

Engaging message, strong interview

Training webinar for Interdisciplinary Research Leaders

Presented by Kayla Beard and Melissa Navas
Metropolitan Group

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Robert Wood Johnson
Foundation

Participant interests

- Pivoting
- Assess/prevent potential harm caused by media engagement
- Identifying media members who will likely perpetuate harmful frames
- Building relationships with journalists
- Building a storybank of individuals w/whom we can connect journalists
- Developing an efficient communications campaign pitching to news outlets + leveraging social media
- Crafting accurate + vivid quotes
- Key elements of a story that move people
- How to sidestep or handle difficult questions
- How to describe research in one sentence or a soundbite



Agenda overview

- Learning objectives for this conversation
 - Use a clear, actionable message that engages your audience
 - Feel more comfortable speaking from personal values, and lived and professional experience
 - Understand strategies for communicating about structural racism
- Agenda
 - Weaving in your personal story
 - Quick review of message and interview modules
 - Addressing structural racism
 - Q&A
 - Practice!

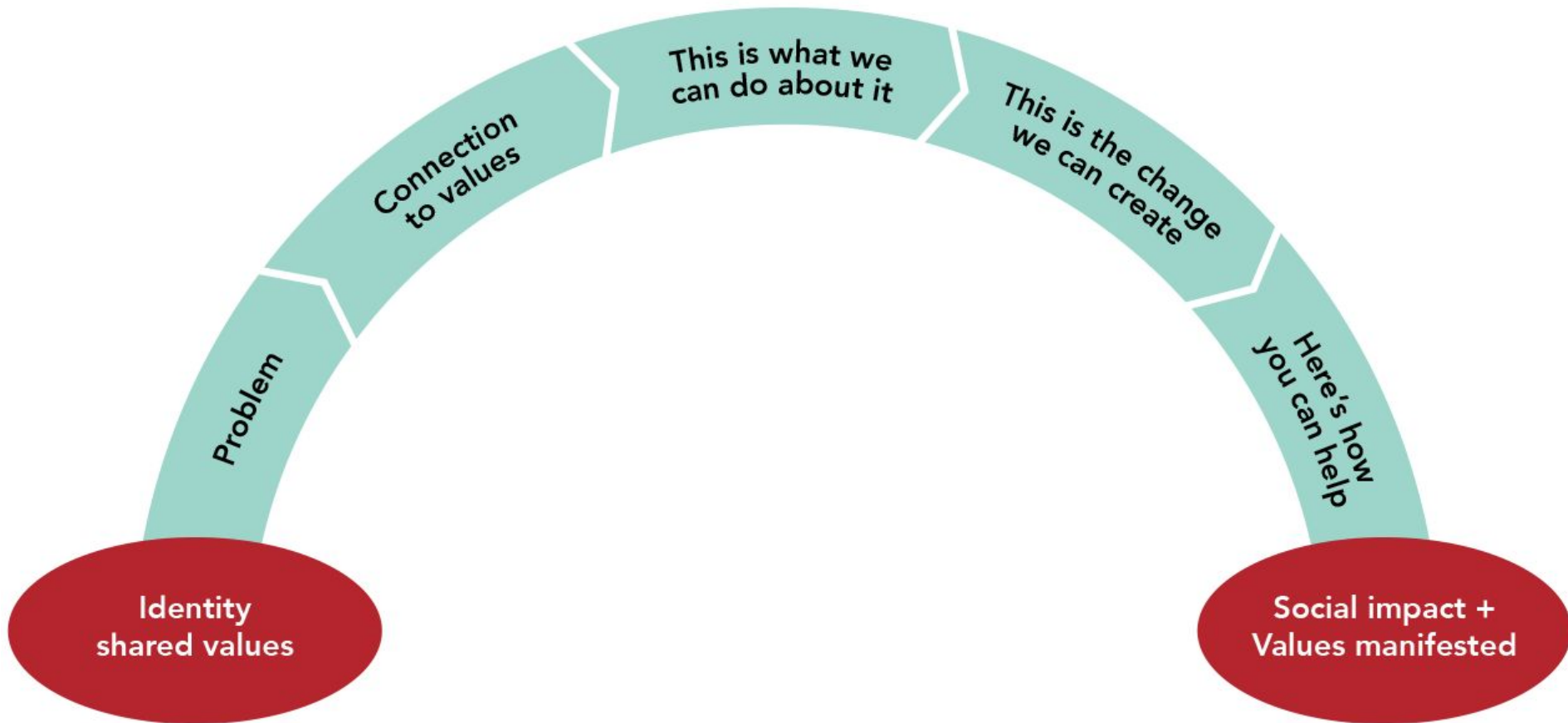


“How do we get people to care?”

