

**More than a message:  
Building narrative power to  
advance racial and health  
equity**

California LHJ Equity Convening

Lori Dorfman, DrPH, MPH



## what we do

- **Conduct media research**
- **Train advocates**
- **Provide resources for journalists**

A map of the Sacramento region in California, showing various tribal territories. The map is overlaid with a semi-transparent dark grey box containing text. The map labels include 'COAST MIWOK' in the northwest, 'SACRAMENTO RIVER' in the center, 'MOUNT TUBERTAK (DIABLO)' in the north, 'DELTA YOKUTS' in the northeast, 'SACRAMENTO VALLEY YOKUTS' in the east, and 'SACRAMENTO' in the center. The text 'Land acknowledgement' is prominently displayed at the top of the map area.

# Land acknowledgement

The Sacramento Native American Heritage Center reminds us that this area was, and still is, the Tribal land of the Nisenan people. Sacramento was a gathering place for many local Tribes who have lived throughout the central valley and the foothills for generations and were the original stewards of this land. We would like to acknowledge the Southern Maidu people to the North, the Valley and Plains Miwok/ Me-Wuk Peoples to the south of the American River, and the Patwin Wintun Peoples to the west of the Sacramento River. We would also like to honor the Wilton Rancheria, the only federally recognized tribe in Sacramento County.

We acknowledge that we are standing on the tribal lands of Sacramento's Indigenous people. We recognize that we have benefitted, and continue to benefit from the use and occupation of this land. Consistent with public health's values of community and diversity, we have a responsibility to acknowledge and make visible our relationship to Native peoples. By offering this Land Acknowledgement, we affirm Indigenous sovereignty and will work to hold our public health institutions more accountable to the needs of American Indian and Indigenous peoples.

HOUSING & HOMELESSNESS

## Oakland to return land rights to Indigenous group

The proposed agreement between the city and the Sogorea Te' Land Trust involves a woody five-acre section of Joaquin Miller Park.

by **Natalie Orenstein**  
September 8, 2022



People gathered at Joaquin Miller Park on Thursday for an announcement of an agreement between the city and an Indigenous group to place a nearby plot of land back under Native control. Credit: Amir Aziz

The city of Oakland plans to return five acres of Joaquin Miller Park to permanent Indigenous control, in one of the first cases of a municipality giving land back to Native people.

# Steps in a long-term struggle



# Lesson 1: Message is never first



# Lesson 1: Message is never first

Before you know what you want to **SAY**...

# Lesson 1: Message is never first

Before you know what you want to **SAY**...

...you have to know what you want to **DO**.



## Message is never first

- What do you want to change in the world?





## Message is never first

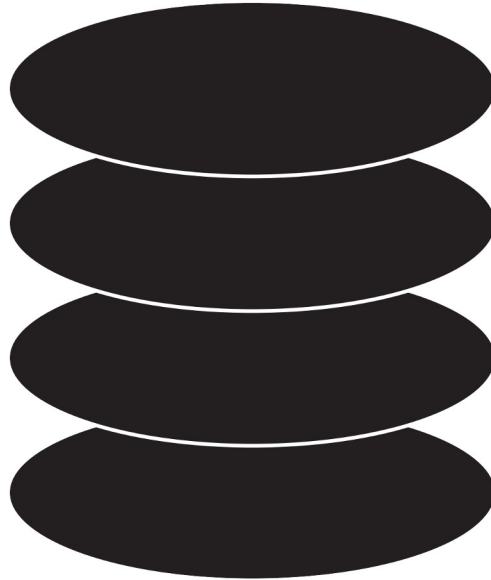
- What do you want to change in the world?
- How will you change it?



## Message is never first

- What do you want to change in the world?
- How will you change it?
- Why do you want it to be changed?

