

Advancing Health Equity Through Power Building and Narrative Change

Webinar for the
Region V Public Health Training Center

January 29, 2019

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#BuildPower4Equity



Today's Goals

1. Discuss the role of **building community power** in advancing health equity
2. Discuss how **public narratives** play a role in policymaking — and opportunities for public health to engage in narrative change
1. Discuss strategic practices to drive transformational change for health equity
1. Q & A Discussion

Human Impact Partners

Through research, advocacy, and capacity-building, we bring the power of public health to campaigns and movements for a just society



Criminal Justice



Economic Security



Immigration



Housing



Land Use and
Transportation

Building Power to Advance Health

Defining Health Equity

Health equity means that everyone has a fair and just opportunity to be as healthy as possible.

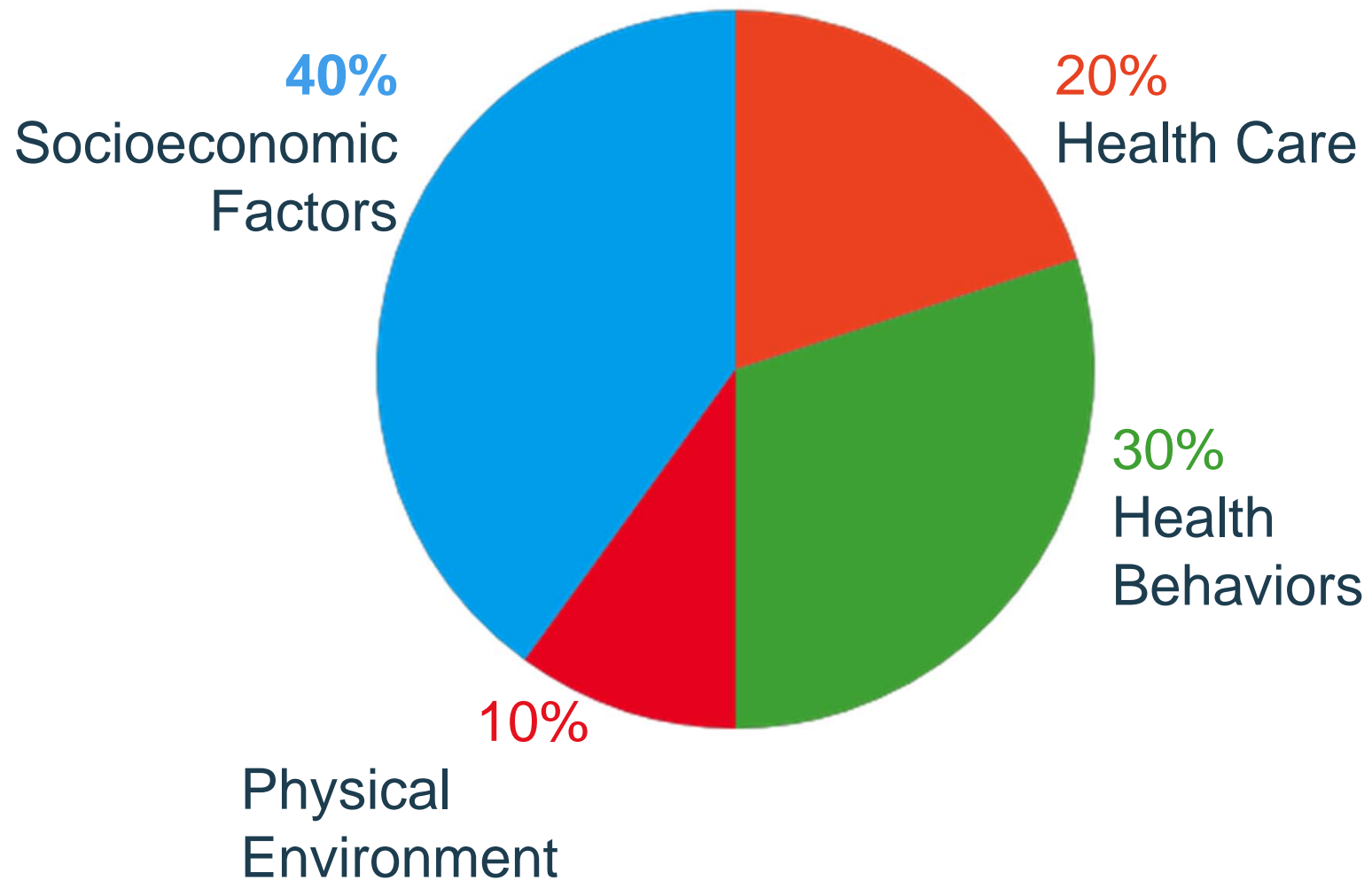
To achieve this, we must remove obstacles to health:

