COMMUNICATIONS WORKSHOP
Visual Learner

(sample version—abbreviated)

Credit: The slides on VPSA are derived, with permission from the Opportunity Agenda and have this symbol.

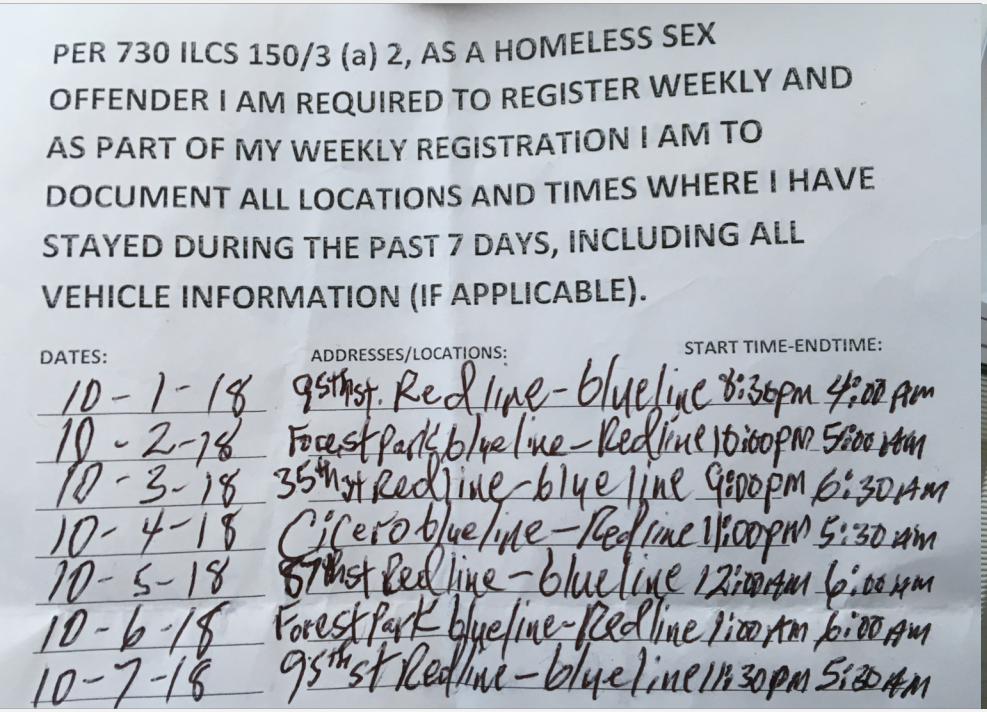


THE FUTURE WILL ONLY CONTAIN WHAT WE PUT INTO IT NOW.

—SITUATIONIST INTERNATIONAL



Come to the policy meeting next week to decide priorities and strategy



PER 730 ILCS 150/3 (a) 2, AS A HOMELESS SEX OFFENDER I AM REQUIRED TO REGISTER WEEKLY AND AS PART OF MY WEEKLY REGISTRATION I AM TO DOCUMENT ALL LOCATIONS AND TIMES WHERE I HAVE STAYED DURING THE PAST 7 DAYS, INCLUDING ALL VEHICLE INFORMATION (IF APPLICABLE).

DATES:	ADDRESSES/LOCATIONS:	START TIME-ENDTIME:
10-1-18	95th st. Redline-blueline	8:36pm 4:00 am
10-2-18	Forest Park blueline-Redline	10:00pm 5:00 am
10-3-18	35th st Redline-blueline	9:00pm 6:30 am
10-4-18	Cicero blueline-Redline	11:00pm 5:30 am
10-5-18	87th st Redline-blueline	12:00 am 6:00 am
10-6-18	Forest Park blueline-Redline	1:00 am 6:00 am
10-7-18	95th st Redline-blueline	11:30pm 5:30 am



Let's change registry and housing banishment laws.

Let's change the way laws are implemented at the police station.

