



# *Resilient Communications*

## CUTTING THROUGH THE NOISE

### During Changing Times



February 11, 2026  
11:30 am - 12:30 pm

REGISTER NOW

*presented by*

**PETER PANEPENTO**

turn two<sup>®</sup>

# Welcome!

THE  
community  
foundation  
FOR NORTHERN VIRGINIA

## **Renée Byng Yancey**

President and CEO, Community Foundation  
for Northern Virginia



# **Sari Raskin**

Vice President of Grants and Community  
Leadership



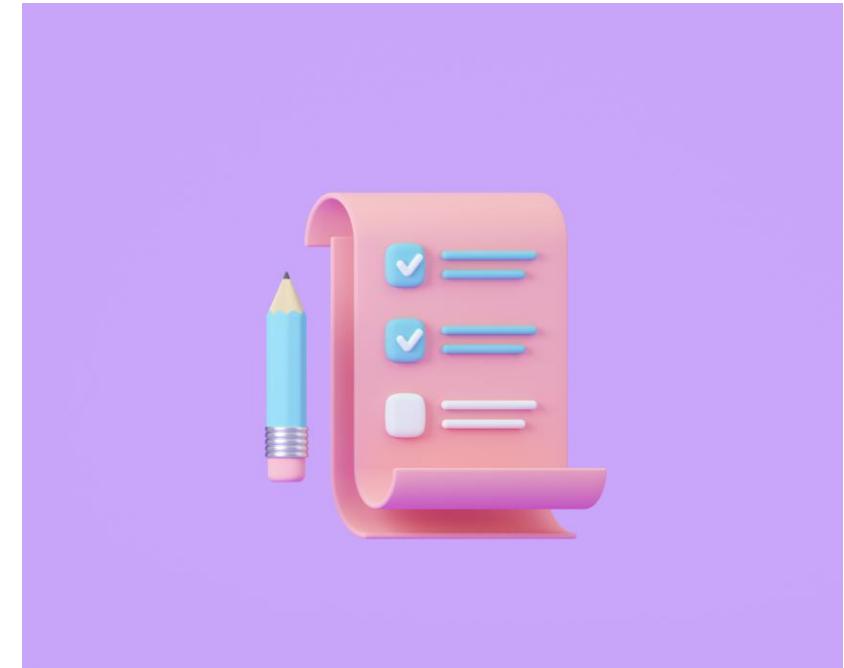
# Housekeeping

- Share your questions in the Q&A
- This webinar will be recorded and shared



# Agenda

- Beyond the Grant Series
- Resilient Communications: Cutting Through the Noise During Changing Times
- Q&A
- Upcoming CFNOVA events



## Beyond the Grant Series

- Over 500 attendees
- Last year's programming included topics such as Fundraising, Crisis Communications Planning, and Financial Preparation for Grantmaking
- We want to hear from you! What do you want to learn more about?

## CAPACITY BUILDING



# Peter Panepento

Co-Founder and Managing Partner,  
Turn Two Communications





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# Resilient Communications

Cutting through the noise during challenging times

February 11, 2026





# Peter Panepento

Turn Two  
Co-founder and Managing Partner  
[peter@turn-two.co](mailto:peter@turn-two.co)



# About Turn Two.

We are a strategic communications and PR agency focused on driving social change to create stronger communities.

We specialize in serving social-good organizations and understand their unique value and challenges.



# The Great Recession of 2008



Nonprofit  
fundraising declines



Foundations  
cut grantmaking



Layoffs and  
budget cuts



# Why Amplify Your Voice?

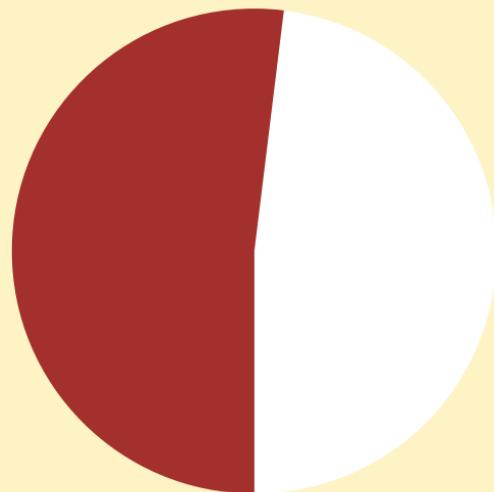
- More people will hear you
- Build trust and loyalty
- Rebound more quickly
- Stand up for what's right
- Build **resilience**

