

# framing equality toolkit >

ILGA-Europe & PIRC



## WHAT'S THIS?

This toolkit is a short guide to strategic communications, based on extensive research and building on the experience of activists and communicators from around the globe.

It aims to provide a **framework rather than a blueprint**; helping you to ask the right questions rather than giving you the right answers. It's designed to be helpful for anyone who communicates as part of their voluntary or paid work. It's written with a focus on European LGBTI activists, but we hope it will be useful to others with a similar vision.

**Read it from cover to cover or jump in at the point you're most interested in.**

## WHY?

Our societies are built on stories. These stories—of our past, present and future—provide scaffolding for our political systems, for our social structures, and for our own thinking. They shape how we understand our relationships, what relationships we value and pursue, how we classify 'us' and 'them', how we treat others, and our expectations of state and civic duties. That we can deny rights to people based on their country of origin, sexuality, or gender identity, is only possible due to a set of beliefs, or stories, about one group being more deserving than another.

By understanding framing—how these stories interact with our thinking—campaigners and activists can craft their communications to create sustainable social change. This toolkit is about helping you to do that.

*“When we speak we are afraid our words will not be heard or welcomed. But when we are silent, we are still afraid. So it is better to speak.”*

**Audre Lorde**

## WHAT'S IN THIS TOOLKIT



There are three key stages to framing.

We'll take you through them in the three main sections of this toolkit.

What each of these stages mean will be different for different types of framing work: whether, for example, it's a big, proactive campaign a movement-building initiative, the everyday communications you're involved in in your organisation, or quick response reactions.

## define the task

You need to know what you're trying to achieve in order to frame effectively.

This means getting clear on your vision and your goals, and then focusing in on where your audience currently is on the issue in order to know the barriers you need to overcome.

Using these ingredients, you'll set your framing tasks: what you need your frame to do. These generally centre on getting consensus around a problem and a solution, and motivating action.

## create frames

Once you've set your task, you can get creative.

There are some general pieces of best practice for framing that it's useful to know, but you can always come back and tweak your original thinking after you've had a go.

## test & refine

And then you just need to check that it works!

There are more and less involved ways to do this, depending on how much resource you have, and what kind of scale of implementation it will involve.

After some time has passed, you'll also need to evaluate your impact: which is all the easier if you've taken some time to monitor your progress and troubleshoot as you go.

Each section is structured for easy navigation with:

- A **SUMMARY** which outlines the key points you need to know about each step of the process;
- 🔧 A **SUMMARY DO IT YOURSELF (DIY)** which will give you a quick methodology, set of tools or questions so you can do this step of the process yourself;
- ▢ A **FULL SECTION** outlining each part of the process and more in-depth 🔧 DIY sections for those of you who have more time, or who are new to the process.

And then you're ready to start all over again...

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## WE CAN'T TAKE SOCIAL CHANGE FOR GRANTED

**Supporting our members to improve the situation for LGBTI people in countries all over Europe has been part of ILGA-Europe's work since 1996.**

While protection for LGBTI people continues to improve in some countries, activists in other regions have had to face hurdles that have shocked their fellow European neighbours. We have been confronted with the reality that change is not a linear process. One improvement does not inevitably lead to more successes like a series of happy dominos.

### And change does not come with a lifetime guarantee.

There are many forces that intervene in this rapidly changing environment. Legislation and policies have a prominent role to play in advancing equality (and sometimes leading to a backlash) for LGBTI people.

What is new is the marked increase in divisive rhetoric, and how intolerance seems to have been normalised by certain political groups. We are faced with populist conversations framed around the 'anti': anti-gender, anti-propaganda, anti-immigrant, and anti-LGBTI.

### It has become more urgent than ever to answer the question: how can the LGBTI movement respond to this reality?

## WE NEED SUSTAINABLE CHANGE

When we talk about change, we aren't just talking about something that lasts until the next election. We are talking about creating change that becomes so ingrained that it becomes habit. We are also referring to changes that take place across many different levels. That could be changes in how we interact with other people on a personal level, political developments or wider cultural shifts. All of these layers merge and combine to produce social change that lasts.

The LGBTI movement in Europe has been the driver of great successes in recent years. Some European countries have become global standard-setters—but this change needs to be sustainable. Legislation is part of the solution, but it needs to be accompanied by public acceptance. LGBTI people need to feel comfortable and safe in their workplaces, schools, public spaces and hospitals. If people feel like they cannot come out in confidence or display any signs of affection publicly with their partner, then a piece of the social change puzzle is missing.

This isn't a one-way (or even a two-way) process. Many strategies have to be put into place for this to work. There are many actors involved; from LGBTI communities and activists, supportive politicians, allies to the LGBTI movements, media outlets, etc.

Refreshing the way we communicate for LGBTI equality, and increasing the reach and impact of our communications, can contribute to creating changes at all levels: when working with LGBTI communities, building alliances, campaigning or advocating for new pieces of legislation. We need to get better at finding common ground with others who don't seem like traditional allies at first glance.

This is one strategic response to the rapidly changing environment and to the new challenges we are facing, both as a movement and as European societies.



## HOW SUSTAINABLE CHANGE HAPPENS

We believe that to overcome the deep disconnection, embedded systems of oppression and democratic deficit that we see at the roots of many of the issues we currently face, we need more than legal reform or technological advancement. The type of social change we need is systemic, sustainable culture change.

This requires deep shifts in thinking: changes in how we define ourselves and those around us, and how we view our relationships with the natural world and our economic systems.

This means we need to change public and political discourse: the stories we tell ourselves. We can easily get trapped in stories that restrict the possibility for change. New stories reflect new ways of thinking and can help new worlds come into being. We believe civil society has a crucial role to play in this: building a movement for change based on stories of the alternative.

These stories must also be deeply rooted in practice. The issue is not just one of communication: it is not that if we find the right words, we can change people's minds. Our practices—how we engage with our communities and with the wider publics—must reflect and strengthen the stories we tell. Change is only possible once our movements are telling better stories through being more representative, diverse, and connected.



