

HEALTH HAPPENS IN COMMUNITIES

Framing Guide to Community Well-Being

2026



Leonard Parker Pool
INSTITUTE FOR HEALTH



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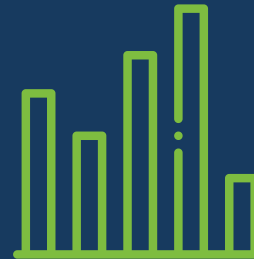
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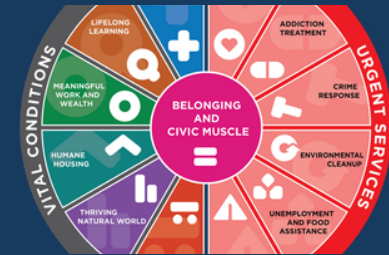
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WHY FRAMING MATTERS

What is Framing?

Framing is the choices we make in what we say and how we say it. We're framing when we decide what to emphasize, how to explain, which metaphors to use, which values to center, and even what to leave unsaid. These choices matter. They affect how people hear us, what they understand, and how they act. When we change the story and how we tell it, we can change the world.

Awareness

People can't care about an issue they don't think about. Effective framing helps put important topics on the radar.

Support

For progress to happen, people must not only understand an issue but also support change. Framing helps people see a social problem as something we can solve.

Understanding

Most people don't understand social issues the way the experts, scientists, or people with lived experience do. Framing helps expand our mental models.

Demand

When we frame an issue together, as a field, we can build narratives that bolster demand for changes that make our world more just.



Understanding public thinking to better frame our work

The first step in framing our work is to understand how the public already thinks about it. Cultural mindsets are the deeply held, often unconscious ways that people make sense of social issues. They shape how people interpret causes, assign responsibility, and evaluate solutions. Everyone holds a mix of productive and unproductive mindsets, and communication can activate either—depending on the words, images, and examples we use. When we understand and anticipate how people are likely to think, we can frame messages in ways that avoid common traps and make it easier for people to see the need for collective, systems-focused solutions.

Three dominant mindsets that hold our issues back:

1. **Individualism.** A mindset that leads people to see outcomes as the result of personal choices, effort, and character rather than social conditions or systems.

Framing move to counter individualism: Explain how systems, environments, institutions and policies shape outcomes. Don't just say "systems matter." Show *how* they matter.

2. **Fatalism.** A mindset in which people see social problems as inevitable, permanent, or too big to fix, leading to disengagement and resignation.

Framing move to counter fatalism: Show that problems are solvable and that collective action works. Not just "hope," but concrete, credible examples of progress.

3. **Otherism.** A mindset in which people divide society into "people like me" and "people not like me," and assume that those outside their group have different values, priorities, and motivations. It frames social problems as belonging to "them," not "us."

Framing move to counter otherism: Frame solutions in terms of shared benefits: stability, safety, community health, or long-term prosperity. Show that investments in any group strengthen the whole system.

WHAT THIS GUIDE IS FOR

Framing influences how people think, feel, and act on complex social issues. When done well, it shifts conversations from individual blame and crisis thinking toward shared solutions and community-led change. This guide is designed to support Leonard Parker Pool Institute for Health (LPPIH) partners frame complex issues in ways that resonate with the public and support community-powered change. Rooted in the Vital Conditions for Well-Being framework, the guide equips cross-sector collaborators—especially those working in neighborhoods like Franklin Park—with framing tools to more effectively communicate, convene and advocate.

By bridging communication science with local experience, this guide serves as a practical resource for:

- Telling a more complete story about neighborhood conditions, health, and well-being
- Reframing challenges such as housing, safety, education, or belonging in ways that invite shared responsibility and solution-building
- Supporting partner organizations in advancing, consistent language around community engagement, narrative change, and policy influence

Each section centers a Vital Condition and provides framing tools—including mindsets, recommendations, and “Try this, not that” language shifts that partners can use in conversations, grant proposals, presentations, and campaigns. It is not a script, but a guide to deepen alignment and build power through more intentional communication.

Communication alone won't solve every challenge facing community-centered work. But how we communicate is one part of the landscape we can shape. Framing is one tool in a communicator's toolbox, and when used well, it can help make complex issues easier to understand, build shared understanding, and advance the collective solutions we care about.