## Resilience Markers

*Percent of leaders who give high marks (8 or higher) when asked to assess their organization's resilience from 0–10.*

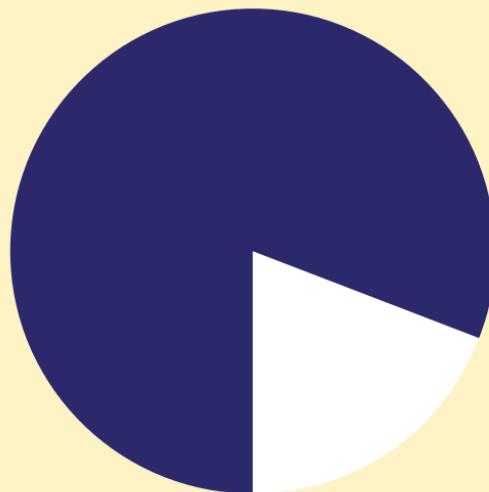
NONPROFITS

**52%**



FOUNDATIONS

**81%**



RESILIENCE MARKERS

NONPROFITS

FOUNDATIONS

*My organization has experienced an increase in staff burnout, retirement, or voluntary departures in the past twelve months.*

**43%**

agree strongly or somewhat

**29%**

agree strongly or somewhat

*My organization seriously considered a major restructuring in the past twelve months.*

**37%**

experienced this

**5%**

experienced this

*I'm worried about my staff burning out, retiring, or leaving for other jobs in the next twelve months.*

**70%**

agree strongly or somewhat

**60%**

agree strongly or somewhat



# Your Recipe for Resilience

- Audit your messaging
- Connect your message to your mission
- Identify your 'magic words'
- Follow this 4-step messaging framework
- Create your rapid response plan
- Questions and discussion



# Audit Your Messaging



# Fundamental Questions

- **What are your organizational goals?**
- **What is your risk tolerance?**
- **Do we have internal alignment?**



# A Clear-Headed Review

- **Do our words match our actions?**
- **Do our messages reflect our values?**
- **Do our messages create unnecessary risks?**
- **Do our messages carry unintended consequences?**



Connect Your Message  
to Your Mission



# The Fundamentals

- **Define and reinforce your mission and vision.**
- **Clearly articulate your values.**
- **Develop jargon-free key messages.**
- **Prioritize comfort over memorization.**



## Our Vision

To help build a Northern Virginia that works for everyone

## Our Mission

To advance equity across Northern Virginia through philanthropy and community leadership

## Our Values

**Trust:** We are an accountable steward of Northern Virginia's charitable resources for immediate and long-lasting impact that respond to the wishes of our donors and communities.

**Collaboration:** We unite community members, nonprofits, government, businesses, and donors to drive meaningful, lasting change. By leveraging our collective strengths, we co-create innovative solutions that build a more vibrant and resilient Northern Virginia.

**Humility:** We listen first, respect different voices, and seek out opportunities to learn from others.

**Inclusion and Belonging:** Recognizing the complexity of our society, we aim to foster vibrant inclusive growth for the diverse region, striving to more effectively address barriers that hamper our collective potential to strengthen Northern Virginia.

**Knowledge and Innovation:** We work to build understanding of our region's challenges and opportunities through dialogue, research, data, and constantly learning from voices throughout our community.



Here are some questions that can serve as conversation starters:

*What makes you most proud about living in Northern Virginia?*

*How do you see yourself making a positive difference in our community?*

*How would you like to be remembered in our community?*

*What would you like to improve or change in Northern Virginia?*

*What issues and charitable causes are you most passionate about?*

Each of the questions offer a prospective partner or donor an opportunity to articulate what matters most to them. As they speak, listen for statements that connect to our work and priorities.



# Identify Your Brand Character

## *The Trusted Advisor\**

### **Attributes**

Knowledgeable. Relational. Collaborative. Thoughtful. Forward-thinking. Catalytic.

### **Tone of voice**

Warm. Optimistic. Energetic. Confident. Respectful.



