trying to achieve?**

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**2) What gets in the way?**

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**3) How can framing help?**

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*Time for questions, reflections, practice, & conversation*

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# **But First!** A Warm-up Activity

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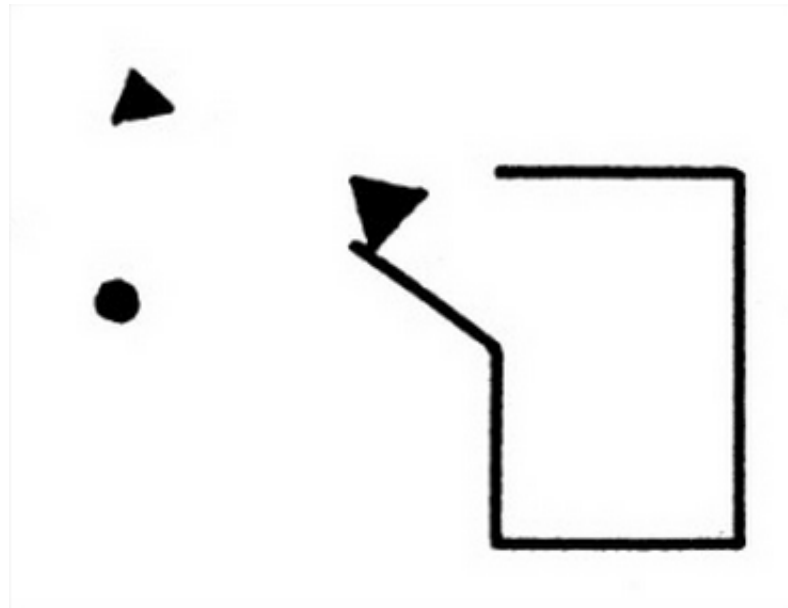




What Did **You** See?

# **There's A Story There —** Whether or Not You're Telling It

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# Introductions: What's Your Story?

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Step 1: Take 2 minutes to **write an 11-second elevator speech** introducing yourself and your work. (That's about 2-3 sentences, or <30 words.) Hint: Go beyond your job title and organization. Say something of substance about *why* you do what you do?



Step 2: At your tables, go around and share aloud. You have 2 minutes total.

1

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**What are we trying to achieve?**

# **Our Partners** Are Reframing Key Social Issues

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**early childhood:** vulnerability → developing brain

# **Our Partners** Are Reframing Key Social Issues

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**adolescent development:** opportunity ∼ risk

# **Our Partners** Are Reframing Key Social Issues

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**child welfare:** sympathy → systems

# Framing Involves Choices in How We Present Ideas

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Tone	Values	Numbers
Metaphors	Order	Explanation
Examples	Context	Visuals
Omission	Messengers	Solutions



# Narrative Is the Landscape We're Navigating

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**Patterns** of stories in  
public discourse

**NARRATIVES**



**Patterns** of understanding  
about how the world works

**MINDSETS**



... and the soil we must till to create social change.

# The “Bootstraps” Narrative (An Example)

## **NARRATIVE:** (the template)

An individual down on their luck struggles to overcome obstacles, but beats the odds and succeeds

## **MINDSETS:**

- *Self-makingness*
- *Resilience as Innate*
- *Stress Builds Strength*

## **STORY:** (the telling)

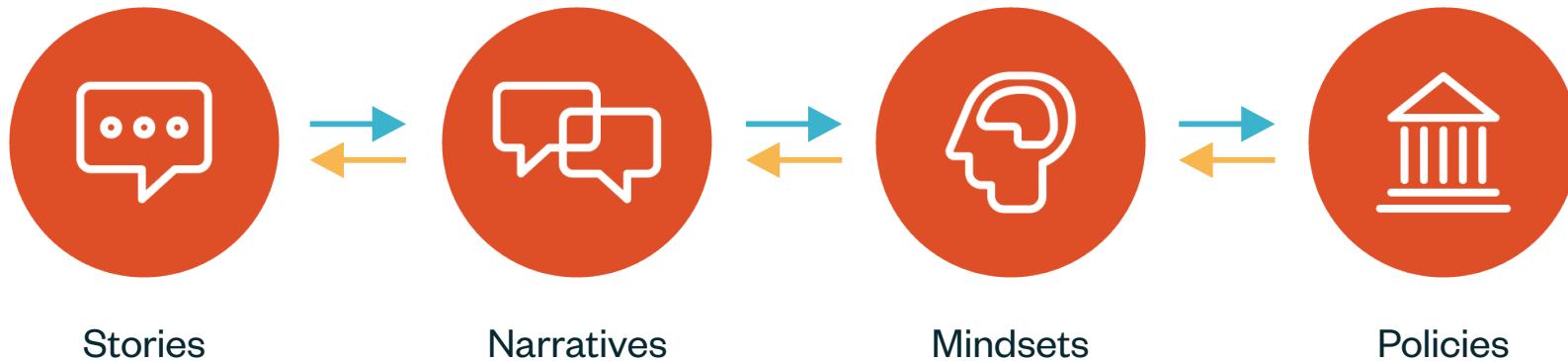
Chris Gardner, a single father and [...] “salesman” overcame homelessness [...]