Organizing means building power



Just enough to be effective

We have to meet people where they are at



We have to meet people where they are at



Our communication becomes powerful if we are all saying the same thing



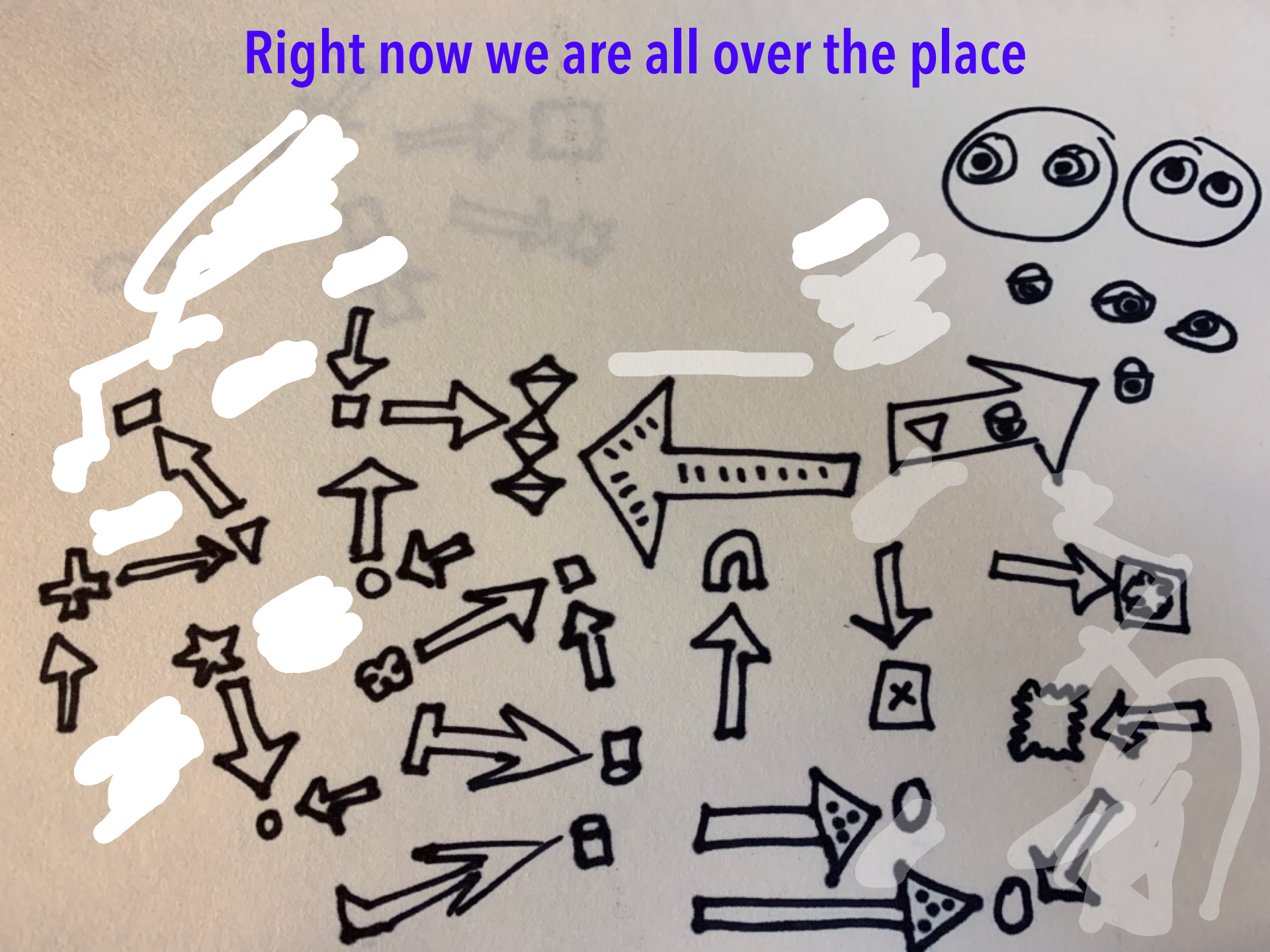
It becomes a familiar framework

But if we are not saying the same thing

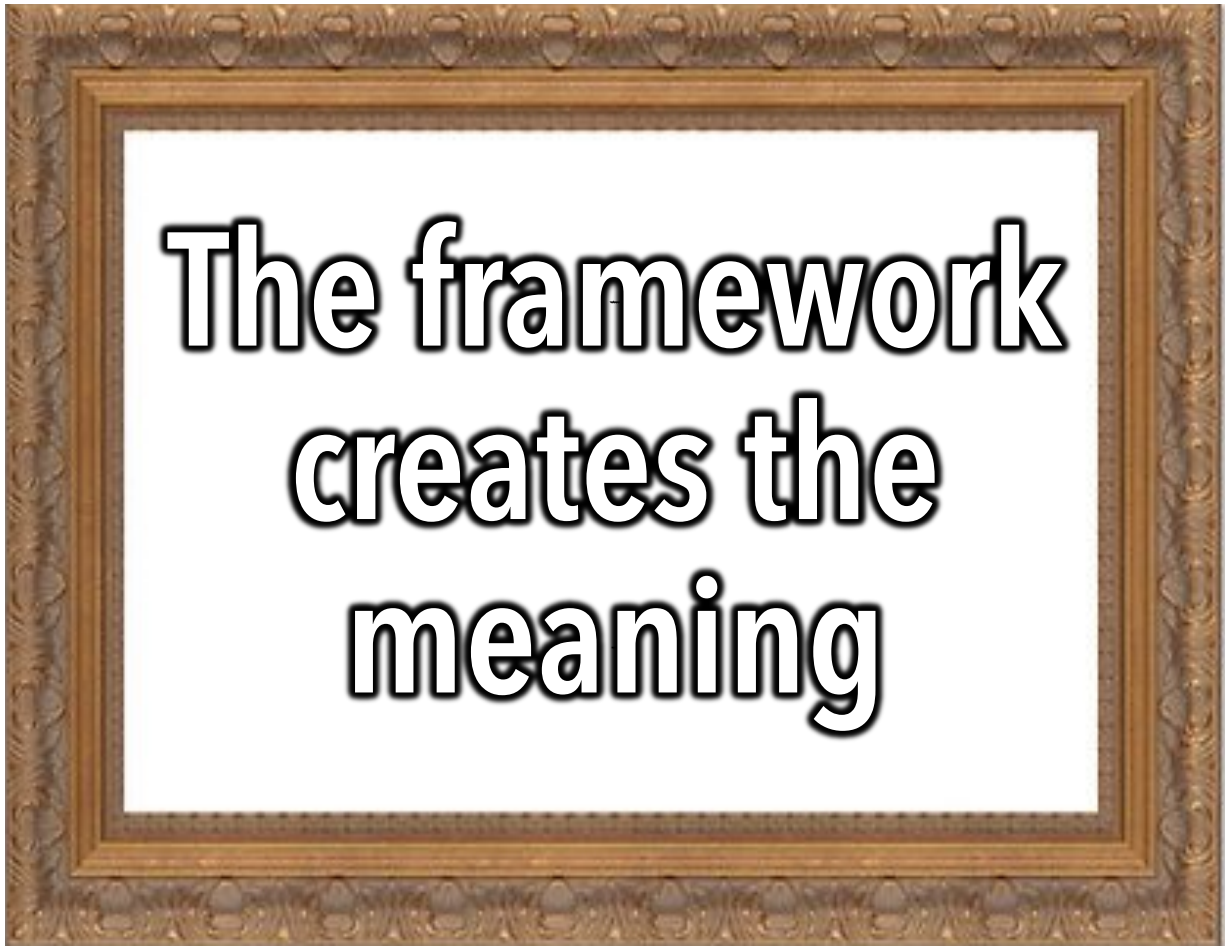


Then we have people looking in every direction

Right now we are all over the place

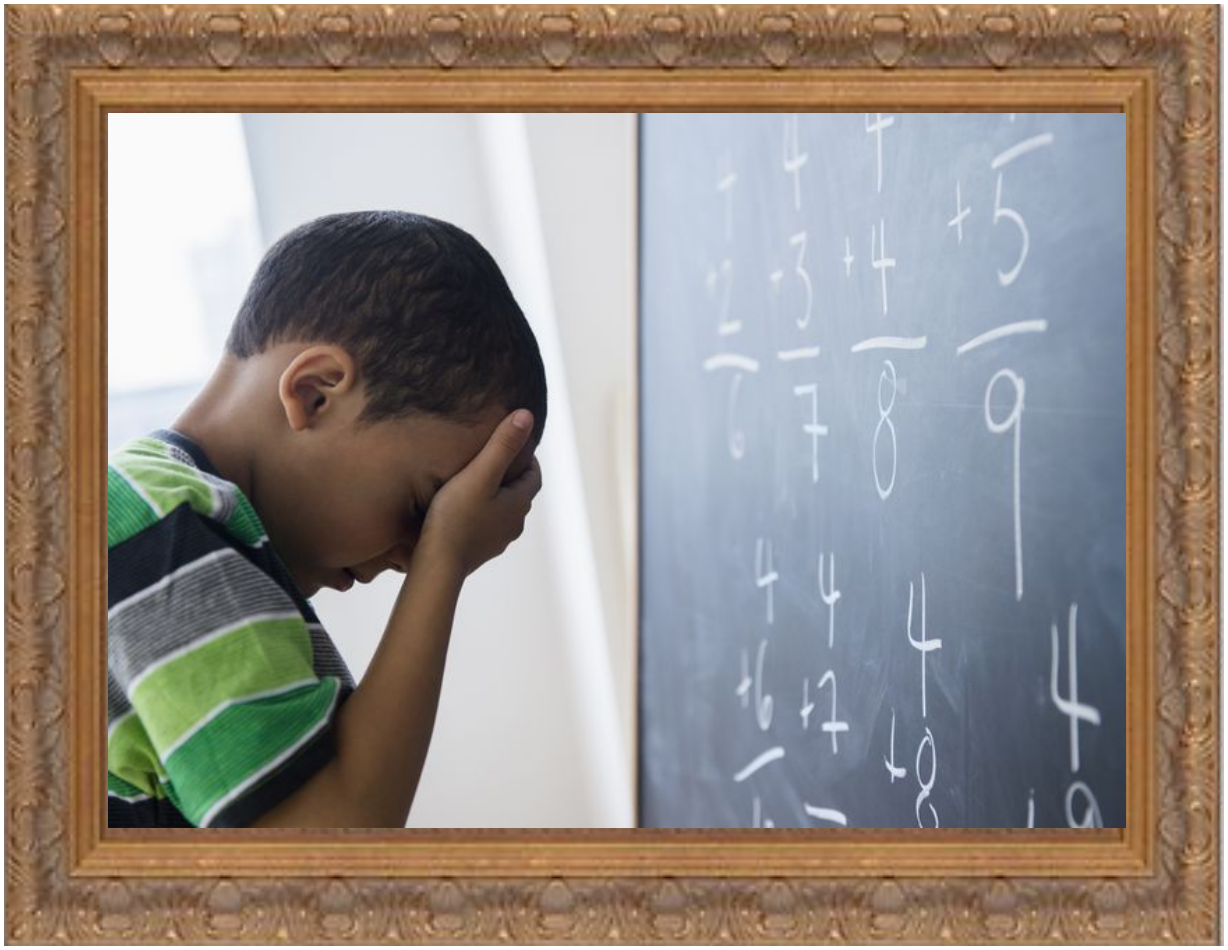


People think according to their frame



Not the evidence in front of them

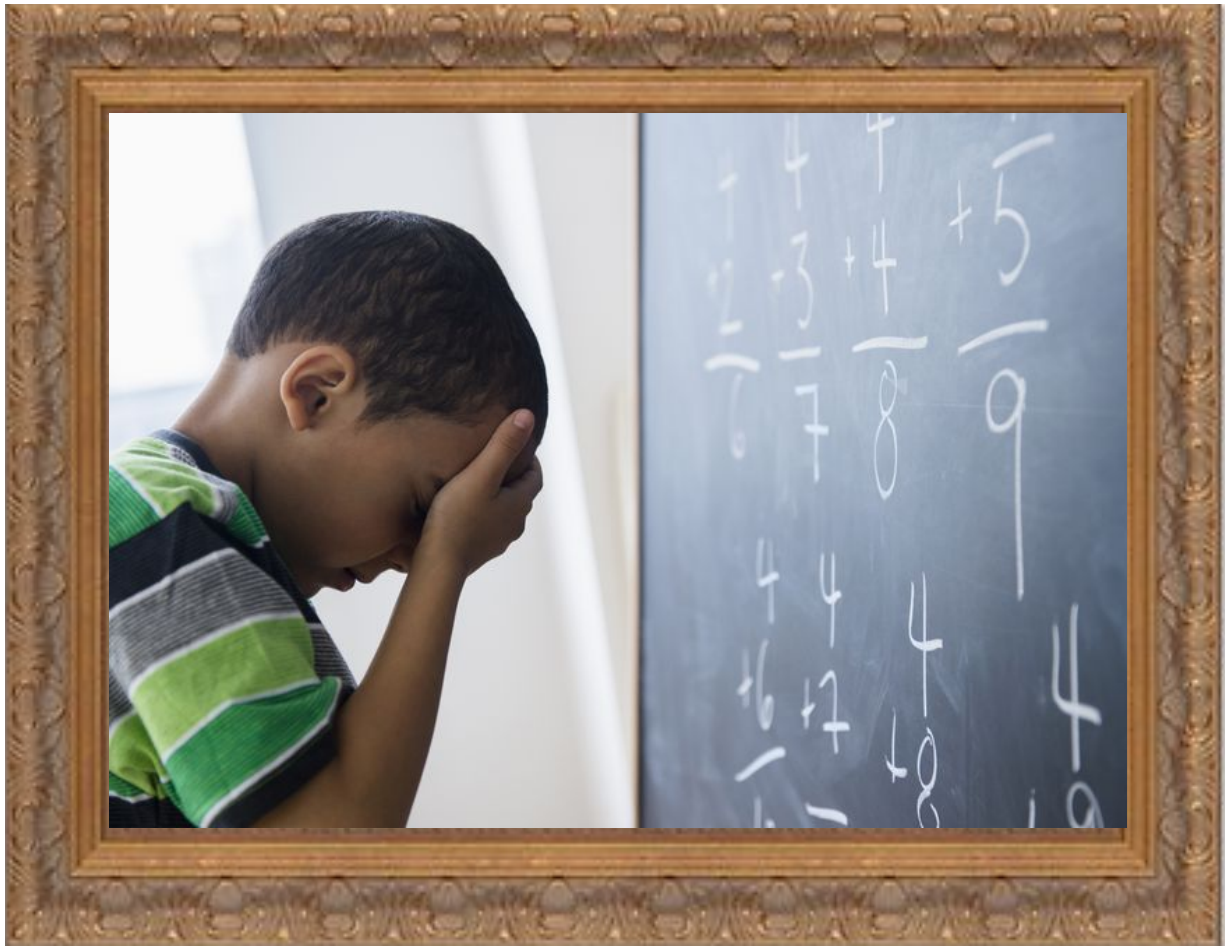
People understand according to their frame



I AM BAD AT MATH

If you or your son struggles with math homework…your frame will explain it for you.

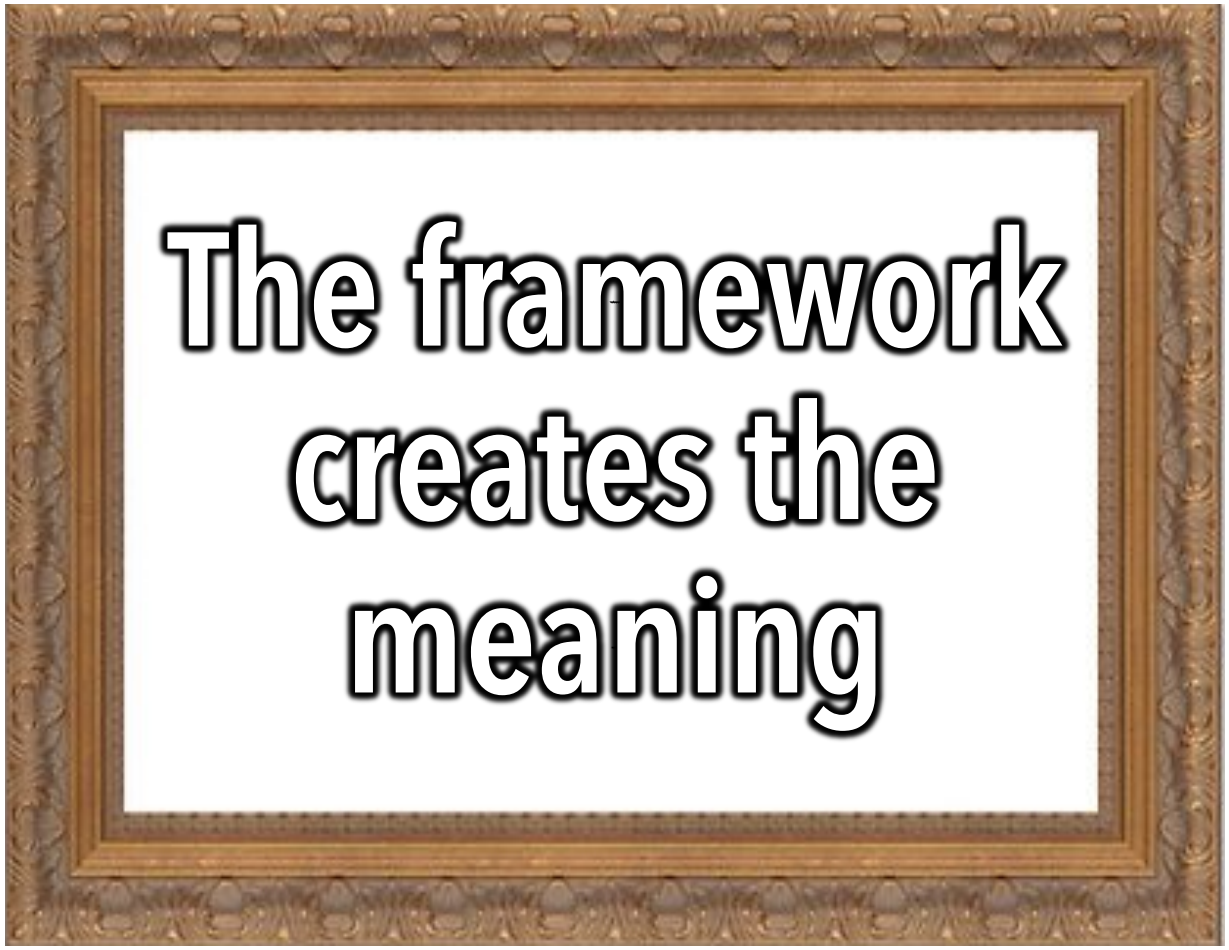
People understand according to their frame