### Change Comms

What we hear, read, see, and say: campaign communications, online and offline media, images and words, slogans, posters, everyday speech, any way information is conveyed.



### Change Framing

How communications shape the meaning of information and the way we think about it: by what is included, excluded, and what associations are created.



### Change Thinking

The emotional and psychological, verbal and non-verbal, ways that we respond to the world around us: the stories, patterns, beliefs and assumptions, emotions, and values.



### Change Culture

The composition and structure of our societies: politics and policies, what behaviour is accepted and unaccepted, social and community cohesion, media and arts, social movements, other outcomes.

## HOW THIS TOOLKIT CAME TO BE

This toolkit is the product of a two-year collaboration between ILGA-Europe and PIRC, in which we scoured Europe for the best knowledge on how to increase public support for LGBTI equality.

### What we did:

- \* **Training workshop:** We carried out a workshop with activists from across Europe in late 2015 to assess the landscape, get a sense of what was and wasn't working, and to develop some new tools and ways of talking about our issues.
- \* **Framing analysis:** We reviewed the key themes of the framing of LGBTI people, through text analysis and talking to practitioners.
- \* **Literature review:** ILGA-Europe members and staff submitted nearly 200 literature sources (some of which were in fact also large data-bases), from which we reviewed a spread of data about LGBTI-phobia, and successful campaigning.
- \* **Interviews:** We reviewed interview material from ILGA-Europe members and staff on the key current challenges for the movement and campaign successes.
- \* **Hypothesis development:** From this background work, we developed a number of hypotheses for better communication.
- \* **Narrative development workshop:** We carried out a second workshop with activists from Lithuania, Slovenia and Italy to focus on how we might develop new ways of communicating, using these (and other) hypotheses as guides.
- \* **Message testing:** We used materials developed during and following this workshop to test some of our hypotheses using some lower-cost and mid-range testing methodologies.

## AND A NOTE BEFORE WE BEGIN...

Being an activist is an emotional rollercoaster. Activism is joy, fun, creating our own families, the thrill of seeing change, and... hard.

Many activists—most of us—have experienced pain, rejection, the discomfort of being surrounded by moulds we don't fit, violence. And our truths are constantly undermined by the lies of others. Feeling anger and the desire to lash out is a wholly legitimate response.

We should give ourselves the space to feel our pain and anger. Wherever, and whenever, we need to.

This toolkit, however, is not about expressing those emotions. It's about channelling them—alongside our love for the causes we fight for—to create persuasive communications that shift our culture away from division towards connection, from inequality to a rebalancing of power.

### It's essentially about responding to hate with love.

To do this, we must stay resourced. In the wise words of Jerry Springer\*, *take care of yourself, and each other.*

So: use this toolkit alone or with others, to understand the approach and to explore your own, to create new communications, and for quick reminders. And when you need to—when that politician is saying *particularly* hateful things—feel free to throw it at a wall, rather than drafting an angry press release.

*“Caring for myself is not self-indulgence, it is self-preservation, and that is an act of political warfare.”*

### Audre Lorde

\* Don't worry if you're too young, too old, or too uninspired by 90s American talk shows to know who this is. Google it. Or don't.



## FRAMING 101

“There is no story that is not true.”

**Chinua Achebe**

### FRAMES ARE STRUCTURES OF MEANING

People are not blank slates or empty vessels waiting to be filled with information—we all already have thoughts, beliefs and feelings about the world around us.

For example, if I describe my new job as being *like being back at school*, I'm relying on you already having an understanding of what *being at school* is like. I'm relying on the *frame* you have around school. This frame is composed of many associations: teachers, pupils, lessons, sport, buildings and playgrounds. It also potentially tells a story of structure, of growth and learning, or of cliques and bullies.

Frames, then, are mental structures through which we view the world and communication tools we use to engage with other people.

### FRAMING IS ABOUT CREATING MEANING

Describing my job as being *like being back at school* creates a different meaning from telling you my job is like *being on holiday*. I am *framing* the situation very differently: I want you to understand something different in either case.

Most of us hold a variety of different views and beliefs. In fact, many of the beliefs that each of us hold are contradictory. I may think both security and freedom are important, though they may pull me in different directions at times. If I encounter a campaign that frames immigration to appeal to one or other of these motivations, I am likely to understand and react to the issue quite differently.

And just like the frame around a picture, we can frame a topic: choosing what is in the foreground, what is backgrounded, and what we will not show at all. This process is *framing*.

## We are framing every time we communicate.

The poster below—a campaign poster for leaving the European Union from the UK Independence Party—is rich in meaning and suggested direction.

Stream of people looks endless:  
– dehumanising  
– relates to metaphor “swarm”.

Image and slogan reflect common message that “Britain is full”.

Suggests a bleak future.

Unless we “break free” and leave the EU.

The EU is an oppressor, the UK its victim.

## FRAMING SHAPES CULTURE

The way that an issue is framed will impact how we think and feel about it, and ultimately how we respond to it.<sup>1</sup> Over time, it can become our common sense: the default way we think about an issue. Ultimately, as the framing is repeated and strengthened, it shifts culture and practice.

The poster on the previous page, for example, is designed to evoke **fear**—even disgust—in a moveable audience; a sense that immigrants are **different**; and provoke concerns for **national security**. Ultimately, it was part of the mass framing project in 2016's Britain that led to a massive spike in hate crimes against immigrants, the murder of a pro-EU parliamentarian, and the UK population voting to leave the European Union.

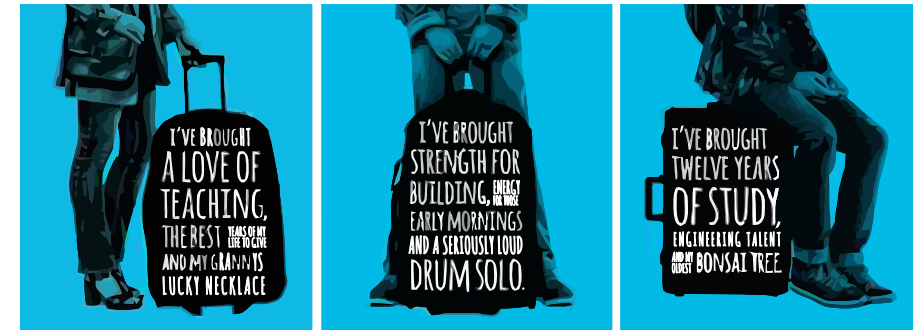
## WE CAN DECODE FRAMES

We can look at the different ways that a topic is framed and understand what types of thinking and responses it might encourage. Decoding means unpacking a message's framing: for instance, to help us understand why an opposition message is so successful.