## **FRAMING:**

- **Values** of self-sufficiency, hard work
- Misspelling as **metaphor**
- **Emphasis** on personal decision points

# Shifting the Narrative is About Improving Outcomes

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**2**

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**What gets in the way?**

# What Communications Challenges Do You Face?

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**Pair up with a neighbor and share your experiences.** Where are your communications getting stuck? When have you been misunderstood, ineffective, or dismissed? If you can remember, *What was actually said?*

# **Framing** Is a Tool

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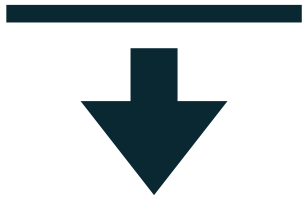
**It's not a silver bullet.**

**It's not the right tool for every job.**  
(We need other tools too.)

**It can help us navigate.**

# Cultural Mindsets are Implicit Patterns in Thinking

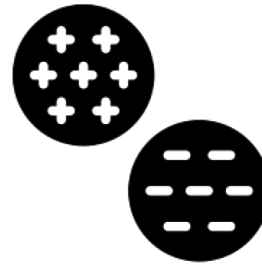
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*deep seated*



*widely shared*



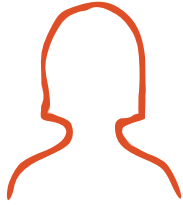
*productive AND  
unproductive*



*normalize/  
problematize*

# **Dominant Mindsets** Are Readily Available and Easily Activated

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***Individualism***



***Otherism***

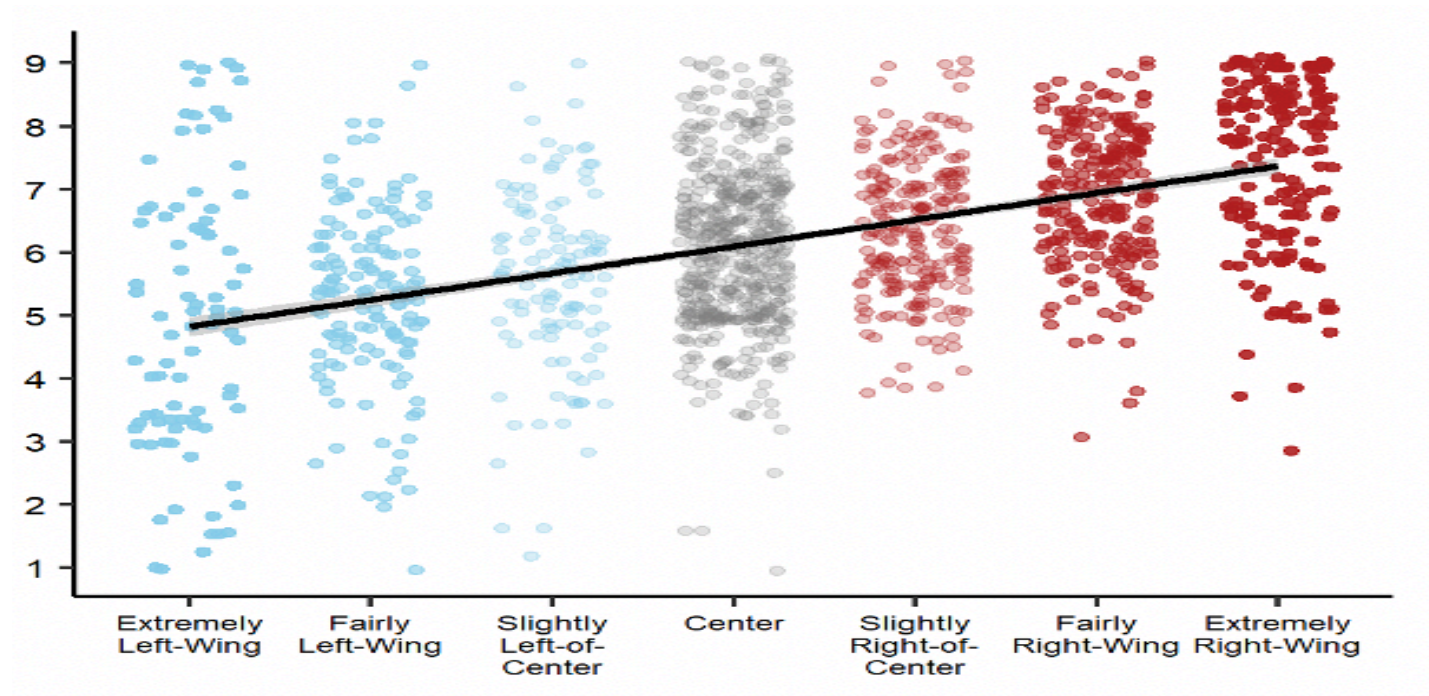


***Fatalism***



# Dominant Mindset: *Individualism*

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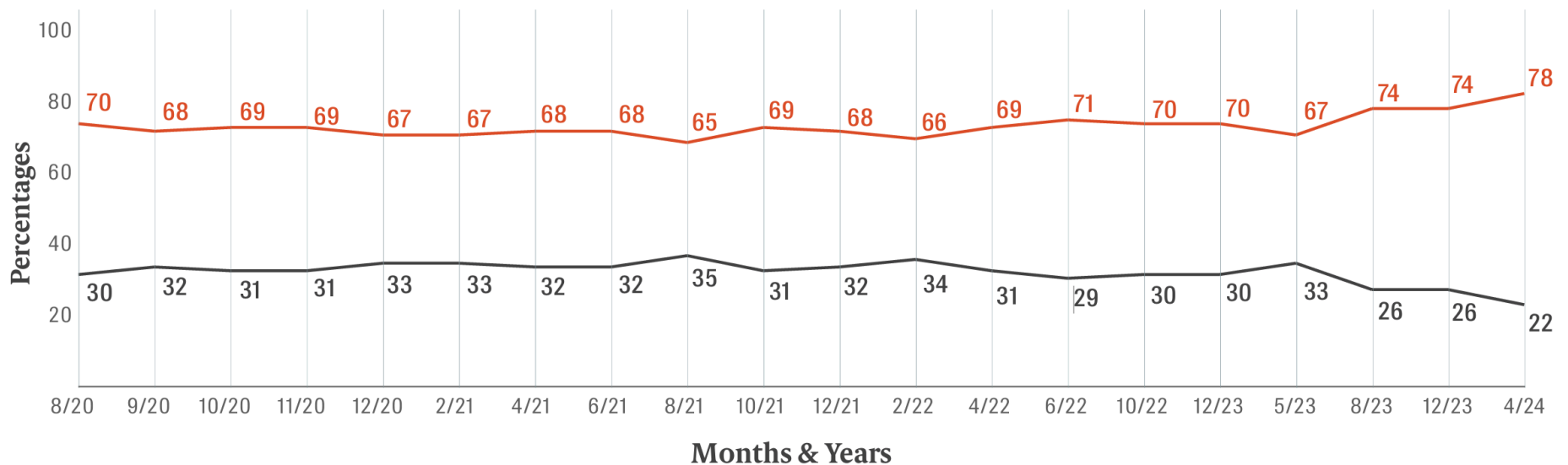


# Dominant Mindset: *Individualism*

Participants in our nationally representative survey believe that racial discrimination is the result of...