Suggested citation:

FRANKLIN PARK BY THE NUMBERS



10,000+
Residents



3,600+
Homes



35%
Living in Poverty

**At the same time,
there are important community assets**



KEY ASSETS IN FRANKLIN PARK

1

A strong Lehigh Valley Health Network part of Jefferson Health presence. The Franklin Park neighborhood is between Lehigh Valley Hospital - 17th Street campus and its administrative headquarters at One City Center in downtown Allentown.

2

Valley Health Partners, a Federally Qualified Health Center (FQHC) established in 2020, is providing access to primary care and school-based health services to the residents in and around the Franklin Park neighborhood.

3

Hays Elementary School, opened in 2020, includes a school-based health center, mental health services, Head Start classes, access to a food pantry, and other social services.

4

Multiple well-regarded non-profit service organizations work with residents and provide local leadership (e.g., Ripple Community, Inc., Ripple Church, Community Bike Works, Pinebrook Family Answers, Community Services for Children). Many of these local organizations have leadership that participated in LPPIH's Pool Fellowship for Health.

5

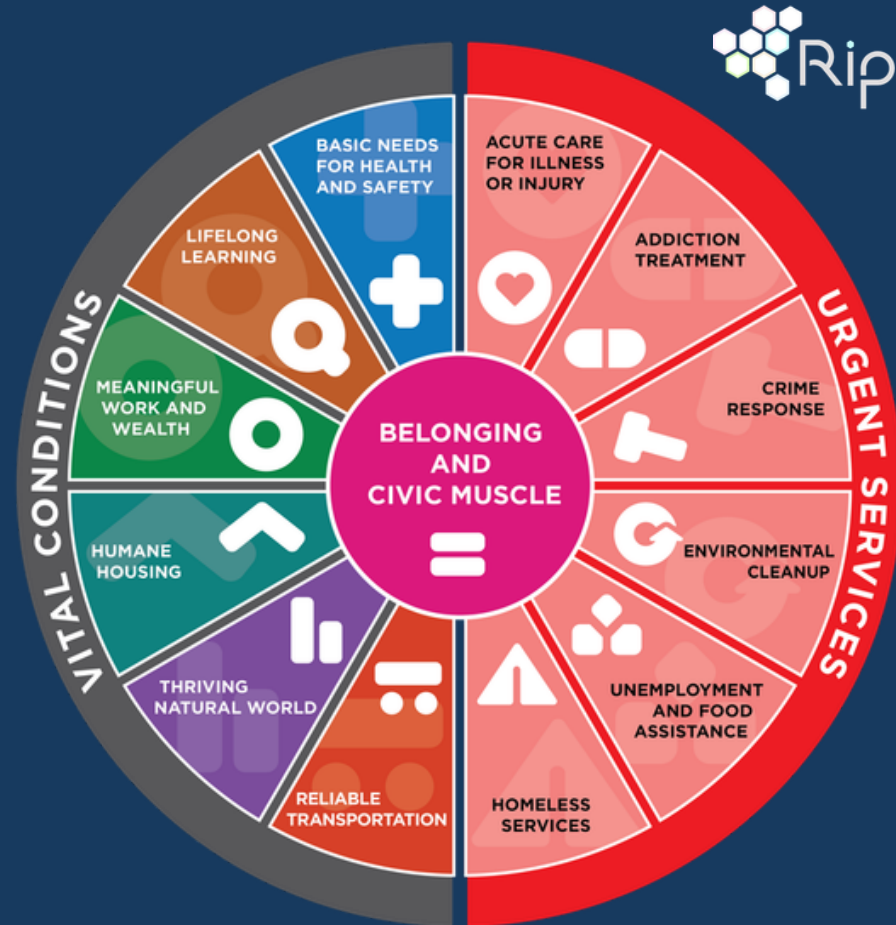
The Franklin Park neighborhood is adjacent to the Neighborhood Improvement Zone (NIZ) in downtown Allentown, which has seen \$1.2 billion of redevelopment since 2014.

WHAT ARE VITAL CONDITIONS?