## Train Your Team

- 1. Take a deep dive into your mission and vision.**
- 2. Connect your values to how you communicate.**
- 3. Socialize your messaging roadmap.**
- 4. Practice and roleplay.**



# Model Mission-Focused Messaging

- 1. Put your community — not your organization — first.**
- 2. Use simple and accessible language.**
- 3. Listen more than you talk.**
- 4. Convey warmth and empathy.**



## Tip: Create a Preamble

- **A statement that almost everyone can agree with.**
- **Connects to universal truths about your work.**
- **Sets the stage for the conversation.**



**“We envision a vibrant and opportunity-rich Northern Virginia in which all of our residents thrive.”**



**“We believe every child in Northern Virginia is better equipped to learn and grow if they have access to healthy food.”**

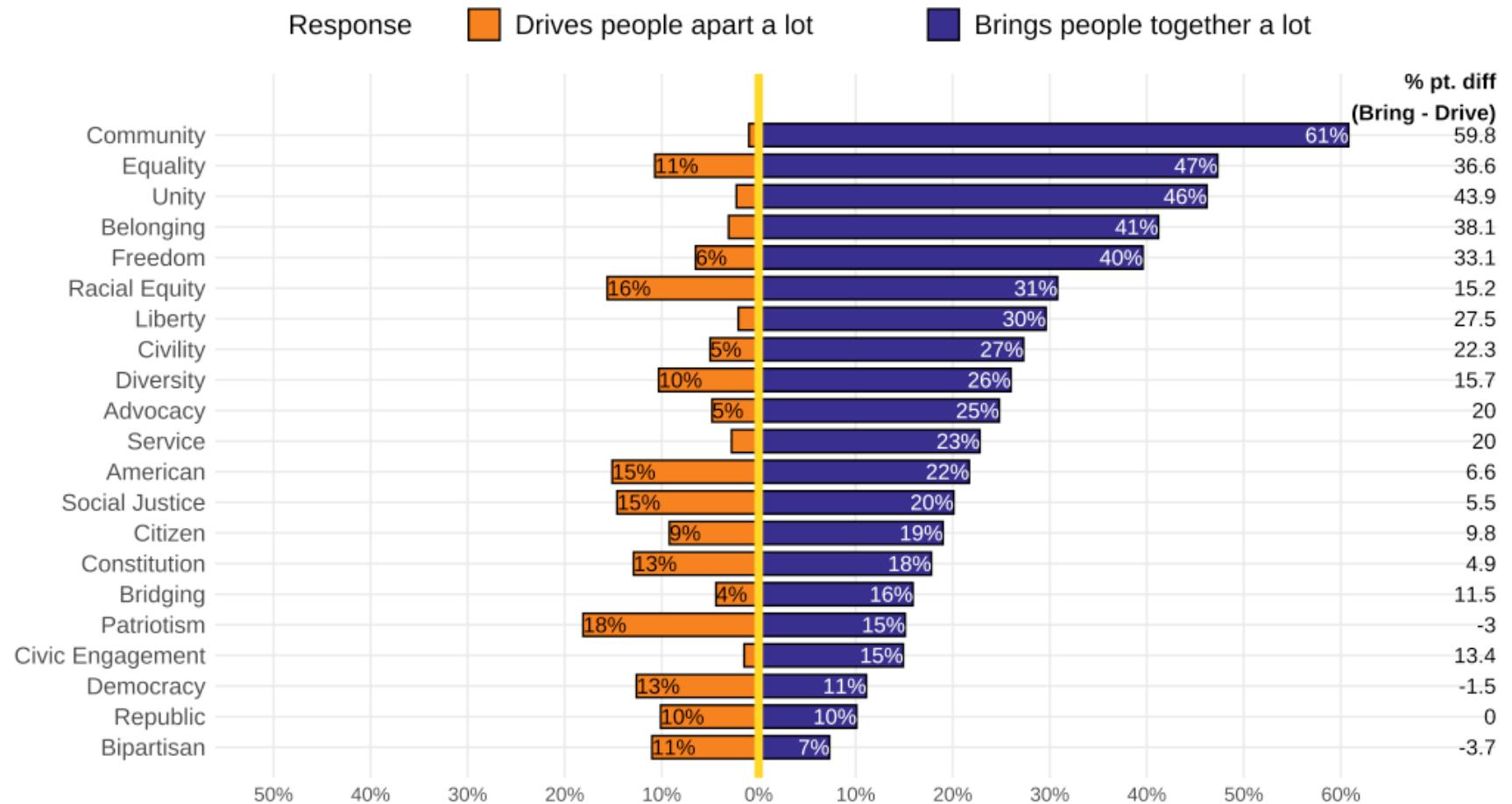


Find Your 'Magic' Words



## Each terms bring together or drive apart a lot ratings

Showing percentage of respondents that chose each response



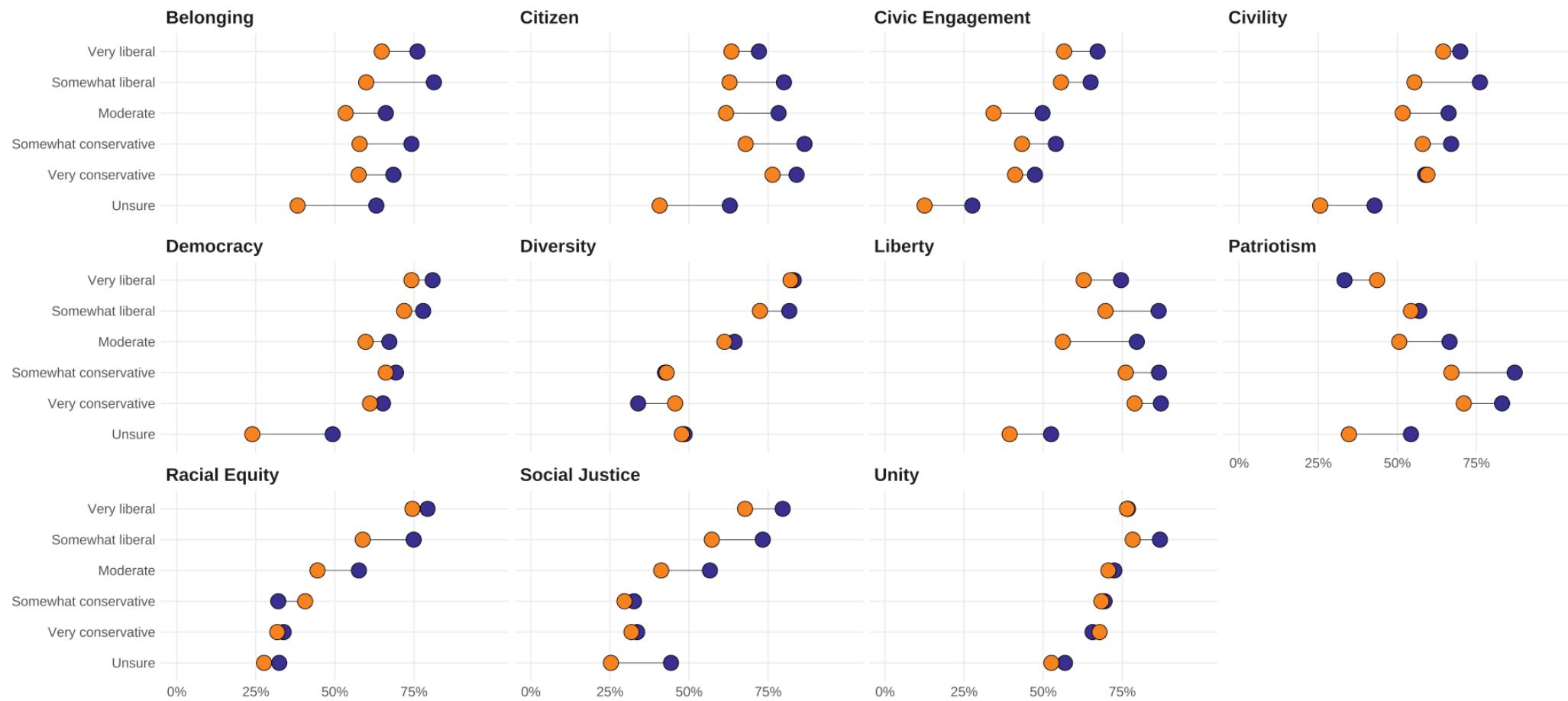
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## Positivity percentage in 2021 and 2023 separated by political ideology

