Media advocacy:
an introduction

Advocating for Children Together Conference

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berkeley media studies group

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Disclosures:

I declare that neither I, nor any immediate member of my family, have a financial arrangement or affiliation with any corporate organization offering financial support or grant monies for this continuing medical education activity. In addition, I do not intend to include information or discuss investigational or off-label use of pharmaceutical products or medical devices.

- Research on news coverage of public health issues

- Media advocacy training and strategic consultation for community groups and public health advocates

- Professional education for journalists

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Training objectives

- Recognize the news media's role in shaping debates on health and advocating for change;

- Clarify your media strategy to create change at the policy level;

- Develop strategic messages for advocacy.

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If all someone knew about your issue was from the news…

What would they know?

What would they NOT know?

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Key Functions of the News

Setting the agenda ▷ What we think **about**

Shaping the debate ▷ **How** we think about it

Reaching opinion leaders ▷ What we **do** about it

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News media coverage trends

- Most news stories are "episodic" and emphasize individual responsibility.

- Reporters try to "put a face" on an issue to illustrate its impact on a person's life.

- Most news stories lack discussion of context or policy implications.

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What is media advocacy?

Media advocacy is the **strategic** use of mass media to **support** community organizing to **advance** a social or public policy initiative.

What's the difference?

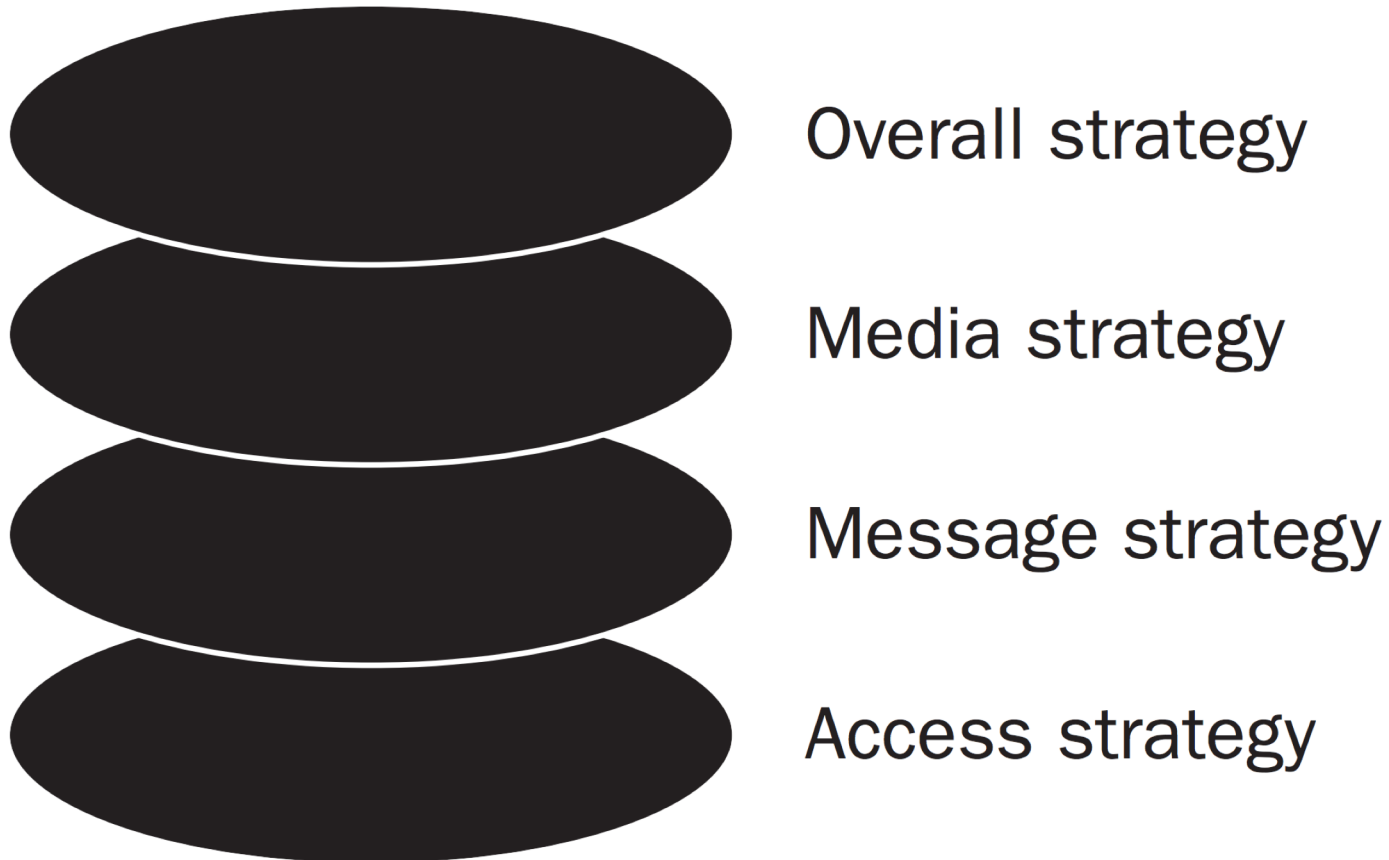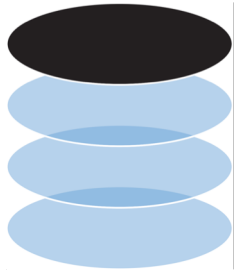| Social Marketing	Media Advocacy
Individual Focus	Issue Focus
Warns & Informs	Pressures & Mobilizes
Personal Change	Policy Change
Message	Voice
Information Gap	Power Gap