- Poverty
- Discrimination
- Deep power imbalances

And we must remove the consequences of these obstacles:

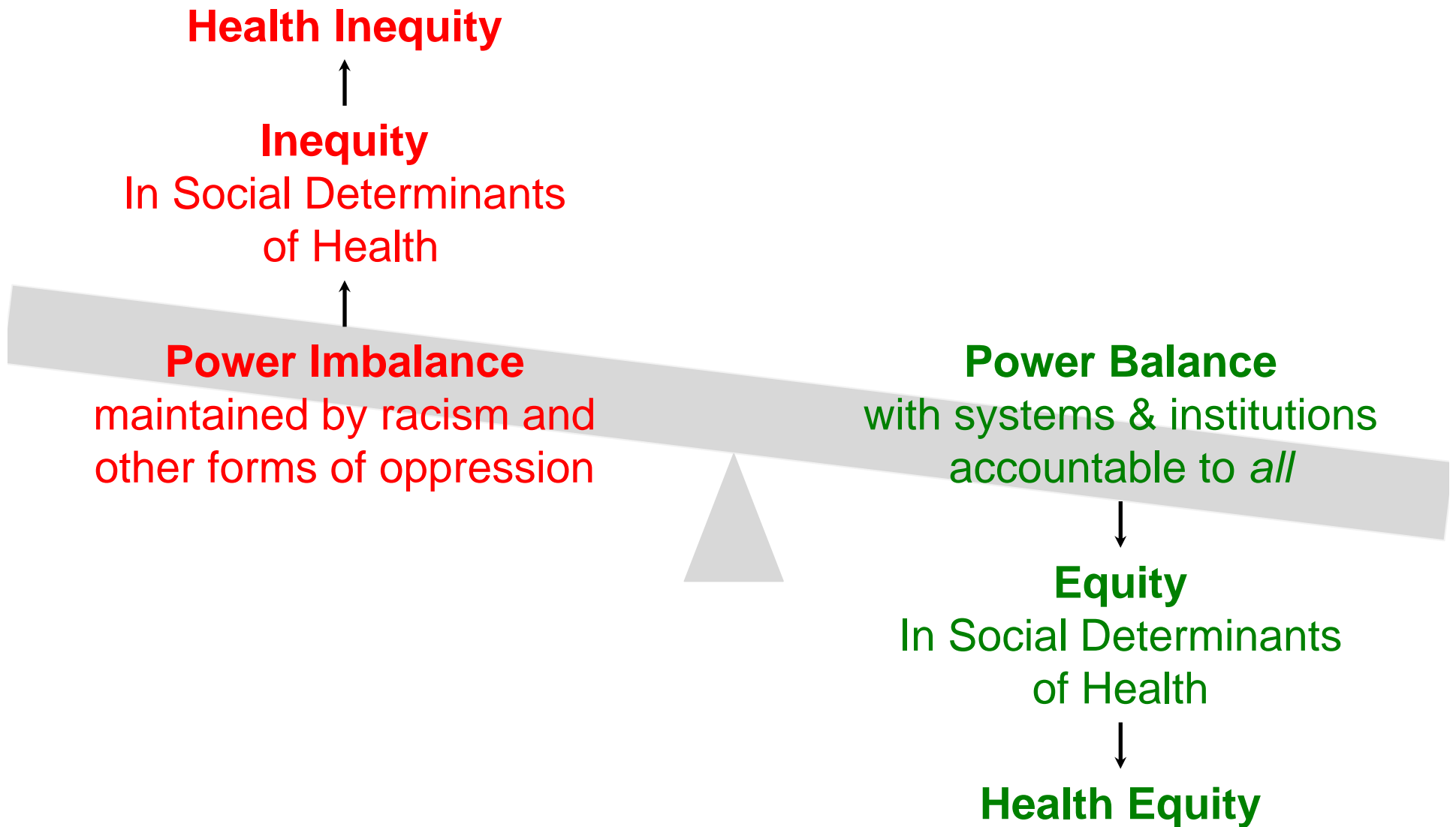


How Health Happens