● 2021 ● 2023

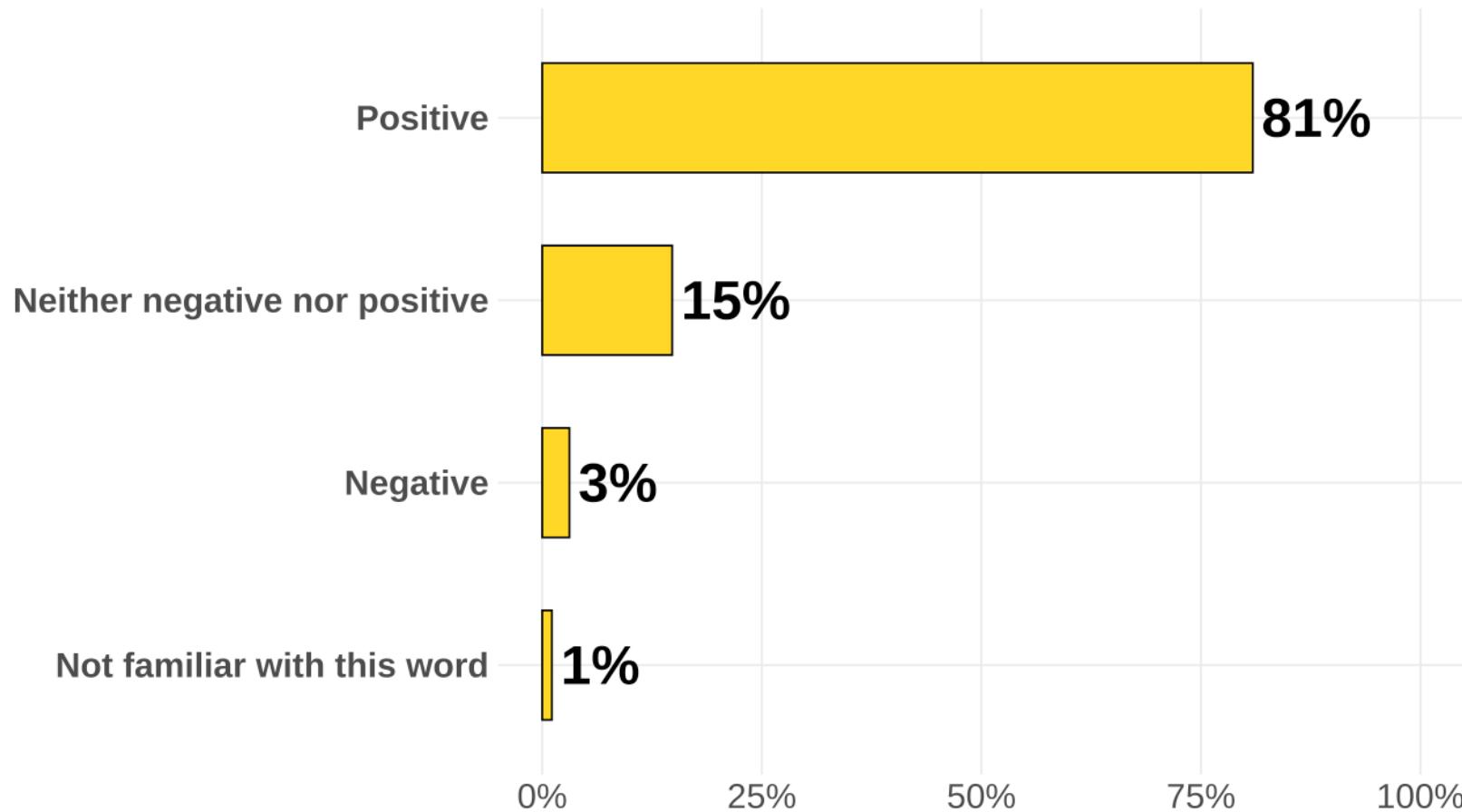


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# How do Americans view the term Community?