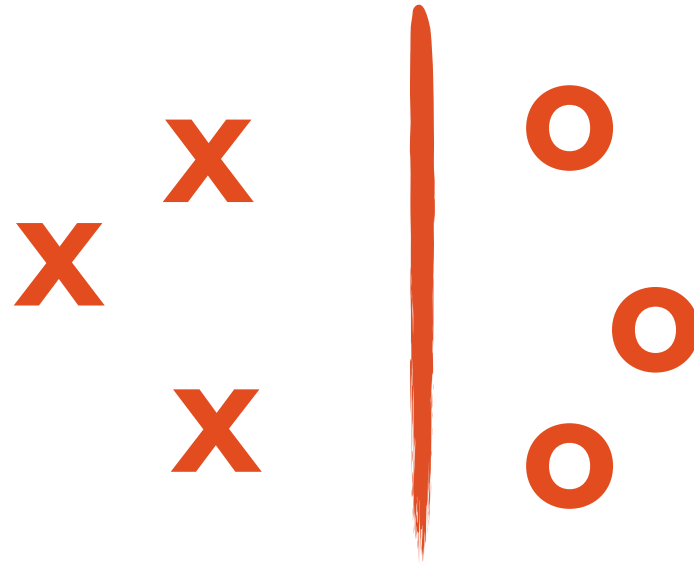
■ ... individuals' bias and prejudice

■ ... how our laws, policies, and institutions work



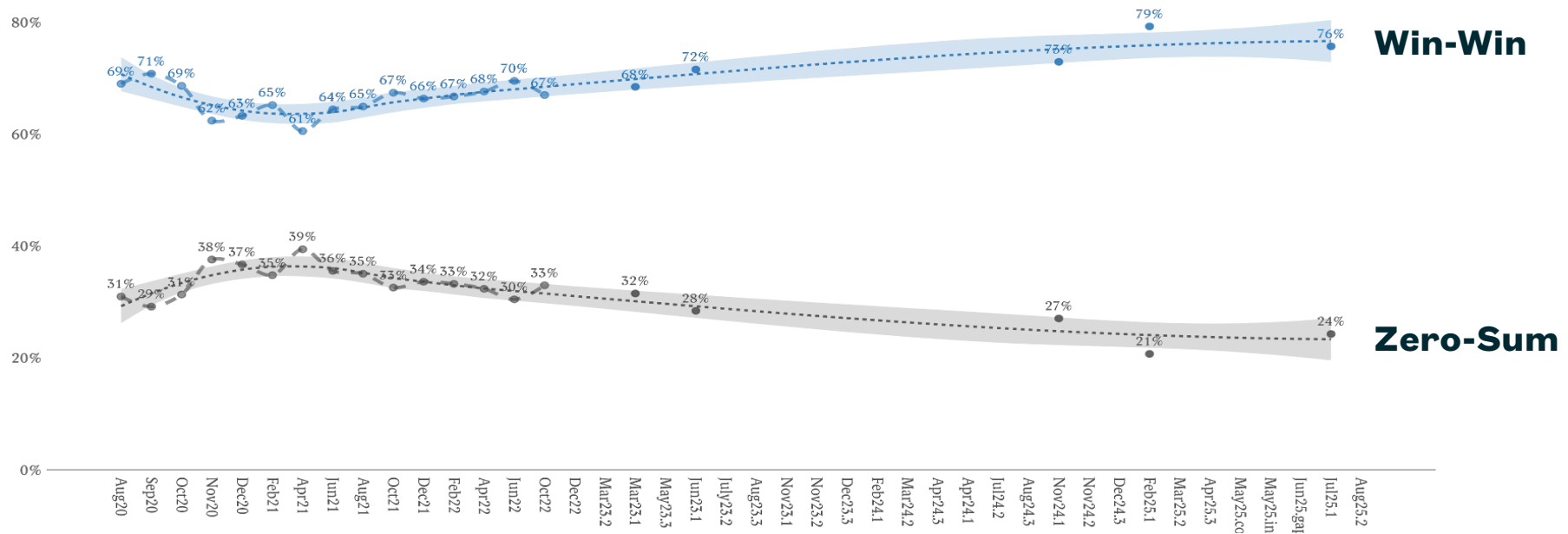
# Dominant Mindset: *Otherism*

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# Dominant Mindset: *Otherism*

- It is possible to provide help to one group within society without taking away resources from other groups.
- When one group within society receives help, it necessarily takes away from or hurts other groups.