## Decoding the framing—and thinking—around our issues will help us to properly position our own communications.

On the following two pages, we use the example of two (very different) campaign communications that are advocating for immigrant rights to illustrate how we might go about decoding frames to understand their meaning and impact.

Take a minute to look at the two communications—below—and reflect on how they make you feel and what comes to mind as you look at them.



**KICK A MIGRANT**

**WHAT HAVE YOU DONE?**

Kumar Singh came to Australia 10 years ago after graduating from university with a business degree. He now owns a Convenience store and employs 10 Australian workers. Kumar is also the local Scout leader and a valued member of his community.

Impact on the Australian Economy:  
**-\$481,640**

Name:	Kumar Singh	Education:	Ba(Hons) Business
Status:	Australian Citizen	Job in Australia:	Business Owner

Total distance thrown (km): 1295.172

**KICK AGAIN?**

TOTAL MIGRANTS KICKED: 3,768,859  
GLOBAL RANK: 711,660  
YOUR BEST: 1295.172KM

Site by Amnesia web/blog

## HOW TO DECODE FRAMES

We can take examples of the way that an issue—such as immigration, or LGBTI equality—is communicated and reduce it to its core framing. This means looking at what messages underpin the words and images. From this, we can decode the thinking it reflects, and what type of impacts this

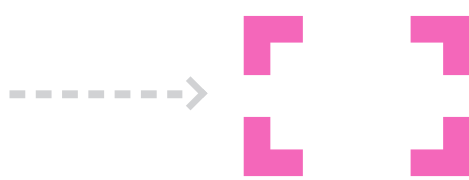
might have. We've used the example of the two communications from the previous page to illustrate how to do this using some set questions.

Try using this format on some of your own communications (or those of others: often easier to start!) Remember, you're looking not just for the intended meaning, or even just at the words on the page, but at what is conveyed by the way it is said.



### Comms

*What we hear, read, see, and say: campaign communications, online and offline media, images and words, slogans, posters, everyday speech, any way information is conveyed.*



### Framing

*How communications shape the meaning of information and the way we think about it: by what is included, excluded, and what associations are created.*

#### ANALYSIS QUESTIONS

##### How is the issue being framed?

What's the focus? What's included, and what's excluded?

What problems (and solutions) are suggested?

Who are the characters and what (different) roles do they play?

How do the characters relate to each other?



### Thinking

*The emotional and psychological, verbal and non-verbal, ways that we respond to the world around us: the stories, patterns, beliefs and assumptions, emotions, and values.*

#### ANALYSIS QUESTIONS

##### What thinking does it provoke?

What beliefs does it encourage?

What stories do you have to believe in order to accept it is true?

What feelings does it provoke?

What values does it promote, what does it motivate?



### Culture

*The composition and structure of our societies: politics and policies, what behaviour is accepted and not accepted, social and community cohesion, media and arts, social movements, other outcomes.*

#### ANALYSIS QUESTIONS

##### How does this shift culture?

What outcomes might this lead to?

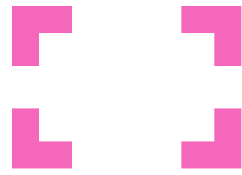
What types of behaviours is this associated with?

What types of policies, and other outcomes is this associated with?

What social and cultural practices might this encourage?



## Comms



## Framing

**Immigrants are just like us:** Individuals are portrayed with details of their personalities (granny's lucky necklace), wearing 'ordinary' clothes, with suitcases.

**Immigration brings benefits:** Skills are highlighted (teaching; strength; building; engineering).

**Multiple stories of immigration:** We don't see where they're coming from, but they are all bringing different things.

*Excluded:* What we don't see is immigrants interacting with others or being part of a community. We also don't see their faces—so they're still a bit dehumanised.

**Violence to immigrants:** It was an online game in which you kicked a migrant into the sea (attempting humour).

**Immigration brings benefits:** More focus on economic benefits, and those to nationals (Australians). The impact on the economy is the most prominent impact text you see: Kumar is worthy because of his price tag.

**Immigrants are part of our communities:** Less prominent—Kumar is also a valued community member.

**Individual responsibility:** The audience has a role to play; Kumar's story is quite individualised.

**Angry man:** The photo we see of Kumar doesn't make him particularly sympathetic.



## Thinking

Diversity is strength, and brings mutual benefits.

Belief in people being active citizens who should contribute to society.

Positive feelings: community, love.

Values of diversity, music, strength, intelligence, education.

Belief that citizens should contribute economically to society.

Negative feelings: guilt, threat of violence.

Values of economic worth, community.



## Culture

We might expect this type of framing to promote a more open-minded approach to immigration. If it was common, we might see resulting policies that promoted immigration and supported rights for immigrants, and a culture that was more welcoming.

We might expect this type of framing to promote policies that were favourable to migrants who were seen as economically beneficial for a country, and to lead to more nationalistic thinking.





TRANS  
IST  
SCHÖN

Trans  
& Stolz

KEIN  
SEXOBJEKT

define task

## SUMMARY

# It's important to be clear what you're trying to achieve—and why—in order to frame effectively.

This means being clear on your **purpose** (vision and goals) and on where your **audience** is currently at.

Below we outline the brief steps involved in setting your framing task. On the following pages there's some space for you to do this yourself if you're in a rush. If you have a bit more time, we'd recommend reading the detail of the section and spending a bit more time getting this right: it'll be worth it.

### 1 | KNOW YOUR PURPOSE

Your vision and goals should guide all of your work, including how you frame it. In order to achieve our long-term vision, we may need to strengthen our movements, encourage our supporters to be more active, or to shift public understanding of an issue.

