



# A Narrative Framework: Inspiring Partners to Strengthen Public Health in Minnesota

# Presenters



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# Purpose

To equip you to talk about your public health work with diverse audiences in ways that grow understanding, strengthen connections, and inspire action.


## Our time together:

- Overview of the Narrative Framework
- Pairing data with stories
- Review examples
- Write your message






**You know** medicine's  
**not even my job.**



**And it is *not*** nurse  
**which is a common  
misconception.**



**Because actually, my  
job...is just health.**

# Narrative Framework



 **Value of  
Public Health**



# Narrative Framework Public Health Storytelling



 **Value of  
Public Health**



Value of Public  
Health

**Shared understanding of why your work matters to your audience.**





Value of Public  
Health

**Shared understanding of why your work matters to your audience.**



People

**Who is doing the work? Who is impacted by it?**







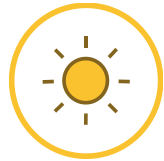
Value of Public  
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Goals

**Where do we want to end up? What's our vision for ourselves and our community?**





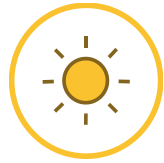
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Problems

**What's getting in the way?**





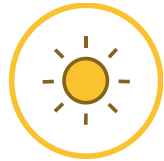
Value of Public  
Health

**Shared understanding of why your work matters to your audience. Shared sense of what's important.**



People

**Who is doing the work? Who is impacted by it?**



Goals

**Where do we want to end up? What's our vision for ourselves and our community?**



Problems

**What's getting in the way?**



Solutions

**What's the new direction? What can we do together to solve this?**







**Humans  
learn  
through  
narrative.**



## Do = Care + Know



What do they  
**care** about?



What do they  
need to **know**?



What do you  
want your  
audience to **do**?

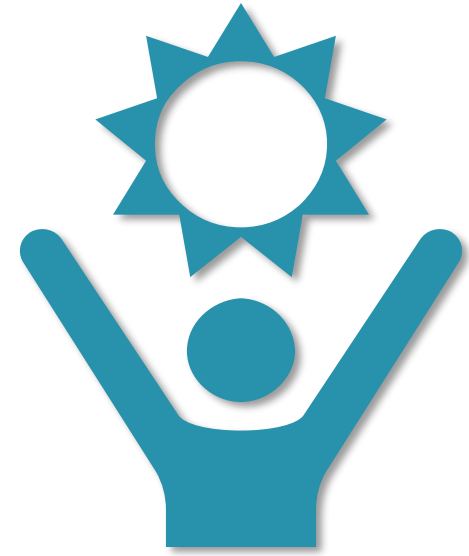
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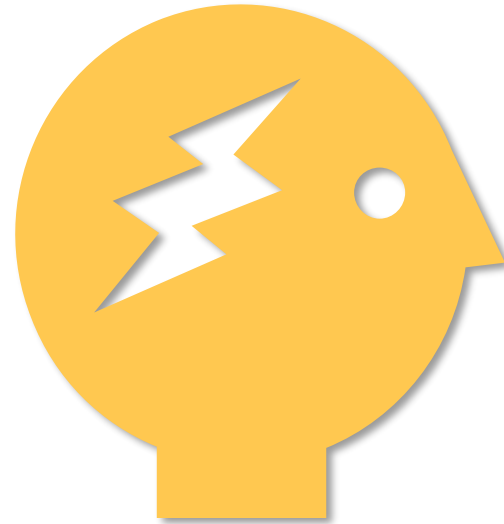