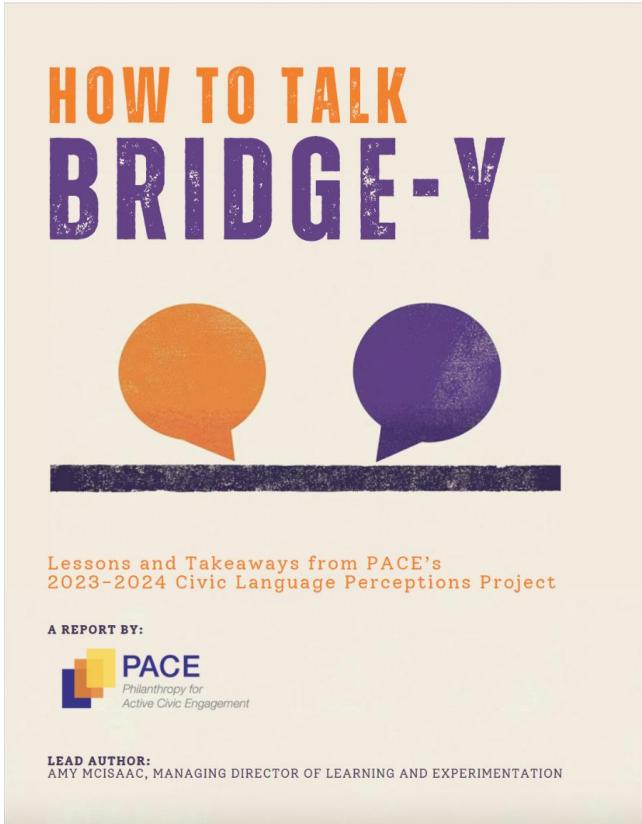


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# Bridging Resources



## Civic Language Perceptions Project

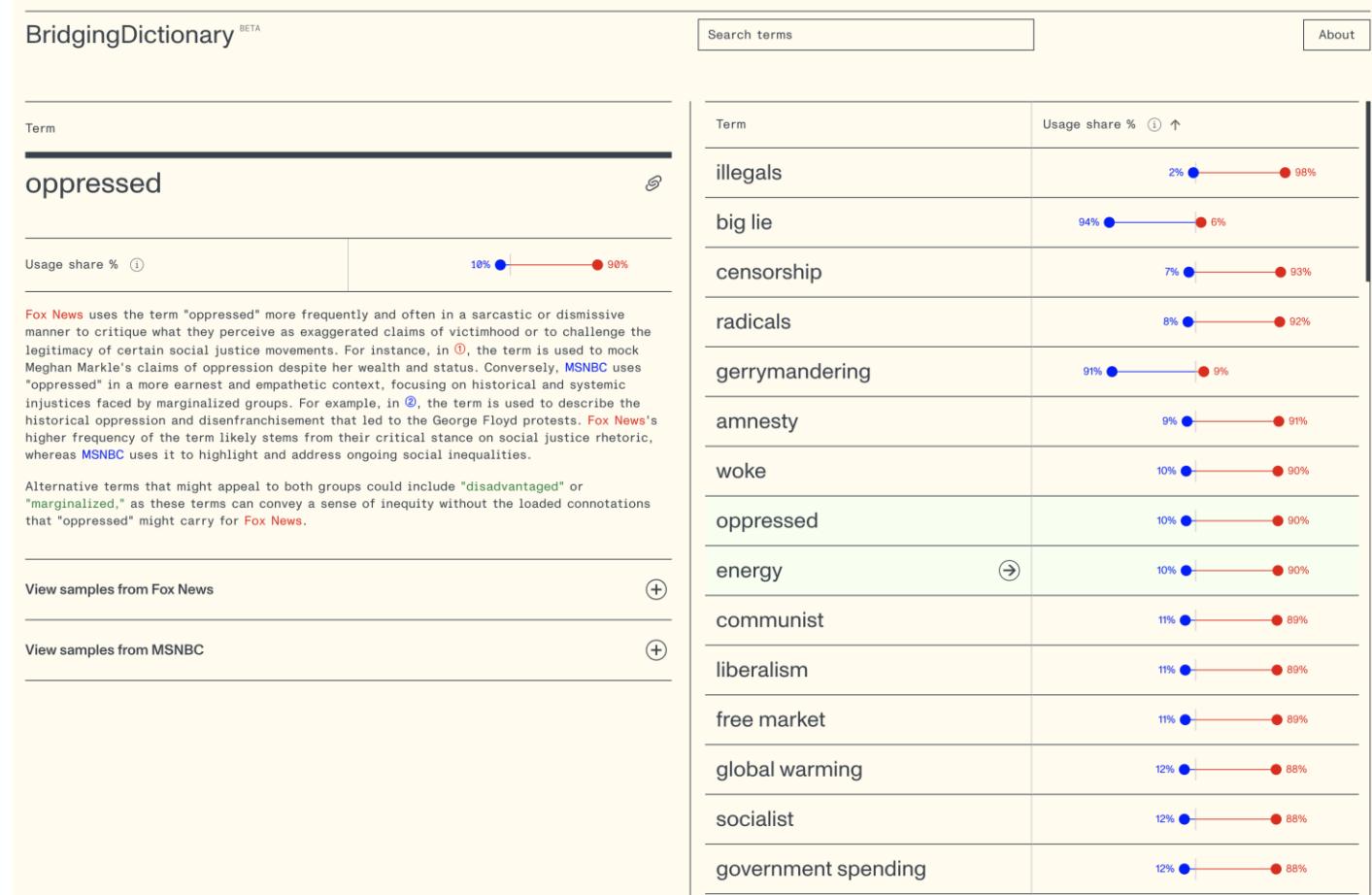
[pacefunders.org/language](https://pacefunders.org/language)



