

2020

PUBLIC HEALTH LAW
**VIRTUAL
SUMMIT**

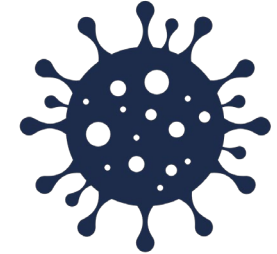
**COVID-19 Response
and Recovery**

September
16-17

Becoming Better Messengers:



Public Health Messaging in a Polarized Pandemic



**12 – 1:00 pm
September 17, 2020**



GILLINGS SCHOOL OF GLOBAL PUBLIC HEALTH
North Carolina Institute for Public Health



The Network
for Public Health Law

Presenters



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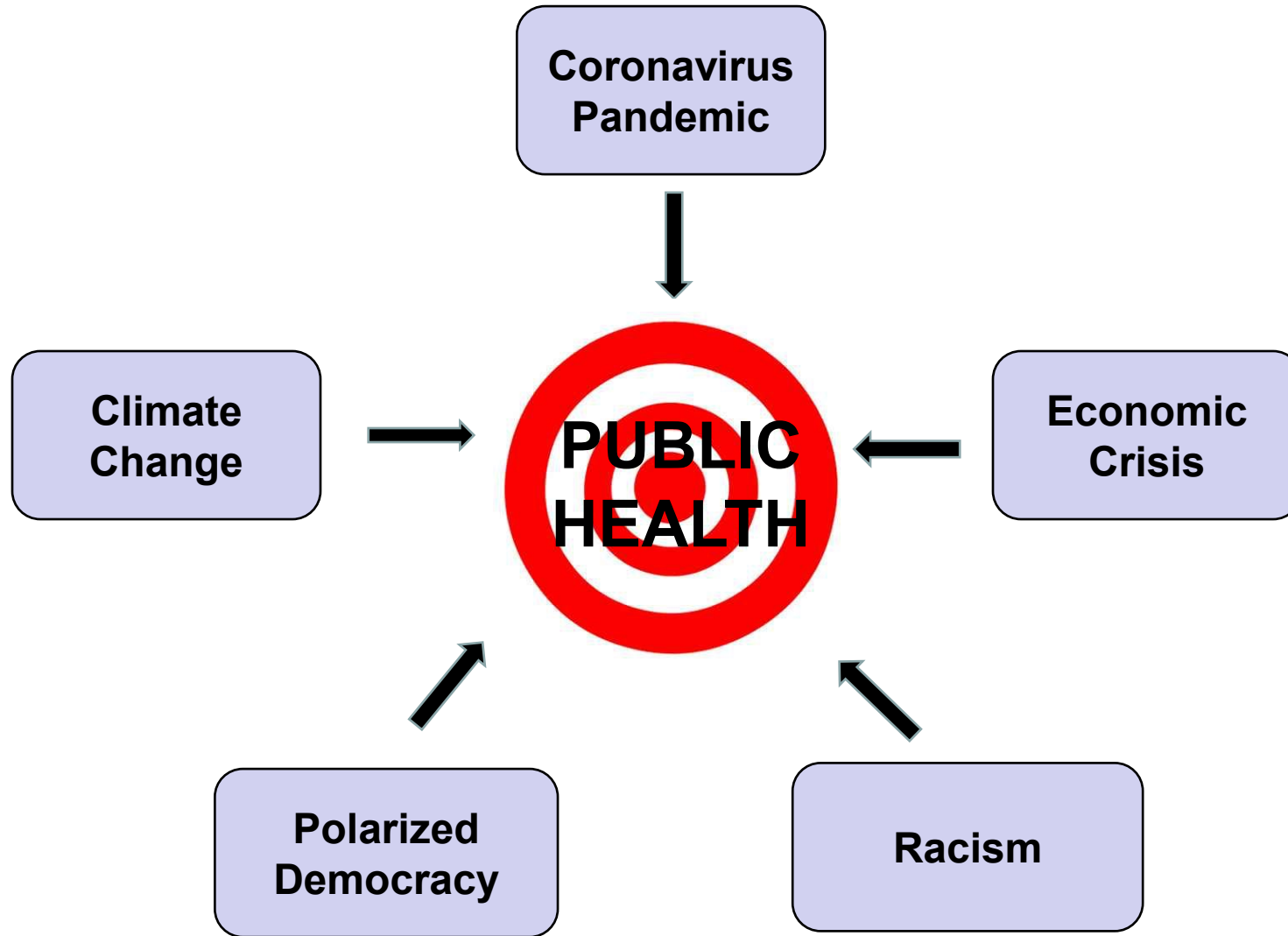
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PHRASES Toolkit

Evidence-based tools and strategies to help public health professionals communicate more effectively. Get framing recommendations, sample emails, answers to tough questions, tested messaging, and more.

[Get Started](#)

Strategic Messaging

Stories from the Field

Sample Documents

Resource Library

<https://www.phrases.org/>

Becoming Better Messengers

Effective messaging of public health challenges and interventions is essential to public health practice and especially to implementing public health laws and policies in a polarized political environment. It is easy for public health leaders to become consumed with the ongoing political and resource shifts taking place in public health and health care. However, it is also clear that those in public health, at all levels, want to engage more deeply and meaningfully with communities of all backgrounds who are burdened by poor health.