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**Solutions**



**People**



**Problems**



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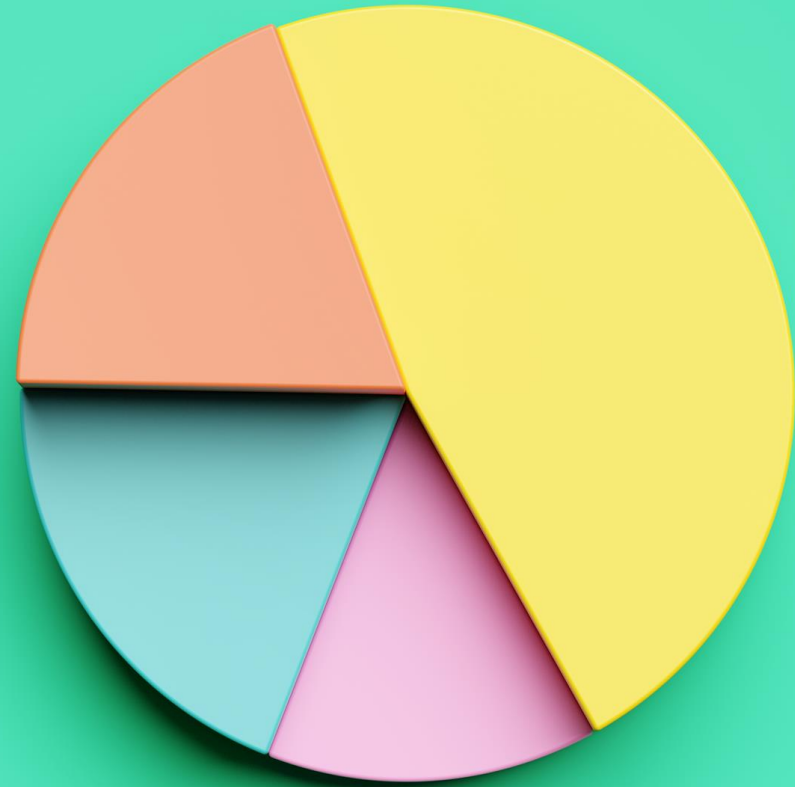


**Value of  
Public Health**



# Guidelines for Including Data in Your Story

- 1. Don't rely only on data.**  
Make evidence one part of the story.
- 2. Order matters.** Connect first on shared values and goals. Then reinforce with data.
- 3. Be selective.** Only share what's *most* relevant. Stacking facts can cause overwhelm.



Sources:  
[Robert Wood Johnson Foundation](#)  
[FrameWorks Institute](#)



**today's emergencies,  
which public health  
could've prevented  
in the first place**

**policymakers**

**public health**



# Narrative Framework

## Public Health Storytelling



**Value of  
Public Health**



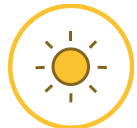
## Topic: Food truck regulation | Audience: Industry leaders and regulators



Value of  
Public Health



People



Goals



Problems



Solutions

Food safety rules keep the places where we eat, sleep and play safe. Food truck industry leaders are frustrated by the complexity of bodies regulating their work, and yet the food trucks need to adapt quickly to community needs and tastes to do business. The system of regulation was created before anyone could even imagine the world of food trucks.

Both industry leaders and regulators seek consistency, efficiency, and quality. We ALL want important rules to be followed so we can count on safe food.

For the many regulating bodies and an ever-adapting industry to achieve a streamlined and consistent process, compromise is inevitable. There will need to be give and take across all parties.



## Topic: Youth & Schools Educator Position | Audience: County Board, School Admin



Value of  
Public Health

Public health and schools make a great team. We're all working to set kids up for lifelong health, wellbeing, and success. And our talents complement each other, because while public health professionals are experts in prevention and wellbeing, we rely on educators' expertise in learning, child development, and school communities.



People

Together, we can equip kids with knowledge and skills to navigate challenges so that they can live their healthiest lives and advocate for their peers to do the same. But it's going to take more than a one-time program, assembly, or after school club. We know many kids across our region are facing big challenges with their mental health. According to the 2022 Minnesota Student Survey, 32% of 8<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup>, and 11<sup>th</sup> graders struggle with depression and 36% report feelings of anxiety. Our public health team has studied proven strategies that can help kids develop resilience and lessen the long-term health impacts that these experiences may otherwise have. But we have a small staff that divide their time across many areas of work.



Goals

Let's invest in the consistent, long-term support that students need. A Youth and Schools Prevention Educator will be able to fully dedicate their time to collaborating with educators and supporting the mental health of youth. Together, we can engage and empower kids with the information and support they need to thrive.