The Leonard Parker Pool Institute for Health (LPPIH), a subsidiary of LVHN and part of Jefferson Health, is a longstanding partner of The Rippel Foundation. LPPIH focuses on advancing the Vital Conditions for Health and Well-Being and uses the Well-Being Portfolio as a framework for understanding and guiding the neighborhood, city, and regional work we are part of.

The Vital Conditions framework, developed by The Rippel Foundation in partnership with the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and other national leaders, identifies the conditions that every person and community needs to thrive. Simply put, vital conditions are the properties of places and institutions that help people reach their full potential. The seven Vital Conditions are Basic Needs for Health & Safety, Lifelong Learning, Meaningful Work & Wealth, Humane Housing, Reliable Transportation, a Thriving Natural World, and Belonging & Civic Muscle.

The Well-Being Portfolio emphasizes the importance of balancing investments across the full spectrum of well-being. While urgent services and crisis response remain essential, long-term community well-being also depends on sustained investments in the Vital Conditions that create opportunities for people and communities to thrive. Together, these frameworks help LPPIH and its partners advance equitable, lasting improvements in health and well-being throughout the region.



Suggested citation:

The Rippel Foundation. (n.d.). Vital conditions for health and well-being. Retrieved 2026, from [The Rippel Foundation – Vital Conditions \[rippel.org\]](https://www.rippel.org)

BASIC NEEDS FOR HEALTH & SAFETY AS A VITAL CONDITION



Key Mindsets (What Does the Public Think?)

The public generally thinks about the fulfillment of Basic Needs for Health & Safety resulting primarily from individual choices and medical care, and that education alone can solve health problems. These mindsets obscure how health is shaped by living conditions, environments, and access to resources, and they limit support for systemic solutions that prevent illness and promote wellbeing.

Framing Recommendations

- Expand thinking past individual behavior and healthcare.
- Explain that health is shaped by what surrounds people.
- Appeal to the shared values like dignity or fairness.

Key Concerns/Opportunities in Allentown

- 1 Access to health and affordable food
- 2 Creating more support for Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs)
- 3 Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) / Trauma Informed Care
- 4 Limited access to mental health care
- 5 Concerns over crime and poor lighting
- 6 Not enough senior health supports

Resources

Communicating Now:
Framing for Health Equity

Framing Tobacco Disparities

Framing the Foundation of
Community Health

Shifting the Narrative about
Childhood Obesity





Sample Messaging for Franklin Park Neighborhood

Alternative public thinking to advance: The public can sometimes see that what surrounds us shapes us and that factors like housing, safety, and access to healthy environments influence people's health.

Talking Points

- Health takes shape in the conditions that help people feel secure, supported, and able to thrive.
- Fairness means making good health possible in every neighborhood. No matter where someone lives, every community should have the basics that support well-being.
- Health begins in our communities. When every neighborhood has safe housing, clean air, reliable transportation, and places to gather, people have a stronger foundation to thrive.
- Health starts with treating every person and every community with dignity.
- Communities are stronger when every person is treated with dignity and every neighborhood is treated with care.
- A healthy community is one where people can breathe easier, feel safer, and move through daily life with less stress.

LIFELONG LEARNING AS A VITAL CONDITION



Framing Recommendations

Key Mindsets (What Does the Public Think?)

- **Family Bubble:** Development is shaped mainly by family.
- **Black Box:** Development is hard to understand.
- **Damage Done:** Harm is lasting and hard to reverse.
- **Threat of Modernity:** Modern life is harmful to young people.

- Explain early development using clear, accessible science.
- Position child and youth development as a shared public priority that affects community wellbeing and long-term success.
- Focus attention on how policies, programs, and systems create conditions families need to support young people.

Key Concerns/Opportunities in Allentown

- 1 Few after-school or mentorship programs
- 2 Families feel excluded from school decisions
- 3 Staffing challenges for Head Start / Early Head Start classrooms

- 4 Gaps in mentorship and youth engagement
- 5 Cost and barriers to post-secondary pathways

Resources

Reframing Family, School, and Community Engagement

Reframing Adolescence and Adolescent Development

Reframing Transition Age Foster Youth Health

Connections and Communities: Reframing How We Talk About Opportunity Youth

Reframing Early Childhood to Strengthen Systems That Impact Children and Families

Reframing Childhood Adversity: Promoting Upstream Approaches





Sample Messaging for Franklin Park Neighborhood

Alternative public thinking to advance: The public can sometimes see that young people grow, learn, and develop when they have access to supportive relationships, enriching environments, and meaningful opportunities over time.