THE SCHOOLS ARE FAILING

If you or your son struggles with math homework…your frame will explain it for you.

People see criminal justice issues in frames



The Drug War

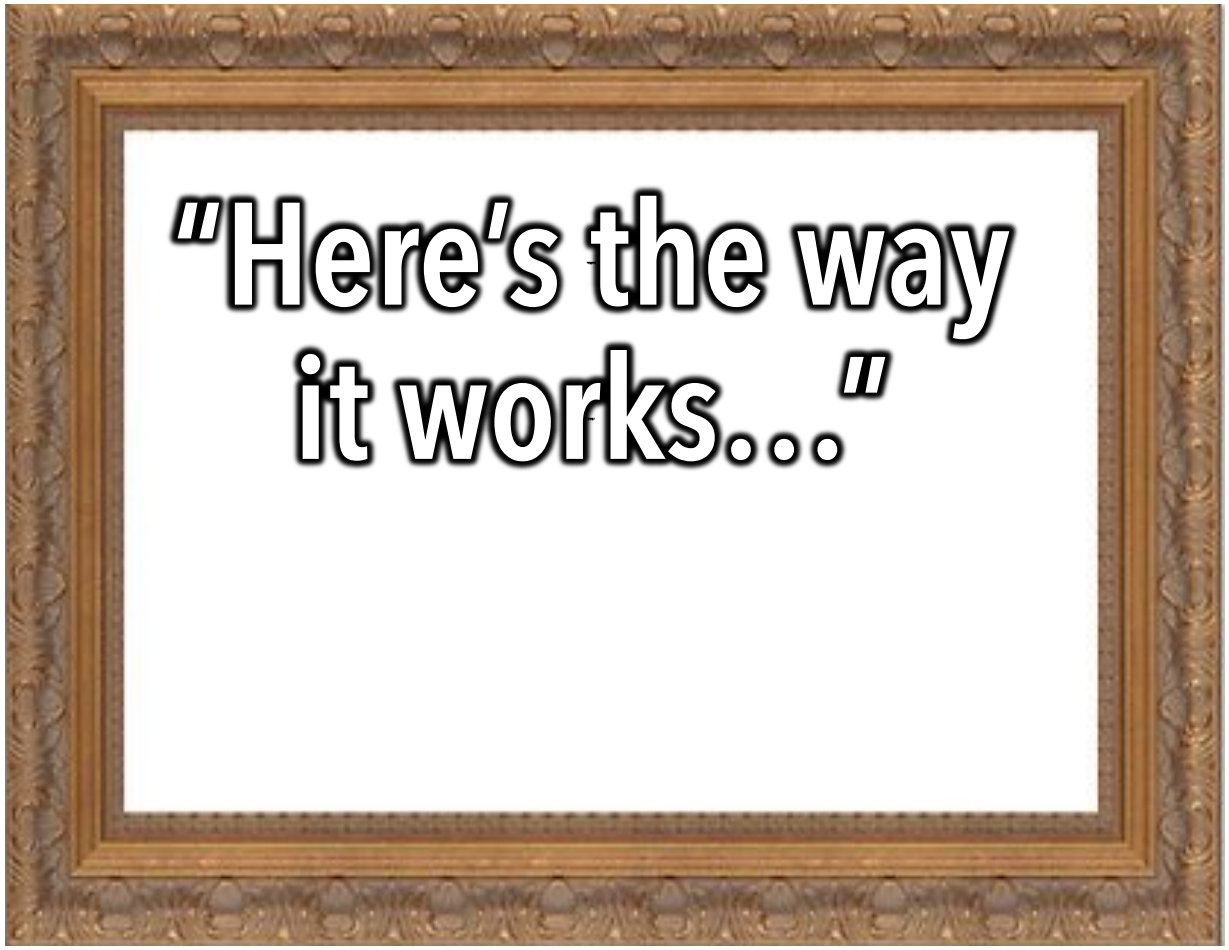
gun violence

Toni Preckwinkle

the death penalty

sex offender registry

People see criminal justice issues in frames



The Drug War

gun violence

Toni Preckwinkle

the death penalty

sex offender registry

What people understand depends on their frame



"Nothing works—lock them up"

The framework creates the meaning

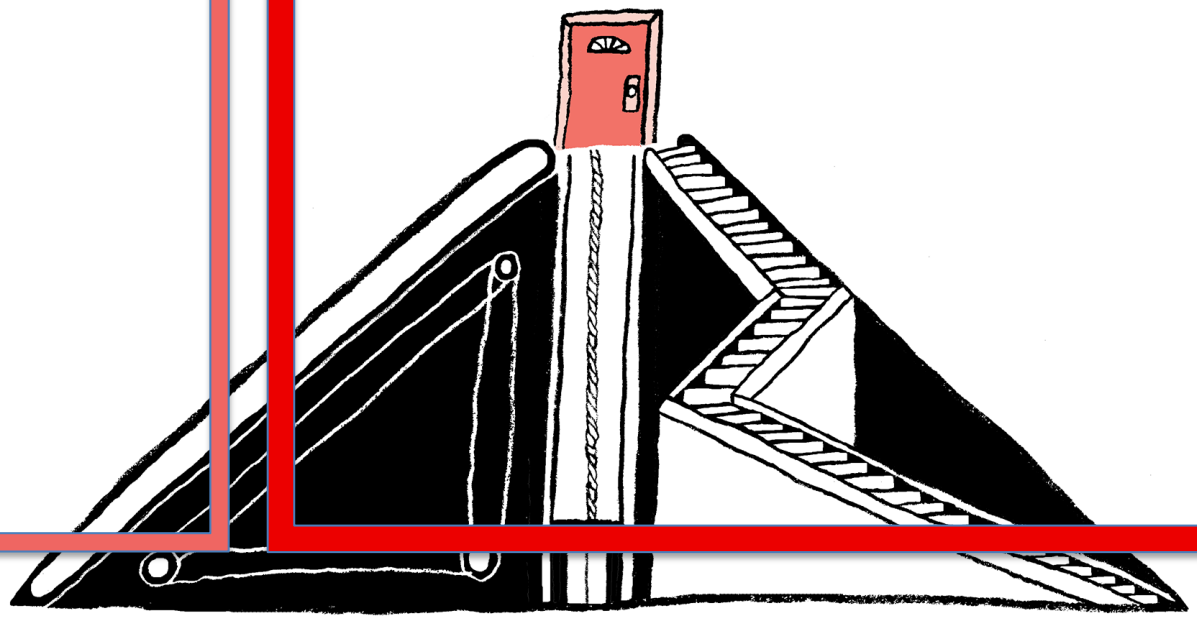
They already have a framework to explain every issue



To change their minds, change the frame

CURRENT FRAMEWORK

NEW FRAMEWORK



Great criminal justice reframing



TOUGH ON CRIME VS **SMART ON CRIME**

Shifting the framework is about people

Ideas about people create the reason for the system.

CURRENT FRAME

- Sex offenders are dangerous people who are compelled to reoffend.

- Predators who have no remorse and never change.



Shifting the framework is about people

Ideas about people create the reason for the system.

CURRENT FRAME

- Sex offenders are dangerous people who are compelled to reoffend.
- Predators who have no remorse and never change.

OUR BETTER FRAME

- People on registries are doing their best to lead positive and productive lives.
- Pro-social people who have made mistakes, been held accountable, and need a chance to move on with their lives.

Shifting the framework is about the system

Our frameworks should be explanatory.

CURRENT FRAMEWORK
REGISTRY + RESTRICTIONS

- System to supervise and control dangerous sex offenders.
- Way to monitor people who have <u>proven</u> they can't be trusted with children.
- "Right-to-know"—a way to give the public the information they want and deserve for safety.

ALTERNATIVE FRAMEWORK
REGISTRY + RESTRICTIONS

- A criminal justice maze that people can never get out of. [Bloated ineffective government system making things worse.]
- A failure to address victimization and reduce harm and help support families in crisis. [Performance of public safety.]
- A gimmick by fear-mongering legislators exploiting sexual violence.

Our goal is to change the WHOLE FRAME.

- why registries are damaging
- how they see people with convictions
- how to prevent sexual abuse

Shifting the framework

Ideas about people create the reason for the system.



Newes from Scotland, originally printed in London in 1591

PROBLEM



SOLUTION



Shifting the framework is about people

Ideas about people create the reason for the system.



Newes from Scotland, originally printed in London in 1591

PROBLEM **SOLUTION**

- The vast majority of sexual abuse and violence comes from people we know. Not people with past convictions.

- There are many pathways to sexual abuse and violence. Prevention means addressing people's needs and allowing them a positive outlook for the future. Some people who are more high-needs than others.

Shifting the framework is about people

Ideas about people create the reason for the system.

PROBLEM

Sexual abuse and violence is common and committed by ordinary people.