# Dominant Mindset: *Fatalism*

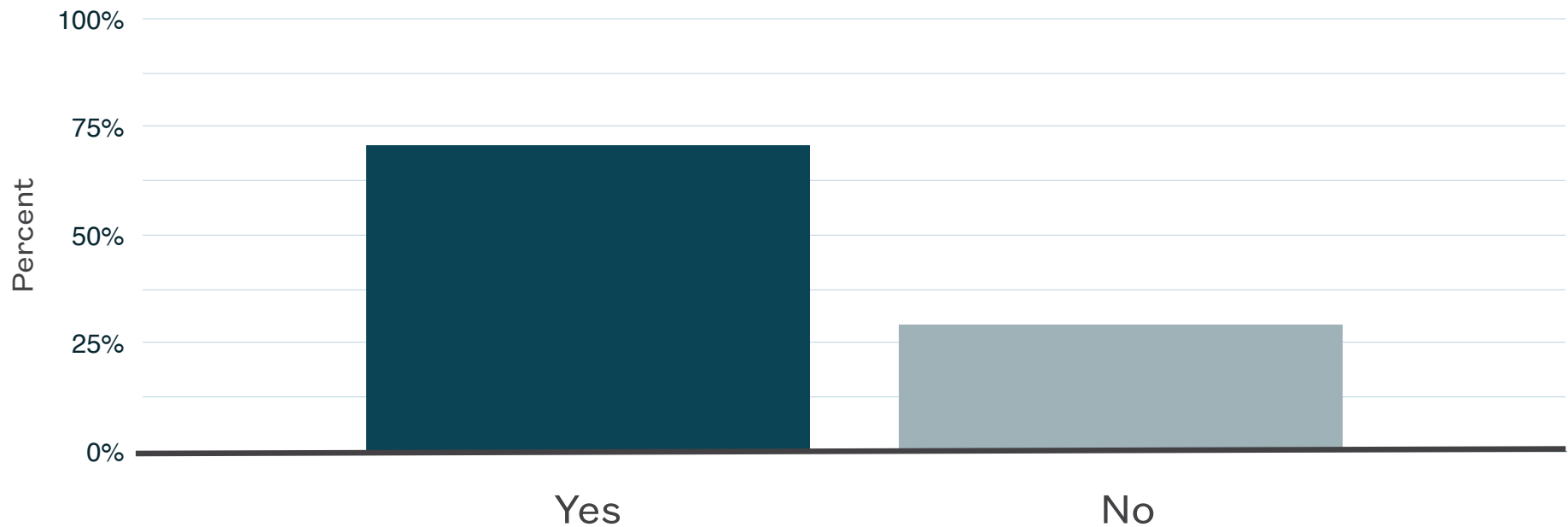
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# Dominant Mindset: *Fatalism*

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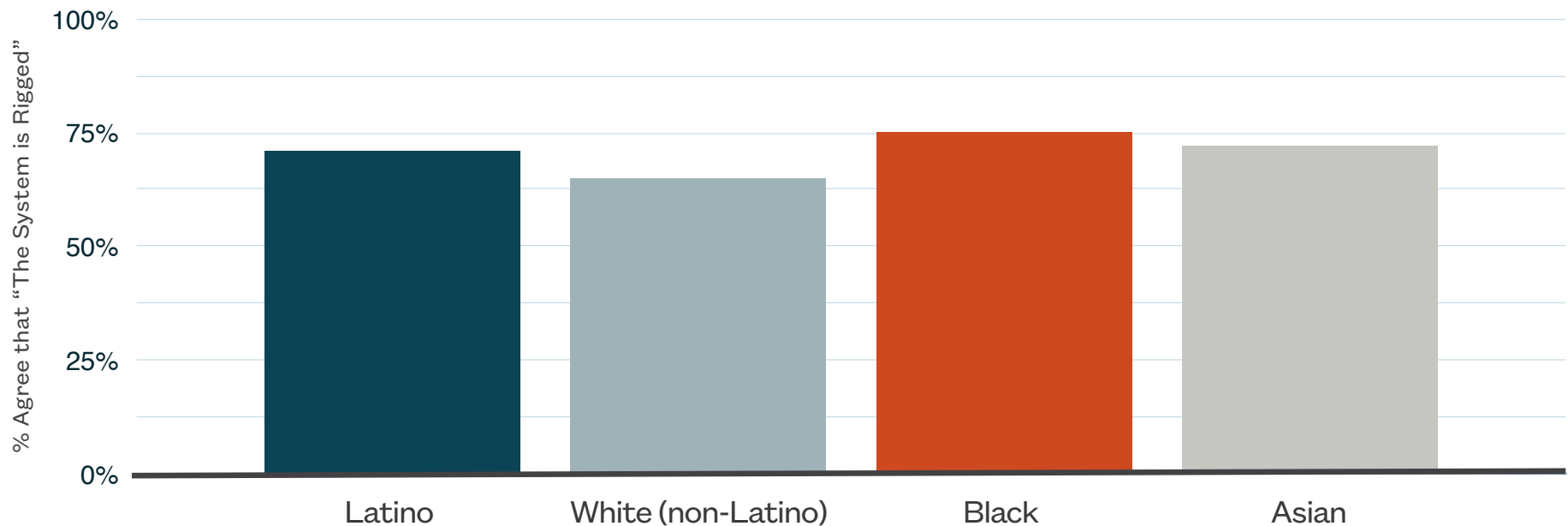
*“Do you think the system is rigged in America?”*