### 2 | KNOW YOUR AUDIENCE

Who you're talking to is a big strategic question. But at the most basic level, your audience needs to be a group who are moveable: encouraged to be more supportive or active in some way.

Once you've identified your audience, you need to find out a bit about them and how they think about your issue. This will ensure that you aim any communications in the right direction, without exacerbating any unhelpful existing beliefs.

Here are some of the key ways that people think about LGBTI equality that we identified in our research:

- A. People are moved by emotions.** So, dissatisfaction with life and anxiety correlate with negative attitudes towards equality. Optimism and satisfaction are linked to more positive attitudes towards LGBTI people.
- B. People's values guide their thinking.** For example, conservative values of tradition and security are connected to negative attitudes. Benevolence, universalism and self-direction values are most associated with non-discrimination and equality.
- C. People rely on faulty logic.** Worrying, for example, that one change in society will lead to an inevitable *slippery slope* of terrible things. For example, a new legal gender recognition law would no longer allow children to identify as boy or girl.
- D. People don't always know there's a problem.** It's not usually the whole reason why people aren't more active, but sometimes people really don't have the information you do.
- E. People reason using common cultural frames.** If there's a common understanding of the *nation as a family*, this may lead people to be concerned about LGBTI equality as a threat to stability.

### 3 | SET YOUR FRAMING TASK

Your task is generally to express three key things to your audience:

- ! Problem:** Getting agreement that there's a problem and what it is.
- ✓ Solution:** Getting agreement that there is a solution and what it is.
- ♥ Motivation:** Showing why the audience should care and act.

Try defining your framing task on the next page.



## DIY: SUMMARY



This is the first of the do-it-yourself sections of this toolkit, for the first step of your framing process. Work through these questions with others for the best results: do it alone when you're working for speed.

### What outcome are you looking for?

*E.g. A 'no' vote in a referendum.*

### Who is your audience? What do you want to tell them?

*E.g. You're targeting young people aged 18-25 and you want them to vote 'no'.*

### What's standing in the way of them acting in the way that is needed for your desired outcome?

*E.g. They're disengaged with politics and don't believe things can change.*

### What does your frame need to do in order for your audience to overcome this barrier or resistance? What is needed to motivate their support or action?

*E.g. You need to show young people that there is hope and that voting no will create change.*

## 1 | KNOW YOUR PURPOSE

Your **goals** are the outcomes you hope to achieve through your work. They should be concrete steps towards your **vision**: the world you are working towards.

**You should be clear on these: they should guide your work, including your framing.**

Your goals should include what you want from your audiences: from the people you are talking to and working with. We may want these people to understand something different, to be more supportive of us, or to be more active. This may be members of our own community who we'd like to be more engaged with our work, particular politicians and parliamentarians, or members of the wider public.

Goals should also be **S.M.A.R.T.:**  
Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time-specific.

### EXAMPLE: WE ARE HERE—INTERSEX CAMPAIGNING

For Intersex Awareness Day 2016, IGLYO, OII and interACT produced a video called *We Are Here*, showcasing five young intersex people talking about their experiences. We see strong **purpose** in the framing of this video. There is a clear **vision**: an end to pathologisation, discrimination, secrecy and isolation; and an informed, empowered, connected intersex community. The video is centred on the voices of young intersex people, talking informatively ('the issues are...') and positively ('you are perfect'), expressing clear **goals** in advance of the vision of empowering its audience—particularly other intersex people—both through clear information and through creating this sense of community.

IGLYO also use a participatory process to shape their campaigns: several days of intensive work with young people in which participants reflect on their own lived realities and find ways to share their story that is not only beneficial to themselves, but can help others or progress a cause.

Watch the video: [is.gd/loSoMi](https://is.gd/loSoMi) and read more from IGLYO: [iglyo.com](https://iglyo.com)





# 1 | DIY: PURPOSE

## DIY: DRAW YOUR VISION

**Draw what you would like the world to look like when you have achieved your organisational goals and dreams.**

*If you are doing this with others, each of you can draw your own, and then compare them as a group. What similarities are there? What are the key differences? Can you combine them?*

**Summarise your vision as a statement.**

## DIY: SET GOOD GOALS

This tool is designed to shift thinking from simply thinking about tactics to thinking about outcomes.

- ✎ First, get six pieces of paper (paper plates work well).
- ✎ Use your **vision statement** to think about something specific you'd like to change (such as a hate crime legislation).
- ✎ Take a few minutes to envision this having been achieved. *What does it look and feel like? What's the story of how it happened?*
- ✎ Your next task is to **identify six changes** that need to have happened before the vision is realised. These are outcomes, not tactics. Not what you'd do, but what you'd see once you've acted. If you find yourself writing tactics, flip your piece of paper over and think about what outcome you're working towards with that tactic.
- ✎ Make them S.M.A.R.T. objectives (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, Time-specific).
- ✎ Lay your pieces of paper out in front of you like stepping stones to help visualise the process.
- ✎ Keep iterating until you're happy with them, and decide which of these you're focusing on in your campaign or communication.

## DIY: MORE TOOLS & READING

A tool to help you clarify your priorities: [is.gd/sTgVMD](https://is.gd/sTgVMD)  
How to develop your mission statement: [is.gd/8rfOxZ](https://is.gd/8rfOxZ)  
More on setting SMART goals: [is.gd/N5jd8G](https://is.gd/N5jd8G)  
Explore your values: [is.gd/Qpl8u4](https://is.gd/Qpl8u4)

## 2 | KNOW YOUR AUDIENCE

Once we have looked at our purpose, we need to better understand who our audience is in order to be able to develop effective messages.





### 2.1 | IDENTIFY YOUR AUDIENCE

We should be aiming at a ‘moveable’ audience: people who we can shift in some way.