Talking Points

- Young people grow and thrive when they are surrounded by supportive relationships, safe environments, and meaningful opportunities over time.
- Learning and development are shaped continuously by schools, families, community programs, and neighborhood conditions.
- Early childhood investments create long-term benefits for the entire community.
- From early childhood through adolescence, development is how young people build the foundations for learning, relationships, health, and participation in community life.
- When children and young people have strong developmental foundations, communities benefit through stronger schools, healthier relationships, and greater long-term well-being.
- Adolescence (ages 16-24) is a time of growth and possibility. As young people develop new skills, deepen relationships, and expand their independence, the supports around them help shape how they learn, adapt, and thrive.

MEANINGFUL WORK & WEALTH AS A VITAL CONDITION



Key Mindsets (What Does the Public Think?)

- **Rugged Individualism:** Success comes down to individual effort.
- **Market Naturalism:** Wages and job quality are set by the market.
- **Consumerism:** People are defined more by what they buy than by the quality of their work.

Key Concerns/Opportunities in Allentown

- 1 Access to childcare to enable workforce participation
- 2 Need for more local manufacturing jobs
- 3 Jobs are low-wage or lack advancement

Framing Recommendations

- Emphasize that stable, well-supported work provides the foundation people need to support themselves, care for their families, and participate fully in their communities.
- Explain how job quality is shaped by systems and not emerging naturally or from individual choices.
- Highlight that people's ability to build stable and secure lives depends on whether reliable, well-paid work is available and accessible in their communities.
- Reinforce that job quality and availability of quality jobs systems are shaped by collective decisions and policies.
- Connect job quality to broader community and economic well-being.

- 4 Longer commutes for better paying jobs
- 5 Few local resources for financial growth
- 6 Need for different pathways

Resources

Producing the Future: Cultural Mindsets of Manufacturing in the United States

Is It Care, Or Is It Work?: Cultural Mindsets of Care Work in the United States





Sample Messaging for Franklin Park Neighborhood

Alternative public thinking to advance: The public sometimes understands that economic systems are designed and shaped by rules and policies, and that these rules influence whether work provides stability and opportunity.

Talking Points

- Reliable, well-supported work provides the foundation people need to care for their families and participate fully in community life.
- Job quality shapes what is possible for families and communities. Reliable hours, fair pay, and safe working conditions help create more stable lives and a stronger local economy.
- Economic mobility does not happen by chance—it reflects the rules and structures that shape local economies.
- People are better able to build secure futures when communities have reliable, well-paid jobs that people can actually access.
- When work provides stability and dignity, communities grow stronger.
- The availability of good jobs reflects the decisions communities make about what kinds of work are supported, protected, and valued.

HUMANE HOUSING AS A VITAL CONDITION



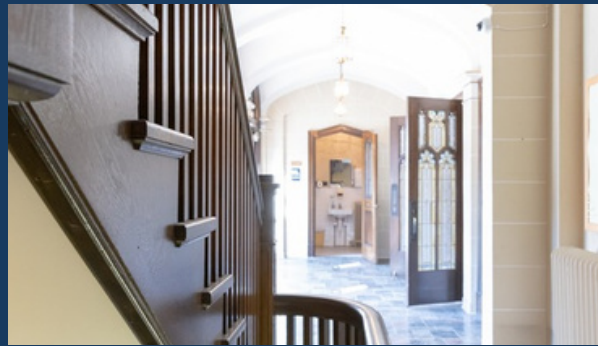
Key Mindsets

(What Does the Public Think?)

- **Consumerism:** Housing is a matter of personal choice and purchasing power.
- **Personal Failing:** Housing instability reflects poor choices or lack of effort.
- **Crisis Thinking:** Housing is an emergency for some, not a system issue for all.
- **Development = Profit:** Housing development serves profit, not public need.

