

# **Oregon Thrives**

Tools that Work:

Framing and Messaging  
for Affordable Housing

# What is this Messaging/ Framing stuff, anyway?

- A strategic approach of how we communicate with those we want to influence
- Part of winning formula
- Not another p/r slogan gimmick

# The Oregon Story

- How we talk about housing and homelessness and the words we use greatly impact our success as advocates.
- Using a values-based framing philosophy in Oregon, the Affordable Housing NOW! coalition and the Housing Alliance have won huge victories for new public resources for affordable housing.
- More importantly, the values-based frames have begun to change the way elected officials, opinion leaders, and the media think about housing and housing need.

# Messages that Work

Hardworking people should be able to afford housing and still have enough money for groceries and other basic necessities

Children deserve an opportunity to succeed in school and life, which is tied to having a stable home

Housing gives people an opportunity to build better lives. To succeed you need a place to call home

Its only fair that everyone has a safe, decent place to live

# Messaging/Framing: A Tool, Not a Guide

- Messaging not intended to guide mission
- Messaging makes mission inspirational
- Messages are broad enough, we can talk effectively about all those we serve
  - ‘Homeless’ or ‘people with disabilities’?
  - ‘Low income households’ or ‘hard working families’

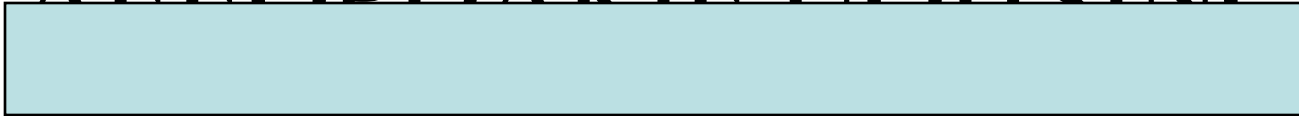
# What are Frames

- How we understand things: We receive facts in terms of our internal frames
- Frames don't appear overnight
- We must understand what frames other people are applying and deliberately put our messages into frames that help us in the long term.