Media is never first

You can't have a media strategy without an overall strategy.

The Layers of Strategy

Overall strategy

Media strategy

Message strategy

Access strategy

Overall strategy

- Define the **problem** you want to address

- Clarify the **policy solution** for which you'll advocate

- Identify the **target** with the power to make the change

- Enlist the **allies** who can help make your case

- Identify what **actions** you'll take to influence the target

Activity: overall strategy

- Think of one policy/solution you are advocating for

- Brainstorm answers to the Overall Strategy worksheet

- Share what was hard, what was easy

Media Strategy
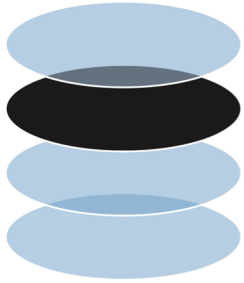
- Identify the best **methods to communicate** with your target

- Decide if engaging with the **media will advance** your goals

- Find the media that will **reach your targets**

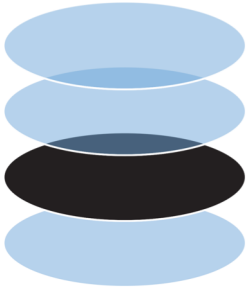- Compile the **media tactics** you will use

Media tactics

- Letters to the editor

- Editorials and op-eds

- Creating news

- Piggyback on breaking news

- Paid advertisement

- Social media

Message is next

You got media attention, now what?

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Message Strategy

Framing: how we characterize the issue

Message: what we say

Messenger: who says it

Target: who we want to hear it

Frames are mental pathways that help people understand the world.

Portrait frames and solutions

Portrait frames

- Kids going hungry
- Kids don't have a place to live
- Kids experience violence

Trigger personal responsibility **solutions**

- Irresponsible lazy parents = Take the kids away; punish the parents
- Not my problem = inaction

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Landscape frames and solutions

Landscape frames

- Gaps in understanding of ACES in system of care
- Programs that offer support for families are limited, threatened, etc.