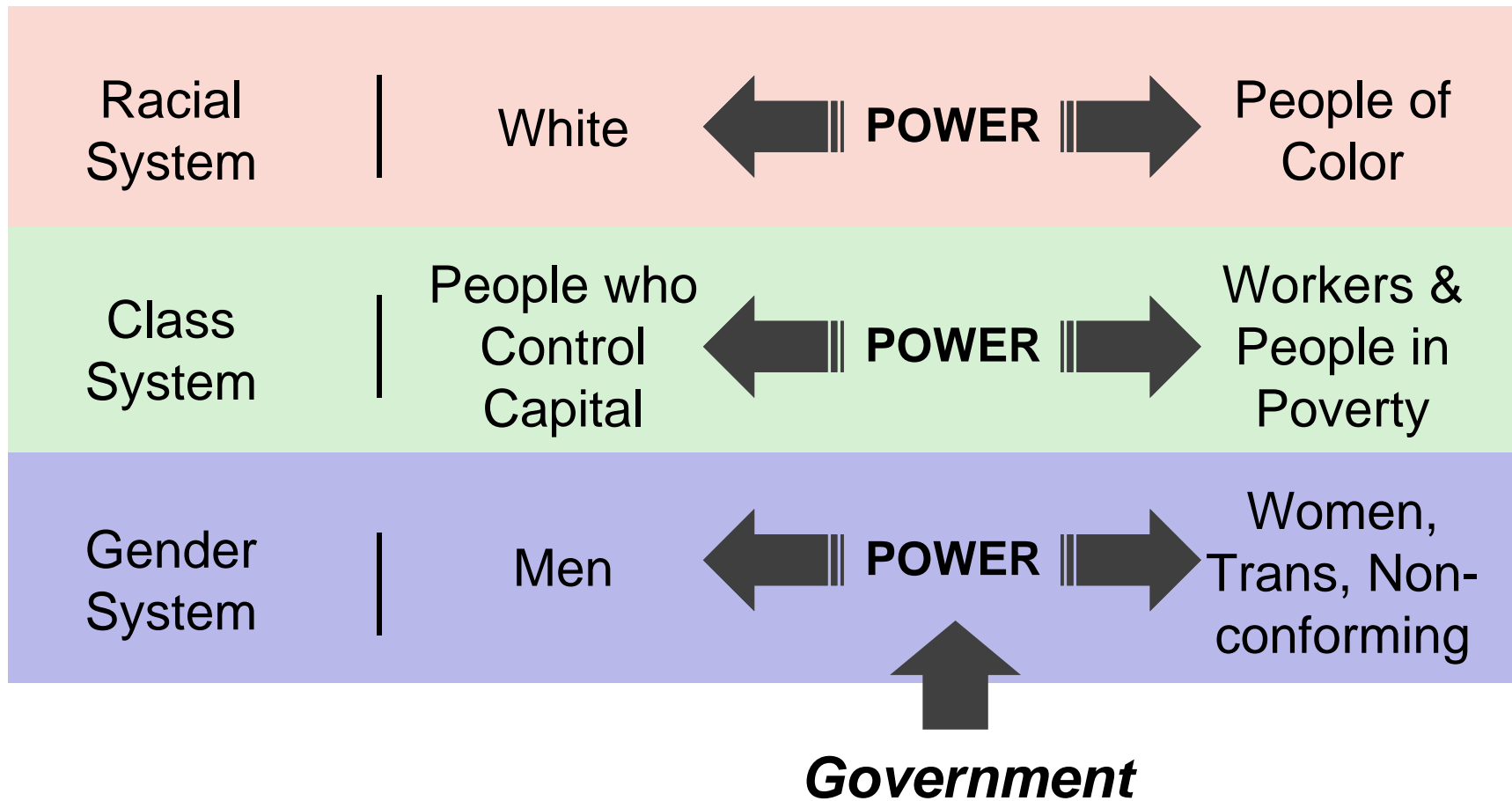


Source: Booske, et. al. 2010. County Health Rankings Weighting Methodology

Confront Racism & Power to Advance Equity



Transform What? The Power Structure!