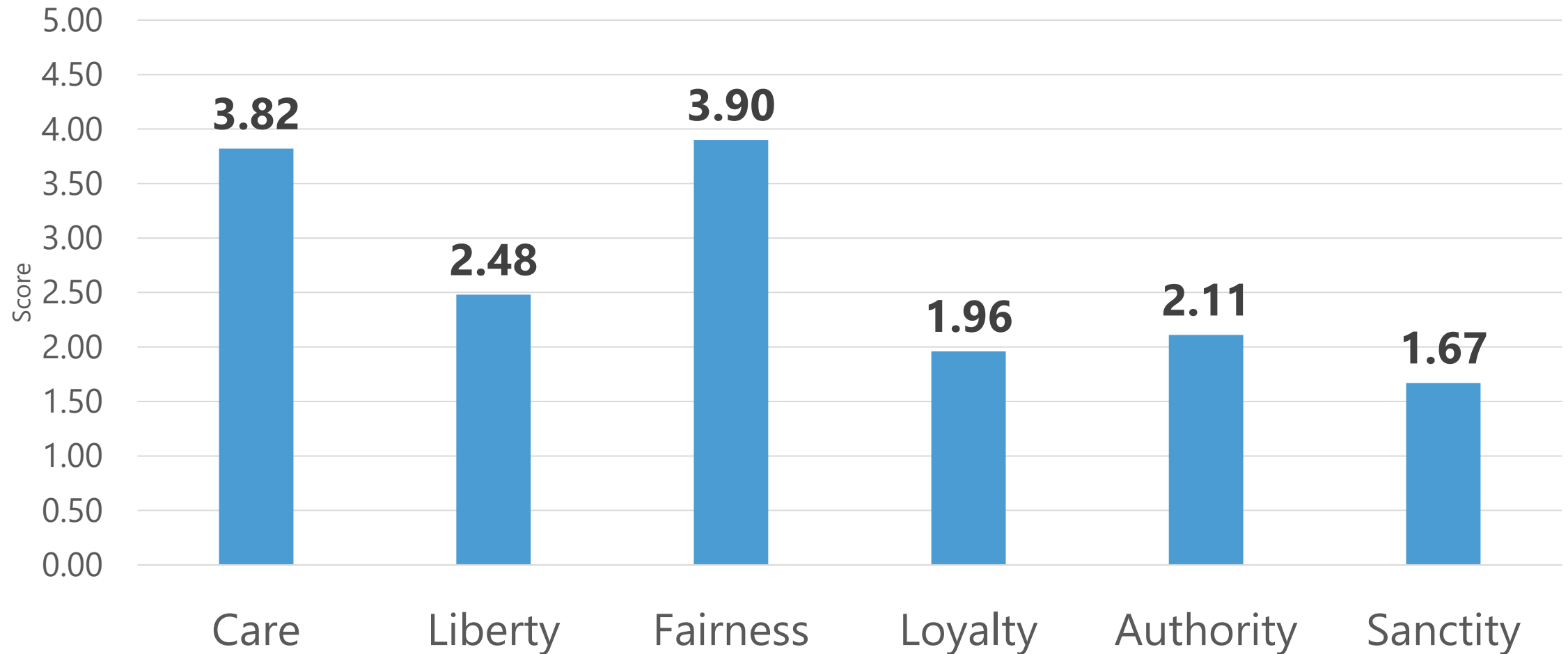


<https://www.networkforphl.org/resources/topics/trainings/becoming-better-messengers/>

Moral Foundations Profile: Network PH Law Summit (n=69)

