

Media & Messaging to Counter Racism & Hate

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*they/them

Cole's NOTES

BREAK OUT SESSION 1:00-2:15

Overview

- EXERCISE 1 & 2: Write one sentence for yourself from two perspectives
- DISCUSSION Function of issue messages for target audience
- EXERCISE 3: Frame self & opponents in message box style in small groups
- EXERCISE 4: Craft a tiny sound bite ONE SENTENCE
- EXERCISE 5: COMBINE personal intro + sound bite & ROLE PLAY in small groups

EXERCISE ONE

Write a one sentence biography or TAG for yourself from the perspective of someone who believes or perpetuates negative stereotypes about people like you.

EXAMPLE:

Cole LeFavour is a radical homosexual activist and transgender groomer who's spent decades as an antifa-apologist, corrupting children in our schools, promoting socialism and degrading the moral values of our state as a baby-killing democrat in Idaho's state legislature.

EXERCISE TWO

Write a once sentence biography of yourself that counters stereotypes about people like you and portrays yourself, your work and your community positively.

Cole LeFavour is a writer, teacher and former Idaho State Senator who grew up in Idaho's rural Custer County and has spent decades working on issues ranging from consumer protection and fair tax policy to ensuring that gay and transgender people are safe and free to work hard, support their families, and contribute to their communities.

EXERCISE THREE – FRAMING in small groups

We are going to evaluate the ways Idaho’s white supremacists and violent extremists DEFINE THEMSELVES.

This exercise is based loosely on the *Tully Message Box*, by Paul Tully.

NOTE FROM COLE: Usually a candidate or issue campaign will do polling to understand specifically how to answer these questions but for many of us the past six years have been a crash course in white supremacy, misogyny, and anti-queer policy and terror tactics.

Using a brainstorm of words, phrases and or sentences, jot down for yourself & share answers to EACH with your group:

–HOW DO Idaho extremists DESCRIBE THEMSELVES & WHAT THEY WANT

–WHAT DO THEY SAY ABOUT US / WHAT DO THEY SAY WE WANT

list harmful stereotypes, ways of demonizing or instilling fear to incite violence

–WHAT DO WE THINK THEY WANT / HOW DO WE DESCRIBE THEM

–HOW DO WE DESCRIBE OURSELVES or OUR COMMUNITY & WHAT WE WANT

NOW, CONSIDERING the demographics of LIKELY LISTENERS

Whose hearts and minds CAN you possibly win with your story and message?

Your TARGET AUDIENCE is the PERSUADABLE MIDDLE

–NOT the CHOIR (those already working to protect our community from white supremacy, targeted violence and fear).

–NOT YOUR OPPOSITION or those actively working to spread fear, white supremacy, targeted violence, or malicious misinformation. (You’re not likely changing these minds.)

WHAT hopes, desires, values might you share in common with your target audience, those in the MIDDLE?

SPECIFICALLY What are a few specific things they may care about? (children, safety, hard work, honesty, community, caring for others, making a living, security)

NOW to FRAME YOUR ISSUE / STRUGGLE / PROBLEM to persuade and connect with TARGET AUDIENCE

CRAFT A SINGLE PERSUASIVE SENTENCE that RE-FRAMES

the situation, the problem,

the opposition and yourself/your community

to make clear **the harm being done** or what is being lost

your frame may even suggest a solution to or origin of the problem

EXAMPLE:

Threats of violence against our neighbors, coworkers and classmates who are refugees and new Americans create fear in the entire community, affecting kids of all backgrounds, their schools, and the safety of our neighborhoods for every one of us.

(NOTICE ALL THE WAYS THIS STATEMENT PUSHES BACK ON ATTEMPTS TO OTHER AND DISTANCE THIS AFFECTED PART OF OUR COMMUNITY)

EXAMPLE:

I support a person's right to own a gun, but when a person brings an automatic weapon to a public event celebrating the culture or lives of people whose communities have been targeted for mass shootings, this act then just isn't about the gun or the person's right to have it anymore, it's about intimidating good people, children and families —and it's unacceptable in our state.

(THIS IS LONG, too long but look at the parts and the framing of those with the guns and the affected community.)

EXERCISE FOUR — on your own

NOW COMBINE

PERSONAL TAG + SOUND BITE

to describe YOURSELF and what you want in terms your target audience can relate to.

EXAMPLES:

“As a longtime idahoan who works hard to support my family and contribute to my community, I.....”

COLE's MESSAGE

“As a person who grew up in rural Idaho feeling I didn't fit into traditional gender roles, I know well that conservative families have transgender kids and that this sort of legislation will be devastating to their families and freedoms.

EXERCISE FIVE — ROLE PLAY in small groups

In your new groups, let one person take a turn as the reporter, asking the others a soft or hardball question about racism and violent extremism in Idaho.

REPORTER should ask other questions of each participant and each participant should practice STICKING LIKE GLUE TO THEIR MESSAGE.

IN ANSWERING THE REPORTER you should use a few word “tag” for yourself from your framing above and tack that onto the start of your message point. (See example at end of exercise above.)

This is a chance to practice verbally making your point and sticking to the message NO MATTER WHAT YOU ARE ASKED.

Just A FEW TIPS for WORKING WITH MEDIA

Say what you came to say, share your message by using a pivot or simply sticking to it regardless.

1. ANSWER THE QUESTION YOU WANTED TO BE ASKED.
2. Never lie or wing it. Your credibility is critical. Last thing you want is for a story to do you, your cause or your community DAMAGE. Don't be afraid to say you don't know or will get back to reporter. Don't be tempted to answer questions you're not prepared for.
3. Consider whether your language or dress should be more or less formal so your target audience relates better or sympathizes more with you and the community you represent.
4. No pressure but remember that you can be assumed by your audience to be speaking for an entire, race, gender, class, tribal nation or community. (NOTE: Frequently, I choose someone else to be spokesperson because, for the issue, that person has a more relatable story, history or profile than I do.)
5. Be BRIEF. The average sound bite is soooooo short, a handful of SECONDS.
6. NEVER banter on camera or on the record. DO NOT GIVE REPORTERS QUOTES, COMMENTS & MATERIAL OTHER THAN THE MESSAGE YOU CAME TO GIVE. (They VERY often use that instead of what you wanted them to use!)
7. Remember friendly reporters can have unfriendly editors. Cut and paste happens and you can be quoted out of context or a partial message can be used so make sure you limit what you say to YOUR MESSAGE.
8. Most TV and radio is RECORDED — this means feel free to stop & start over until you get your message right.

NOTE FROM COLE: **STORIES ARE PERSUASIVE**

You can choose to use a personal story of someone's journey to caring about one of the groups of people targeted by Idaho extremists.

Their journey. The before. The turning point. Afterwards.