The Faces of Power

1. Organizing people and resources for direct political action



2. Building infrastructure and shaping the political agenda



3. Making and shaping meaning of ideology and worldview



Forms of Oppression Used to Maintain Power

Racism

Classism

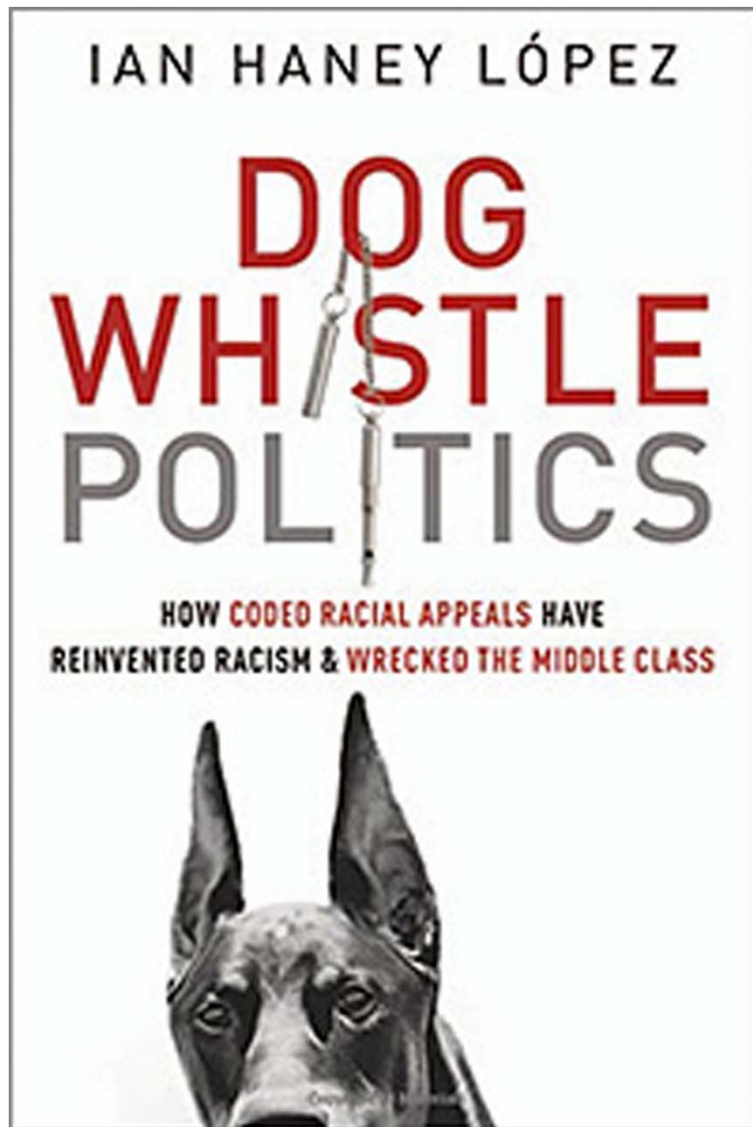
Sexism

Ableism

Hetero-
sexism

... all contribute to **systemic, avoidable, unfair, and unjust health outcomes** and are used to **maintain power.**

Racial Narratives as a Political Strategy



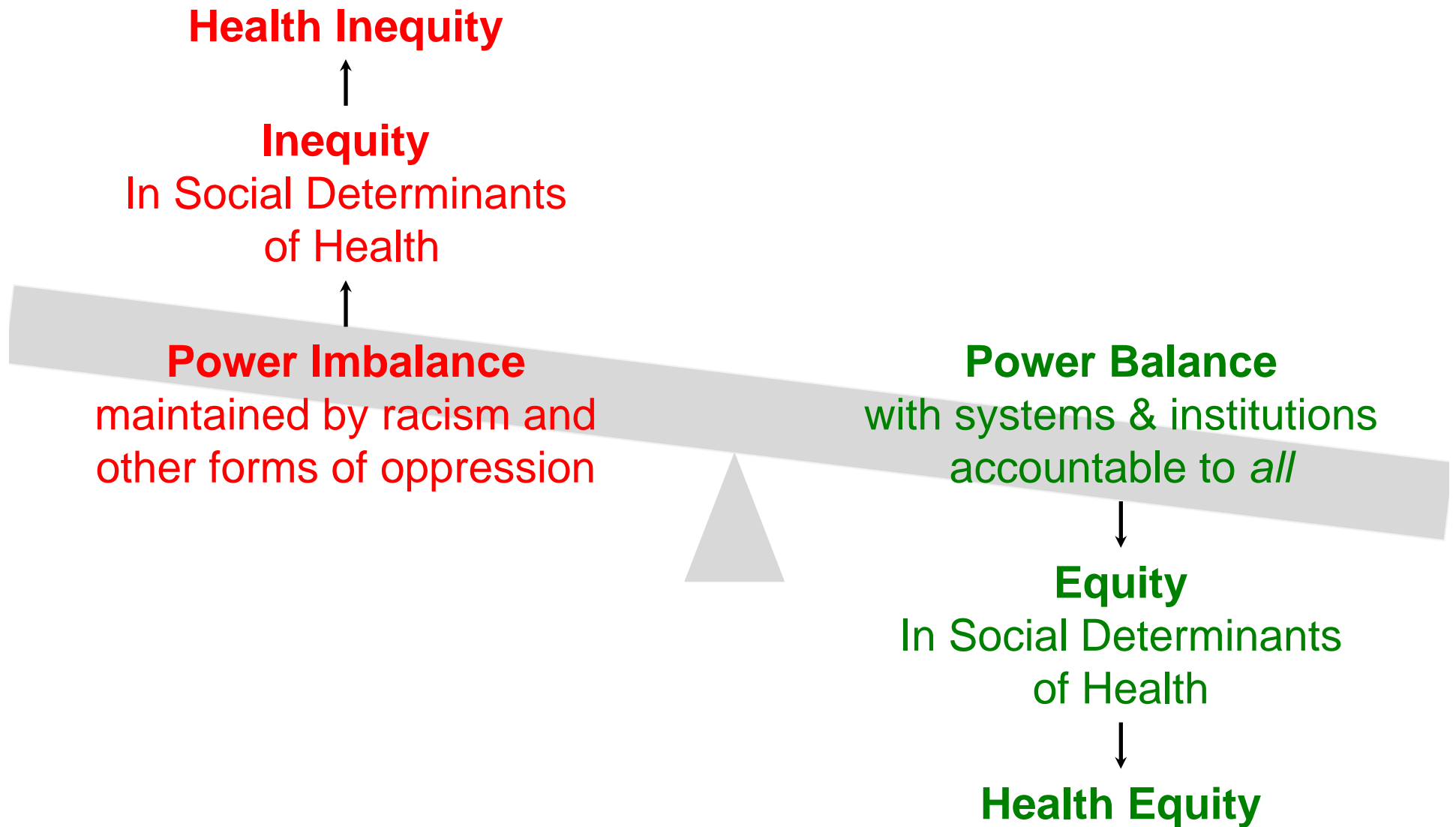
- "Welfare queens"
- Willie Horton
- "Super predators"
- "Food stamp president"
- "Rapists"