Responses submitted: September 15, 2020

Respondents' Average Score, by Moral Foundation

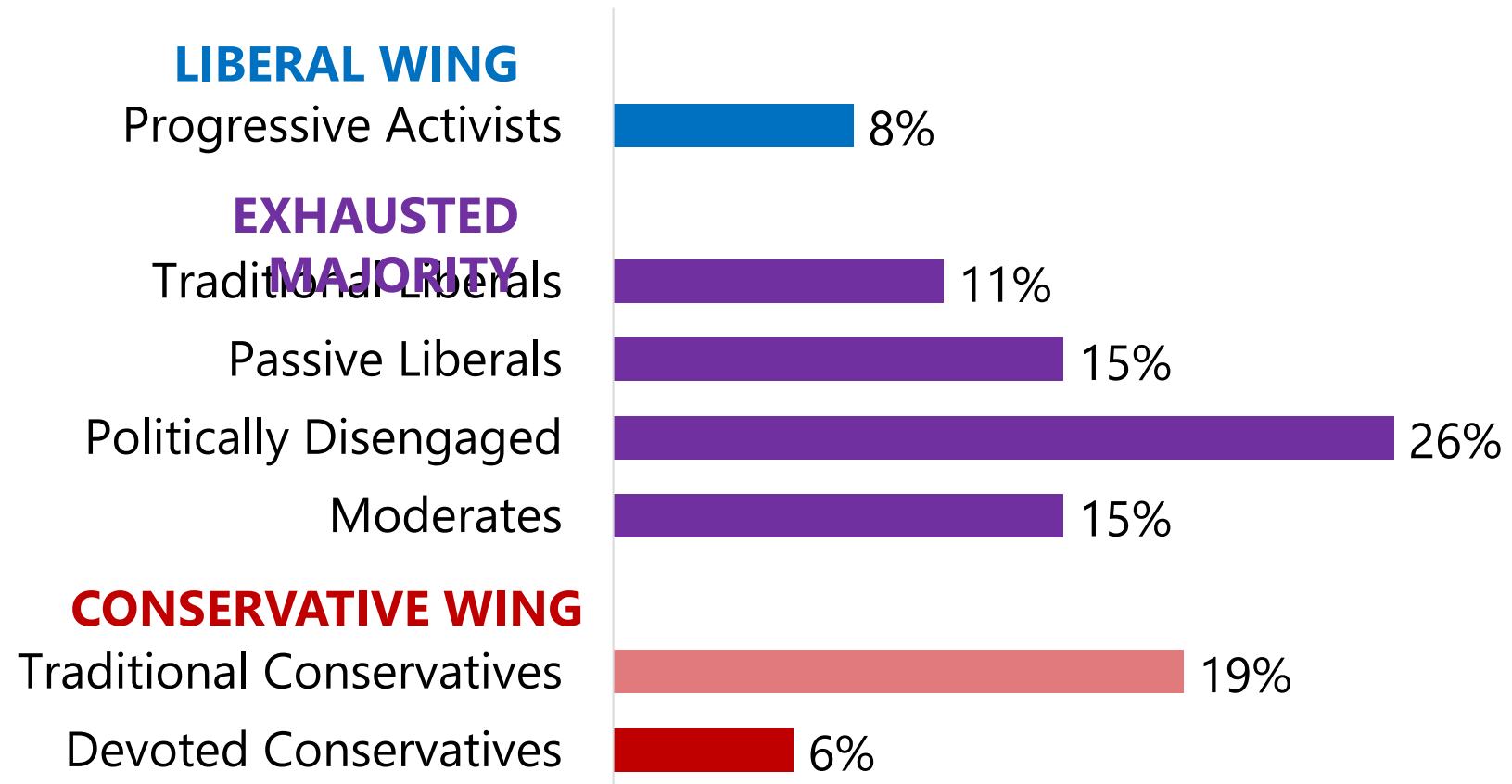


**14% of America,
roughly 1/2 left and 1/2
right, consistently shouts,
posts and votes**

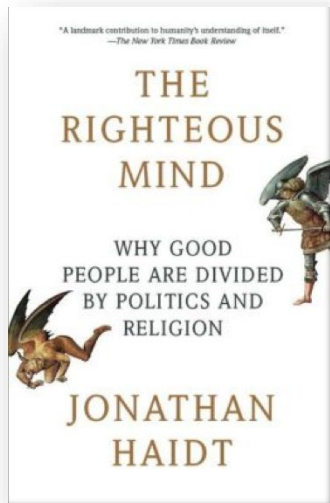
**while 67% of us
are exhausted**



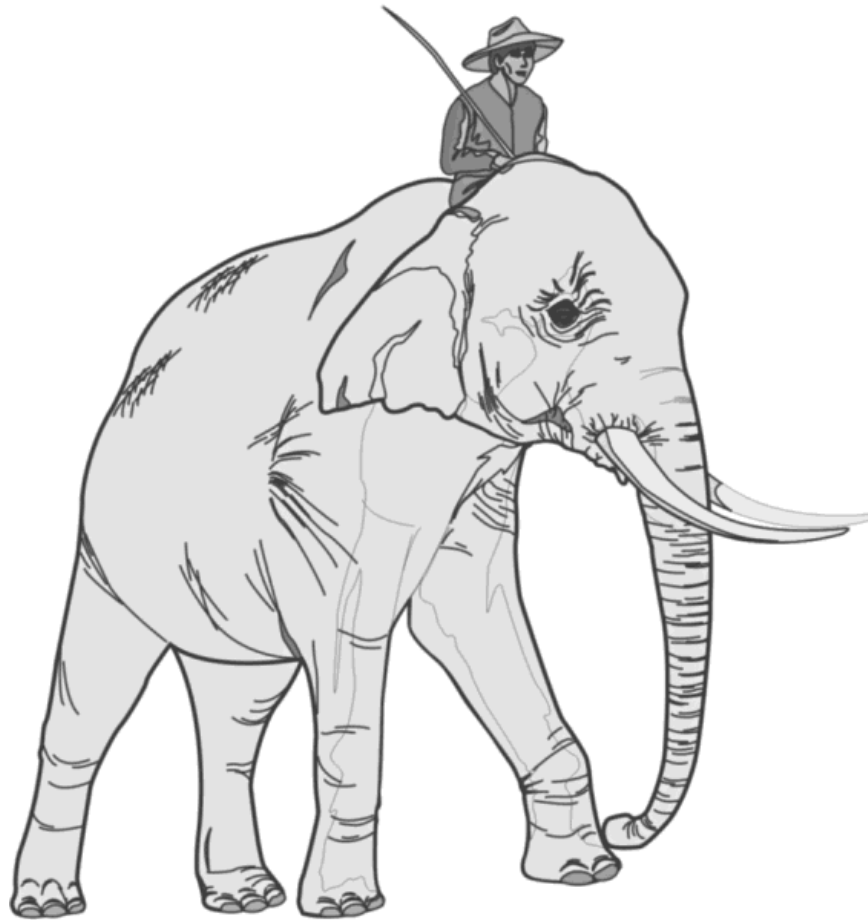
The Hidden Tribes of America



Hidden Tribes: A Study of America's Polarized Landscape Source: October 2018 by More In Common. Chart: Adapted from Axios Visuals 10/17/2018



Intuitions come first, strategic reasoning second



Moral Foundations Theory

Understanding evolutionary moral psychology

Social and political judgments are particularly intuitive

90% = Intuitive Elephant

10% = Rational Brain

We resonate differently to six foundational moral values



1. Care / Harm

**Compassion for the vulnerable;
Intolerance of suffering**



2. Liberty / Oppression

**Free choices & actions;
Social intolerance of bullies**



3. Fairness / Cheating

**People treated fairly, get what they
deserve;
Social intolerance of “free-riders”**



4. Loyalty / Betrayal

**Personal trust, group identity
Social isolation for those who betray**



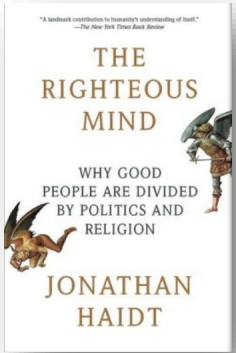
5. Authority / Subversion

**Competitive advantage of organized
groups;
Intolerance of those who subvert system**



6. Sanctity / Degradation

**Part of human spirit is elevated & pure;
Aversion to personal degradation**



Moral Foundations Theory (MFT)

Care

Harm

Liberty

Oppression

Fairness

Cheating

Loyalty

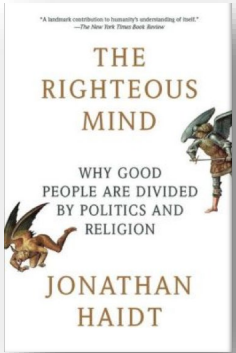
Betrayal

Authority

Subversion

Sanctity

Degradation



The Liberal Moral Matrix

Help those in need!

