

Inspire Action with Empathetic Communications: Advancing Strategic and Collective Narratives

2023 RCP Network Gathering

November 9, 2023



**Increase
awareness**

**Build
municipal
support**

**Raise private
donations**

**Engage staff
members &
volunteers**

**What actions do you
hope to inspire?**

**Educate
community
members**

**Influence
policy &
funding**

Introductions



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A close-up photograph of a person's hands clasped together in a prayerful gesture, held up against a bright, sunlit background. The background is filled with soft, out-of-focus bokeh lights, suggesting a forest or garden setting. The lighting is warm and golden, highlighting the texture of the skin and the details of the hands. The overall mood is contemplative and spiritual.

**Why are we
here today?**

Photo by Ali Kaukas

**Start with the end
in mind**



Starting with the end in mind

- What are the goals and milestones that move you closer to achieving your mission?
- How are your goals shaped by your audiences: partners, donors, legislators, public, and anyone you're looking to serve?
- How does narrative impact your work?

What is narrative?

“A narrative reflects a shared interpretation of how the world works.”

— Narrative Initiative

<https://narrativeinitiative.org/blog/narrative-change-a-working-definition-and-related-terms/>

What is positioning?

Positioning is about “how people use words (and discourse of all types) to locate themselves and others.”

“It is with words that we ascribe rights and claim them for ourselves and place duties on others.”

Positioning Theory: Moghaddam and Harré (2010: 2)

What is framing?

“A frame is a guide. It directs people where to look, but more importantly, helps them interpret what they see. Every message - whether written, spoken, illustrated, or signed - is presented through a frame of some kind. Simply put, every communication is framed.” - Frameworks Institute

<https://www.frameworksinstitute.org/article/whats-in-a-frame/>

**Empathy
is...**



Photo by Emily Nichols Photography

Empathy is...

**our capacity to feel, understand, and respond
to the needs of others.**

Empathy opens up a chance to connect with people whose goals, needs, values, and life experiences are different from our own...

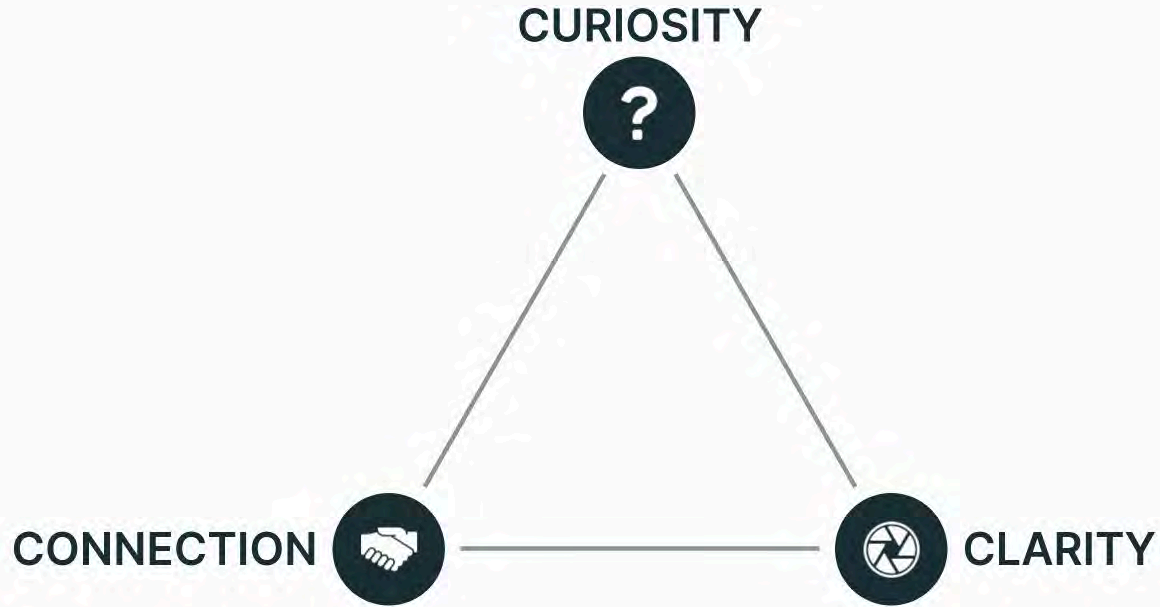
especially those who have experienced the impact of social, racial, and cultural inequities.