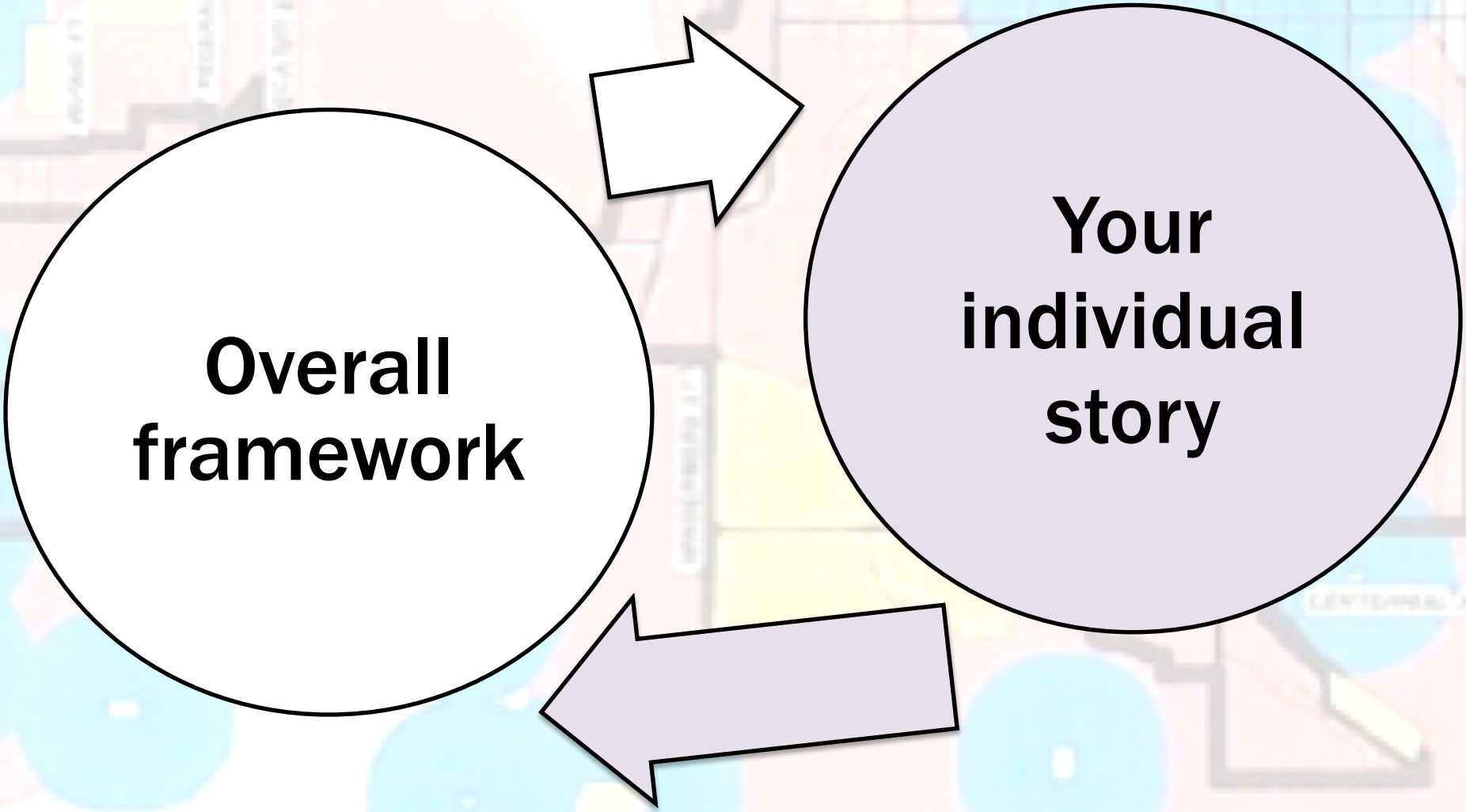
The vast majority of sexual abuse and violence comes from people we know. Not people with past convictions.

There are many pathways to sexual abuse and violence. Prevention means addressing people's needs and allowing them a positive outlook for the future.

SOLUTION

Shift in our culture and our investment in resources.

- Pay attention to sexual conduct in our own circles.
- Be knowledgeable and empowered bystanders.
- Stop stigmatizing victims and abusers. Support both.
- Provide sex education and peer counseling.
- Restore people who harm others to full citizenship.



We will use your story to shift the framework.

COMMON MISTAKES IN MESSAGING AND FRAMING

We have to meet people where they are at



We have to meet people where they are at





Sometimes we think we are saying something persuasive but it backfires


Beware of persuasion land mines

Beware of persuasion land mines

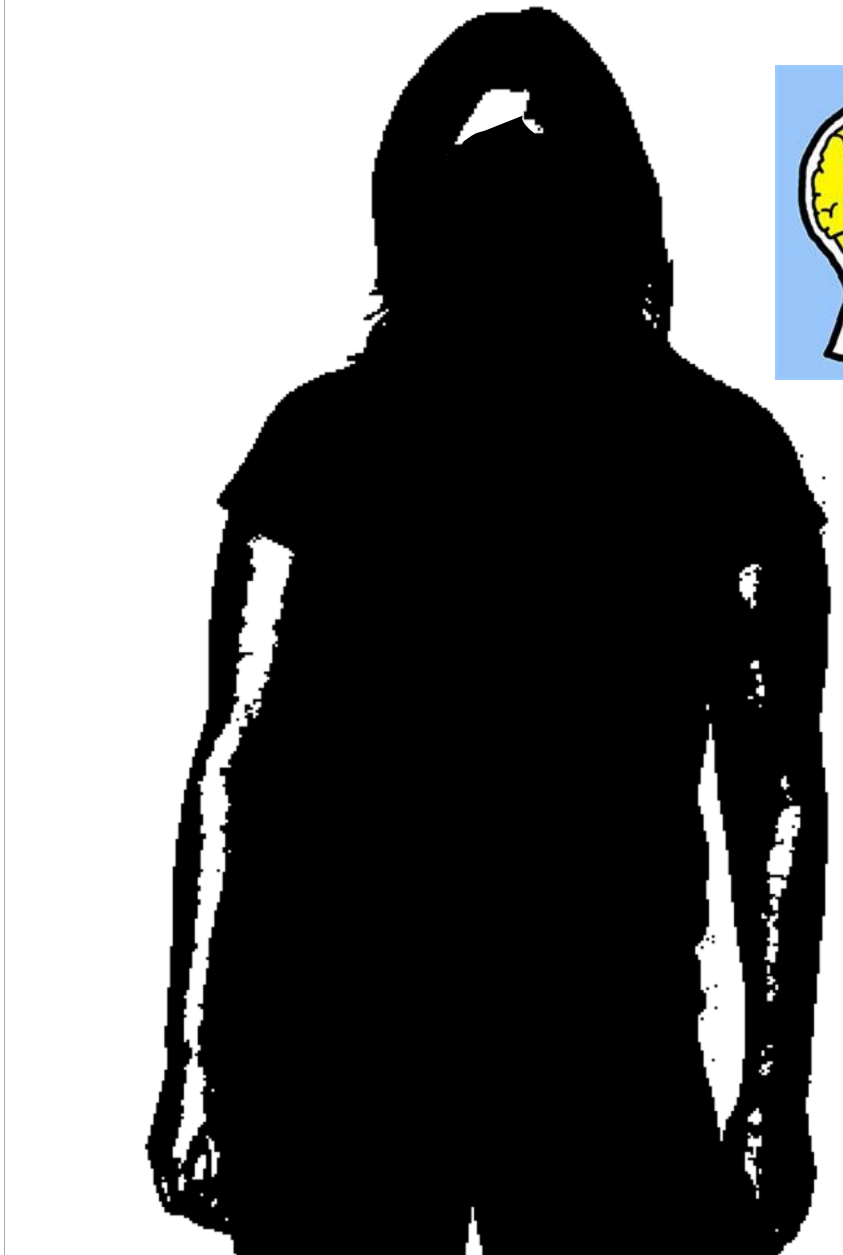
Human design flaws

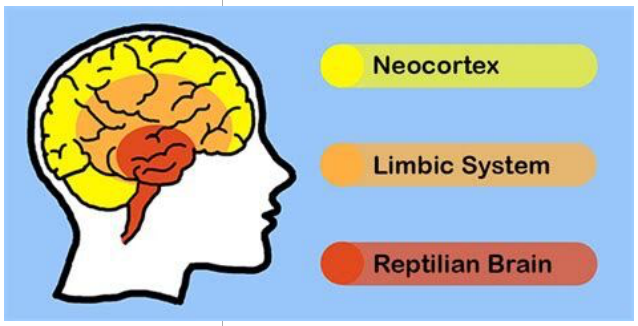
Reptilian brains:

Disturbing or fearful information activates a reactive irrational response.