Moveable audiences will generally have a number of competing frames they could use to think about your issue. Your framing task is to encourage them to think through a frame that is aligned with your vision. While many people may be *moveable* or *persuadable* in this way, some people already feel so strongly about an issue—such as human rights or equality—that however you frame the issue, you may find it difficult to change their minds.<sup>2</sup>

Most activists in our own movement, for example, will not be convinced by the communications of right-wing populists. And similarly, these people are unlikely to be convinced by many of our communications. **This means it’s important to understand who your potential audiences are (and who they are not).**

The categories below may help:

-  **Your base:** People who are already (broadly) supportive of the issue: activists, campaigners, supportive parliamentarians.
-  **Your moveable middle:** People who can be persuaded. These may be people who are undecided or haven’t engaged with your issue.
-  **Your target:** People (or institutions) whose behaviour you want to shift, usually by leveraging your base or moveable middle.
-  **Your opponents:** People who are strongly opposed to your issue. They are unlikely to ever be supportive of your message.

Who you are talking to is a big strategic question.

Sometimes, the best move is to target your base, and strengthen the movement by increasing the active members of the community, before moving on to wider public campaigning.

We should always consider our base in the framing process, because they need to be enthused enough by the message to want to share it with others.

In the best case scenario, the framing process should involve the participation of as much of our community and base as possible.

Arguably, your message should in fact actively *alienate* your opponents in the same way their communications alienate you.

We can identify both challenges and opportunities when we get to know our audience.

Understanding both a) how they currently think about your issue and b) what they value and care about will help you to identify barriers and opportunities in communicating to this group.

On the following pages we outline some of the ways that people think about LGBTI equality in Europe that we identified in our research. It’s not exhaustive: people are likely to use models on both sides of what we present, and many shades in between.

## 2.1 | DIY: AUDIENCE

### DIY: IDENTIFY AUDIENCES

Generate a long list using the questions below. Be specific!

**Who supports your issue?**

**Who is affected by your issue?**

**Who influences or shapes the issue?**

**Who do you not currently talk to who's affected by the issue?**

### DIY: USE 'PERSONAS' TO THINK ABOUT YOUR AUDIENCE

Pick three potential audiences. Focus in on them using the template below. This should help you find common ground in order to frame effectively.

**Persona Name:**

**5 things about me**

**What I look like...**

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**3 reasons for me to engage with you**

**3 reasons for me not to engage with you**

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**My dreams**

**My social environment**

Find full, printable version of this at: [diytoolkit.org/tools/personas](https://diytoolkit.org/tools/personas)

### DIY: MORE TOOLS & READING

[ctb.ku.edu/en/table-of-contents](https://ctb.ku.edu/en/table-of-contents)  
[diytoolkit.org/tools/target-group](https://diytoolkit.org/tools/target-group)

## 2.2 | KNOW HOW YOUR AUDIENCE THINKS ABOUT LGBTI EQUALITY

In order to develop effective messages, it is important to understand the key drivers and patterns in how people think about LGBTI equality. This will allow you to properly set the 'tasks' for your frame: what it needs to do in order to overcome these ways of thinking.

In our research we identified many common themes in the way people think about LGBTI equality. See which apply to your own issue, in your own context.

There's a visual summary of these findings at the end of the section. Find your way by matching the heading shapes (you'll see what we mean when you get there).

### A PEOPLE ARE MOVED BY THEIR EMOTIONS, AND NOT JUST WHAT THEY KNOW

- + **Optimism and satisfaction with life** correlate with more positive attitudes towards LGBTI people.<sup>3</sup>
- **Pessimism, anxiety and dissatisfaction** are associated with more negative attitudes.<sup>4</sup>
- **Fear and disgust** are associated with LGBTI-phobia and negative attitudes.<sup>5</sup>

### B PEOPLE'S VALUES GUIDE HOW THEY THINK

- **Tradition, security and power values are connected to homophobic, transphobic and gendered thinking.** Power values are associated with discrimination on the basis of gender, race and sexuality, for instance.<sup>6</sup>
- + **Benevolence, universalism and self-direction values are most associated with non-discrimination and equality.** So if we value equality highly, we are more likely to treat all people with respect and support policies that are redistributive in nature.<sup>7</sup>

### C PEOPLE RELY ON FAULTY LOGIC

There are many ways of thinking that can help or hinder the way we understand the world. (You may be familiar with the term *logical fallacies* to describe some of these more unhelpful ones.)

A couple of particularly common ones that seem to pop up when people are debating rights for LGBTI people are:

#### ZERO-SUM THINKING

This logic sounds like *there is only so much to go around*. It assumes finite resources, and leads to a deserving / undeserving mentality. The understanding is that, for example, providing for LGBTI people will take resources *away* from more deserving groups like the elderly, or children. It relies on *scarcity* beliefs. Zero-sum thinking can therefore drive people to act more competitively and less cooperatively, and more 'group'-minded.

#### SLIPPERY SLOPE

This logic sounds like *If this, then whatever next?* There is a linear understanding at play here: if A happens, then B will happen, and B is completely terrible (so A shouldn't happen).

### D PEOPLE DON'T ALWAYS SEE THAT THERE'S A PROBLEM

There is a common argument against the state granting 'special rights' to a minority that don't need (or deserve) them. At its most benign, the roots of this belief are a misunderstanding: about the rights that are accorded to different groups, about the different *needs* that different groups may have, or about the experiences of discrimination and violence that are faced by different communities.

(In a less benign form, this is sometimes used as an argument disingenuously by people with other motivations, but who wish to appear liberal but pragmatic).



## E PEOPLE REASON USING COMMON CULTURAL FRAMES

### We all hold many frames in our minds.

Some are contradictory (such as the English idioms, look before you leap and the early bird catches the worm). Some are shared (there are often similar idioms shared across languages). Importantly, some frames are more helpful than others in communicating for social change. For example, if you were campaigning against income inequality, it would be more helpful to use frames that suggest that poverty is politically created than common frames that suggest poverty is because some people are lazy.

This is also true for frames around LGBTI equality: there are common frames that are more and less helpful in advocating for our causes. When communicating, you should avoid the frames that are unhelpful.

What follows are some of the most common frames we identified in our research that related to how people think about LGBTI equality. It's not an exhaustive list, and some of these frames are more common in some contexts than others. Remember: people might be using any number of these frames to reason at different times, even if they are contradictory!