Transactional

Transformational

	Technical Problem / Transact	Adaptive Problem / Transform
Problem identification	Easy	Difficult (easy to deny)
Approach	Routine solutions using skills and experience readily available	Require changes in values, beliefs, roles, relationships, and approaches to work
People responsible	Often solved by an authority or expert	Solved by the people with the problem
Changes required	Require change in just one or a few places; often contained within organizational boundaries	Require change in numerous places; usually cross organizational boundaries
Receptivity	People are generally receptive to technical solutions	People try to avoid the work of "solving" the adaptive challenge
Timeframe	Can be implemented quickly - even by edict	"Solutions" take long to implement and require innovation & experimentation

Confront Racism & Power to Advance Equity



Lead Exposure



Low-income children
Black children

Courts
Electeds

Owners of large
corporations (paint
manufacturing) &
landlords

Paid Sick Days



Owners of large corporations (big box retail, services, etc.)

Corporate Associations

Politicians

Public Health!

Community & Worker Organizations

Workers

Reflections, Questions

Health Equity Guide

Local health departments are building power for health equity

After years of struggling to close health disparities, a new movement has taken root: local health departments are using a set of strategic practices to confront the power imbalances and forms of oppression at the root of health inequities, change the conversation about what creates health equity, develop leadership and support innovation, and build a movement for health equity.

[Dive into the strategic practices →](#)

Inside/Outside Theory of Change



To systematically address power imbalances, racism, and other forms of oppression – the roots of health inequities – health departments must pursue a wall-to-wall transformation.



They must:

- Build internal capacity and a will to act
- Change government
- Partner and strategize with community



Key Messages

- Advancing equity is a complex, non-linear process that takes adaptive leadership skills and transformative change
- Needs to be embodied in everything the agency does – it is not a side project
- All LHDs can start down the path toward putting the practices in place