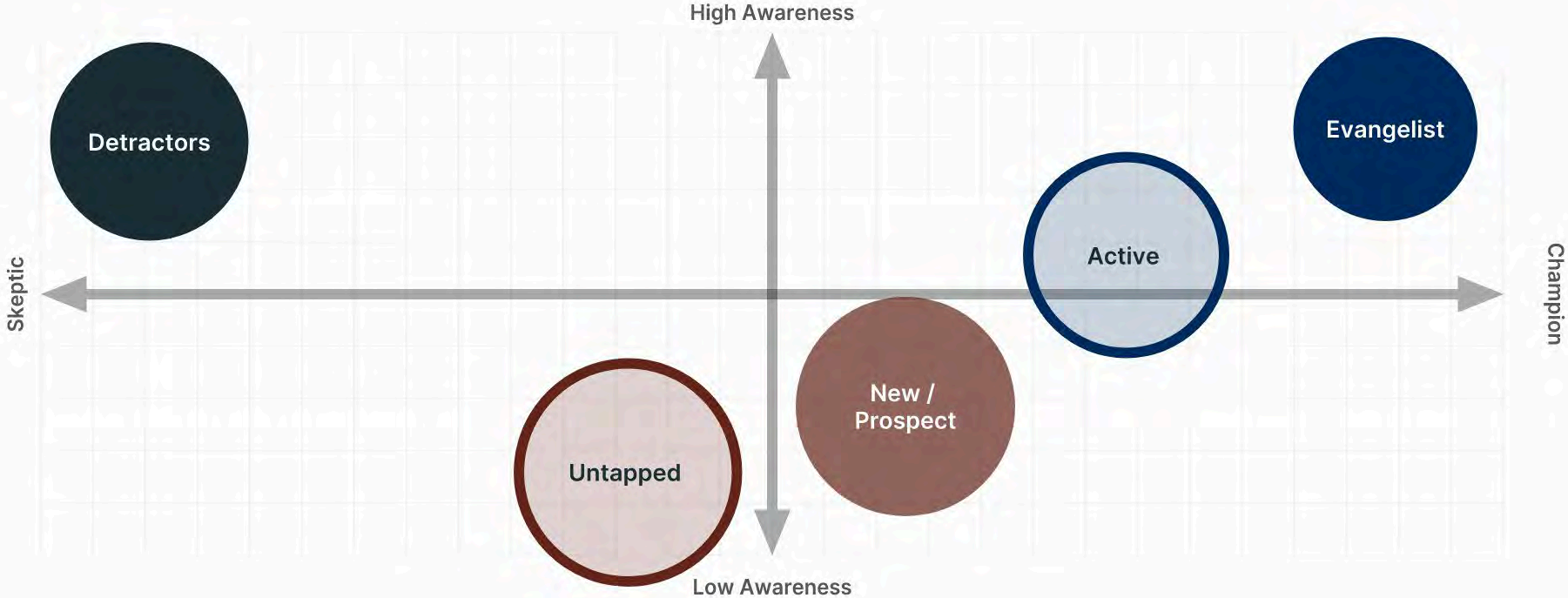
Why empathy?



The 3 C'S of Empathy



Inviting Voices to the Table



Goal Overlap Study

The goal overlap study is an internal tool designed to focus communication efforts on the place where the goals, needs, and values of the internal stakeholders and the external audiences overlap.



Workshop & Discussion

Click to view materials



Outcomes & Actions

What outcomes do you seek for your organization in the short-term (1-3 years)? What actions do you hope to inspire that support each action?