PROBLEM: Reptilian brain

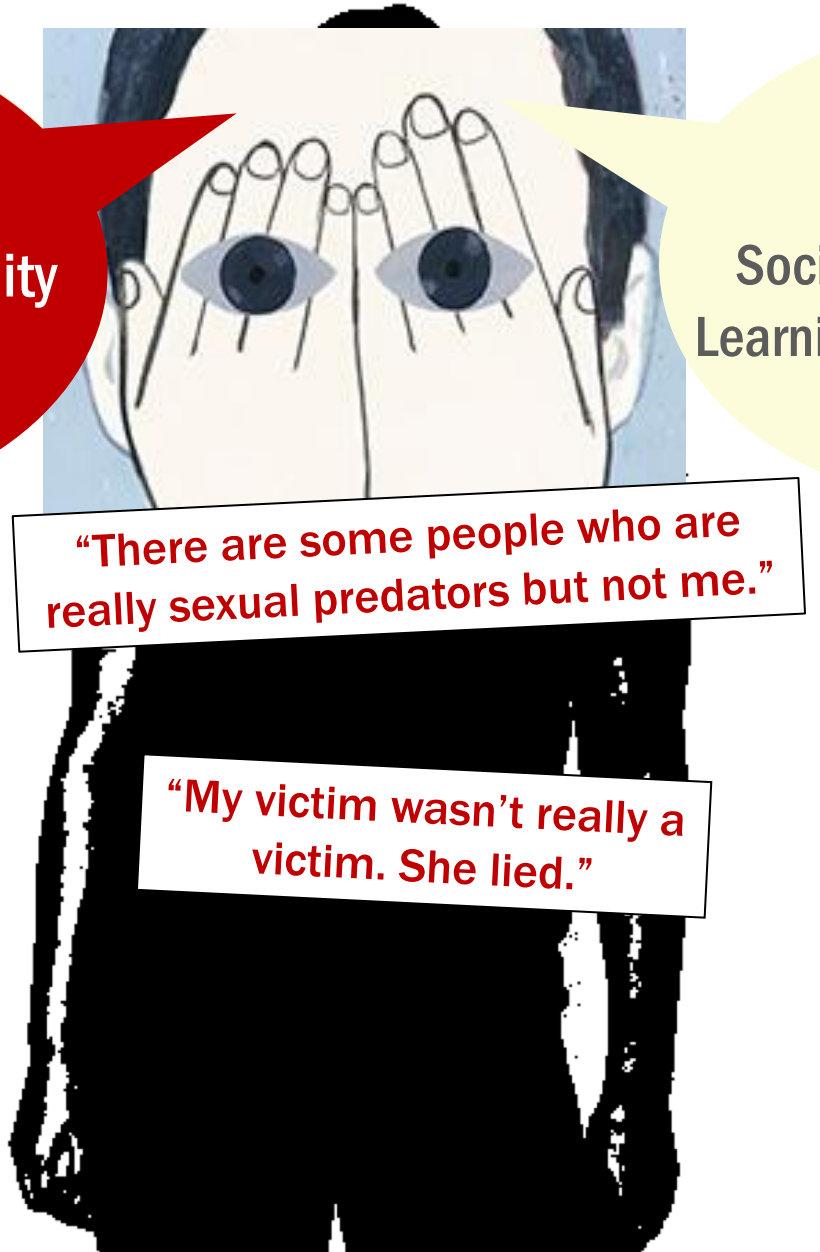




PROBLEM: Reptilian brain

Punishment
Us v. Them
Individual Responsibility
Stereotypes
Fear

Prevention
Pragmatism
Societal Responsibility
Learning and Starting Over
Accountability



Danger
Panic
Negative Imagination

Rationality
Logic
Best Practices

PROBLEM: Reptilian brain



Beware of persuasion land mines

Human design flaws

If an idea becomes familiar, we believe it. Don't repeat bad ideas.

Familiarity effect:

The more we hear something, the more it sticks. Even hearing it is not true.



Don’t re-enforce what you want people to forget.

OPINION

DON’T BLAME IMMIGRATION FOR HOMEGROWN TERRORISM

BY **ALAN REYNOLDS** ON 7/23/16 AT 8:00 AM





Gavin Long, a U.S. Marine Corps veteran who shot dead three policemen in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, in this image taken from video released by Louisiana State Police on July 18. Alan Reynolds writes that despite the homegrown origin of Jihadist terrorism, controlling terrorism is seen to be primarily a matter of controlling immigration.

LOUISIANA STATE POLICE/HANDOUT VIA REUTERS

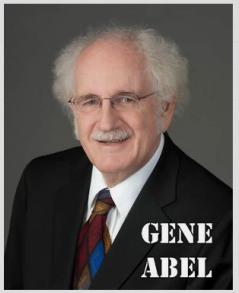
Don’t use myth and fact structures!

Organ Donation Myths and Facts

Myth	Fact
My family will have to pay for the donation.	**There is no cost to … or their families for o… issue donatio…**
Somebody could take my organs and sell them.	**…law prohibits buying and …in the U.S.**
If I'm in a co… could take my o…	**The majorit… donors are patie… been declared b….**

Myth #6: Sex Offenders have hundreds of victims

- No other study has validated these outlandish claims.
- If 700,000 Registered Offenders had 100 to 300 victims like the myth claims, there would be around a 70 to 28… The US… on …70



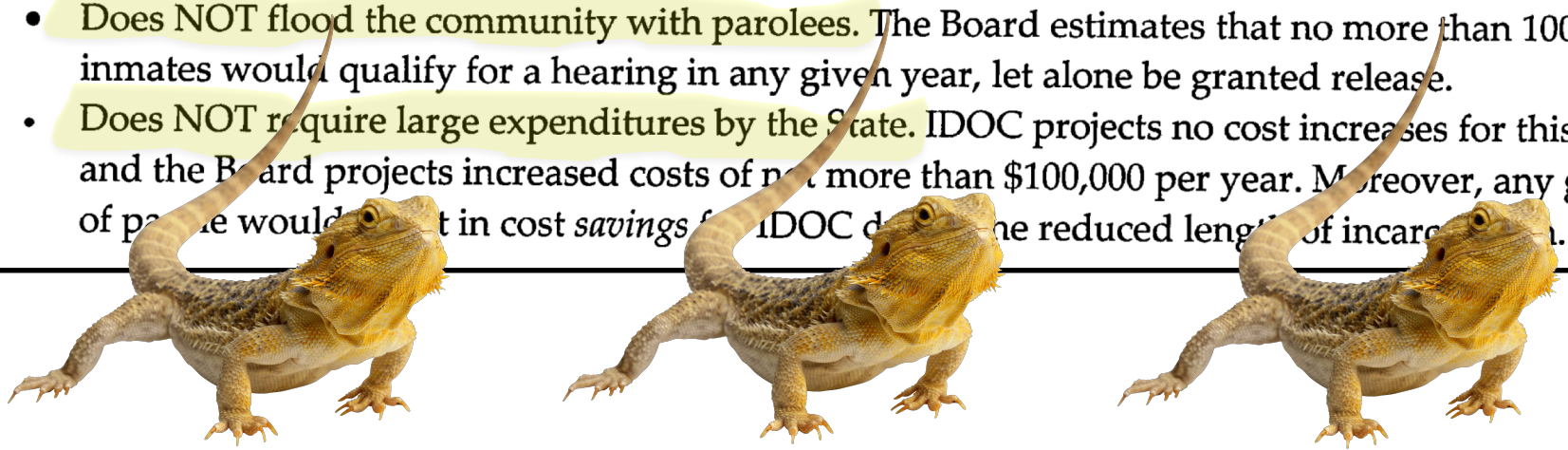
…Offenders are …” or “Predators”

…rtion of convicted sex offenders …actually preferentially attracted to …f this fact, studies typically use the … interchangeably with terms such ch…ter,” “sex offender,” “abuser,” and “rapis… urce: Okami, P. & Goldberg, A., “Per… Correlates of Pedophilia: Are They R…icators?”, Journal of Sex Research, Vol. 29… pp. 297-328.

STATE OF ILLINOIS
BRUCE RAUNER, GOVERNOR
PRISONER REVIEW BOARD

What this bill does NOT do:

- Does NOT apply retroactively. No existing sentences will be changed by this bill.
- Does NOT apply to the 'worst-of-the-worst.' Predatory criminal sexual assault, first-degree murders of 'special victims' (i.e. peace officers, EMTs, firefighters), and any inmates given a natural life sentence will not be eligible for parole consideration.
- Does NOT create a presumption of release from custody. If the Board feels there is a substantial risk of non-compliance with release conditions, or that the release would deprecate the seriousness of the crime, or that release would adversely effect institutional discipline, then parole MUST be denied by the Board.
- Does NOT change the conditions of mandatory supervised release. All inmates will still be given specific release conditions on a case-by-case basis by the Board, and will be subject to re-incarceration and the extension of their MSR term for a violation of those conditions.
- Does NOT flood the community with parolees. The Board estimates that no more than 100 inmates would qualify for a hearing in any given year, let alone be granted release.
- Does NOT require large expenditures by the State. IDOC projects no cost increases for this bill, and the Board projects increased costs of not more than $100,000 per year. Moreover, any grant of parole would result in cost *savings* for IDOC due to reduced length of incarceration.



There is no single magic bullet, especially not a fact

"These laws don't work. Residency restrictions only drive people into isolation and reoffending."

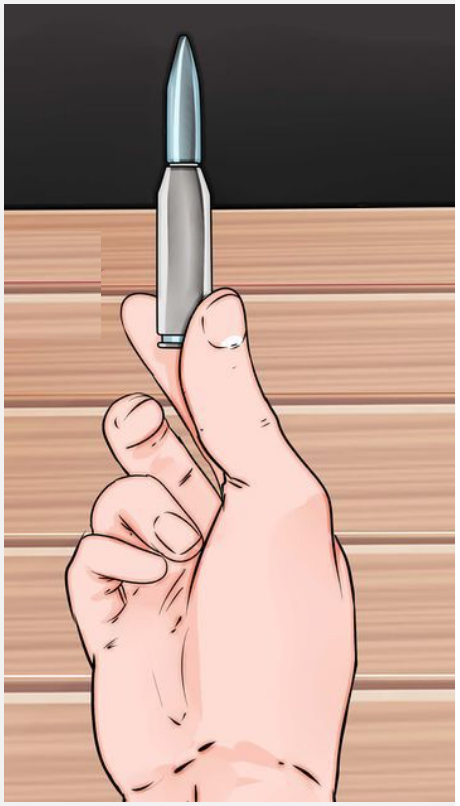
"We have too many people in prison and 45% of them are offenders without a violent record."

"Only 2% of juveniles with violent offenses will offend again."

"Sex offender recidivism rate is only 5.2%"

"Most sex offenses are committed by first-time offenders, not people on the sex offender registry."

"Young offenders and child porn offenders have low re-offense rates."




THE IMPACT WE THINK OUR FACTS HAVE ON OPPONENTS
wikiHow to Kill a Vampire

HOW PEOPLE ACTUALLY RESPOND TO FACTS

"You can have a single non-contact crime and be labeled a predator."



"Sex offender recidivism rate is only 5.2%"

"Residency restrictions only drive people into isolation and reoffending."

"Child porn offenders have the lowest re-offense rate."



"Only 2% of juveniles with violent offenses will offend again.

"Most people on the registry are low-risk to offend."

"95% of new convictions for sex crimes are from people NOT on registries."

Labeling

START UNIT

Labels are frameworks



What you call someone, even yourself,
provides a framework for understanding.