Heavy on caring for the weak, preventing harm; focused on rights & fairness as equality of outcome



Care

Harm



Liberty

Oppression



Fairness

Cheating



Loyalty

Betrayal



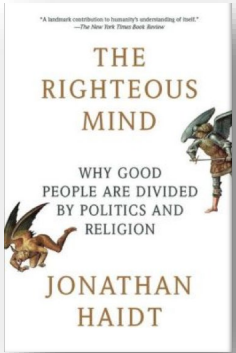
Authority

Subversion



Sanctity

Degradation

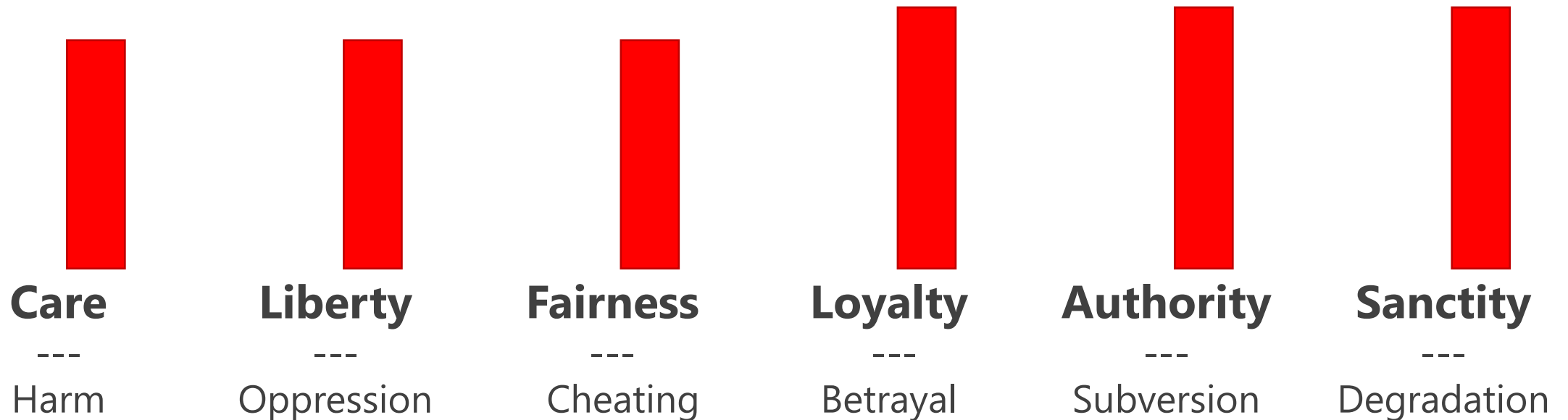


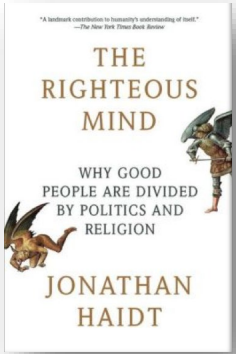
The Conservative Moral Matrix

Includes first three (as equality of opportunity), but even more on the three “institutional” values.

Help those in need!

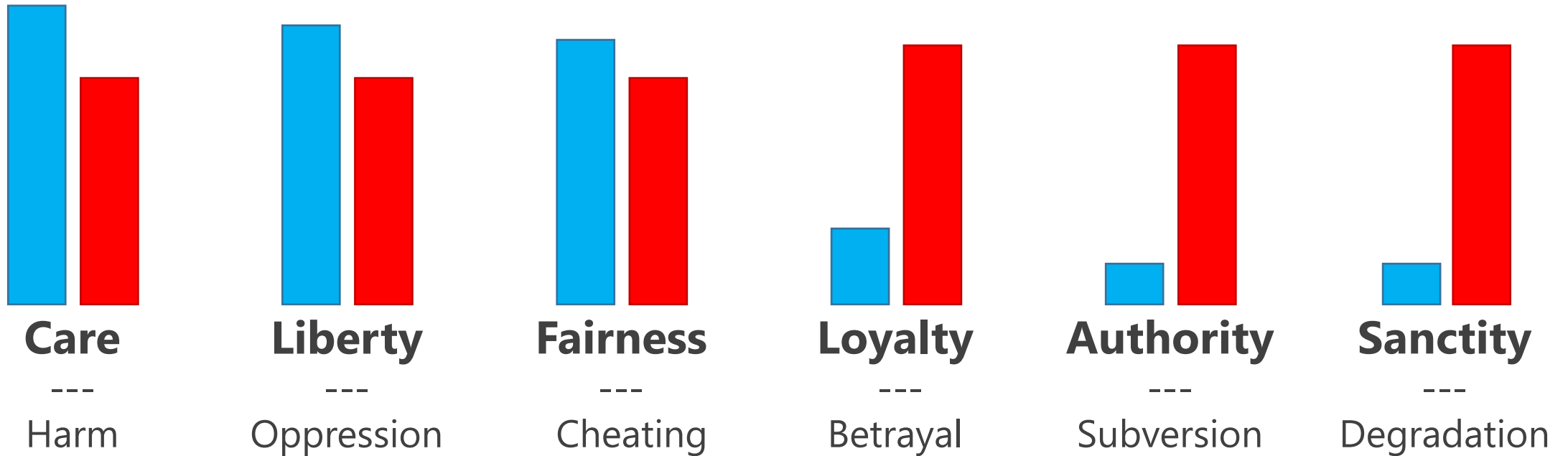
Preserve norms and treasured institutions!





Haidt calls this the “Conservative Advantage”