# Bridging Resources

## Bridging Dictionary

[BridgingDictionary.org](https://BridgingDictionary.org)





# 4-Step Messaging Framework



# Your Messaging Roadmap





## Asset Framing

- 1. Focuses on aspirations and contributions.**
- 2. Creates shared sense of what's possible.**
- 3. Invites your audience to the table.**

## Deficit Framing

- 1. Positions through the lens of problems/deficits.**
- 2. Creates dissonance in our brains.**
- 3. Builds subconscious barriers.**



# Lead With Your Vision

- 1. Shows where you're going.**
- 2. Connects to shared values.**
- 3. Creates a sense of possibility.**
- 4. Invites your audience to continue reading/listening.**



## Vision Statement Example

**We're working to build a vibrant Northern Virginia where every person has the opportunity to thrive.**



## Identify the Challenge

- 1. Presents the case for taking action.**
- 2. Acknowledges the obstacles that must be overcome to achieve your vision.**
- 3. Uses clear, easy-to-understand language. No jargon!**



## Challenge Statement Example

**While Northern Virginia provides ample opportunities for some, many others face barriers that make it difficult to thrive and prosper.**



# Show the Path Forward

- 1. Shows your audience you have a plan.**
- 2. Offers details on how, together, you can address the challenge and achieve your vision.**
- 3. Sets up the invitation for the join/support you.**



## Show the Path Forward Example

**Together, we can support our vision for creating a healthy and vibrant community by creating accessible and welcoming mental-health services that invite people of all ages and backgrounds to improve their wellbeing.**



## Invite!

- 1. Ends your message with a clear call-to-action to join you in achieving the vision.**
- 2. Creates an opportunity to continue the conversation.**
- 3. Inspires your audience to give, advocate, volunteer, or partner.**



Invite!

- **You can help make this possible by sharing your time as a volunteer.**
- **You can support this work by contributing to our summer jobs fund.**



# Let's Review

## Your Messaging Roadmap





# Communicating During Fast-Moving Events

# Planning Challenges



**ROUGHLY**  
**1/2**

**(48%) don't have plans  
for internal emergencies**  
such as the death of a team  
member or a security breach.

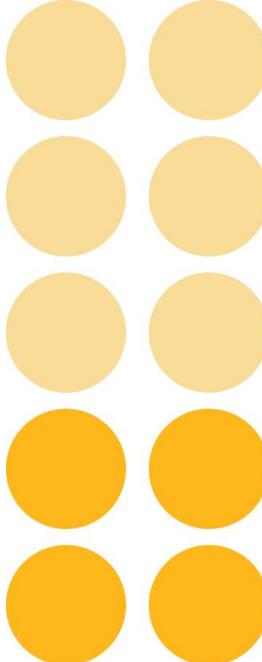
# Planning Challenges



NEARLY

**3 in 5**

(57%) report **not having policies for social crises** such as mass shootings or public health emergencies.