# Dominant Mindset: *Fatalism*

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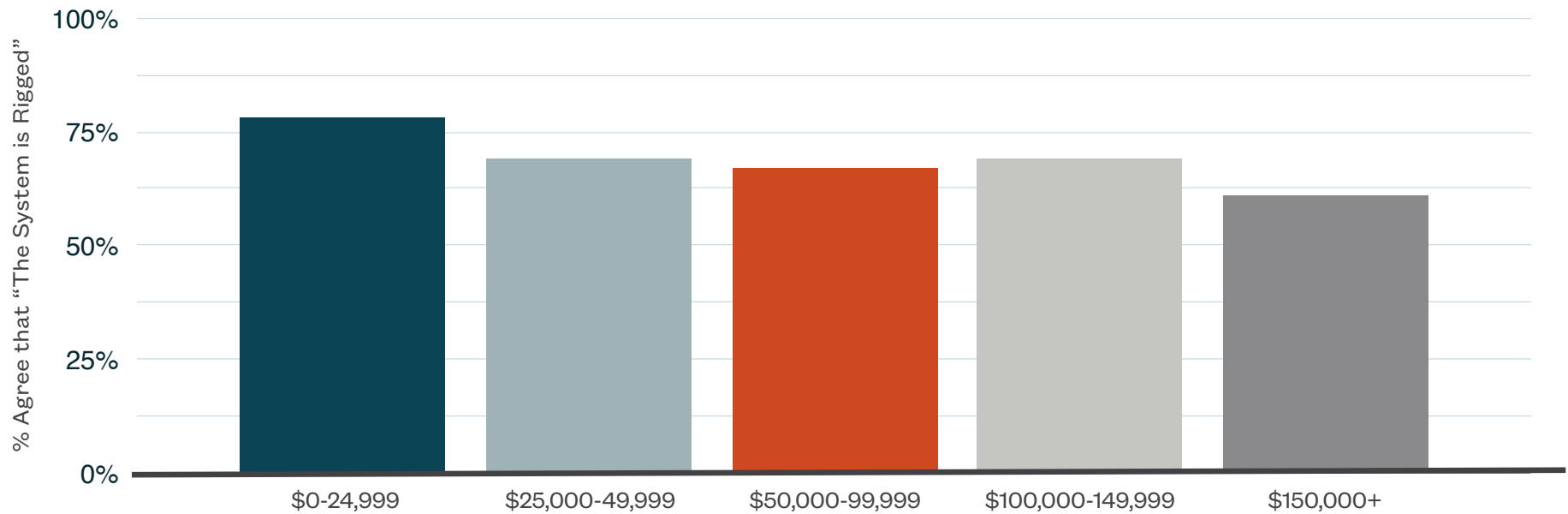
This mindset is shared across racial groups...



# Dominant Mindset: *Fatalism*

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Income...

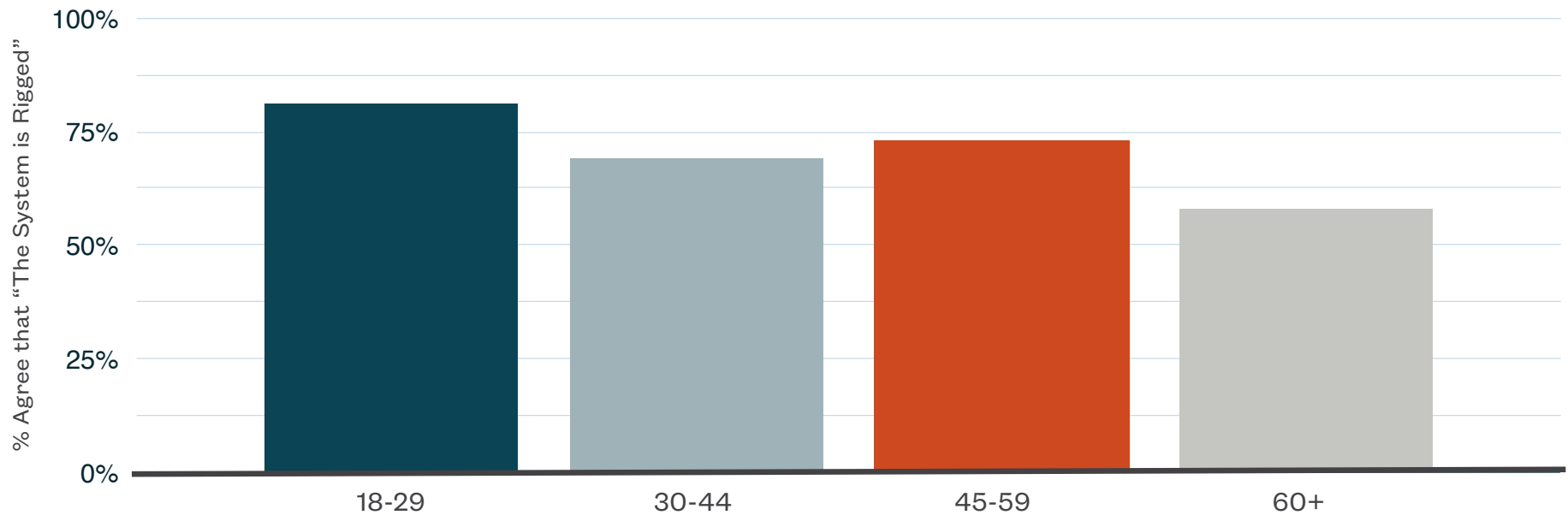




# Dominant Mindset: *Fatalism*

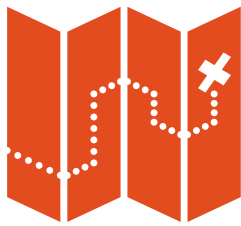
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Age...

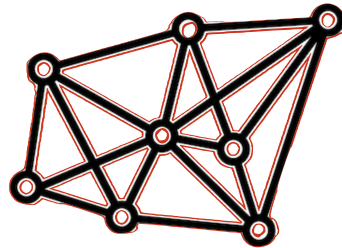


# **Alternative Mindsets** Can Be Activated (With a Bit More Effort)

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***Place Matters***



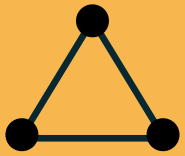
***Interconnection***



***Can-Do***

# Which Mindset is Being Activated?

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Step 1: Working in a group of 3, revisit the communications challenges you identified earlier. **Could a particular dominant mindset help explain** what was at the root of the pushback or misunderstanding?

***Individualism | Otherism | Fatalism***



Step 2: **Where else have you encountered these mindsets?**  
Are they reflected in your own thinking? (Discuss in your group.)

3

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# How can framing help?

