REFRAMING HUMAN SERVICES: Creating a New Narrative for the Sector
By the Numbers

The Assembly’s member network collectively represents:

- $61 billion + sector
- 100,000 + locations
- 1,140,000 + employees
Putting Human Needs on the National Radar Screen

Why This Report

Proposed cuts are so sweeping that they may leave millions in far more desperate conditions than the disadvantages they now experience.

Organizations and subcultures (e.g., youth aging) are fighting for the programs needed by the people they serve as they always have, but times are different now. Proposed cuts are so sweeping that they threaten the infrastructure of community and methods nations can more desperate conditions than the disservice they now experience. Even strong organizations...
Non-defense spending already headed to historically-low levels, sequester would cut even more

Non-defense discretionary outlays as a share of GDP

- Historical spending
- Reagan administration average: 4%
- Clinton administration average: 3.5%
- With discretionary caps
  - 2021: 2.7%
- With sequester
  - 2021: 2.6%

Note: Shaded areas represent Reagan and Clinton administrations, respectively
Source: Office of Management and Budget, Congressional Budget Office

Economic Policy Institute

Giving as a percentage of GDP, 1972-2012 (in billions of dollars)

Source: Giving USA 2013 data tables

National Human Services Assembly 2014
Poverty in America

Which of the following reasons do you think is most responsible for the continuing problem of poverty?

Source: NBC News/Wall Street Journal Poll, June 2013
Why Reframe Now?

Strategic Dissonance Model

- **OLD PARADIGM OF JOURNALISM**
- **Inflection point**
  - change in media industry dynamics
- **New strategic intent**
- **NEW PARADIGM OF JOURNALISM with adaptation**
- **< dissonance gap**
- **Strategic recognition**
- **without adaptation**

GROWTH

TIME
- industry lock-in
- mid '90s
- 2009
- new industry lock-ins

National Human Services Assembly 2014
Applying the power of neuroscience to change how we present human needs/services…

And how America thinks about them.
What is Framing?

*Frames are just structures of thought that we use every day.* All words in all languages are defined in terms of frame-circuits in the brain. But ultimately, framing is about ideas, about how we see the world, which determines how we act.

~ George Lakoff, Linguist
Using Framing to Change Minds
What Can Framing Research Tell Us?

1. What the EXPERTS know
2. What the PUBLIC believes
3. What FRAMES Americans use to THINK ABOUT HS
4. What erroneous FRAMES are at work
5. What OTHER FRAMES in American culture could help people think differently
6. Which elements of those other frames we can USE
Um
I do not know
Job training
Human resources
Health
Human relations
Like Red Cross
Social skills
You Say…They Think

You say…

We are failing to do right by children and youth. Child poverty, youth homelessness, juvenile delinquency, and other complex challenges threaten the health and well-being of the next generation. Isn't it time to invest more?

In these tough times, people need more support, not less! This is no time to start cutting holes in the social safety net.

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 some program pick up the tab.
You Say...They Think

Human service programs offer critical support for families struggling to make ends meet, and for the most vulnerable in our society - youth, older citizens, and people with disabilities.

Meals-on-wheels for elderly Americans or people with disabilities is one thing. But able-bodied adults should stop relying on handouts, take care of their own kids, and get a job.
## Human Services—What Are They?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>Target Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Big Brothers/Big Sisters, Salvation Army, Red Cross…</td>
<td>The Poor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education, after-school activities &amp; mentorship programs</td>
<td>Children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Counseling &amp; financial support services</td>
<td>Families</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transportation &amp; job support</td>
<td>People with Disabilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meals on Wheels</td>
<td>Older Adults</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Human Services—How Do They Work?

1. Direct Services
2. Kindness and Charity
3. Only the Basics
4. Austerity
Mapping The Gaps

**Experts**
- Quality of Life
- An End
- Services, Advocacy, Prevention
- Problematic
- Necessary
- Structural
- Governments
- Necessary
- Everyone

**Wellbeing Definition**

**Social Connections**

**Scope of Human Services**

**Charity Model**

**Increased Funding**

**Causes**

**Solutions**

**Responsibility**

**Government Assistance**

**Benefits of Human Services**

**Public**
- Financial Autonomy
- Means to End
- Direct Services
- Status Quo
- Problematic
- Individual
- Individual/Fatalistic
- Individual
- Problematic
- Direct Recipients
Dominant American Frames

Some dominant frames Americans currently access:

- Individualism and ‘self making’
- Well-being defined as financial autonomy
- Government as corrupt and ineffective
- Nonprofits as charities
Recessive American Frames

Non-dominant frames Americans *could* access:

- **Shared value:** equality of opportunity, fairness between places
- **Pragmatism:** we can fix problems with common-sense, practical solutions
- **Connectedness:** social connections matter
- **The value of prevention**
One Issue -- Two Frames

SHOULD MEALS ON WHEELS FUNDING (CUT IN THE SEQUESTER) BE RESTORED?

Results

- **Yes, it should** 69%
- **No, it shouldn't** 22%
- In part 9%

© Sep '13  579 votes  230 comments

detailed results  vote now  next debate


National Human Services Assembly 2014
Agreement the tip of the iceberg, but…
## Framing vs. Messaging

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Framing-Informed Communications</th>
<th>Messaging</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Communicating about issues or programs in ways that resonate with deeply held values, using tested elements, including tested metaphors that help listeners think more productively</td>
<td>Communicating what the sender believes or intends to convey in an attempt to persuade and sway opinion</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The safety net:

Social Safety Net
Reframed:
Reframing Tobacco

Smoking: Old Frame
- Choice/Freedom
- Individuals
- Drug addiction/personal vice
- Parents’ responsibility
- Teens’ bad behavior
- Vital industry
- Protection: ‘Just say no’

Smoking: Reframed
- Defective Product
- Big Tobacco
- Manipulation of addiction
- Government responsibility
- Big $ in politics/corruption
- Deviant industry
- Protection from advertising

CHANGE BEHAVIOR

CHANGE PUBLIC POLICIES

National Human Services Assembly 2014
What We Need To Achieve Through Reframing
To achieve these results:

1. New language, imagery, metaphors---a new lexicon

2. Clear industry identity

3. Framework for advocacy, reforming human services---a new playbook

National Human Services Assembly 2014
Steps to Reframing an Issue

1. Problem
2. Map the Gaps
3. Defining Metaphors and Values
4. Test Tools
5. Messages and Toolkits
6. Disseminate and Integrate
7. Structure Reinvention
Reframing to Reinvention

- Desired Outcomes for People
- Evidence Based Strategies
- Blueprints:
  - Children
  - Families
  - Older adults
  - People with disabilities
- Changing Policy and Practice
Contact:

Bridget McCabe
Project Manager
National Human Services Assembly

bmccabe@nasassembly.org