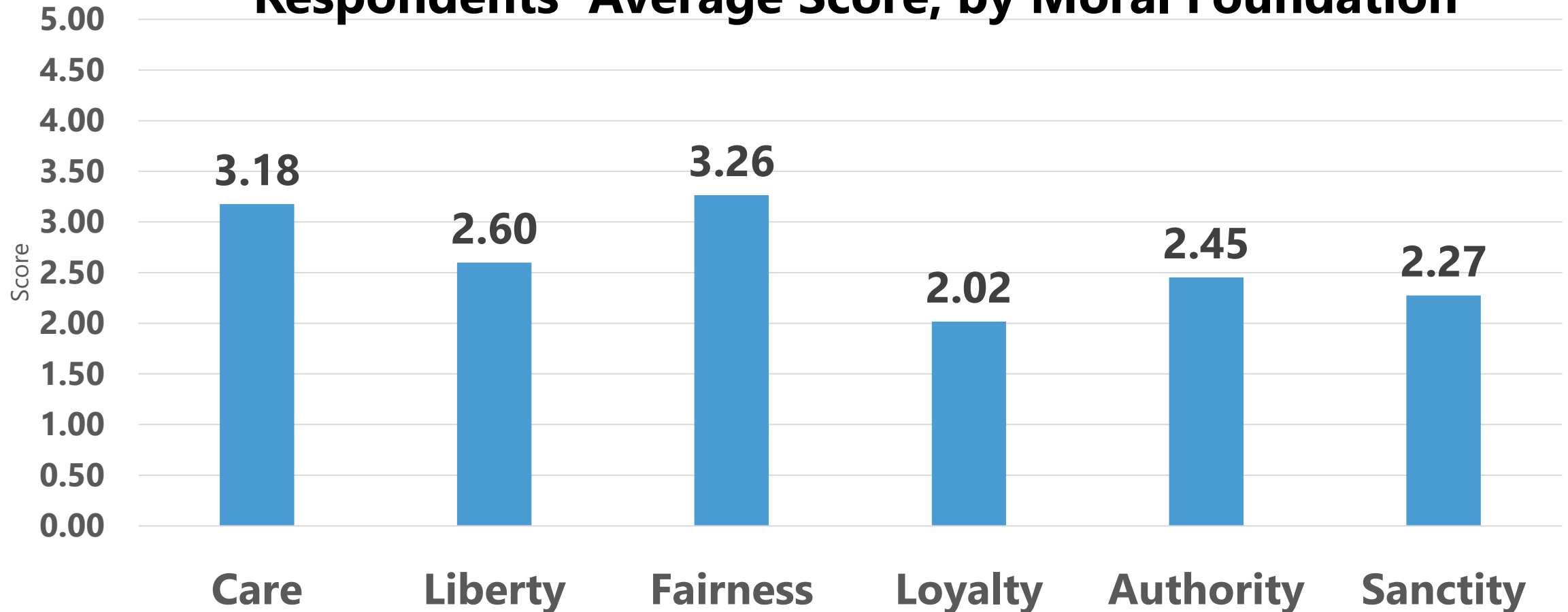
**This framework gives us insight into a significant
“Public Health Advantage” at this moment**



NC Public Health Leadership Conference (n=116)

Responses submitted: January 23 – February 14, 2020

Respondents' Average Score, by Moral Foundation



Consider Knowledge vs. Self-Awareness

Self Aware *or* **Not Aware**

**What I Don't
Know**

or

**What I Do
Know**

I'm aware I do
NOT know this"

"I'm not aware
what I don't
know"

"I know this"

**"I was NOT
aware I KNEW
this!"**

**Sometimes
you can
surprise
yourself!**



Public Health resonates with all six MFT values

“The Public Health Advantage”



1. Care



2. Liberty



3. Fairness



4. Loyalty



5. Authority

6. Sanctity



Care



Social justice



Equity

The heart of Public Health: Community coalitions

Public Health is a police power: Quarantine, food inspection, etc.

The nobility of Public Health: When others are running away from the fire, we run towards Ebola