- Centering the stories you want to tell
 - Your personal story carries strength
 - Ethics of personal storytelling: YOU decide
 - Ask questions
 - Build relationships
 - Negotiate terms with journalists
 - Bring your authentic self



Messages: Lead with Values, Get to Why



Message Elements

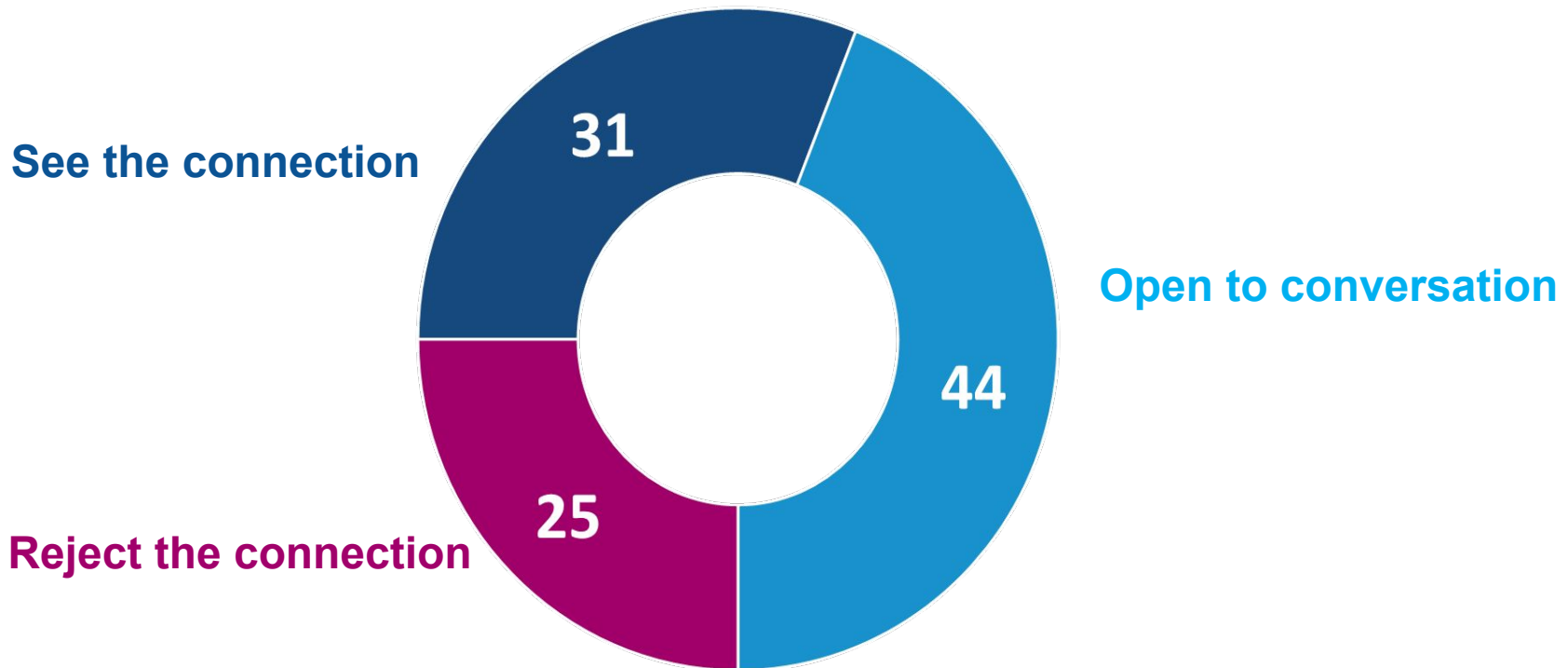
- Why are you doing this?
 - Describe the conflict, challenge, and opportunity at the heart of your work. What brought you here?
- Why does your work matter?
 - What are you doing?
 - What is it adding? How is it different?
 - What are you learning?
- Why should people stay engaged?
 - Is there a call-to-action?
 - A cliffhanger?
 - Can you link to the benefits of the program?



Addressing structural racism

Know your start point

In a national survey, people answered values-based questions, which researchers used to define three groups based on understanding of structural racism and health.



Addressing structural racism

Gauge where the reporter is

- Look at the reporter and media
 - How have they addressed structural racism in past reporting?
 - Do they talk about structures, systems, policies in their reporting? Or lean more toward personal responsibility?
 - What do their questions to you indicate about their understanding?
- Use this insight to shape your approach.

- Resource:
Structural racism and health

Messages to inspire broader understanding and action



Addressing structural racism

Message essentials

Lead with values

Opportunity

Inclusivity

Unity

Justice

Hope

Use the ladder

1. Shared, values-based ideal
2. Problem and positive vision, rooted in place and people
3. Call to action, unity, sense of possibility



Sample message on structural racism

Use the ladder

1. Shared, values-based ideal
2. Problem and positive vision, rooted in place and people
3. Call to action, unity, sense of possibility

RWJF tested message (version B)

SHARED VALUES

We all have dreams for ourselves and our families.