Labels organize thought for your audience

Labels organize thought for your audience

"inmate"
"perpetrator"
"prisoner"
"offender"
"sex offender"
"predator"
"super-predator"
"sexual predator"
"child sex offender"
"homeless sex offender"

These terms help establish the damaging explanatory frameworks you are trying to to overcome. Simply using the word does the work of your opponents.

people in prison
people with records
people with past convictions
people with sex offense convictions
people on registries
people required to register

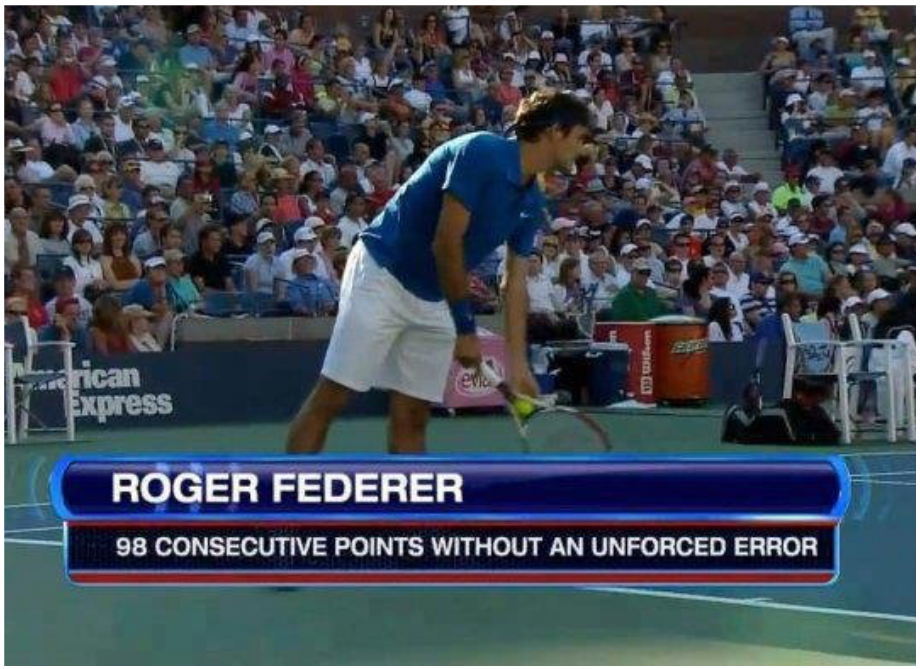


Pennsylvania Dept. of Corrections to discard terms 'offender,' 'felon' in describing ex-prisoners

By Tom Jackman May 25, 2016 Email the author

It's high time that I extend this courtesy to others, which is why I'm embracing "people first" language for everyone — including those who committed a crime. Surely, the language we use more accurately defines *us* than it does those we seek to describe — and I need to be better.

Use people-first language





Using any of these terms is an unforced error.

Offense labels promote bad frames

Don't use any offense to create a "category of person":

"murderer"
"drug offender"
"gun offender"
"sex offender"
"porn offender"
"rapist"
"arsonist"

People end up in these categories AFTER the fact. But the category creates the belief that it is what CAUSED the action.

There are many pathways to crime. It's something ordinary people do—and they do it a lot.

Offense labels promote bad frames

Don't use any offense to create a "category of person":

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Your labels organize thought for your audience

Don't use any offense to create a "category of person":

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"arsonist"

Don't use "violent" as a category for people. Do not set up a dichotomy between violent and non-violent people:
"non-violent offenders" vs
"violent offenders"

Don't use risk as a category or qualifier for people:
"low-risk offenders"
"high-risk offenders"

People with convictions are inherently risky and unstable. They all have risk scores.

We do not want people to be viewed as ticking time-bombs.

Hey, your punitive policies are changing my risk assessment scores.

Perceptions of risk correspond to support of punitiveness.

And reality

We have to meet people wh

We get further and further away from understanding causes of crime and violence and what true public safety would look like. We look for "dangerous people" rather than systemic problems.



We do not want people to be viewed as ticking time-bombs.

Perceptions of risk correspond to support of punitiveness.

Our biggest problem are these mistaken beliefs in the essential qualities of people with convictions.

STOP REINFORCING THESE CATEGORIES

Can we stop using these terms?



The terms activate the reptilian brain and the entire fear-based narrative we are trying to overcome.



The label "sex offender" is a framework

"Sex offender" already means something in our culture that is categorically incorrect:

- Perverts. Sick people. Child molesters.
- Persistent, incurable predators.
- High r[illegible]e.
- S[illegible]tional, unlike other criminals, unlike other people.
- Can't change. Treatment doesn't work.
- Bill Cosby, Brock Turner, Larry Nassar
- Perpetual danger to children.
- Born with [illegible]tic defect.
- Universally despised category.
- Must be watched. Need surveillance.

Oh yeah. We will exclude them.

Obviously.

This [illegible]n.

It c[illegible]
this [illegible]re.

It [illegible]not chang[illegible]use it to criticize the laws or correct myths.

This goes without saying.

So convenient for our opponents because they just say this and it does all the work.

Two words fills someone's mind with all these horrid associations—and a clear understanding of the problem.

What about sex offenders?

Did you consider how this might apply to this horrid species of people who we universally agree should be excluded from human rights and civic life?

The label "sex offender" is a very damaging framework

There is sexual violence and there is sexual harm. The goal is to prevent it, stop it, and hold people accountable for it.

But even people who commit harm are not sex offenders.

People who have committed sex offenses do not share an inherent set of qualities.

They don't even share the one defining quality they supposedly have which is a conviction.

There are many pathways to sexual abuse and violence. There are many pathways to rape.

"Sex offender" is a label.

It is not explanatory. It does not describe or explain sexual offending.

Even if they did:

- Convictions are dependent on what you get caught for, rules of evidence, and other factors. They don't reflect behavior.
- Even "accurate" convictions would not reflect the same behavior.
- Even the same behavior would not indicate a shared inherent quality in the person who enacts it.

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People who have committed serious and very harmful sex crimes are STILL NOT sex offenders.

The label "sex offender" is a very wrong framework

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People who have committed serious and very harmful sex crimes are STILL NOT sex offenders.

You are not a "sex offender."
Your client is not a "sex offender."
The people you carve out from good bills are not "sex offenders."
No one is a sex offender.

The term "sex offender" is a category error. Do not endorse or perpetuate this belief.

Some of the women who were burned as witches may have believed they were witches. But they were wrong. - WBM

Michaels, W. B. (2013). Racecraft: The Soul of Inequality in American Life by Karen Fields and Barbara Fields. *London Review of Books*, *35*(3), 25-26.

Labeling others only hurts you

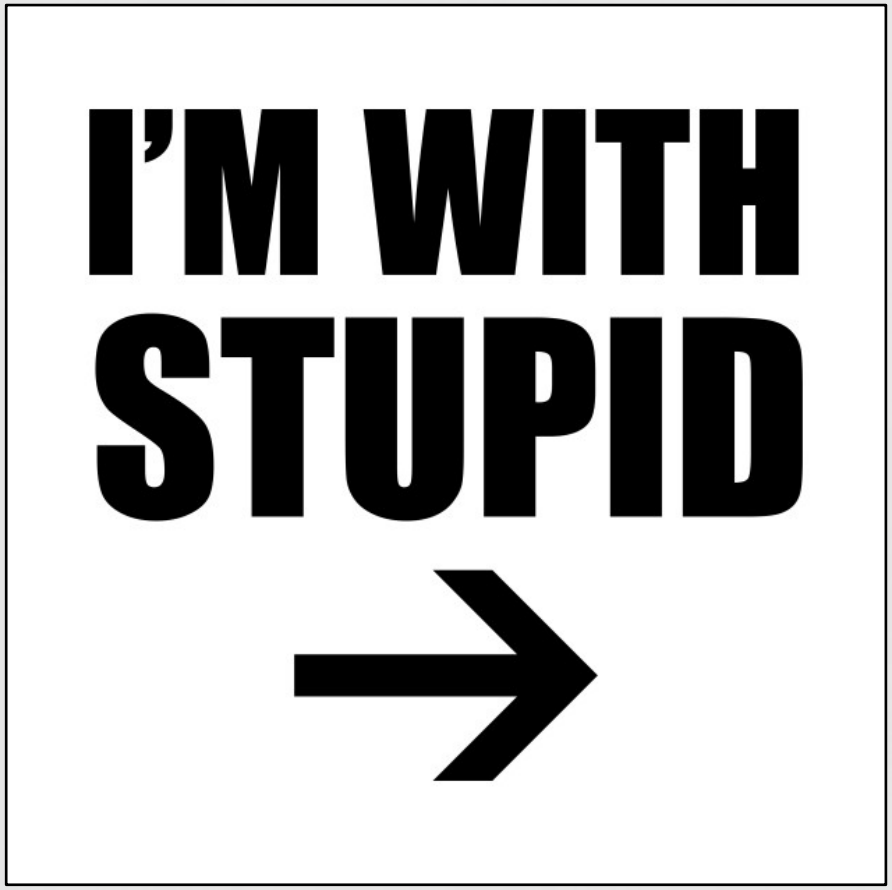
If you label people in the criminal justice system, then you direct focus to individuals and not the system.

Do not spend precious air time saying someone else deserves this system.

You are legitimizing the system.



We want a focus on systems, not individuals





Talking about "how bad" other people are draws attention to individual crimes.

The problem is not other people, it is the system.

SHIFTING NARRATIVE FRAMEWORKS

Use the term "public conviction registries" or "lists"

I don't like the government making lists

Example of system thinking

This whole system excludes and stigmatizes people with convictions. Legislators just piled on. That's what they do.

DO NOT SAY:	DO SAY:
Sex offender registry	Public conviction registries Public conviction lists
Residency restrictions School zones	Housing banishment laws Public exclusion laws Banishment zones
Register Non-compliant conviction juvenile	Re-register Behind on paperwork past conviction youth

Labeling

END

SHIFTING NARRATIVE

what works

start

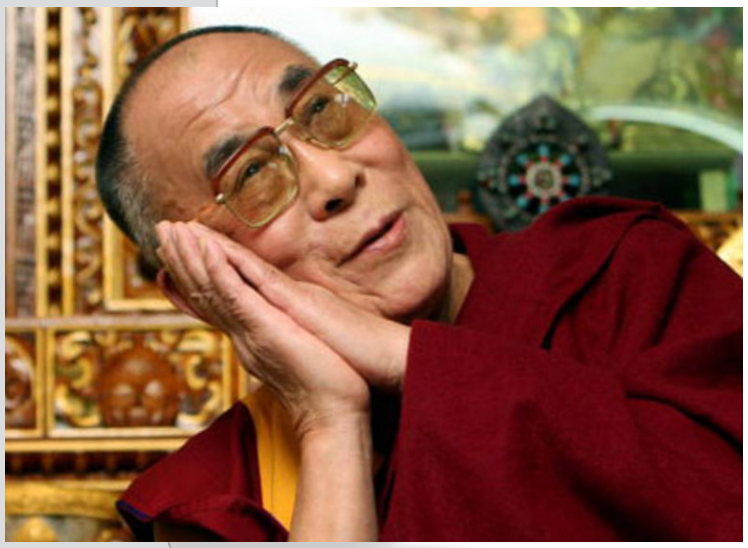
HOW?