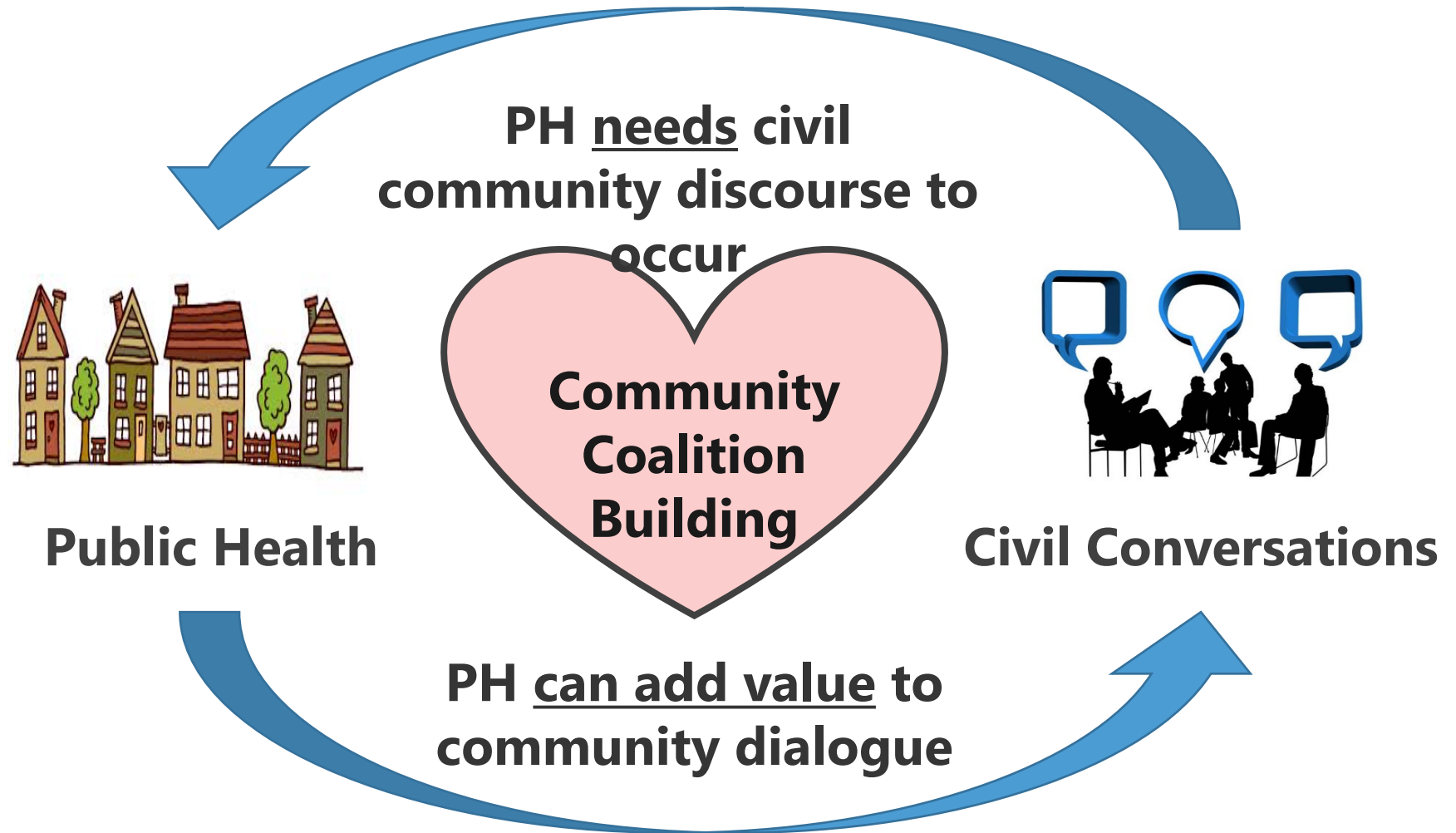
Public Health & Civil Discourse

Public health has the breadth of moral values and can use them in a way:

- People across the political spectrum can feel safe engaging in relationships with us to improve their communities

...AND...

- Civil discourse is vital to the heart of public health



But What if the Discourse... Looks Like This?

COVID-19 is also a public health communications crisis.

How can public health leaders gain trust and meet people where they are?



Empathy is Key

Empathy helps us:

- Build relationships
- Relate to and learn from others
- Become trusted messengers



"I've learned that people will forget what you **said**, people will forget what you **did**, but people will **never** forget how you made them **feel**."

— Maya Angelou



What Else Can We Do?



Be Candid

- State my position clearly
- Explain/advocate my position
- What data and interpretations informed it?
- ___ data leads me to believe that ___ is the best option.

Be Curious

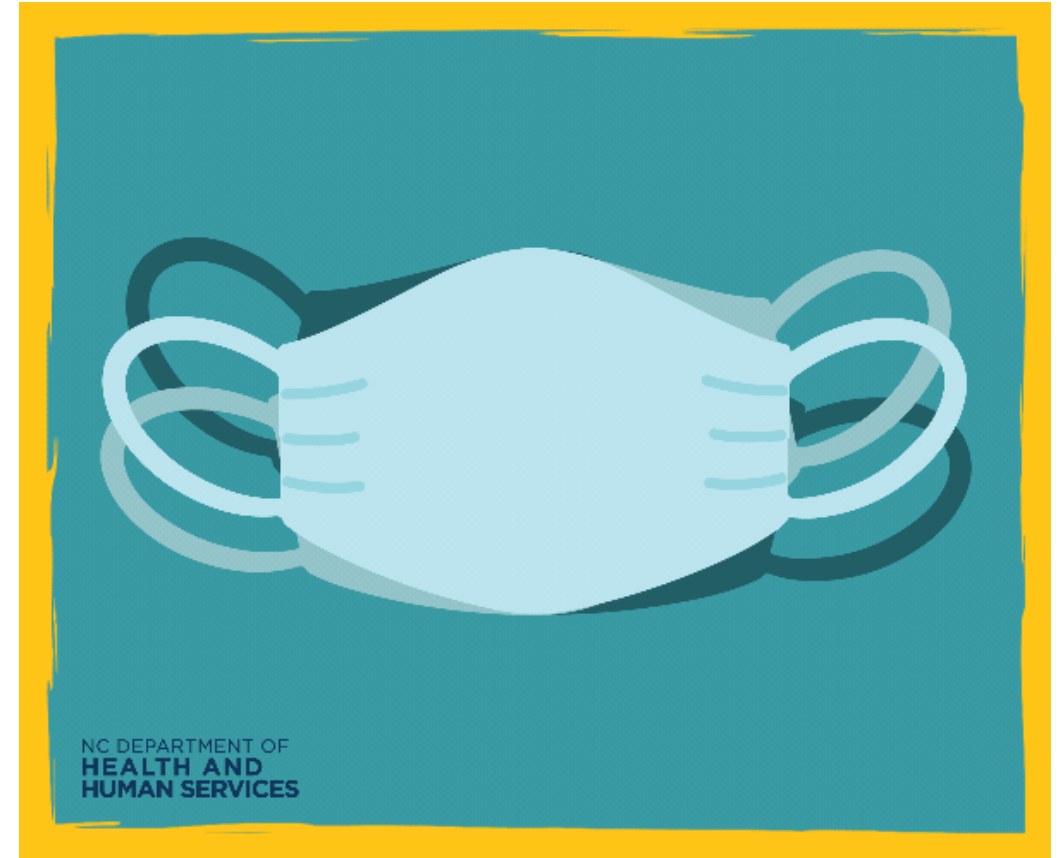
- What's your perspective?
- Test my position – what am I missing?
- Tell me more about that.
- Can you give me an example?

Empathetic Messages Bridge Divides

- Learn from the past
- Be humble
- Look for the human connection



NCDHHS' COVID-19 Response website:
<https://covid19.ncdhhs.gov/ncdhhs-response-covid-19>



DEEPER TRAINING

New opportunities for skill-building training for our workforce on these deeper values

Ability to frame individual issues to resonate with each of the 6 foundational values

Useful both to frontline PH workers in the community AND to leadership officials advocating to decision-makers for law & policy change

Six Intuitive Foundational Moral Values Adapted from: Haidt, <i>The Righteous Mind</i> , Vintage Books (2012)	
Moral Foundation	Your Public Health Message
1. Care (pairs with Harm) <ul style="list-style-type: none">Reflects the base of Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs(Security, Shelter, Food, Water, Warmth)	
2. Liberty (pairs with Oppression) <ul style="list-style-type: none">Physical and Mental FreedomSocial Intolerance of <u>Bullies</u>	
3. Fairness (pairs with Cheating) <ul style="list-style-type: none">Equality of OpportunitiesSocial Intolerance of "<u>Free-Riders</u>"	
4. Loyalty (pairs with Betrayal) <ul style="list-style-type: none">Personal Trust, Group Identity, PatriotismSocial isolation of those who <u>betray</u>	
5. Authority (pairs with Subversion) <ul style="list-style-type: none">Competitive advantage of organized groupsDeference to "good" leaders (Alexander the Great)Social intolerance of those who <u>subvert</u> the system	
6. Sanctity (pairs with Degradation) <ul style="list-style-type: none">Not simply a religious valueRespect for the human spiritSocial aversion of personal <u>degradation</u>	