### NATURAL ORDER / NATION AS FAMILY

The nuclear family—based on a heteronormative, traditional domestic frame—is both at the centre of and a metaphor for broader society (*homeland, fatherland*). Gender is at the roots of the *natural* order of society (god-given or divine). The structure is hierarchical, with a strict authority (father, state leader, God) at the top. Inequalities are not a problem, as they just reflect different needs. **Nationalism** and **authoritarianism** are strongly associated with this frame. Deviance from the social order (or diversity) is seen as a threat: disruptive at best, destructive at worst.

*Example:* The Vatican has framed 'gender' as having the potential to 'denaturalise society', suggesting it creates distance from God-given nature.



### CITIZENSHIP AS REPRODUCTIVE

Just as reproduction is key to the family, so it is in this frame of the nation (as family): it is how culture and values are maintained over time. And the concern about 'demographic winters' and the threat to population is common in much anti-LGBTI framing.

*Example:* A Latvian MP is quoted as saying, in a Parliament plenary session, May 2006, 'We must say a clear "no" to all those wise men from the West, who want to suggest that our people undertake voluntary suicide because, as you know, children do not come from homosexuals'.



### GENDER AS BINARY

Embedded in the frame of natural order is the idea that gender is binary, and synonymous with sex: because the heteronormative, nuclear family is at the heart of the nation, and citizens must reproduce.

*Example:* Studies in Portugal<sup>8</sup> and Belgium<sup>9</sup> show that negative attitudes towards LGBT people are strongly associated with adherence to traditional gender roles.



### CONTAGION AND EXTERNAL THREAT

There is a common idea about the 'spread' of gender 'deviance', which matches the metaphor of the nation being like a body that is susceptible to invasion and disease. It's an argument often made against adoption or sex education programmes in schools that sexuality and gender diversity may be 'caught'. There are also arguments made around the idea of this coming from 'outside', or being imposed by an outside force, such as the EU.

*Example:* In a US poll, 46% agreed that: 'With homosexuality (increasing in visibility) I worry that children may think it's okay to experiment.'<sup>10</sup>



### HUMAN RIGHTS

This frame ignores characteristics, but says violence or discrimination against any group is wrong. This may be a particularly strong cultural frame in places that have more recently experienced human rights abuses and war.



### LIBERAL SOCIETY

This frame draws on similar 'enlightenment'-type values (rationality, intelligence, openness) as the human rights frame. It says that as civilised societies, sexuality is morally arbitrary. For example, homosexuality has been noted as having become a marker of Danish modernity. It is an interesting frame, because it is often employed to make moral judgements about other groups (for example, in attesting that Islam isn't welcome in Western societies because of alleged LGBTI-phobia in the Muslim community). It's also perhaps connected to ideas of a changing society, and of progress (ideas that won't chime well with everyone).



### FAMILY AS FOUNDATIONAL TO LIFE

A frame drawn upon in the 2015 Irish referendum, researchers discovered that it was one that many people believed but hadn't yet been co-opted by the opposition campaign. The core of this frame is that family (whatever it looks like) is vitally important.



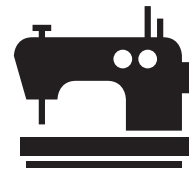
### DIVERSITY IS REALITY (AND GOOD)

This frame is based on the assumption that individuals and families don't all look the same: rather, we already have diverse populations with multiple configurations of families (with different migration origins, different numbers of parents, different faces). There's an implicit assumption that this is good: whether just 'acceptable' or whether it might even count as a strength. For example, the '*Some people are gay—get over it*' campaigns might be drawing on this frame, as is the traditional rainbow flag of the movement.



### COMMON HUMANITY (AND LOVE)

Similar to the above, this frame is based on an acceptance of the reality of human difference, yet built on a belief of common humanity that 'they' are 'us': LGBTI people are you, me, your cousin, your grandma. We are here; we are queer. It's visible in 'it could be you / your family'-type campaigns, and draws on compassion and the emotions. It's perhaps also connected to campaigns based on 'love' as an argument ('we all love' / shared experience).



### SELF-MADE PEOPLE

Rather than identity, family structure or other elements of life being dictated by traditional social norms, this frame assumes many traditions to be outdated, including those around family, marriage and gender roles. It suggests people make their own versions of these.



### RELATIONAL MODEL OF CITIZENSHIP

This frame might centre around a broader vision of societal contribution, or see the strength of relationships and communities as the most important piece of citizenship.



### UNBOUNDED GENDER

There is clearly a frame that competes with the binary model of gender (and sexual) identity; one we see within gender theory for instance, and that is perhaps visible in recent polling that suggests that young people in the US are less binary in thinking about their own gender identities and sexuality than previous generations.

### SUMMARY: HOW DOES YOUR AUDIENCE THINK ABOUT LGBTI EQUALITY 1

Below is a summary of the findings of our research, as outlined in the previous pages.

If you tried decoding some communications around LGBTI equality in the previous section, you might be familiar with these frames and ways of thinking.