Key Concerns/Opportunities in Allentown

- 1 Improving local landlord relations
- 2 Limited options for safe, affordable housing
- 3 Fear of retaliation when reporting issues



Framing Recommendations

- Build messaging around the values of Fairness Across Places
- Avoid consumerist language
- Shift attribution from individuals to systems.
- Highlight possibilities for wide-scale improvement— not wide-scale disaster.
- Use lived experience strategically to illustrate how systems operate, not as proof of suffering or moral worth.

- 4 Landlords seen as unresponsive or “absentee”
- 5 Housing stock vs. Housing needs mismatch

Resources

[Reframing Housing: A Communications Toolkit](#)

[Piecing It Together: A Communications Playbook for Affordable Housing Advocates](#)

[Mapping the Gaps Between Expert and Public Understandings of Healthy Housing](#)

[How to Talk about the Importance of Lived Experience in Solving Homelessness](#)



HUMANE
HOUSING AS A
VITAL CONDITION



Sample Messaging for Franklin Park Neighborhood

Alternative public thinking to advance: The public can sometimes recognize that stable housing provides the foundation people need to maintain jobs, care for their families, and build secure lives.

Talking Points

- Stable housing helps families maintain jobs, support children, and build strong connections.
- Housing conditions are shaped by policies, planning, and accountability systems.
- Making more homes available is one way communities create stronger foundations and fairer access to opportunity.
- The availability of affordable housing is shaped by the choices communities make about what gets built, where, and in what number.
- Safe, well-maintained homes contribute to neighborhood vitality and long-term stability.
- When housing systems function well, the entire community benefits.
- Expanding access to affordable housing is one way communities create stronger, more stable foundations for everyone.

THRIVING NATURAL WORLD AS A VITAL CONDITION



Key Mindsets (What Does the Public Think?)

- **Nature and Humans as Separate:** Nature is separate from human systems.
- **Pollution as Visible Mess:** Pollution is what people can see.
- **Local Over Systems Thinking:** Environmental problems are local, not systemic.
- **Self-Correcting Nature:** Nature will recover on its own.

Key Concerns/Opportunities in Allentown

- 1 More inviting, clean green spaces
- 2 Trash/cleanup efforts
- 3 Air quality



Framing Recommendations

- Frame green space as part of the environments that shape health, not as an amenity.
- Explain how access to safe outdoor spaces supports physical activity, reduces stress, improves mental health, and strengthens overall wellbeing (including community well-being).
- Focus on the quality of green spaces in addition to the quantity as being important to people's health and well-being.
- Use the value of *Fairness Across Places* to help people understand how environmental conditions differ across communities and why equitable access matters.
- Broaden "pollution" beyond what people can see.
- Link policies, industry, and infrastructure to environmental outcomes.

Resources

Where We Thrive:
Communicating about
Resident-Centered
Neighborhood Revitalization

Building Understanding of
Environmental Health

How to Talk about Climate
Change and the Ocean

"Nature Doesn't Pay My Bills:"
Mapping the Gaps Between
Expert and Public Understandings
of Urban Nature and Health





Sample Messaging for Franklin Park Neighborhood

Alternative public thinking to advance: The public does sometimes understand that human activities affect air, water, and environmental quality.

Talking Points

- Fairness across places means every community should have access to safe, healthy outdoor environments that support well-being.
- Safe, clean, and inviting green spaces support physical activity, reduce stress, and strengthen social connection.
- Healthy environments are built through decisions about planning, investment, and accountability that shape the conditions communities live with every day.
- Environmental conditions should not depend on zip code. Every community should have clean air, safe outdoor spaces, and healthy surroundings.
- Pollution can take many forms, including poor air quality, unsafe water, chronic noise, and chemical exposure that builds up over time.