Six Intuitive Foundational Moral Values

CORONAVIRUS WORKSHEET

Moral Foundation

Your Public Health Message

1. Care (pairs with Harm)

- Reflects the base of Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs (Security, Shelter, Food, Water, Warmth)

- Protect yourself and others**
- Help those most vulnerable**
- Public health can assist you**
- Stay healthy and safe**

2. Liberty (pairs with Oppression)

- Physical and Mental Freedom
- Social Intolerance of Bullies

- Coronavirus can threaten our safety and freedom**
- We want our community to be free from fear of contagion**
- The quicker we beat this, the quicker we recover and return to normal**

3. Fairness (pairs with Cheating)

- Equality of Opportunities
- Social Intolerance of "Free-Riders"

- **Everyone has an interest in beating his outbreak**
- Those at home all need to have resources to stay there**
- Infection does not discriminate**
- We have an interest in everyone getting appropriate care**

Moral Foundations	Your Public Health Message
<p>4. Loyalty (pairs with Betrayal)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personal Trust, Group Identity, Patriotism • Social isolation of those who <u>betray</u> 	<p>-Do your part, wash your hands and don't be a risk to others</p> <p>-We need to protect our community</p> <p>-Limited resources should go first to responders, HCW's and those caring for us.</p> <p>-I'm loyal to you and want to keep you safe</p>
<p>5. Authority (pairs with Subversion)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Competitive advantage of organized groups • Deference to "good" leaders • Social intolerance of those who <u>subvert</u> the system 	<p>-Scientific evidence and common sense: protective measures work</p> <p>-Listen to your local public health official</p> <p>-Respect HCW's and the risks they are taking</p> <p>-Quarantine and social distancing may be necessary</p> <p>-Be a good role model for others</p>
<p>6. Sanctity (pairs with Degradation)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not simply a religious value • Respect for the human spirit • Social aversion of personal <u>degradation</u> 	<p>-Public health does not run, it stands by your community</p> <p>-Support those taking risks to care for your loved ones</p> <p>-Look for ways to serve others</p> <p>-Help nurture the spirits of those needing comfort</p> <p>-Be willing to sacrifice your wants for community needs</p>

Centering Equity in Public Health Messaging

- **The WHAT and the WHY**
- **Audience considerations**
- **Creating a narrative**
- **Other language considerations**
- **Engaging the Community**

The WHAT and the WHY

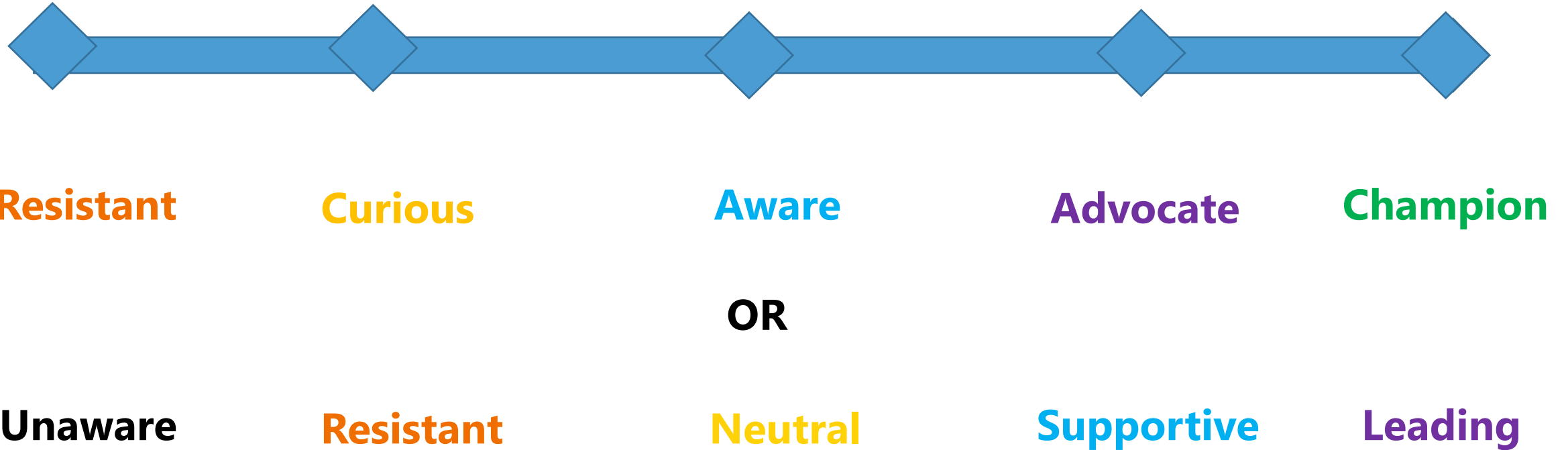
- **What does it mean to center equity?**
 - Focusing on equity in the **CONTENT** of the message
 - Focusing on equity as an **OUTCOME** of the message
- **Why should we center equity?**
 - Share solutions that ensure that everyone has what they need in the way they need to have the best health possible
 - Normalize conversations about what leads to differences in health outcomes
 - Reach people where they are

Naming and Framing...

We can't get to the America we want without talking about racial equity, structural racism, and racial and ethnic discrimination. But if communications aren't framed carefully they can reinforce misconceptions about people of color and set back change.

