



A QuickStart Guide

Framing strategies for public health professionals and advocates who want to communicate more effectively about the value of cross-sector collaboration.

Public health’s mission—to ensure the conditions in which everyone can be healthy—depends on being able to forge close partnerships with professionals in other sectors, which in turn, depends on being able to communicate effectively with them. This can be a challenging task, given that other sector professionals come to the table with their own missions, priorities, and areas of expertise. They often have limited understandings of the public health field, or even health as a community issue. As a result, professionals in other sectors are frequently unaware of how public health’s objectives and priorities are aligned with their own. All of this means cross-sector collaboration—which should be a no-brainer—can sometimes be a tough sell.

That’s why the PHRASES project has partnered with the FrameWorks Institute to conduct extensive communications research to identify the most significant gaps in understanding between public health experts and professionals in other sectors—specifically, Housing, Education, Health Systems, and Business. FrameWorks then developed and empirically tested framing strategies that public health professionals can use to most effectively close those gaps.

You can read all about it in FrameWorks’ Strategic Brief and Map the Gaps Report, but to get you started, the following strategies draw on major findings from the research.

Avoid ✘	Advance ✔
Relying primarily on the phrase “social determinants of health” to do your explaining	A positive, proactive, and detailed vision for how various sectors can contribute to building a strong foundation for community health <i>(See recommendations #2 and #10)</i>
Generalizing about, or messaging to, an entire sector without acknowledging intra-sector variability	Evidence of existing relationships with sub-sector groups, familiarity with their priorities, and knowledge of their resource constraints <i>(See recommendations #1, #4, and #6)</i>
Talking in vague or abstract terms about the importance of working together; or describing collaboration as beneficial without naming the specific benefits	Current, concrete examples of collaboration that highlight recent successes, especially in the areas of health promotion, health innovation, and addressing health inequities <i>(See recommendations #3, #6, and #7)</i>
Focusing on health-related challenges that professionals in other sectors face	An understanding of how public health’s expertise—particularly with data—can be harnessed to fuel other sectors’ important and ongoing work <i>(See recommendations #5, #8, and #9)</i>



When you're ready to dig a little deeper into the recommendations, check out the other framing resources in this toolkit...



Discover why some common messages promoting cross-sector collaborations with public health may be hurting rather than helping the cause in this **"When You Say... They Think..."** chart.



Compare standard replies with a set of **Reframed Answers to Tough Questions about Public Health.**



Keep these three **Reframe Cards** handy when you set out to adopt a tested metaphor or value (either Foundation of Community Health, GPS Navigation, or Value of Investment) in your own communications. Each card summarizes the main idea behind that tool, offers guidance on how to use it, and serves as a reminder of the specific communications tasks it was designed and tested to do.



View a **Sample Email** that models how the framing strategies can be applied in everyday communications. (This one is written by a public health expert proposing to work with education partners to increase attendance levels in our schools.)

These resources and more are all available at www.phrases.org.