# A Framing Strategy Informs Messaging

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Framing	Messaging
Drives public narrative in a new direction	Drives action toward specific goals
Consistent across contexts and over time	Varied across settings, audiences, etc.
Longer-term process & outcomes	Shorter-term process & outcomes
Key tools: themes, values, explanations	Key tools: turns of phrase, calls to action

## *Framing Recommendation #1:*

# **Lead with a vision.**

---

### ***Less of this***

“Hunger” and “poverty”



People struggling, suffering



Who's affected



Vulnerability



### ***More of this***

Access to affordable healthy food  
and economic stability

People participating, calling for  
change

Who's responsible

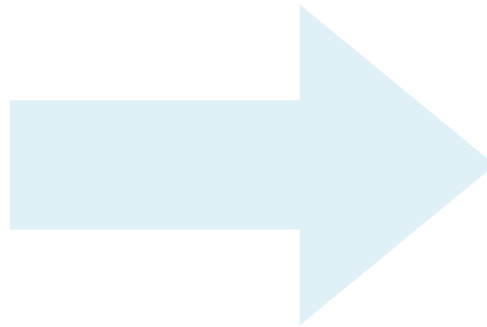
Shared prosperity

## *Framing Recommendation #1:* **Lead with a vision.**

---

4 in 6 of Philadelphia's children are not reading at grade level by the start of 4th grade.

The numbers are even higher among students of color.



*Framing Recommendation #1:*

**Lead with a vision.**

---

When advocating from a place of **lived experience**...

**Highlight your unique  
knowledge and expertise.**



EXAMPLE:

Like other families separated by incarceration, my wife Kayla and I have an intimate understanding of its harmful effects on children's development, adult relationships, and community stability. We also know firsthand that preventive measures—such as behavioral health services, which Kayla accessed on her path to sobriety, and job training programs, like the one I enrolled in—reduce trauma and improve outcomes for everyone. As we reform our criminal legal system, insights from families like mine, gained through direct experience and lived expertise, can guide the way.

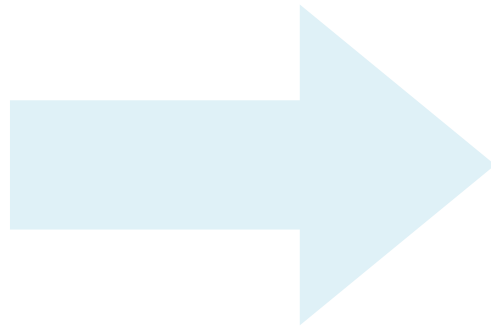
*Framing Recommendation #2:*

## **Put people in context.**

---

Instead of zooming in on...

- behaviors
- choices
- actions
- decisions



**Widen the lens**  
to include...

- environments
- relationships
- conditions
- (dis)incentives

## Framing Recommendation #2:

# Put people in context.



**26,000**  
PRIMARY AGE KIDS  
WERE ADMITTED TO  
HOSPITAL  
LAST YEAR BECAUSE OF  
TOOTH DECAY  
CAUSED BY SUGAR  
#SugarRush

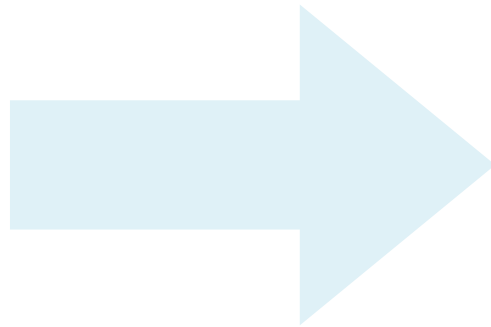
RETWEETS 712 FAVORITES 377

-  **judy swafford** @judykarol · Sep 3  
@jamieoliver and neglectful parents forgot that part.
-  **Love Lassi** @LoveLassi1 · Sep 3  
@jamieoliver #SugarRush educate educate educate - cook home made food, drink water, take responsibility for your children's health
-  **linda mackenzie** @lindamackenzie5 · Sep 3  
@jamieoliver its impossible to omit sugar from kids diets! Fresh juice or not. What can we do?? I don't take sugar as I hate sweet things.
-  **Lesley MacGregor** @scoobs1969 · Sep 3  
@jamieoliver I refuse to give my son drinks which contain aspartame and sweeteners in them x
-  **Lisa Downes** @downesrule · Sep 4  
@jamieoliver well done but good luck.. ive worker in special care dental services for 27 years we have over a year waiting list. Good luck

## *Framing Recommendation #2:*

# **Put people in context.**

---



CANDY DISPLAYED **AT THE EYE LEVEL OF TODDLERS** RIDING IN SHOPPING CARTS GENERATED ENOUGH REVENUE LAST YEAR TO COVER THE HOSPITAL BILLS OF THE **26,000** PRIMARY AGE **KIDS** WHO WERE ADMITTED FOR TOOTH DECAY.