MORE THAN

**4 in 10**

(42%) **do not have policies for natural disasters** such as hurricanes, floods, or tornadoes.



## Why a Rapid-Response Protocol?

- News travels faster than ever — and so does misinformation.
- Bad things sometimes happen to good nonprofits.
- Mitigate risk.
- Create opportunities.



## Without a Protocol

- Slow response.
- Misinformation/confusion.
- Poor messaging.
- Reputational risk.



## Create Your Protocol: 5 Steps to Success

1. Create your rapid-response team.
2. Designate a spokesperson and identify roles.
3. Identify audiences and channels.
4. Identify your key messages.
5. Establish your gameplan.



## Create Your Ground Rules

1. What activates your rapid-response activities?
2. What do you expect of members?
3. What needs to be prepared in advance?
4. How will information be shared?
5. Who makes the final call?



<b>Issue Response Matrix</b>	no <----- >yes-----				
	1	2	3	4	5
Issue is directly related to mission and core values					
Issue has direct and substantive impact on our members					
We have expertise or perspective that is valuable and have a well-articulated point of view					
Important stakeholders expect us to be involved					
We can get involved while remaining respectful to those with opposing views					
We have specific actions we are taking or asking others to take					
We can effectively differentiate personal views from organizational views					
We are filling a void not occupied by others and doing so because we are the most closely aligned organization to the issue					
Our participation will not be perceived as opportunistic or self-serving					
Other well-respected organizations (peers, partners, others we admire) are participating					
This will remain an issue for an extended period of time					



**ASSIGNMENT OF CRISIS LEVEL BY TEAM - The Crisis Communication Team will assign and may change the designated crisis category between levels or not, depending upon the situation.**

LEVEL	When	External	Internal	Team
GREEN	Often used for international or national issues which indirectly affect our stakeholders, or local issues with a low level of severity.	May or may not have a response due to either the low level of severity or lack of information. Response may include a short social media message. Once a message of condolences or solidarity is shared, it is possible that no further response is expected.	HR to email staff with update, either monitoring or responding. If responding, HR will send a copy of the message to all staff including staffing HR support message.	Crisis team expected to monitor the situation. They will communicate via group email/text/phone as needed.
YELLOW	Often used for national or statewide issues which indirectly affect our stakeholders, or local issues with a medium level of severity or directly affect our stakeholders with a low level of severity.	We are monitoring the situation. A proactive message will be prepared. A green level may have escalated. Most likely the team will respond with a social media message, maybe a website message.	The team may choose to prepare a reactive statement for staff, board members, etc. Whatever message is posted will be shared with staff via email from HR, including staffing HR support message.	Crisis team expected to monitor the situation. Crisis team is expected to communicate, may need a conference call, phone calls, or group email/text
RED	Often used for issues which directly impact our business operations, and/or stakeholders, with a high level of severity.	The team will prepare a proactive statement for the website and may choose to also share via email blast to specific stakeholders, media, etc. A prior level may have been escalated.	The team is expected to prepare a reactive statement for staff, board members, etc. If necessary, an in- person staff meeting may be convened. Whatever message is posted will be shared with staff via email from HR with support message.	Crisis team expected to monitor the situation and communicate as often as necessary, possibly in person. CEO and/or Board Member must be included in conversations.



# Identify Your Key Audiences

1

Internal  
(Staff/board)

2

Donors/  
volunteers

3

Partners  
(Funders/other  
nonprofits)

4

Media

5

Public



# Match Channels to Your Audiences

1

Website

2

Social media

3

Email

4

Earned Media

5

Paid Media



## Rapid Response Messages

- Lead with your values.
- Acknowledge the situation.
- Assesses what's next.
- Provides clear actions/next steps.
- Tie back to your values.



# Questions



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# Shape of the Region 2026

Tuesday March 24 | 7:30 – 11:30 AM  
Valo Park, Tysons Corner

Highlights include: Lightning talks and actionable strategies



## KEYNOTE SPEAKER

Paul Misener

Founder and Principal at  
Misener Innovation



## HOST & MODERATOR

Drew Wilder

NBC4 Northern  
Virginia Reporter

# Innovation and Leadership for Northern Virginia





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# Thank you for joining!