# layers of strategy



Overall strategy

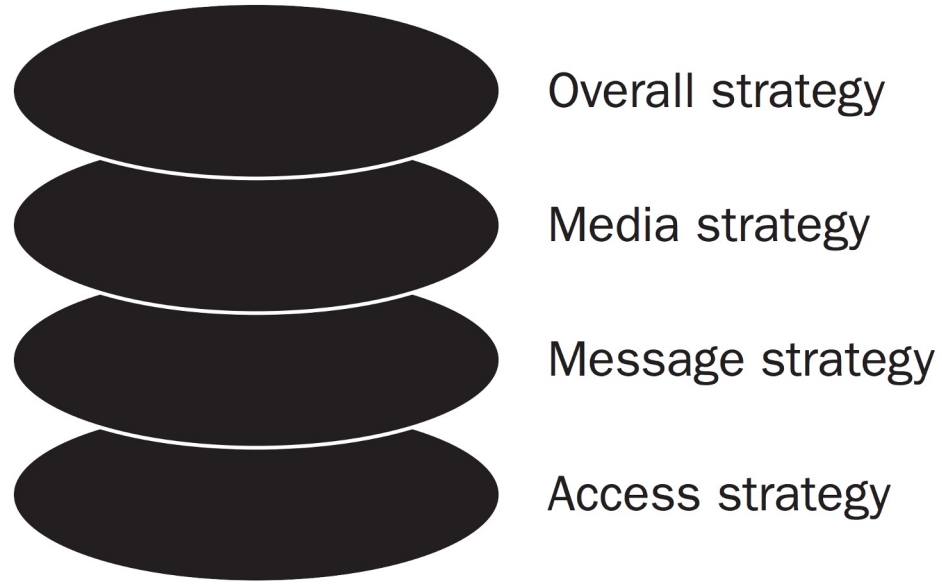
Media strategy

Message strategy

Access strategy

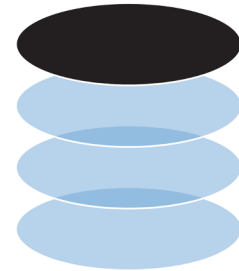
# You can't have a media strategy without an overall strategy.

layers  
of  
strategy



# Overall strategy

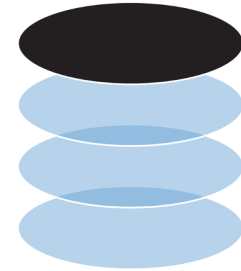
- ➔ Define the **problem** you want to address
- ➔ Clarify the **solution** for which you'll advocate
- ➔ Identify the **target** with the power to make the change
- ➔ Enlist the **allies** who can help make your case
- ➔ Identify what **actions** you'll take to influence the target



## Overall strategy example

- ➔ **Problem:** Evictions during early months of COVID-19 pandemic
- ➔ **Solution:** Pass an equity-focused county eviction protection package to keep people housed
- ➔ **Target:** County Board of Supervisors
- ➔ **Allies:** Local grassroots groups (legal, faith, housing, immigrant rights), public health organizations, etc.
- ➔ **Actions:** petitions, public comment, op-ed, social media, etc.

*Based on work by the Vallejo Housing Justice Coalition and other community organizers in Solano County*



COMMENTARY

# Extend the eviction moratorium to ward off another public health crisis



BY GUEST COMMENTARY  
JUNE 9, 2021



Illustration via iStock

### IN SUMMARY

Keeping families housed should be a top priority as the state recovers from the pandemic.



By Tracy Delaney

*Dr. Tracy Delaney is executive director of the Public Health Alliance of Southern California, phasocal@pahi.org.*



Zenei Triunfo-Cortez, Special to CalMatters

*Zenei Triunfo-Cortez is president of the California Nurses Association/National Nurses United, execoffice@calnurses.org.*

# Overall strategies drive media and message strategies





# Addressing racial and health equity

## Walk the talk

Your **overall strategy must center racial and health equity** if you want your communications strategy to advance racial and health equity.



Your **overall strategy must center racial and health equity** if you want your communications strategy to advance racial and health equity.

BAY AREA // REAL ESTATE

## Black Bay Area residents own homes at half the rate of white neighbors. Could \$500 million help change that?



Lauren Hepler

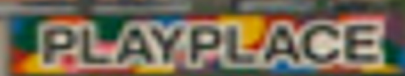
June 30, 2022 | Updated: July 3, 2022 4 p.m.

Gift this article



Darris Young, an impact manager at the Bay Area Regional Health Inequalities Initiative, at San Pablo Berkeley Park. Young, 60, grew up in Berkeley but has seen many friends and family members move to more affordable nearby cities or cross-country destinations like Atlanta.

Yalonda W. James/The Chronicle



**What surrounds us  
shapes us.**

Childhood obesity.  
Don't take it lightly.

EAT FRUITS & VEGETABLES  
AND BE ACTIVE

Food Stamps can help. Call 1-88-8-328-3483 to see if you qualify.