Problems



Solutions

# Topic: Using the toolkit | Audience: You!



Value of  
Public Health

We all know that when we work on root causes of injury and disease with community-driven, evidence-based solutions we can prevent chronic illness, contain health care costs, limit the health impacts of natural disasters, and improve quality-of-life.



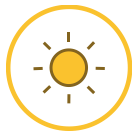
People

As prevention experts, many of you are collaborating or talking to partners, with community leaders, maybe with policy makers--people who care deeply about the quality-of-life in their communities. But many of them don't have a public health background. They come from other fields. They're experts in other areas. And often they have a long list of other important issues they're working on, just spending a sliver of time on yours.



Problems

So, it's up to us to make the most of that sliver. To empower partners and leaders to strengthen our public health system. To inspire them to advocate for policies that advance equity.



Goals

That's where this Narrative Framework comes in. It's a guide for developing concise and impactful messages that inspire action, using research-based methods of communicating that can help make the most of even a minute talking to someone who could become a champion for public health.



Solutions





## ST. LOUIS COUNTY MEDICATION LOCK BOX INITIATIVE

Understand the background of this project and its public health goals.



### BACKGROUND

As fellow health and human services providers, helping households keep kids safe is a priority for all of us. Sadly, each year, approximately 35,000 young children nation-wide visit the emergency room due to accidental ingestion of medications or mind altering substances, such as cannabis. Recognizing the importance of proper storage of these items, we in public health aim to make safe practices accessible for all households in St. Louis County.

With grant funding from *Children's Dental Services*, we purchased medication lock boxes each labeled '**Up & Away Every Time**,' reminding families to keep medications and mind-altering substances out of reach of children. Each box includes resources on safe medication storage, proper disposal methods, cannabis safety around youth, and guidance for handling accidental ingestion situations.

### GOAL

Our goal at St. Louis County Public Health is to reduce the risk of accidental drug ingestion in children under five years of age by 5%. This is an objective in the current Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP), based on data from our most recent Community Health Assessment (CHA) for St. Louis County.

This initiative provides families with a practical solution to prevent misuse and fosters community conversations about medication safety. We seek your help in distributing these free lock boxes. By partnering with public health to distribute these free lockboxes and having conversations with your patients/clients about their purpose, you can help reduce the number of accidental drug ingestions for the youth of St. Louis County.

NEED A SUPPLY  
OF LOCK BOXES  
TO DISTRIBUTE?



SCAN THE QR CODE TO  
FILL OUT THE **REQUEST**  
**FORM TODAY**

# Topic: Distributing Medication Lockboxes

## Audience: Client-serving PHHS professionals

(to be adapted for dental care providers and community orgs)



**Public Health**  
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

**St. Louis County, MN**



Public Health  
St. Louis County, MN

Questions? Contact Kaitlyn Russell, Public Health Educator

[russellk@stlouiscountymn.gov](mailto:russellk@stlouiscountymn.gov)

10/2024



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Details and grant acknowledgement

NEED A SUPPLY OF LOCK BOXES TO DISTRIBUTE?



SCAN THE QR CODE TO FILL OUT THE [REQUEST FORM](#) TODAY

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# EXERCISE

1. Identify an issue that's important to your work and community, that you would like to inspire partners and leaders to work on.
2. Who is your audience? (Who do you hope to inspire to act?)





# Value of Public Health







## Value of Public Health

### Examples:

- Data can be harnessed to support the health and wellness of communities.
- We need to be able to attract and retain good people to do the work of public health. People in our community deserve every opportunity to be healthy.
- When we focus on solving the root causes of disease, we can limit rapidly accelerating health care costs and improve quality-of-life.
- We want to set kids up for lifelong health, wellbeing, and success.





**People**





## DEFICIT FRAMING

CREATES NEGATIVE  
ASSOCIATIONS

Helpless

Overworked

Uninformed



## ASSET FRAMING

CREATES POSITIVE  
ASSOCIATIONS

Experts

Problem Solvers

Lived experience



## People

### **Examples:**

- Prevention experts.
- Teachers who support their students' mental health every day.
- Experienced staff with expertise in foundational public health areas.
- Industry experts and leaders.
- Community leaders with first-hand knowledge.