Health Equity Guide Domains

Foster Community Partnerships

Work Across Government

Build Internal Infrastructure

Champion Transformative Change

Foster Community Partnerships



Work Across Government



Build Government
Alliances



Develop a Shared
Analysis



Broaden Regulatory
Scope

Build Internal Infrastructure



Mobilize Data,
Research, & Evaluation



Prioritize Upstream
Policy Change



Build Organizational
Capacity

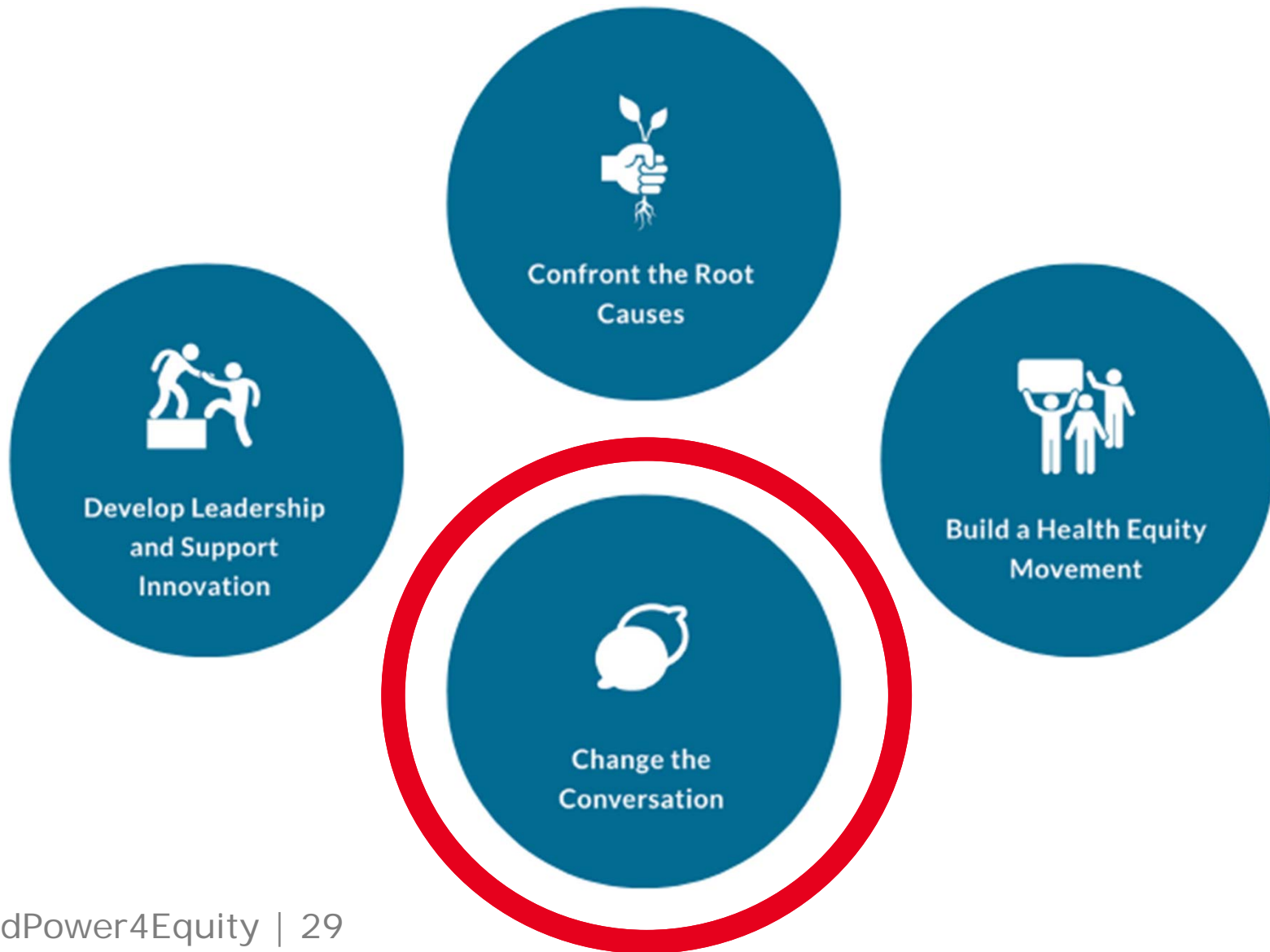


Change Internal
Practices and
Processes



Allocate Resources

Champion Transformative Change



Narrative and Why It Matters

Public sentiment is everything. With public sentiment, nothing can fail; without it nothing can succeed...

Consequently, he who molds public sentiment goes deeper than he who enacts statutes or pronounces decisions. He makes statutes and decisions possible or impossible to be executed

– Abraham Lincoln

Message

A communication containing information — in the form of writing, in speech, audio and/or visuals, etc.

Message

How marginal tax rates actually work, explained with a cartoon

The recent Republican pushback against Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez's 70 percent proposal repeats a common error.

By Alvin Chang | @alv9n | alvin@vox.com | Jan 7, 2019, 12:30pm EST

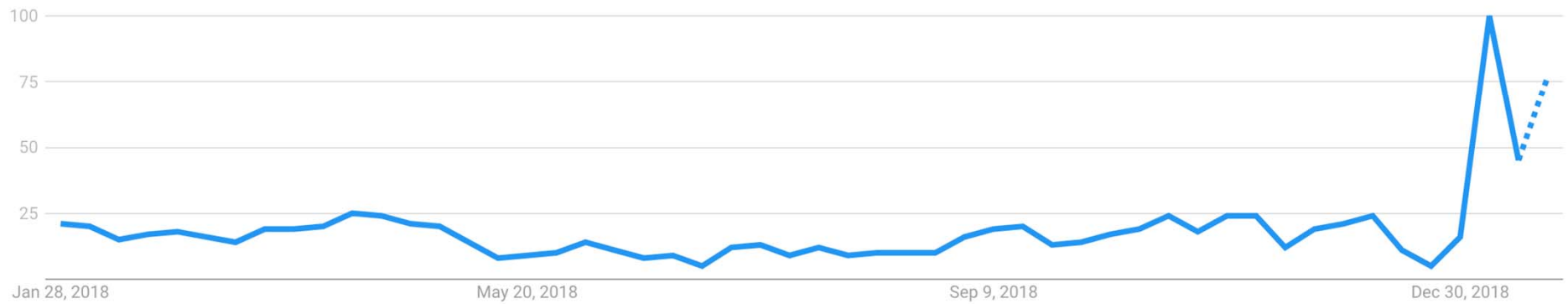
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Google search trend for "marginal tax rate"

Interest over time [?](#)



Frames

Frames are metaphors that help us make sense of what we hear and see by triggering concepts that already exist in our minds. Frames point us toward solutions that are grounded in a particular worldview.