*Framing Recommendation #2:*

**Put people in context.**

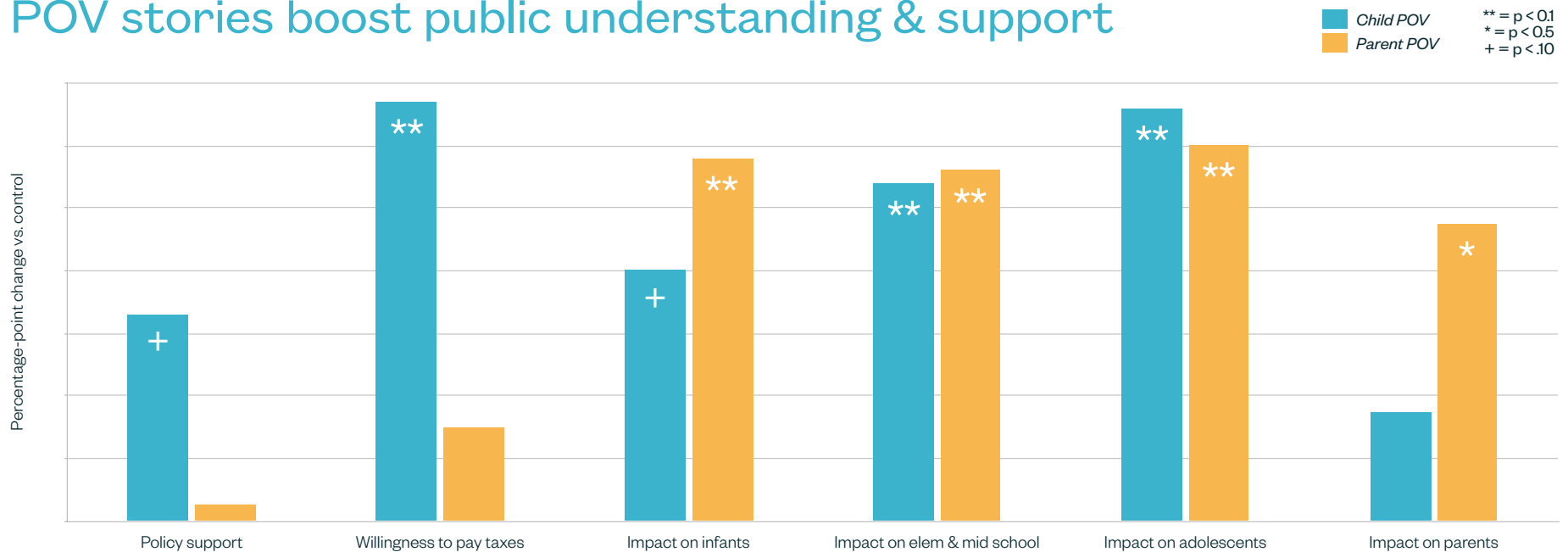
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When advocating from a place of **lived expertise**...

**Give your story a setting.**

## *Framing Recommendation #2:* **Put people in context.**

POV stories boost public understanding & support

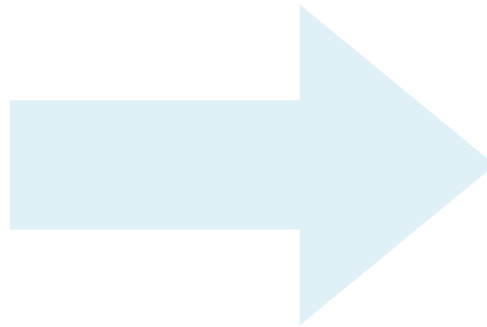


*Framing Recommendation #3:*

## **Explain the problem.**

---

Instead of focusing  
on *negative*  
*outcomes* (or the  
people who  
disproportionately  
experience them)



**Connect the  
dots** between  
causes and  
consequences.



## *Framing Recommendation #3:*

# **Explain the problem.**

---

Which one is actually explaining?

**A**

Because incomes have barely budged while housing prices have sharply increased, today's average salary isn't enough to rent a modest one-bedroom apartment anywhere in the US.

**B**

"Rent burden" is defined as spending 30 percent or more of pretax income on housing. In 2024, more than 49% of Americans were rent-burdened, compared with 38% in 2015 and 24% in 2001.



### *Framing Recommendation #3:*

## **Explain the problem.**

---

Which one is actually explaining?

**A**

Black patients are less likely to seek medical care for chronic health conditions.

**B**

The experience of discrimination can make people reluctant to seek medical care.

### *Framing Recommendation #3:*

## **Explain the problem.**

---

Which one is actually explaining?

**A**

The stress of social isolation helps to explain why LGBT+ youth are twice as likely to try smoking before age 13.

**B**

Youth who identify as LGBT+ are twice as likely than their straight peers to try smoking before the age of 13.

## *Framing Recommendation #3:*

# **Explain the problem.**

---

*“This is the result of...”*

*“Which leads to...”*

*“Is affected by...”*

*“And in turn...”*

*“The reason it occurred was...”*

*“This can cause...”*

*“As a result...”*

*“That helps explain why...”*

*Framing Recommendation #3:*

**Explain the problem.**

---

When advocating from a place of **lived expertise**...

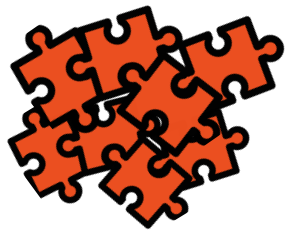
**Illustrate the process**  
(not just the end product).

## *Framing Recommendation #4:*

# **Offer a well-matched solution.**

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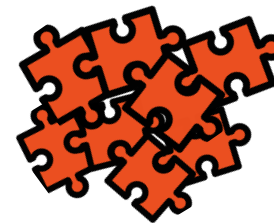
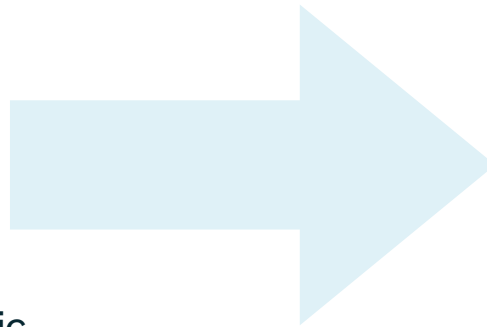
(Common framing trap)



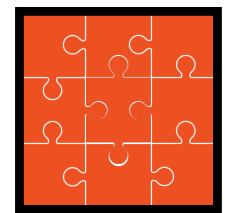
HUGE, complex  
problem



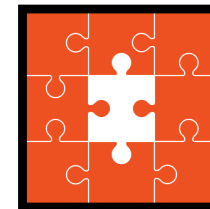
Narrow, specific  
solution



Big-picture  
problem



Big-picture  
solution



Specific  
problem

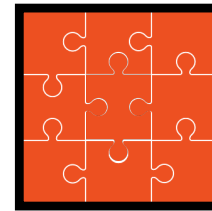
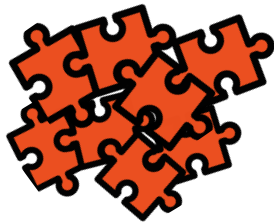


Specific  
solution

*Framing Recommendation #4:*

## **Offer a well-matched solution.**

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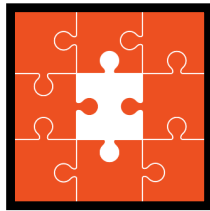
Our childcare system isn't working the way we need it to. Childcare has become unaffordable for both families and early educators.