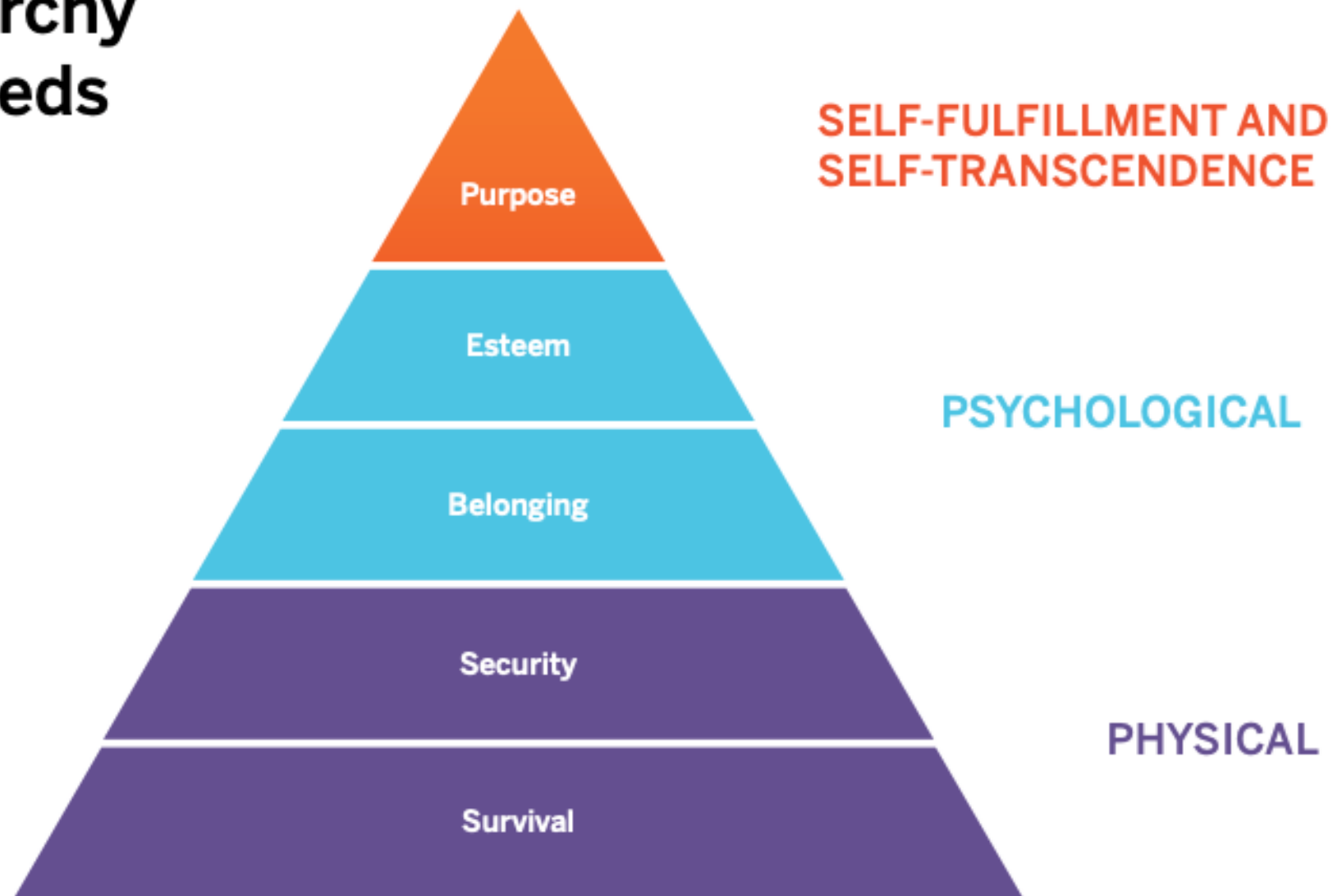




# Goals



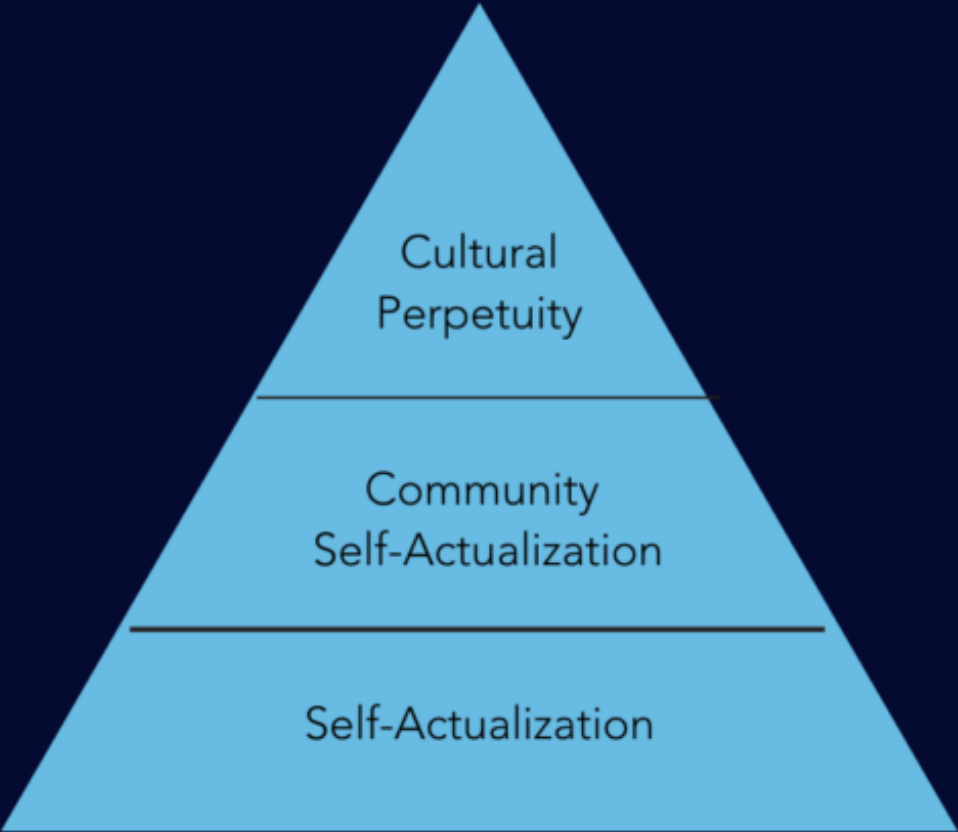
# Hierarchy of Needs



# HIERARCHY OF NEEDS



Western Perspective



Blackfoot Perspective



## Goals

### Examples:

- Equip kids with knowledge and skills to live their healthiest lives and advocate for their peers to do the same.
- It is easy to follow and regulate the food truck industry rules so we can all count on safe food.
- Support public health practice so that no matter where you live, you have the same public health protections available to you.





# Problems





## **KEEP IT SUPER SIMPLE**

To be motivated to solve a problem, people need to understand it, care about it—and believe change is possible.



## Problems

### Examples:

- Minnesota's approaches to public health are out of date.
- The system of regulation was created before anyone could even imagine the world of food trucks.
- Teens across our region are facing big challenges with their mental health. According to the 2022 Minnesota Student Survey, 32% of 8th, 9th, and 11th graders struggle with depression and 36% report feelings of anxiety.

# Metaphors

Using metaphors and proverbs can very quickly help your audience see and understand the problem clearly.

We strive to use “plain language” so that the message is clear (no acronyms, little jargon). However, when you know your audience, a metaphor or proverb that is well known by that community can be the easiest way to state your problem.



# Solutions





## **SHOW SOLUTIONS AND BENEFITS**

State specific solutions to your problem—and show how they benefit individuals AND society.





## Solutions



They are NOT quick fixes.



They are the path we start down,  
and the tools we bring with.



## Solutions

### Examples:

- Create a Youth and Schools Health Educator position.
- Invest in a new approach to public health.
- Using a narrative framework can help you create concise and impactful messages that can inspire partners to become champions for public health.
- For the many regulating bodies and an ever-adapting industry to achieve a streamlined and consistent process, compromise is inevitable. There will need to be give and take across all parties.



# EXERCISE

Using your narrative framework notes, draft a one-minute message that helps you solve the challenge you're facing.