### Comms

### Framing

### Thinking

### Culture



An elite is protecting minority rights at the expense of majority

LGBTI people don't need more rights; they're already privileged

Even the LGBTI community is conflicted

LGBTI people are a threat to society, demography, or nation

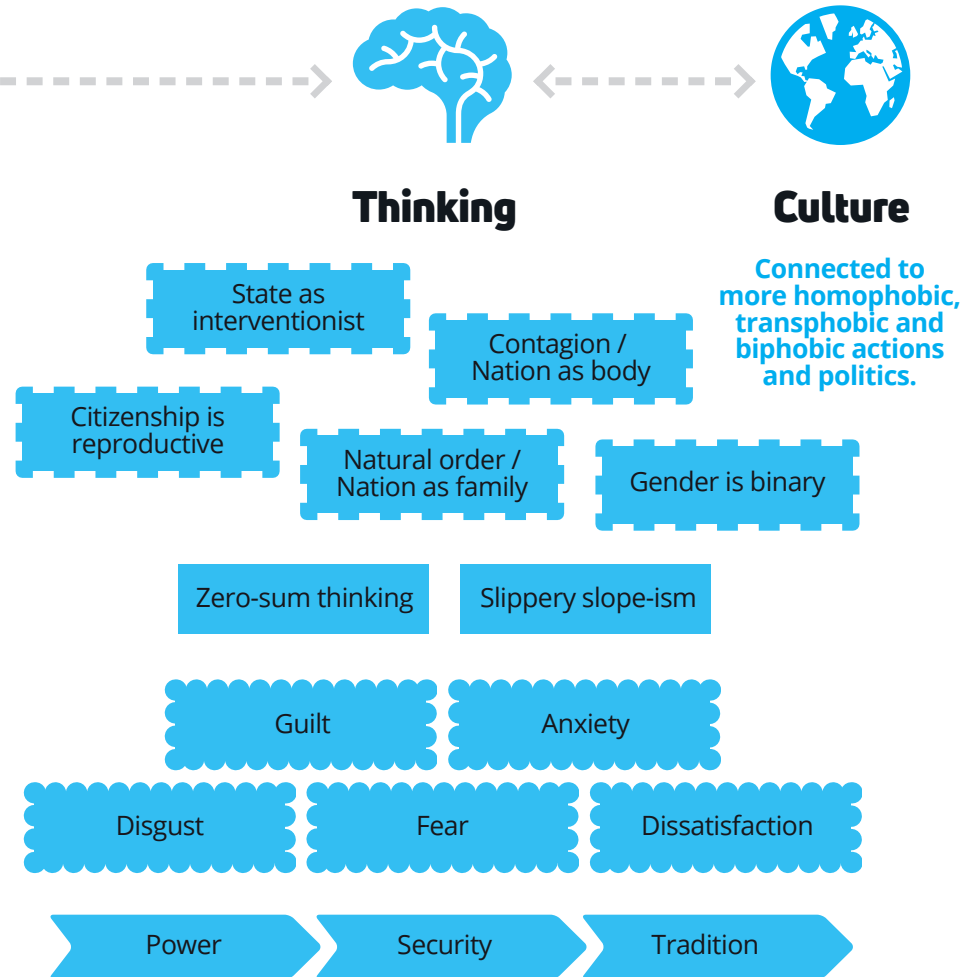
LGBTI people are not like me

This agenda goes against traditional (conservative, religious, family) values

This agenda is an ideology and is imported from outside our culture

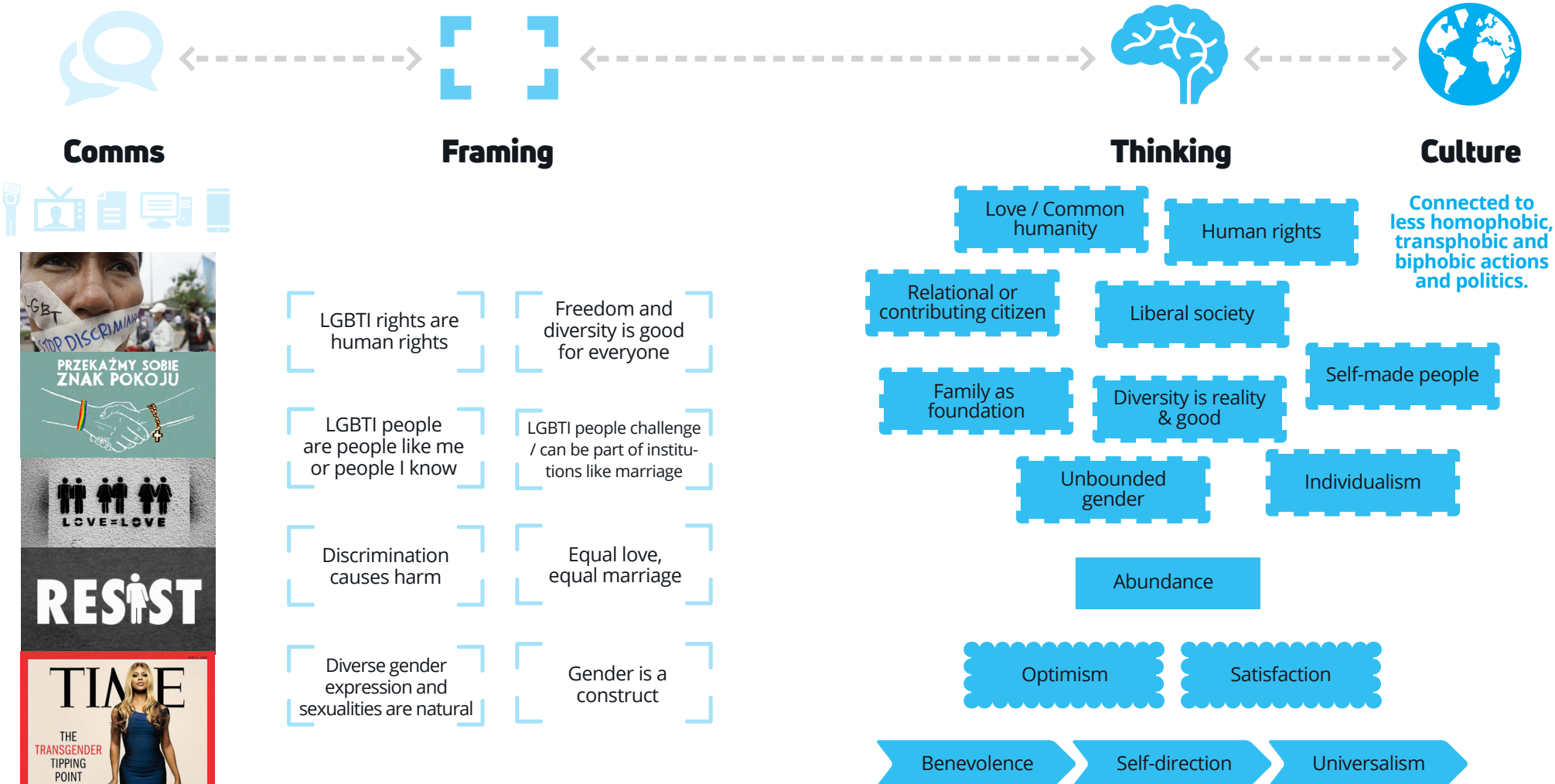
Children are under threat

**Methodology:** This model is a compilation of our research, in which we ran workshops with activists across Europe, collected materials and analysed how they were framed, carried out a wide-ranging literature review, and consulted an Advisory Group of expert practitioners and activists.