# Just a few cues...



ΑΕΕΟΡΔΑΡΙΕ ΛΙΟΗΣΙΝΟ

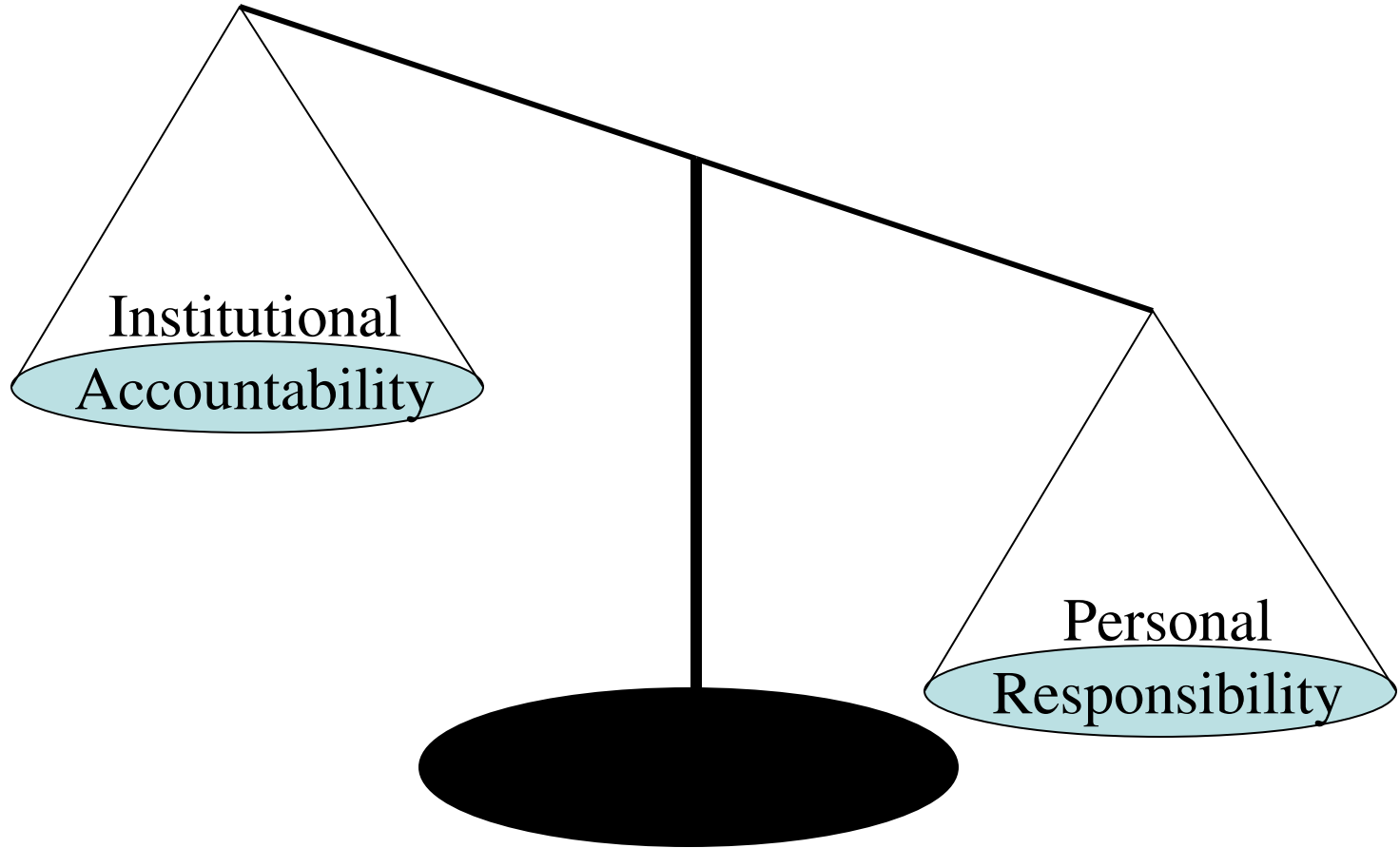


...might surprise you



AEEQPDARIF UQHSINC

# The Need to Reframe





# Lakoff's three levels of analysis

- **Level 1: Big ideas and universal values like fairness, equality, and justice**
- **Level 2: Issue types such as civil rights, the environment, public health**
- **Level 3: Specific policy areas such as affordable housing, beer taxes, toxic waste sites**

Adapted from The Frameworks Institute  
<http://www.frameworksinstitute.org>

# Problem with Progressive Frames

Progressive often spend too much time on issues and specific policies, rather than invoking values and big ideas

NUMBers leave many folks NUMB

We need to both simplify and amplify: Value frames are easier to understand and more likely to tap into people's passion



# Developing a message

- λ **Statement of concern,  
*what is wrong?***
- λ **Statement of the value/frame,  
*why it matters?***
- λ **Statement of solution,  
*what is the policy?***

Adapted from Berkeley Media Studies  
[http:// www.BMSG.org](http://www.BMSG.org)

# Message Development

- How do we determine what messages work?
  - RESEARCH AND POLLING

# Messages that Work

Hardworking people, seniors, people with disabilities should be able to afford housing and still have enough money for groceries and other basic necessities

Children deserve an opportunity to succeed in school and life, which is tied to having a stable home

Housing gives people an opportunity to build better lives. To succeed you need a place to call home

Its only fair that everyone has a safe, decent place to live

# Message Discipline

- Once you identify message that work, Message Discipline is essential
  - Repetition establishes steady drum-beat
  - Avoid getting mired into details

# Putting the Messaging to Work

In the Media

Communicating with Electeds

Broadening Your Coalition

# Putting the Messaging to Work

In housing information materials

In your organization's publications

In grant applications and reporting

# Breaking Out of What We Know



‘Just a cog’ can be a beautiful thing









Children and families  
deserve an opportunity to succeed in  
school and life, which is tied to having a stable home.