POSITIVE VISION AND PROBLEM

But we don't all have the same opportunities to make those dreams come true. There are laws and social practices that place more value on some lives than others, based on race and class. And that leads to fewer opportunities in jobs, education, lending, and housing, and unfair differences in the legal system.

Our ZIP code shouldn't dictate our health. Everyone should have the opportunity to live the healthiest life possible in the place they call home.

CALL TO ACTION AND UNITY

Since people created the laws and social practices that shape these opportunities, we can reinvent them. We can work together so that everyone's children and grandchildren can have the best possible future, and everyone can reach their best health and wellbeing.



Message Q&A / Discussion

- Questions?
- What's working or not working?
- Share your messages?

Message framework:

- Why are you doing this?
- Why does your work matter?
- Why should people stay engaged?



Interview Tips

- Vet the reporter and do your research
 - ask if this is the right opportunity for you
- Don't assume that a reporter knows what's obvious to you
- Practice your messages
- Prepare for questions
- Bridging and pivoting, flag
 - “That is a great question. The way I see it is...”
- Think about visuals, sounds, experiences
- Leverage the placement

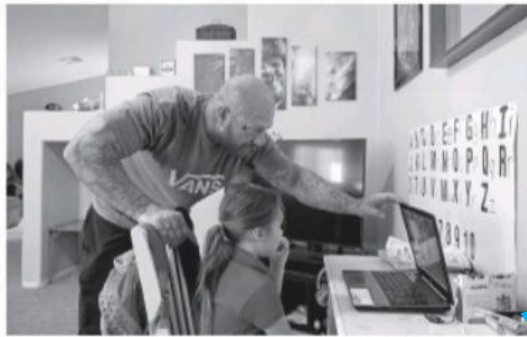


Research as a Catalyst for Bigger Stories

Tracking an Outbreak The New York Times

Parents' Stress Mingles With Joy of Side Effect Of Novel Quality Time

By ANNE HEMLEIGH
 In an episode without steady work, Gregory Fink, a single father in Las Vegas, has taken to his car for his only and constant, if somewhat noisy, source of joy: his 4-year-old daughter, Malory. He has found that his little girl may be the catalyst for his own joy.



Gregory Fink helps his daughter, Malory, at their home in Las Vegas. He said his pandemic has brought him closer to his daughter.

Research done by the Department of Psychology at the University of Chicago, led by the professor who has spent the past several years studying the effects of parental unemployment on children, found that parents who are unemployed during the pandemic are more likely to spend time with their children. The study also found that parents who are unemployed during the pandemic are more likely to spend time with their children.

“The really interesting part,” said Mr. Fink, the Columbia researcher, “is that parents who are unemployed during the pandemic are more likely to spend time with their children. It’s not just about the time spent together, but also about the quality of that time. Parents who are unemployed during the pandemic are more likely to spend time with their children in a way that is more meaningful and enjoyable.”

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Maria Garmen benefits from help, and she found herself enjoying her teenage daughter.

Three researchers at the University of Chicago — Ariel Kalil, Susan Mayer and Rohen Shah — recently found that government aid had reduced the harm of unemployment during the pandemic.

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Be open to all types of media

Beyond newspapers, radio and TV...

- **Never underestimate an unfamiliar platform.** Podcasters, Vloggers and more: **Research and ask questions**
- **Social engagement matters:**
 - You control narrative — and always remember your audience
 - Building community is valuable: loyal followers can help advocate and preserve integrity of your message
 - Consistency is key
- **These skills can translate across media platforms**



Solutions journalism

Focus on how people are trying to solve problems and what we can learn from their successes or failures

- Amanda Ripley, Washington Post:
The human factor
 - Create hope
 - Provide a sense of agency
 - Create dignity: people are more than sum of circumstances
- Resources
 - Solutions Journalism Network
 - Reasons to be Cheerful
 - Yes Media

“The world will get better when people understand problems, threats and challenges, *and* what their best options are to make progress.”

David Bornstein
Solutions Journalism
Network



Interview Q&A / Discussion

- Questions?
- What's worked or not worked in past media experiences?
- Questions about upcoming (or hypothetical) media opportunities?



Interview Practice and Discussion

Listen for:

- Clear message, reinforced
- Compelling examples, stories, proof points
- Bridging, flagging
- A quote you'd use if you were the reporter

Message framework:

- Why are you doing this?
- Why does your work matter?
- Why should people stay engaged?



**Final thoughts
or questions?**

Thank you!