SOLUTION: Assert new positive frameworks

Avoid activating the wrong frame, even if it is to make "someone else" the exception. You still trigger worse-case fears.

Assert a positive, hopeful, rational frame so the rational brain will take over.





Shifting the framework is about people

Ideas about people create the reason for the system.

CURRENT FRAME

OUR BETTER FRAME

- People on registries are doing their best to lead positive and productive lives.

- Pro-social people who have made mistakes, been held accountable, and need a chance to move on with their lives.

VALUE-BASED MESSAGING







Base claims in language of shared values

VALUES AND PRINCIPLES

1. We all share the goal of maintaining safe communities.

2. Illinois laws should be clear, pragmatic, and informed by research. Rules should correspond to improved public safety.

3. People should be held accountable for harm to individuals and communities, and then be given a chance to prove themselves and move on with their lives.

4. The justice system must be held accountable for promoting safety, reducing recidivism, using resources wisely, and creating fair and reasonable policies.

5. We should support people with criminal records in their efforts to lead positive and productive lives, support their families, and contribute to their community.

Accountability

Pragmatism

Effective Law Enforcement

The Constitution

Safety

Equal Treatment

Human Rights

Focus on Evidence

Value • Problem • Solution • Action (VPSA)



This method sidesteps any backfire effects by:

- starting with shared values
- asserting a positive framework (no reptilian fear frame)
- lets you construct a frame for your facts and story

Value • Problem • Solution • Action (VPSA)

VALUE

We all believe our criminal justice policies should be **clear and pragmatic.** After punishment, people should be able to **support their families and move on with their lives.**

PROBLEM

People have to live somewhere, but the **pile up of laws and restrictions** has made it illegal to live anywhere. They **push even people with homes into homelessness,** making it **difficult for them to take care of their families.**



SOLUTION

We need to get rid of housing banishment laws.

ACTION

Support our campaign.

Base claims in language of shared values



Conspiracy theories

Comparing groups of "offenders"

Attacking all law enforcement

Bashing government

Using the term "Offender"

Equal Treatment

Pragmatism

Throwing People Under the Bus

Extreme, unsubstantiated claims

Accountability

True Public Safety

The Constitution

Myth-Busting

Focus on Evidence

Inclusion

Human Rights

"Non-violent" vs. "Violent"

Effective Law Enforcement

Don't get off track and distract from shared values.

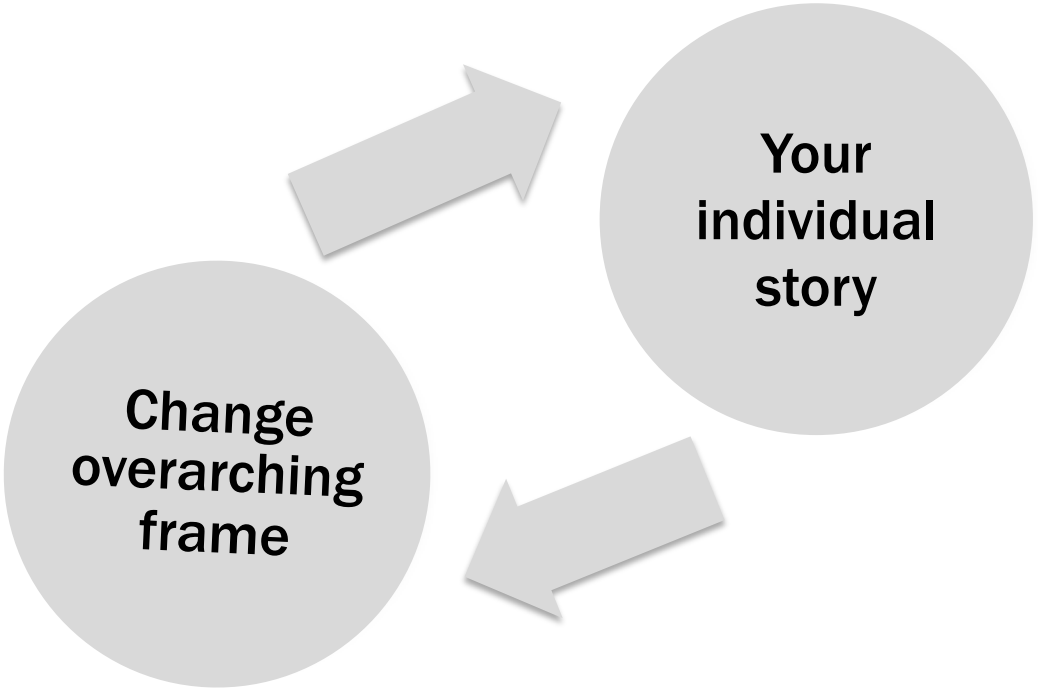
Stick with language of shared values



Don't get off track and distract your audience

Stick with language of shared values

Use VPSA.
It will help you say only what is essential and relevant to your communication goal.



Don't get off track and distract your audience

Stick with language of shared values

Use VPSA.
It will help you say only what is essential and relevant to your communication goal.



Don’t get off track and distract your audience

Control what you say

Don't take us on a detour about your case. Be clear, accountable, and brief.

Audiences have limited attention and sympathy. They are looking for the point.

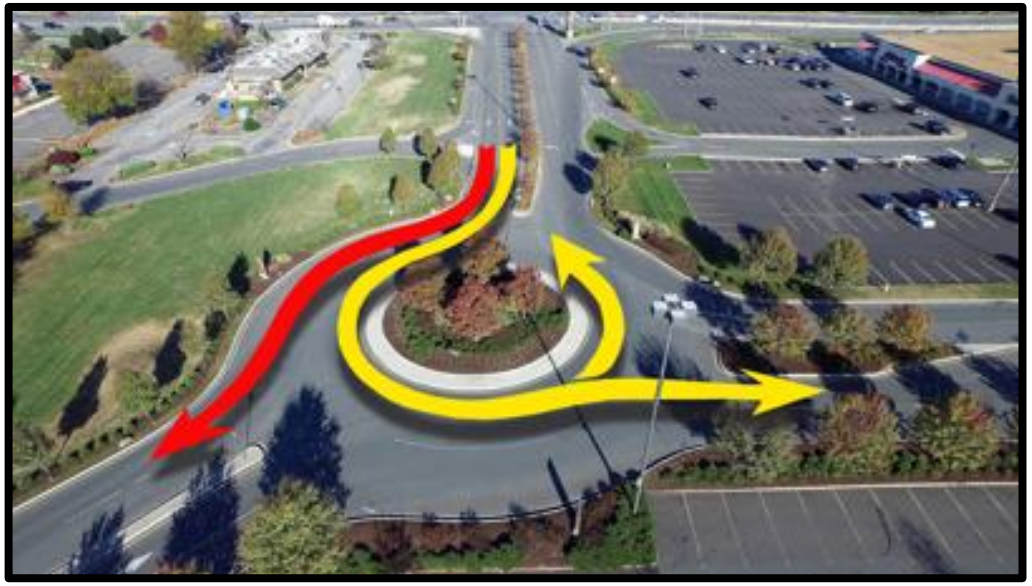
The more you say, the more they think about offending.



Don't get off track and distract your audience

Examples of veering way off course from values

Spending your precious time saying someone else deserves this system or talking about "how bad" other people are.



Minimizing your offense or maximizing someone else's offense.

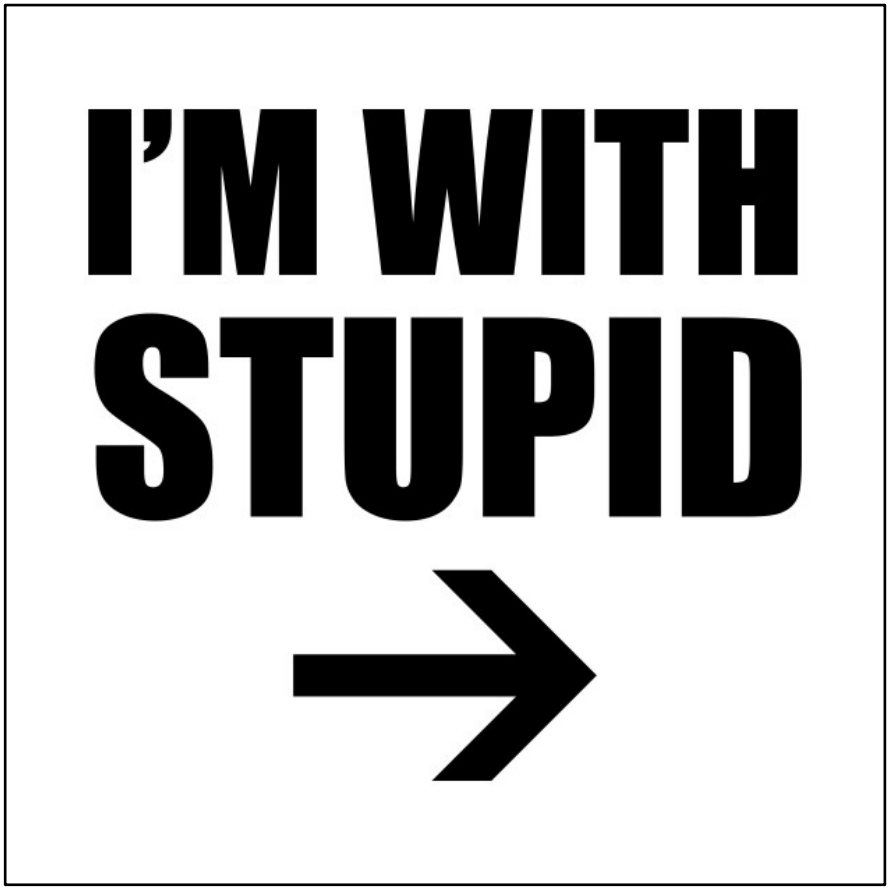
"Murderers and arsonists only have to pay $10. Why should we pay $100?"



Talking about "how bad" other people also draws attention to individual crimes.



Examples of veering way off course from values





Talking about "how bad" other people are only draws attention to individual crimes.

The problem is not other people, it is the system.



PUBLIC SAFETY

- Prevent victimization.
- Support survivors of crime.
- Restore people responsible for harm back to useful citizenship.