Trigger social responsibility **solutions**

- Trauma informed systems
- Support programs
- Support initiatives/policies

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Reframing diabetes

Portrait

- Bad personal choices and behaviors

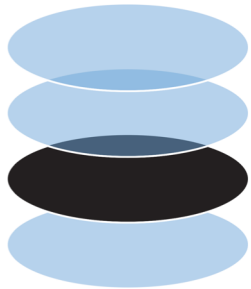- Absent parents and lack of oversight

- Poor role models

Landscape

- Lack of healthy eating and physical activity options

- Target marketing of soda and junk food to kids of color

- Celebrity endorsements of soda and junk food

The need to reframe

Institutional accountability

Personal responsibility

Message development

Components of a message:
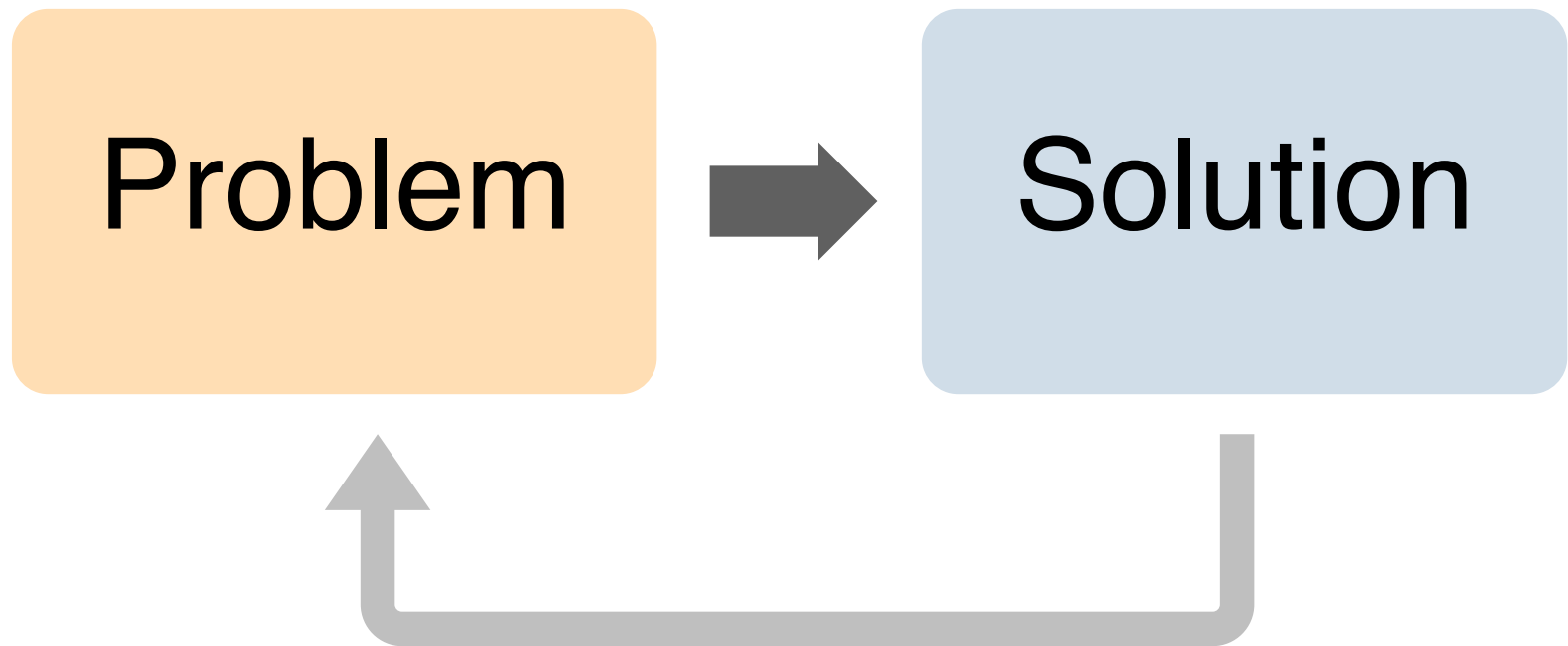
- Statement of problem
  What's wrong?

- Value dimension
  Why does it matter?

- Policy solution
  Who should do what by when?

Defining the problem

Example

Problem

Too many liquor stores create neighborhood blight, crime, and loitering, and detract from the quality of life.

Solution

The city should limit the number of liquor stores allowed within a certain radius.

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Why does it matter?

Value dimension

- Facts alone do not move people

- Connect first

- Evoke shared values

Example

Evoke shared values

It is not **fair** that certain **families** are subjected to such degraded conditions. Every **family** should have the **opportunity** to raise **children** in a **safe** and **vibrant** neighborhood.

Tobacco example

Tobacco companies are targeting consumers in our state with cheap tobacco products. Sometimes this is done through discount coupons and sometimes through financial incentives provided directly to the stores that sell cigarettes. Kids are especially vulnerable to these tactics since they have less money to spend. Restricting coupons and other promotions would go a long way toward solving this problem and when we can do something to improve the health of the community, we have an obligation to do it.
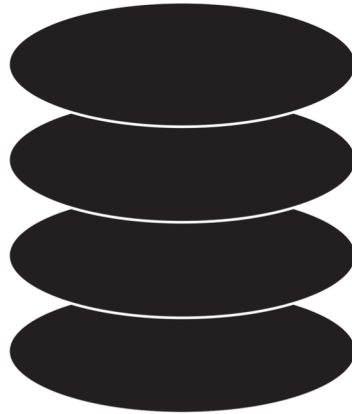
Problem

Solution

Shared values

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Activity

On your Message Development worksheet:

- Write down your **problem** statement

- Write down your **solution** statement under "what should be done"

- Write down your **values** statement

- Put it all together!

Summary

Frames are mental pathways that help people understand the world.

Personal responsibility — Institutional accountability

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THANK YOU!

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