**FRAME
WORKS**

Audience Considerations



Creating a Narrative

- **Lead with Values**
- **Connect to history when possible**
- **Draw a through-line to the issue today**
- **Focus on solutions**

- 
1. Care
 2. Liberty
 3. Fairness
 4. Loyalty
 5. Authority
 6. Sanctity

Other Language Considerations

- Use language that is meaningful to your audience...and meaningful to you
- Take an asset-based perspective
- Focus on places or conditions rather than people (or systems over individuals)
 - **Instead of...**African Americans in this community have higher rates of diabetes.
 - **Consider...**Diabetes is more common in neighborhoods that don't have access to healthy foods
- Be aware of cognitive biases: the Framing Effect and Authority Bias

Authority bias

We're more likely to trust and be influenced by ideas that come from authority figures.



Framing effect

We draw different conclusions based on how an idea is presented to us.



<https://www.visualcapitalist.com/11-cognitive-biases-influence-politics/>

Engaging the Community



<https://www.mobilecause.com/storytelling-for-your-organization/>

- ...to develop messaging**
- ...to lead with the message**
- ...to create opportunities for community storytelling**
- ...to recognize and appreciate the differences in communities**
- ...to build community trust**

Communication as an Essential Public Health Service: Tying it all together



- Developing and disseminating accessible health information
- Communicating with accuracy and necessary speed
- Using appropriate communications channels
- Developing culturally and linguistically appropriate and relevant communications
- Employ the principles of risk communication, health literacy, and health education
- Actively engage in two-way communication
- Ensure communications are asset-based

Toolkit: Public Health National Center for Innovations. 10 Essential Public Health Services Toolkit. September 9, 2020. <http://ephns.phnci.org/toolkit>

3 Take-Aways

1

Community health has a vital role to play amid this polarization

2

Community health cannot afford the luxury of contempt or condescension towards those in our communities who do not happen to share our viewpoints

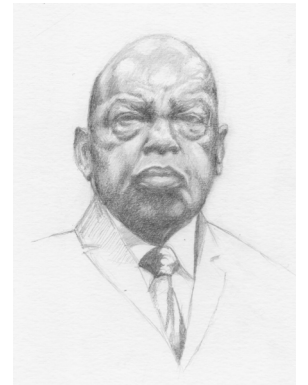
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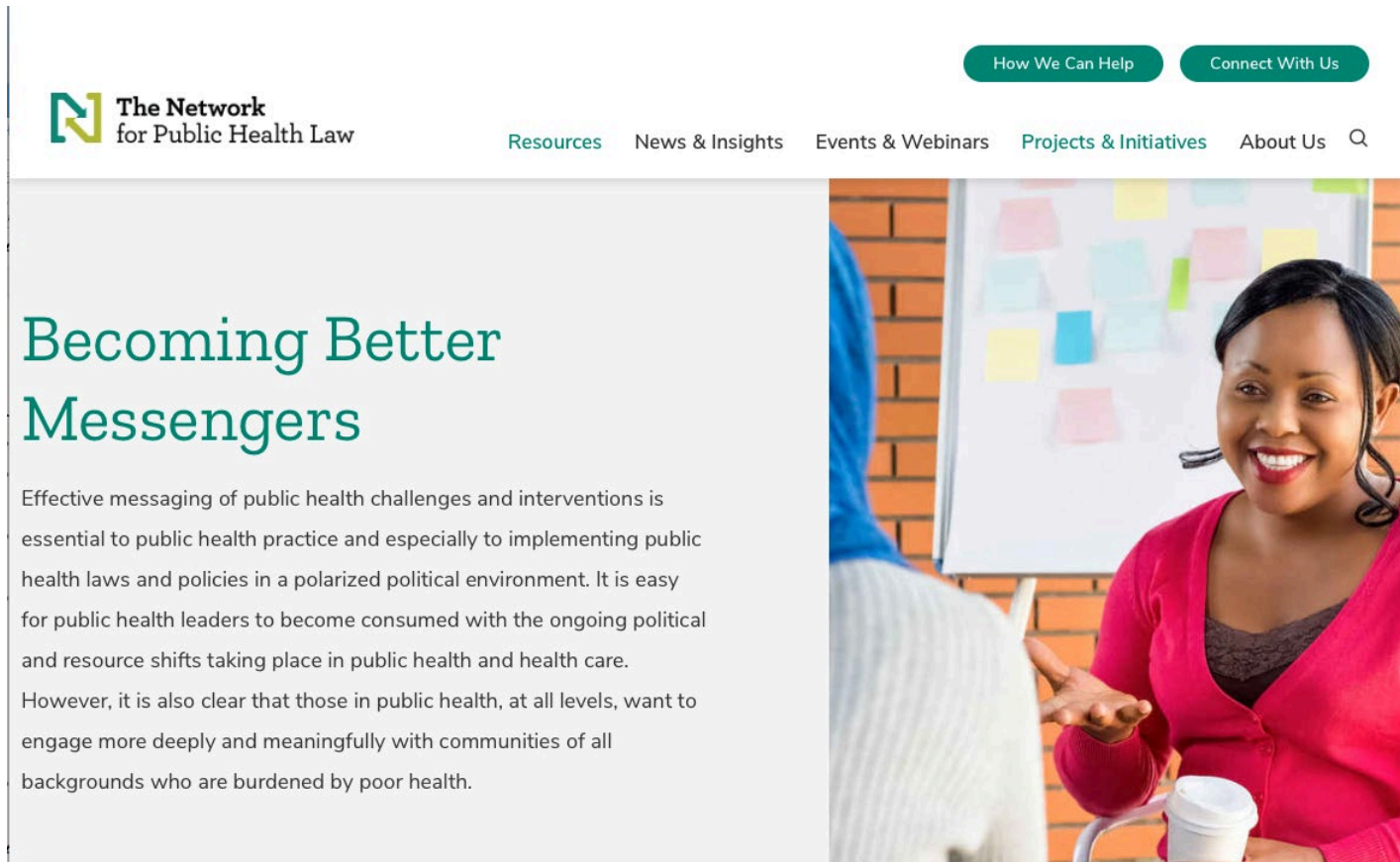
We must build the skill-sets of our entire workforce in order to change law & policy to meet many new challenges

Try to find the goodness in every human being.

Don't ever give up on that other person.

John Lewis





<https://www.networkforphl.org/resources/topics/trainings/becoming-better-messengers/>