

Terms and definitions for expanding public conversations

NARRATIVES AND HEALTH EQUITY: EXPANDING THE CONVERSATION

Worldview is a set of values, beliefs, assumptions that shape our view of the world. There are always multiple worldviews at play.

Public narratives are certain kinds of stories that have the power to shape conscious perceptions, understanding, analysis and sense of what needs to be done and what is possible. Among other things, public narratives (or grounding narratives):

- Provide an understanding or interpretation of people and situations.
- Are grounded in and reflective of a larger set of values and beliefs—a worldview.
- Are designed to shape possibilities and outcomes—serve a purpose.
- Are most powerful when they draw on what is already in people, even if it is buried.

Dominant public narratives are ones that override other narratives and thus have the most power to shape what is possible.

Narrative frames are like lenses that bring some aspects of a picture or situation into focus while de-emphasizing others. The **power** of a narrative frame is that it points the audience toward particular sorts of solutions that are grounded in a particular public narrative and worldview.

Narrative frames answer the questions:

- How do we define the situation in the context of the grounding narrative? What values/beliefs are being violated or upheld?
- What do we want to say are the main causes of the problem in the context of the grounding narrative?
- What sorts of solutions do we want to propose or point to?

Messages are how we communicate the story we want specific audiences to hear. We use verbal and non-verbal messages to communicate frames, narrative and worldview – often times we use personal stories to deliver messages. Messages may vary with audiences and situations, but they should be consistent.

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2019. To obtain this information in a different format, call: 651-201-3880.
Based on the work of David Mann & Grassroots Policy Project.