OPINION
The Shaming of Karen Pence



U.S. NEWS
Supreme Court Allows Trump Restrictions on Transgender Military ...



LIFE
Forgive Yourself for That Thing You Forgot



OPINION
Visions of a 70% Tax Rate

then surely you'll click this banner to make sure they're correctly buckled up in the back seat.

[The Right Seat >](#)

OPINION | COMMENTARY

The Crippling Cost of 70% Tax Rates

Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez's proposal would smother investment and innovation, leaving America poorer.

By Edward Conard
Jan. 21, 2019 3:58 p.m. ET

Newly elected Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez spent her first few weeks on Capitol Hill calling for a 70% top marginal income-tax rate, and suddenly the debate over optimal rates has reopened. To support her charge, some liberals are citing a 2011 study by economists Peter Diamond and Emmanuel Saez, which advocates for confiscatory upper-range tax rates. But a quick look at their analysis reveals grave caveats that only an advocate of higher taxes could possibly overlook.

Messrs. Diamond and Saez admit that taxes can have detrimental...





Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez 
@AOC

Following



Explaining marginal taxes to a far-right former Governor:

Imagine if you did chores for abuela & she gave you \$10. When you got home, you got to keep it, because it's only \$10.

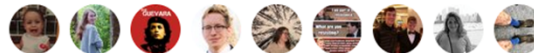
Then we taxed the billionaire in town because he's making tons of money underpaying the townspeople.

Scott Walker  @ScottWalker

Explaining tax rates before Reagan to 5th graders: "Imagine if you did chores for your grandma and she gave you \$10. When you got home, your parents took \$7 from you." The students said: "That's not fair!" Even 5th graders get it.

10:41 AM - 15 Jan 2019

44,169 Retweets 190,223 Likes



 13K  44K  190K 

Public Narratives

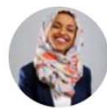
Values-based meta-stories about how and why the world operates that can shape public consciousness, including our collective senses of responsibility and possibility.

- Free market solutions
- Individualism
- Government is inefficient
- Racism is in the past
- Market for common good
- Interdependence
- Government by/for us
- Radical, structural inclusion

Worldviews

The beliefs, norms, values, and commonsense that are socially derived and provide shared meanings for us.

Worldviews



Ilhan Omar ✓

@IlhanMN

Following



Budgets are a reflection of our values.

We have the opportunity to create a people-centered budget—one that invests in universal health care, debt-free higher education, and a Green New Deal. That change starts with the House Budget Committee.