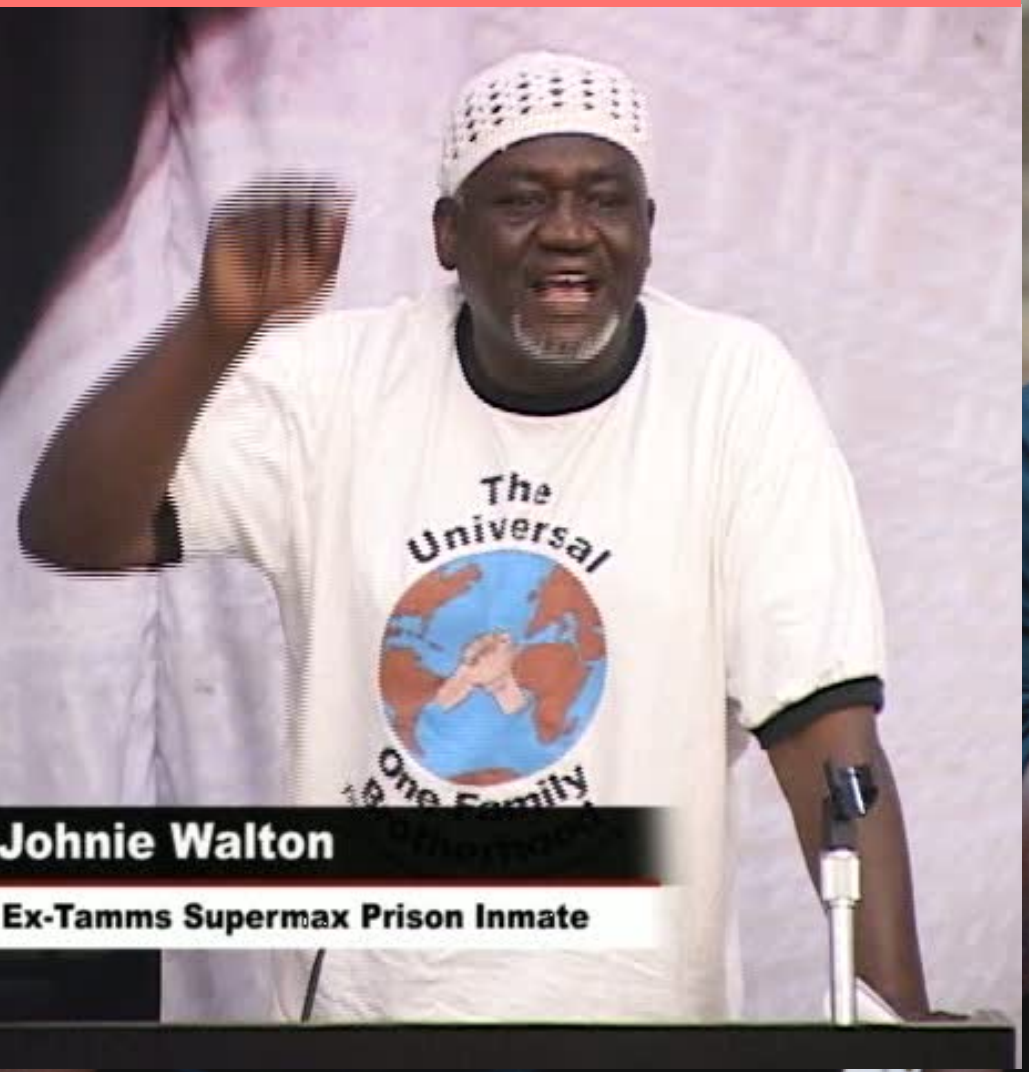
TELLING OUR STORY



Building a campaign requires talking about these policies. What we say will determine how people feel about supporting our campaign.

We should not have policies we are afraid to talk about: a symposium on public crime registries
April 21, 2017, University of Chicago

We won't succeed without well-crafted stories from people who are directly affected.



Our target audiences will root for real people, not concepts.



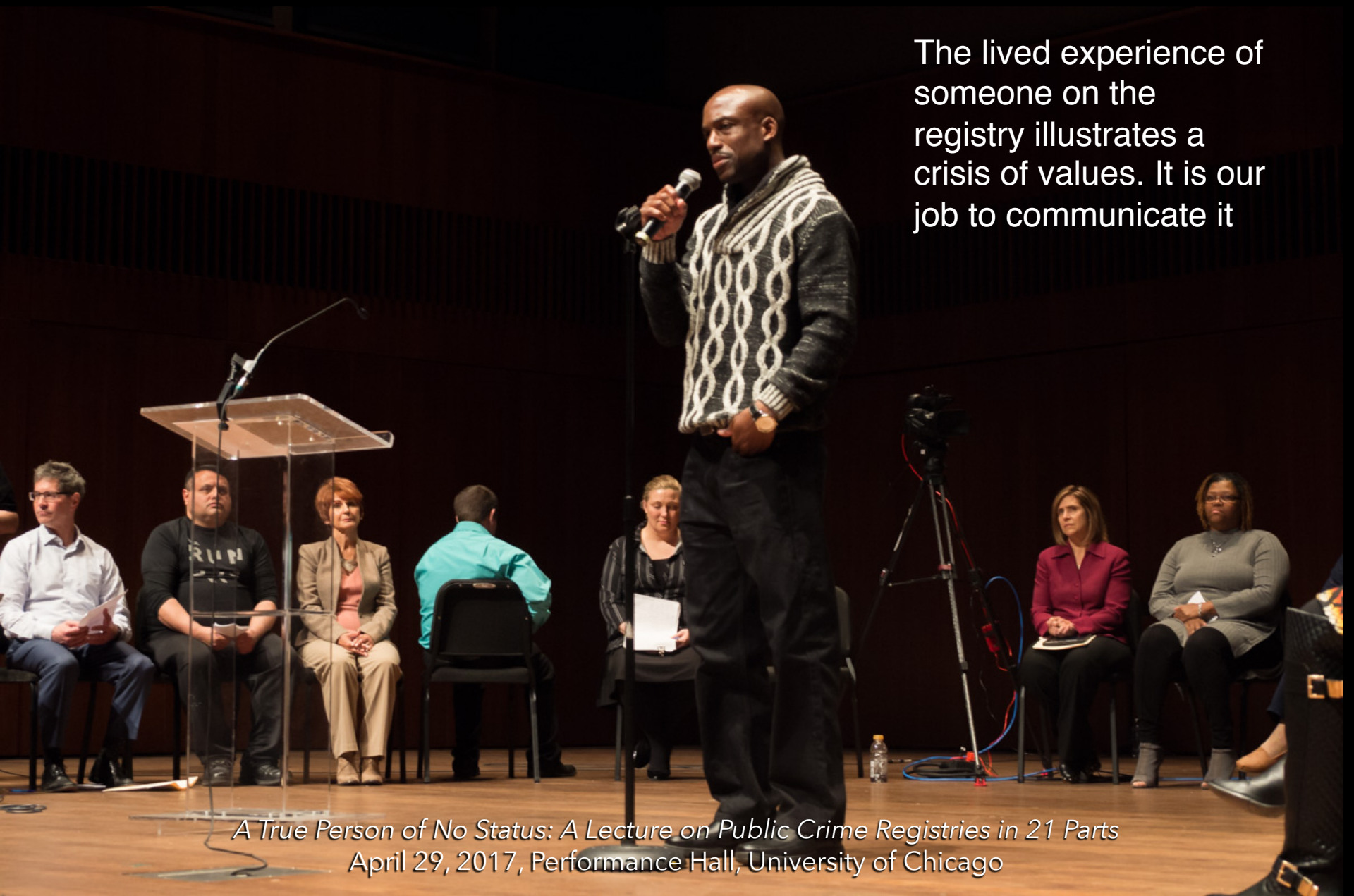
People are motivated to act on behalf of others.





We won't succeed without key allies at the table or neutralized.

People on registries know their dignity and life experience.



The lived experience of someone on the registry illustrates a crisis of values. It is our job to communicate it

A True Person of No Status: A Lecture on Public Crime Registries in 21 Parts
April 29, 2017, Performance Hall, University of Chicago

Value • Problem • Solution • Action (VPSA)



ACCOUNTABILITY

We have found that people will not truly listen to this testimony from people on registries until they hear the principle of accountability.

Value • Problem • Solution • Action (VPSA)

INTRODUCTION

My name is _____.

I am _____.

[say something about yourself]

I am here because _____.

Your accountability statement _____

_____

_____



VALUES / VISION

- We all have the goal of preventing future harm. We trust that policies will advance public safety.
- We all believe people should be held accountable for their actions, and after they are, they should be supported in leading positive, productive lives and taking care of their children/supporting their families/contributing to their community.
- We trust our justice system to prevent victimization, support survivors, and rehabilitate and restore people impacted by crime and incarceration.

We all_____

[pick one or some combination from above] [keep it brief]

PROBLEM

- The stigma and shame and burdens of these policies are harmful to children and families.
- The restrictions and barriers in this convoluted system make it difficult for people to maintain housing, employment, and social connections. The system is a maze with no exit.
- If we want people to be successful, we shouldn't destabilize them.
- These laws pull families into poverty, housing insecurity, and emotional distress.
- These policies are contrary to everything we know about successful reentry: we want people to work, have homes, proudly support their families and make positive community connections.

The problem is that _____.

[pick one or some combination from above] [keep it brief]

In my case:

TELL YOUR STORY

_____

EXAMPLES

Case study: news story is framing free-for-all





We should not have policies we are afraid to talk about: a symposium on public crime registries
April 21, 2017, University of Chicago

Value • Problem • Solution • Action (VPSA)

VALUES / VISION

1 – We share the goal of true public safety.

2 – Our justice system should prevent victimization, support survivors, and rehabilitate and restore people who harm others.

3 – People should be held accountable for their actions, and then be allowed to move on with their lives.

4 – We want people on registries to lead positive and productive lives, take care of their children, and support their families.

PROBLEM

1 – The government puts up barriers to housing, employment, and social services, so people can't meet their fundamental needs.

2 – If we want people to be successful, we shouldn't destabilize them.

3 – These laws pull families into poverty, housing insecurity, and emotional distress. The stigma, shame and stress of living under these policies is especially harmful to children.

4 – The state should support people with records, not sabatoge them from meeting essential needs.

Value • Problem • Solution • Action (VPSA)



ACCOUNTABILITY

Accountability statements can be that "people should be held accountable" or "people on registries have been punished."

PREPARE STORIES

Effective communications strategy is the groundwork for organizing. Building power through organizing and strategic alliances is necessary to make changes in public policy.

Thanks

Opportunity Agenda
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Sources

Opportunity Agenda, influenced by FrameWorks Institute
FrameWorks Institute
Center for Story Based Strategy
Working Narratives
The Narrative Initiative
David McRaney
Anat Shenker-Osario
Tali Sharot
Rob Willer and Matthew Feinberg
Midwest Academy