Desired Outcomes	Actions that Support Outcome	Who Can Take this Action?
<i>Increased local awareness of our organization's mission</i>	<i>Attendance at events Sharing success stories (video and written)</i>	<i>Community, partners Community, local media outlets (online/print)</i>

Inviting Voices to the Table

Internal Stakeholders:

Who are the internal stakeholders in your organization that have a stake or role in the success of your communications?

Name	Role/Title
<i>Jane Smith</i> <i>George Tempe</i>	<i>Board Chairperson</i> <i>Communications Director</i>

Questions:

What are their goals, needs, and values? What challenges do they face? Who do they believe your organization serves or hopes to engage? What do they believe is true about your audience(s)?

External Audiences

Select the audience categories of the people you wish to engage. Add 3-5 individuals who can provide a voice for that category. Indicate whether each person is an Evangelist, Active Participant, New/Prospect, Untapped, or Detractor.

Audience Category (Partners, Volunteers, Donors, Legislators, Community Members, Others?)	Names of Individual(s)	Relationship to Organization E=Evangelist; A=Active; N=New/Prospect; U=Untapped; D=Detractor
<i>Volunteers</i>	<i>Belle Barbery John Balboa</i>	<i>E N</i>

Questions

What are their goals, needs, and values? How do they currently engage with your organization? How can your organization support them?

Goal Overlap Study

The goal overlap study is an internal tool designed to focus communication efforts on the goals, needs, and values of the internal stakeholders and the external audiences.

Your Organization Goals	Audience Goals
<i>Increase local awareness of our organization to inspire more people to support our mission through volunteer activities and donations.</i>	<i>Preserve the beautiful natural spaces of our county. Ensure we are ready to adapt to a changing climate and catastrophic weather events..</i>

Translating the Goal Overlap into a Positioning Statement

A positioning statement is an internal tool designed to guide the messaging and content strategies by focusing on how the organization is uniquely positioned to its audiences.

It answers the following questions:

- Who do you serve or hope to engage?
- What are their goals, needs, and values?
- How does your work uniquely support their goals, needs, and/or values?
- How does your work exhibit your organization's values?

Sample:

For residents of Manheim County who want to preserve natural spaces and safeguard against climate change, the Manheim Conservation Alliance provides opportunities for people of all ages, backgrounds, and experience levels to become active participants in land protection and stewardship. We are committed to ensuring that Manheim County continues to be a place where people can enjoy active, outdoor lifestyles while knowing that land use and development decisions carefully consider the future of all of its residents.

Identifying Collective Narratives

What narratives are shaping the beliefs and actions of the people you wish to engage?

Goal Driving the Narrative	Obstacle	Solution
<i>EX: Equitable access to healthy land and waterways for sustainable growth and harvest of food for future generations</i>	<i>EX: The modern day concept of resource and property ownership is rooted in capitalism and colonial theft and remains a deeply seated cultural norm</i>	<i>EX: Local, state, and federal policy makes land and water more accessible for communities</i>

Moving from Collective Narratives to Framing/Messaging

The Audience You Want to Reach

Goal of the Framing/Call to Action

Narrative You Want to Lift Up

Goal Driving the Narrative	Obstacle	Solution
<i>Equitable access to healthy land and waterways for sustainable growth and harvest of food for future generations</i>	<i>The modern day concept of resource and property ownership is rooted in capitalism and colonial theft and remains a deeply seated cultural norm</i>	<i>Local, state, and federal policy makes land and water more accessible for communities</i>

Framing/Messaging to Use in Outreach

Equitable access to healthy land and waterways is often thwarted by the traditional concept of resource and property ownership and we need to advocate for state policy that makes this possible. Support our advocacy efforts through a donation today.

Discussion

- ✓ What does it mean to you to work in solidarity with your partners and the community you serve as it relates to your communication and narrative goals?
- ✓ How can you more effectively come together to support one another and work together to increase the impact of your communication and narrative work?
- ✓ What infrastructure or space would you need to do this on a regular basis?
- ✓ What do you think coming together and working collectively on communications and narrative work could accomplish?

Reach Out to Us & Take the Survey



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Take the Survey
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