Childcare is critical to a well-functioning society. Public investment is needed to reduce costs for families and increase wages for educators.

*Framing Recommendation #4:*

## **Offer a well-matched solution.**

---



+



Tax credits that aim to make childcare more affordable for low- and middle- income families, currently don't go far enough to make a dent.

We should increase the max. amt. that parents can receive under the CDCTC to \$2,500 for families with 1 child, and \$4k for families with 2+.

*Framing Recommendation #4:*

**Offer a well-matched solution.**

---

When advocating from a place of **lived expertise**...

**Celebrate coordination and  
collaboration.**



# Let's Practice Reframing a Piece of Communication

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Step 1: Find a new pair to work with, and choose a specific piece of communication to look at together. Discuss: **Which dominant mindset(s) are likely to be activated?** Which alternative mindset(s) would you want to strengthen instead?



Step 2: **Work together to implement the framing recommendations.** (Pick just one to start with!)

# Let's Practice Reframing

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**(1) Lead with a vision.**

*Highlight your lived expertise.*

**(2) Put people in context.**

*Give your story a setting.*

**(3) Explain the problem.**

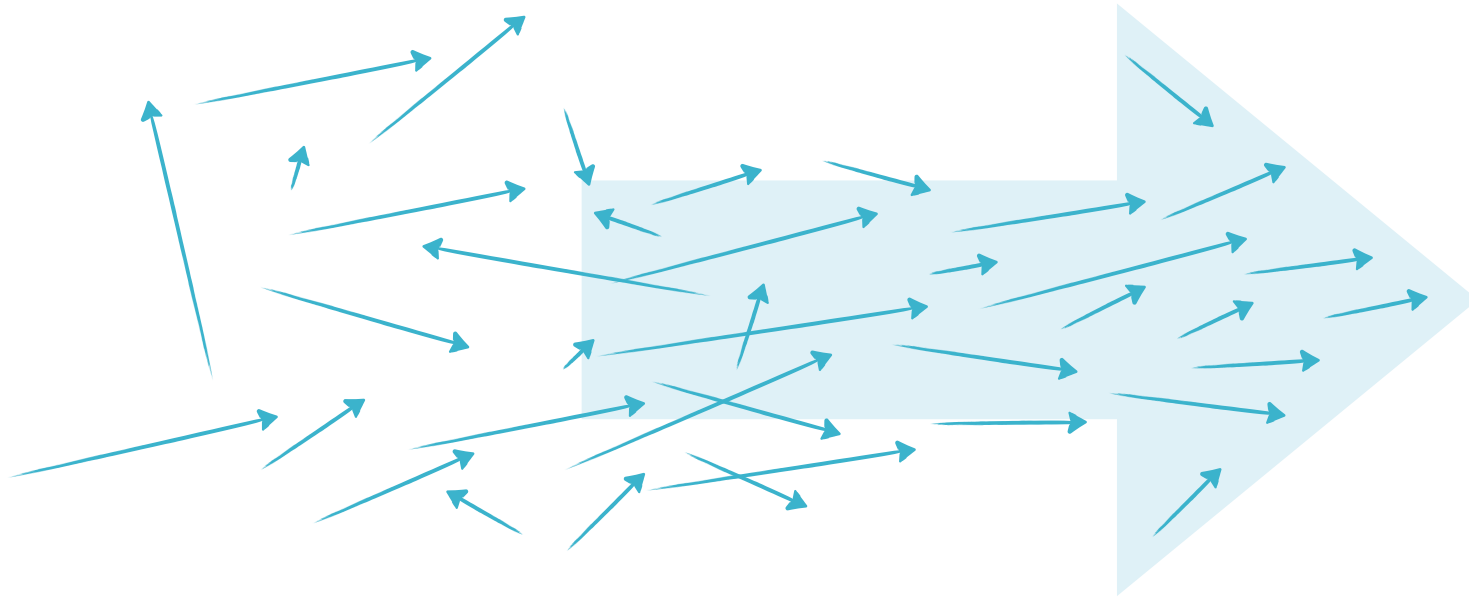
*Illustrate the process (not just the end product).*

**(4) Offer a well-matched solution.**

*Celebrate coordination and collaboration.*

# **A Shared Framing Strategy** Increases Our Narrative Power

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# **Framing Now** Affects What's Possible Later

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# Time for Questions, Reflections, & Intentions

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*What did you find  
helpful?*

*What was  
especially tricky?*



*What are you still  
wondering about?*

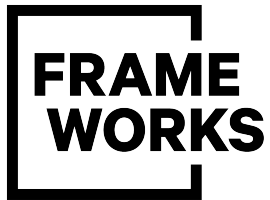
*What will you take  
away?*

# Thank You!

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*“The world changes according to the way people see it, and if you can alter, even by a millimeter, the way people look at reality, then you can change the world.”*

**JAMES BALDWIN**



 [frameworksinstitute.org](https://frameworksinstitute.org)

 [frameworksinstitute](https://www.instagram.com/frameworksinstitute)

 [FrameWorks Institute](https://www.linkedin.com/company/frameworksinstitute)