
AN ADVOCATE'S GUIDE TO EFFECTIVE FRAMING

The goal of an effective frame about a social problem is to produce a shared and accurate understanding of reality - a coherent and motivating story about its causes and solutions.

How do you do that?

First: Understand the 3-step recipe for an effective frame

1. Explain **WHY** the issue matters, with an appeal to collective values.
2. Tell a causal story by explaining **WHAT** the challenge is and **HOW** we might solve it.
3. Point to **WHERE** the solution will lead us and **WHY** it matters that we get there.

Second: Understand some key framing dos and don'ts

DO:

1. Appeal to people's sense of **community** and **civic responsibility**.
2. Be positive and solutions-oriented in **tone**.
3. Don't use data/numbers without interpreting their meaning for your audience.
4. Make sure **visuals** reflect your frame; don't use a photo/image just because it's appealing.
5. Make sure that the **messengers** you choose will be viewed as credible but unbiased.

DON'T

1. Use jargon, acronyms, abbreviations, or technical language without explaining the terms.
2. Reinforce crisis at the expense of hope and solutions. Crisis framing disengages and makes problems seem unsolvable.
3. Rely only on a single, vivid personal story to substitute for an effective frame. Personal stories often reinforce stereotypes about those portrayed and usually make systemic/structural causes and solutions more difficult to imagine. A story is a good story if it compels people to support your proposed solution(s), not whether it builds sympathy.

Finally - Use this template to craft your frame

Explain **WHY** the issue matters, with an appeal to collective values.

Tip: Use values that cultivate a sense of shared fate in solving the problem. Use more “us” and “solution” values, like ingenuity and innovative thinking, interdependence, and equity in opportunity. Avoid sympathy, care, and charity.

Tell a causal story by explaining **WHAT** the challenge is and **HOW** we might solve it.

Tip: Clearly connect the dots between your problem statement/challenge, its consequences, and the solution proposed. Analogies and metaphors can be helpful here, as well.

Point to **WHERE** the solution will lead us and **WHY** it matters that we get there.

Tip: Give your audience a vision of the destination, explaining what things could look like if the solution is implemented, and why it's worth trying to get there.

MORE FRAMING RESOURCES:

My blog: daveystrategies.com/blog

My YouTube channel: <https://bit.ly/DaveyTube>