4151

This advertisement features a close-up of a female doctor in a white coat and blue stethoscope. The background is dark. The text is in white and orange. A small logo of a sun with a rainbow is positioned above the text 'EAT FRUITS & VEGETABLES AND BE ACTIVE'.

VIACOM

my kinda  
shoppin'  
spree

Dollar **M** Menu

I'm lovin' it

This advertisement features a woman in an orange top smiling and holding two McDonald's bags. The background is green. The McDonald's logo is in the top left. The text 'my kinda shoppin' spree' is in white. The 'Dollar M Menu' logo is at the bottom. There are images of a burger and fries on the right side.

Photo courtesy of Prevention Institute

**Health equity  
demands more.**

**Health equity  
demands more.  
We must reframe.**



# Why framing matters for racial and health equity

## You say

People who live in neighborhood X are three times as likely to have diabetes

## They hear

People living in neighborhood X have made bad choices. Why don't they eat better?



# Cognitive frames

Mental pathways that help people understand the world.



**Just a few clues...**

**HEALTH EQUITY**



# Lesson 2: Make the landscape visible.

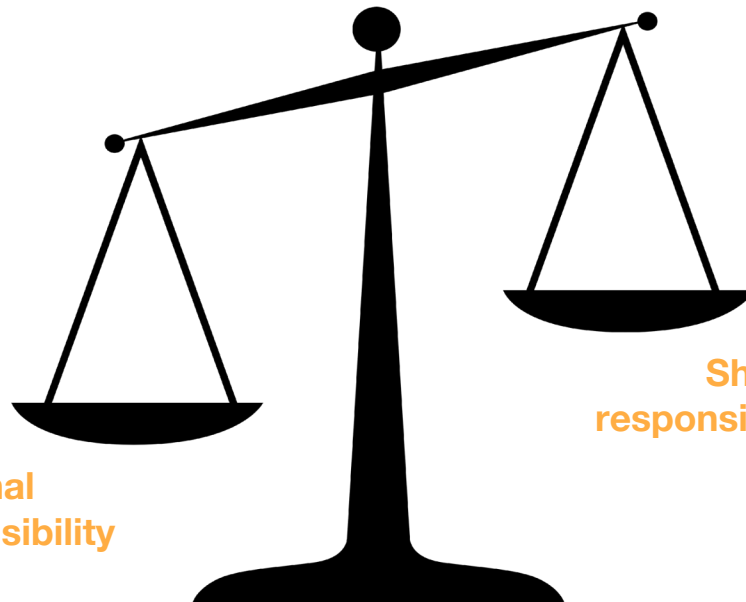
# Lesson 2: Make the landscape visible.



# Lesson 2: Make the landscape visible.



# news frames



Personal  
responsibility

Shared  
responsibility

# key terms

## **portrait** *(episodic)*

Personal responsibility ⇒

You're on your own ⇒

Duty to family ⇒

**Market justice** ⇒

## **landscape** *(thematic)*

Shared responsibility

We're in this together

Duty to the collective good

**Social justice**

## Lesson 3:

# Articulate your values

community

liberty

unity

interconnection

Can-do spirit

fairness

democracy

family

# Lakoff's levels

## Level 3:

Details of the policy  
or approach

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## Level 2:

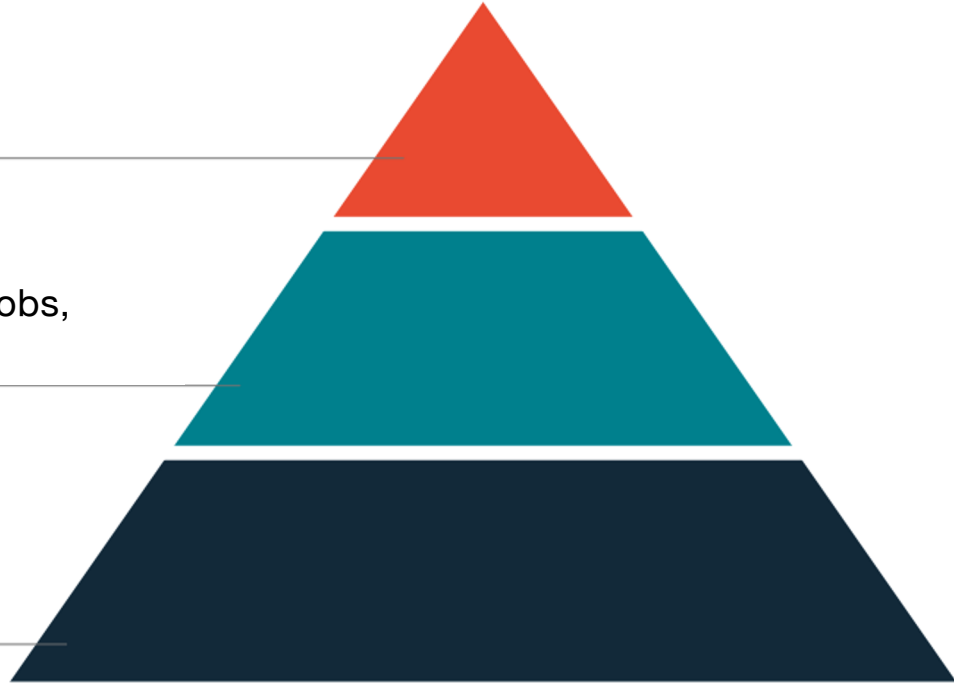
Topic area, like housing, jobs,  
environmental justice

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## Level 1:

Foundational value, like  
justice, unity or  
interconnectedness

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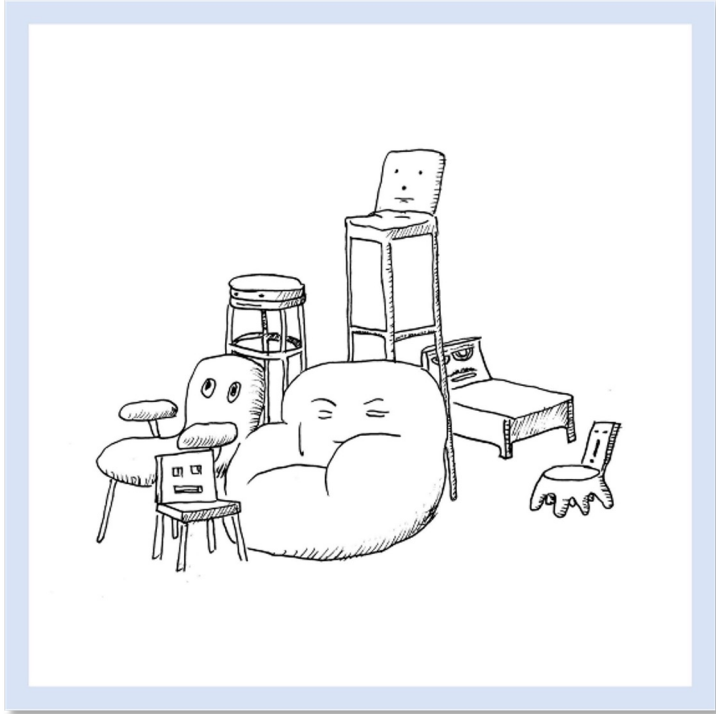
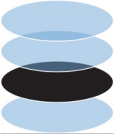
# An Analysis of Health Equity in the San Joaquin Valley Region

A Report from the San Joaquin Valley Public Health Consortium  
February, 2022



## Lead with values

“The diversity, commitment, ingenuity, and resiliency of the region’s people have carried them through decades of hardship and adversity and make the Valley a unique and valuable place to live for many.”



**Use plain  
language**



# for example

Avoid labels and jargon. Instead of saying “*health equity*”

## **try saying:**

*“We want our county to be a healthy, safe, and vibrant place for everyone, yet some of us face barriers to this.”*

# for example

Avoid labels and jargon. Instead of saying “*health equity*”

## **try saying:**

*“We want our county to be a healthy, safe, and vibrant place for everyone, yet some of us face barriers to this.”*

## **Or better yet, say:**

*“We want our county to be a healthy, safe, and vibrant place for everyone. This means that our residents have access to good jobs with dignity, quality schools and housing, reliable ways to get from place to place, and clear air to breathe.”*



## What can we do?

- **Embed equity into our overall strategies.**
- **Reframe to make the landscape visible.**
- **Articulate our values.**
- **Do it all with clear, simple language.**



**Questions?**

# thank you

## stay connected!



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The logo for Berkeley Media Studies Group, consisting of the lowercase letters 'b', 'm', and 'sg' stacked vertically in a white, sans-serif font.