RELIABLE TRANSPORTATION AS A VITAL CONDITION



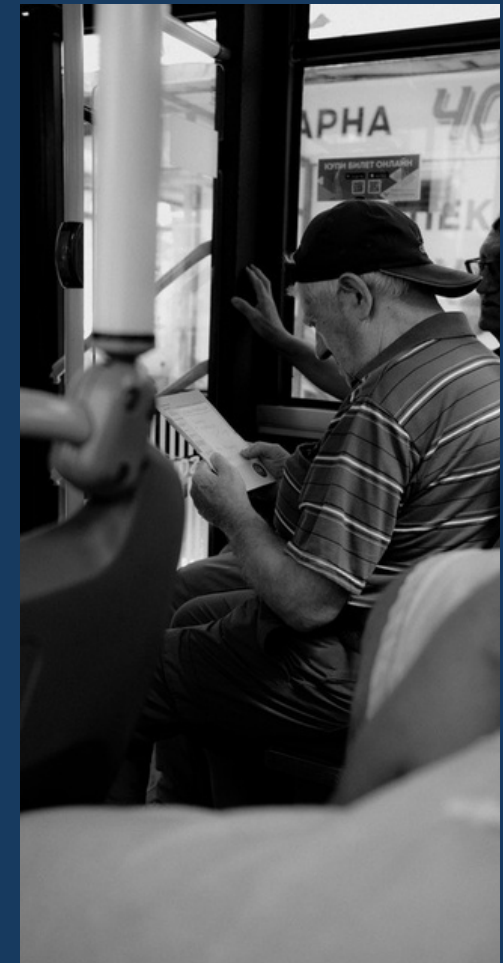
Framing Recommendations

- Introduce infrastructure as a public system shaping everyday life.
- Lead with the value of fairness across places.
- Connect built spaces to well-being.

Resources

Where We Thrive:
Communicating about
ResidentCentered
Neighborhood Revitalization

FRAME
WORKS



Key Mindsets (What Does the Public Think?)

- **Transportation as Personal Responsibility:** Mobility depends on individual effort and choices and is not a public issue.
- **Health Is About Behavior, Not Place:** Health is shaped by personal behavior.

Key Concerns/Opportunities in Allentown

- 1 Limited parking
- 2 Riding the bus is stigmatized
- 3 Inconsistent bus routes
- 4 Car ownership is unaffordable for some
- 5 Car culture
- 6 Street infrastructure

RELIABLE
TRANSPORTATION AS
A VITAL CONDITION



Sample Messaging for Franklin Park Neighborhood

Alternative public thinking to advance: People can sometimes see that access to reliable transportation affects people's ability to get to work, school, and essential services.

Talking Points

- We have a shared responsibility to ensure that all communities are treated fairly, no matter where they're located.
- Transportation is the infrastructure that connects people to jobs, schools, healthcare, and opportunity.
- Public decisions about routes, lighting, sidewalks, and affordability shape who can access opportunity.
- Reliable transportation strengthens economic participation and community stability.
- Improving transportation systems reduces barriers and expands choice.
- When infrastructure works well, neighborhoods thrive.

**BELONGING & CIVIC
MUSCLE AS A VITAL
CONDITION**



Key Mindsets

(What Does the Public Think?)

- **Character Shapes Place:**
Communities reflect the character of the people who live there.
- **Government as "Them":**
Government is separate from everyday people.

Key Concerns/Opportunities in Allentown

- 1 Overall trust in local government is still fragile
- 2 Language/culture barriers limit participation
- 3 Long timeline to get stuff done
- 4 Access to leadership/representation



Framing Recommendations

- Lead with shared values like community, fairness, or dignity.
- Emphasize that communities work best when people are meaningfully included in decisions that affect their lives.
- Frame relationship-building, dialogue and shared learning as the essential infrastructure for long-term change.
- Frame government systems as changeable and collective.
- Highlight how neighborhoods are shaped by past and present decisions and not by the character of residents.

Resources

Where We Thrive:
Communicating about
Resident-Centered
Neighborhood Revitalization

The Terrain of Spatial Justice



**FRAME
WORKS**

**BELONGING & CIVIC
MUSCLE AS A VITAL
CONDITION**



Sample Messaging for Franklin Park Neighborhood

Alternative public thinking to advance: People understand that our systems are designed and can be designed to produce better outcomes.

Talking Points

- Belonging and civic muscle are built through systems that invite residents into decision-making.
- Communities are stronger when people have real ways to participate, be heard, and shape what happens around them.
- What a neighborhood looks like today reflects past and present decisions about investment, infrastructure, and opportunity.
- Public systems are shaped by the choices people make together and can be changed to better reflect what communities need.

P