

June 2024

# LEARNING LAB: CRAFTING YOUR PUBLIC NARRATIVE

# Learning Lab Goals



[www.changewellproject.com](http://www.changewellproject.com)

- Identify solutions to overcome roadblocks in the program and system development process.
- Introduce tools that will expedite your program and system development.
- Increase the capacity of you and your staff to improve the equity and efficacy of your system and your programs.

# Welcome!

## Introductions in the chat:

- Your Name
- Your County or Tribal Community
- CDSS Program



# Today's Session Overview

- ✓ Welcome
- ✓ Learning Lab Goals
- ✓ Crafting your Public Narrative
- ✓ Questions
- ✓ Get in Touch!



# Crafting your Public Narrative

Part 1

Learning Lab

June 18, 2024

# Learning Objectives

- Understand why having a strategic public narrative is important to constituents
- Craft a public narrative that motivates commitment to a shared purpose and call to action
- Apply a narrative framework in moments of critical change to educate and sustain support for programs and services

**We recognize and acknowledge the First People of this ancestral and unceded territory – the land that today we call California. With respect to their elders, past and present, we recognize the tribal communities as the original stewards of this land and who continue to lift up their stories and cultures.**

*Adopted from Los Angeles County's  
Land Acknowledgment*

## ASPIRE:

- Assume good intent and take accountability for negative impact (“ouch” and “ops”)
- Share airtime (take space, make space)
- Practice active listening (with empathy)
- “I” Statements; speak from your own experience
- Respect confidentiality: take what resonates and apply, but leave who said what in the zoom
- Everyone is an expert in their own experience, but they don’t represent an entire group
- Is there anything that we are missing to make this a safe place for your experience?



Crafting your Public Narrative

# **WARM-UP EXERCISE**

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## **We are all good storytellers . . .**

Based on your reflection of the AI generated image - without overthinking - take 5 minutes to complete the statement below.

Once upon a time there was \_\_\_\_\_. Every day, \_\_\_\_\_. One day  
\_\_\_\_\_. Because of that, \_\_\_\_\_. Because of that, \_\_\_\_\_. Until finally  
\_\_\_\_\_.

Crafting your Public Narrative

# **STORYTELLING PRACTICES**

# Storytelling is a form of meaning-making



## Stories as building blocks of public narratives:

“Storytelling cultivates a connection between the agency and its audiences. When utilize effectively, well-crafted stories can foster long-term relationships with people in the community. Additionally, neuroscience research has revealed that storytelling has the potential to initiate a biochemical response that assists in cultivating empathy, trust, and openness towards the communicative organization.”

Source: Becker Digital – Storytelling in Government Communications

## Why now?

- Era of accountability
- Opportunity to engage constituents and local stakeholders
- Celebrate success
- Advocate for needs
- Measure progress over time
- Attract new system partners
- Sustain or increase funding

# Tension attracts attention; not the perfect for the good:





# A Storytelling Framework:

- **Problem:** What is your why? What homelessness services does your organization provide to your constituents?
- **Solution:** What makes your homelessness solution different from other system partners including other public or tribal agencies and nonprofits?
- **Impact:** Why does your solution matter to your program participants, staff, elected officials, community at-large? What are your intended system-level outcomes?
- **Ask:** What action are you hoping to inspire from your community?
- **Communication:** How are you communicating your story to your community?

# United Way Home For Good LA

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# Imagining CDSS Program Storylines

## Home Safe Program

<b>Problem</b>	Older adults who have become homeless or at-risk due to elder abuse.
<b>Solution</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Intensive Case Management</li><li>• Housing Stabilization</li><li>• Housing Navigation</li><li>• Direct Financial Assistance</li><li>• Connect to longer term supportive housing.</li></ul>
<b>Impact</b>	Increase safety and housing stability of individuals involved in APS.
<b>Ask</b>	Refer eligible individuals Identify landlords Identify in-home support partners



Crafting your Public Narrative

# COMMUNITY PRACTICE

# Crafting your Narrative: Problem Statement

In this practice, select one of your CDSS homelessness programs (Bringing Families Home, Home Safe, HDAP, CalWorks HSP) and brainstorm your answers to the following questions on a sheet of paper or your computer:

# Crafting your Narrative: Problem Statement

- 1. Problem (Why): What is the social condition that your program seeks to resolve?**
  - What community challenge does your program address?
  - What is the scope of the problem?
  - What did people in need do before your program existed? What were the gaps in service delivery and/or access to resources?
  - What are 2 to 3 challenges that your organization is facing at this time?

## **2. Solution (What):** What makes your homelessness solution different from other system partners?

- What is your organization's position in the greater local homeless response system?
- What is your organizational philosophy, beliefs, values?
- What are your organizational strengths?
- What is unique or different in the way your organization delivers its homelessness services?

**Impact:** Why does your solution matter to your program participants, staff, elected officials, community at-large?

- What are your intended system-level outcomes?
- How are you measuring progress towards these outcomes? What are your metrics?
- How are you collecting this data?
- How are you sharing this data with staff across your organization and with the public at-large?
- What change do you hope you will see in the next 5 years?



## **Ask:** How can the community support your work?

- What additional resources are needed that may be provided for by the community?
- What are possible opportunities for collaboration and/or greater coordination?
- What additional sector representation is needed to make your program a success?
- What myths, misnomers, or other false perceptions are triggering people in the community that you would like to clarify?

**Communicating:** How are you sharing your story with the greater community?

- Who are the important audiences that your story needs to be shared with?
- How are you sharing your story and what is the frequency of this communication?
- Who do you need to collaborate with to generate meaningful stories about your work - internal and external to your organization?
- What communication policies/practices may need to be put in place to increase the opportunity to communicate?
- What are your fears around increasing communication with the public?

## **We are all good storytellers - Part 2**

Once upon a time there was \_\_\_\_\_. Every day, \_\_\_\_\_. One day  
\_\_\_\_\_. Because of that, \_\_\_\_\_. Because of that, \_\_\_\_\_. Until finally  
\_\_\_\_\_.



**Community Share: What is Your Story?**

# Additional Tips from Housing Narrative Lab

- Establish shared values
- Emphasize systemic root causes
- Name race/diversity/inclusivity
- Focus on lived experience
- Focus on solutions
- Connect housing to other issues
- Create unity of purpose: ‘join together’
- Avoid saying affordable housing (and anything wonky or number driven)
- Carefully counter false narratives

# Data Sources



California Continua of Care (CoC) Map

Open



Rehousing Funding Matrix

Open



California Funding Dashboard

Open

Crafting your Public Narrative

**FINAL THOUGHTS, QUESTIONS, FEEDBACK**

# Resources & Links



Requests for Change Well Project TA can be made at [changewellproject.com](https://changewellproject.com)



Change Well Project Resources can be found at [www.changewellproject.com/webinarsandtrainings](https://www.changewellproject.com/webinarsandtrainings)



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