The Story We Need to Tell About Homelessness

Thursday, June 8, 2023
Agenda

1. Conversation role play
2. The guide, and more messaging ideas
   a. Q & A
3. Breakout discussions
4. Toolkit and next steps

How to Talk About Homelessness

A messaging guide from

shift the bay
ALL HOME
How to Talk About Homelessness

A messaging guide from

**Important Principles**

**Establish shared values and benefits.** Lead and close with inclusive, values-based language that reaches across race and class to remind your audience what we all have in common. Show how addressing homelessness benefits our entire community.

**Explain that structural forces push people into homelessness.** “Pushed into” evokes the systemic and economic forces at play: decades of underbuilding and underfunding affordable housing, and generations of systemic injustice and discrimination.

**Center homelessness as an experience, not an identity.** Connect with the humanity of your audience and the people who are suffering.

**Focus on solutions.** Everyone knows there’s a problem, they want to know more about how to solve it.

**Include a call to action.** Give your audience something to do, a next step to take to be part of the solution.
Personal stories can be transformative
  ● From people who have experienced homelessness
  ● and from frontline staff providing direct service

Let's hear from Zak Franet
  ● Director, Ground Floor Public Affairs
  ● Member, All Home's Community Advisory Council
Chronic homelessness: Shared values/benefits

- When we meet people in distress with **homes, care, dignity, and respect**, everyone is safer and better off.
- Everyone needs a safe, dignified place to call home.
- We all have a time in our lives where we need care to get by. When we care for the members of our community who need it, our **whole community is stronger** for it.
• The biggest drivers of homelessness are housing and economic forces.

• But obviously there's a very visible minority who are struggling with complex health issues including mental illness and substance use.

• These are our neighbors. Fellow human beings in need of care.

• But our health care and legal systems are not designed to provide the care they actually need.
Chronic homelessness: Solutions and action

- **There is a solution that works** to stabilize people with complex needs, or whose health has deteriorated from being unsheltered for years: permanent supportive housing.

- But we don't have enough PSH units, money to operate them, or expert staff to meet the need.
  - Those are problems we can fix.

- When we meet people in distress with homes, care, dignity, and respect, everyone will be safer and better off.
Lean into abundance

Reject a scarcity mindset
- Govt has resources, we're choosing to spend them on other things (Prop 13, mortgage tax deduction, etc.)
Lean into abundance

Reject a scarcity mindset

- Don't allow solutions to be pit against each other. Grow the pie.
- We need interim AND permanent housing AND prevention.
Real solutions are worth the cost

The bill for decades of bad policy is coming due with compounded interest.
“All this spending isn't fixing things!”

● Don't blame solutions, blame the depth of the problem.

Like taking an aspirin to cure a broken leg and then demanding answers for why our leg still hurts.
We can do this!

We have the solutions, they work.

- All Home's 1-2-4 Framework for Homelessness Solutions (interim, permanent, prevention)
- Permanent/ongoing funding for operations and services (at permanent supportive housing)
- Ensure solutions reach BIPOC communities
Pandemic relief programs prove we can do big things, act with urgency, spend money to make people's lives better
  ○ Homekey
  ○ Emergency rental assistance, eviction moratoria
  ○ Expanded Child Tax Credit