Let's get to work 💪

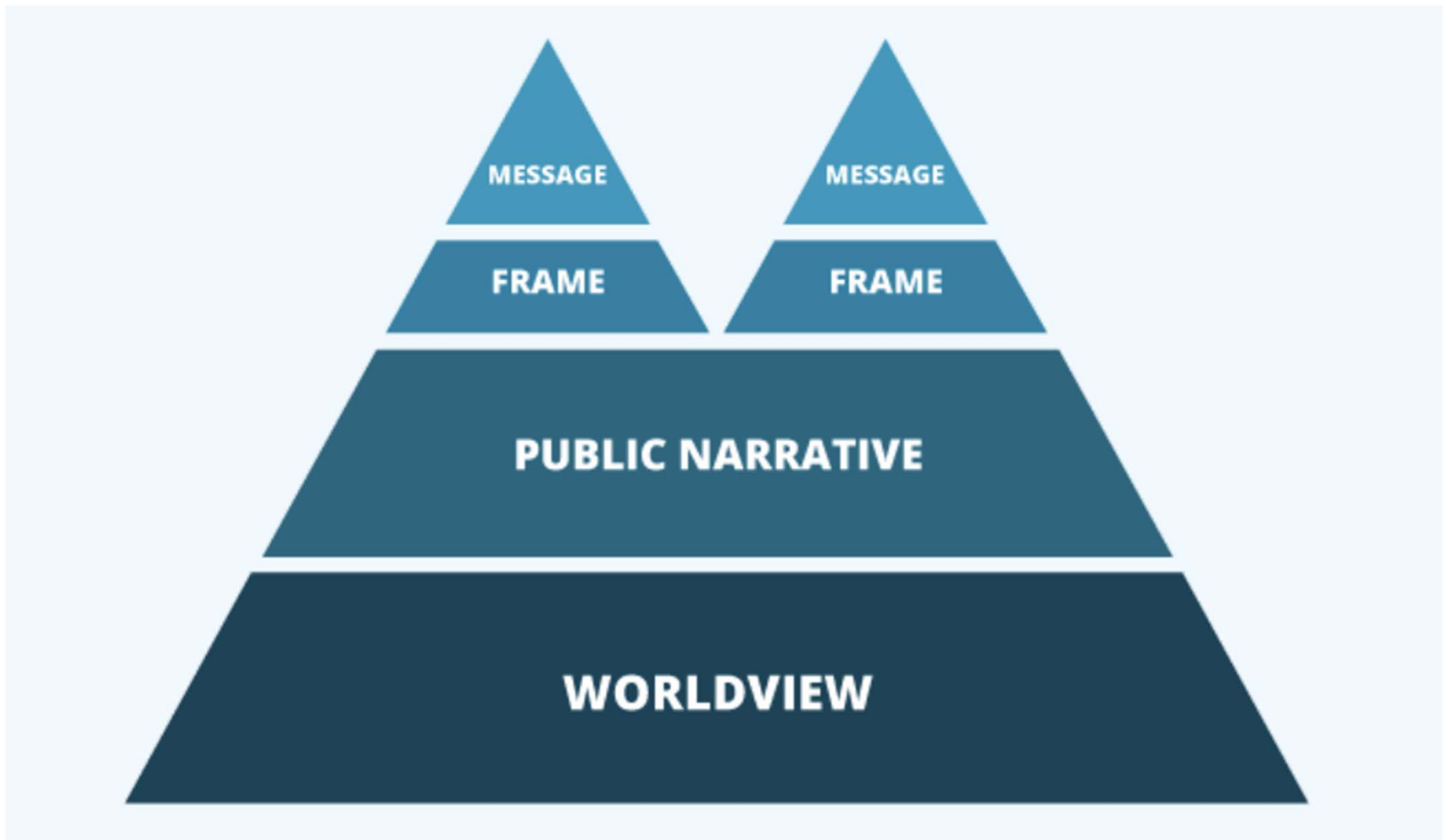
7:33 AM - 24 Jan 2019

308 Retweets 2,783 Likes



231 308 2.8K

#BuildPower4Equity



Dominant Public Narratives are...

- Public narratives held by many people at this moment in time
- Omnipresent and insidious; they are in our heads and actions without us being aware of them
- Embedded in our institutions, structures, and norms
- Created, advanced, and maintained by people for a purpose - to intentionally shape possibilities and outcomes
- More powerful than facts in changing outcomes
- Drawn from a subset of values and beliefs people already hold
- **Changeable! Unmasking them makes them lose some of their power.**



WE IN PUBLIC HEALTH BELIEVE IN A WORLD WHERE
#TAXES MAKE HEALTH HAPPEN

- A just and fair society provides everyone with an opportunity to live a long, healthy life
- Our tax structure is a critical component of building an inclusive, healthy society
- High-quality public goods must be equally accessible to everyone
- We can move to a fair and inclusive society with a social compact that supports everyone's health
- We need to reimagine, reinvent, and transform our systems to create a better lot for future generations
- We have the knowledge, resources, and the power to change our tax system so that we all can all thrive

Healthy MN 2020: Health Narrative

DRAFT

- Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being.
- All people should have the opportunity to attain their highest level of health possible.
- The conditions necessary for health include peace, shelter, food, income, education, a stable environment, sustainable resources, social justice and equity.
- We are all responsible for creating the conditions necessary for health.
- Health is a resource that can be enjoyed by all, to the benefit of all.
- Health equity is essential to improve the health of all.
- Talking about race and structural racism is essential for advancing health equity.
- Health equity is created in the community by people working together to create just economic, social and environmental conditions.



Ways to Harness Narrative in Your Work

- ❑ List your shared values and vision prominently.
- ❑ Identify the dominant narratives your work pushes up against.
- ❑ Develop new, transformational narratives.
- ❑ Practice reframing and using new language.

Reflections, Questions

Resources

- HIP Toolkit to Develop a Transformational Narrative on Criminal Justice:
<http://bit.ly/narrativetoolkit>
- Public Health Awakened's #TaxesMakeHealthHappen Narrative:
<http://bit.ly/taxesmakehealthhappen>
- Grassroots Policy Project:
<https://grassrootspolicy.org/>

Thank You!

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HumanImpact.org
HealthEquityGuide.org
PublicHealthAwakened.com



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