### SUMMARY: HOW DOES YOUR AUDIENCE THINK ABOUT LGBTI EQUALITY 2

Which of these apply in your context? Are some stronger than others? Different people will also use different ways of thinking: which are most relevant to your audiences?



## 2.2 | DIY: AUDIENCE

### DIY: FIND OUT HOW YOUR AUDIENCE THINKS

There are a number of ways to find out how people think.

#### NO BUDGET

- Q **Desk research:** Use existing survey data, from universities, market researchers or other institutions; also look for international data sets such as Eurobarometer, or the European Social Survey.
- Q **Pool your common knowledge:** Get together with other activists, supporters or allies and pool your common knowledge of what people think about your issue.
- Q **Basic media framing analysis:** Create a media diary, or pick a few examples of print or online media that you think are representative of common understanding. Carry out a framing analysis with your colleagues (see p.106).

#### LOW BUDGET

- Q **Street interviews:** If it feels safe and comfortable, try sending a group of volunteers out onto the street and asking members of the public a few on-the-spot questions. Take a clipboard so it looks official!
- Q **Low-cost focus groups:** If it feels safe and comfortable, invite a group of straight / cis friends and allies, or university students, to take part in a small 'focus group' in which you ask a number of questions to provoke conversation.

#### MORE BUDGET

You could commission in-depth interviews, focus groups or surveys (see p.96 for more detail on these methods).

### DIY: WHAT ARE YOU TRYING TO FIND OUT?

We're looking to find out what stories and frames (see p.37) are shaping the way our audience currently thinks about our issues. To work this out, we're looking to find answers to the types of questions below:

- Q **How people talk about gender identity**  
E.g. Do people believe in strictly defined, binary gender roles?
- Q **How people talk about sexuality**  
E.g. How is homosexuality / bisexuality explained? (e.g. as natural, disease, choice, sin)
- Q **How people think about relationships**  
E.g. What kind of relationships are seen as good, healthy or valued?
- Q **How people talk about family**  
What structure do people believe the family should take? What is the purpose of the family?
- Q **How people talk about morality and / or religion**  
E.g. what informs people's ideas of what is right or wrong?
- Q **How people talk about children**  
E.g. is there any suggestion that children are affected by the sexuality or gender identity of their parents?
- Q **How people think about the role of the state**  
Do people imply that the state has a role to play in how people conduct their relationships? What role does it have?
- Q **How people talk about change in society**  
How do people talk about changes in society over time? (e.g. that it is good that things are better than at x point, or that modernity has gone too far) Do people prefer to maintain the status quo? Do people use slippery slope / zero sum logic in considering impacts?

**Use the answers to these questions to map your audience's understanding of your issue and to guide your message.**



### 3 | SET YOUR FRAMING TASKS

Once you know your purpose and understand your audience, you can set your framing tasks.

**They're an expression of what you need your frame to do in order to overcome your audience's resistance to your purpose.**

Framing tasks generally fall into three categories:<sup>11</sup>

- ❗ **Problem:** Getting agreement that there is a problem and what it is.
- ✅ **Solution:** Getting agreement around a solution to a problem.
- ♥ **Motivation:** Inspiring support or action.

Your frame may need to do all three of these, or focus specifically on one, whilst the others are implied. To identify yours, you need to define how to move towards your goal from the *emotions, values, cultural frames, logic, and general understanding* that are currently driving your audience's response to the issue.

#### EXAMPLE: RECLAIMING FAMILY

A group of funders, campaigners, practitioners and other activists published an investigation into the framing task of *redefining the family* in 2017. Their vision of family equality is defined as the recognition and support of the multiple forms of family that exist in our societies.

*Family* has been a frame defined largely by conservatives and right-wing populists in recent years: tied to the nation state, and understood through the cis-heteronormative, nuclear model. So the task is to shift public and political understanding of family away from this conservative one to a more progressive solution.



## Using family as a frame in social justice activism

### A guide for activists and funders in Europe

Alice Coffin ◊ Evelyne Paradis ◊ Gordan Bosanac  
Gráinne Healy ◊ Julia Ehrt ◊ Matthew Hart ◊ Nicky McIntyre  
Pav Akhtar ◊ Peter Matjašič ◊ Susan Treadwell

Compiled by Bruno Selun



### 3 | DIY: FRAMING TASK

What's your vision?

What's your current goal  
for your comms?

What do you want your audience to do?

What do they need to know, think, or feel  
in order to do so?

Summarise...

Problem:

Solution:

Motivation:

What does your audience currently think and feel about your vision? How do they reason about it?  
How would you like them to think and feel about it?

*Circle your answers below. Write any that are missing from the list.*

#### Feelings

Pessimism  
Anxiety

Optimism  
Fear

Joy  
Disgust

#### Values

Security  
Universalism

Self-Direction  
Tradition

Power  
Benevolence

#### Frames

_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

*Refer back to p.18 (decoding frames) to help with this exercise.*

#### Logic

Zero sum  
Slippery slope

#### Problem

*Do they know the problem?*







## SUMMARY



## The way you *frame* your issue will engage with different ways of thinking.

The way we communicate is never neutral: it will always tap into emotions, values, and ways of reasoning, and thus contribute to how people think about this issue. We should do this mindfully.

The best guide to this is to remember a time you changed your mind: what motivated this shift?

**In this section, you'll find recommendations that might help when you're framing for social change:**

### 1 | SPEAK TO PEOPLE'S BEST SELF

*It's easy to caricature the public as stupid, uncaring or easily-led, particularly when an election or referendum doesn't go our way. Communicators may therefore mistakenly believe they must therefore appeal to a set of values they don't subscribe to themselves.* But one of the worst things we can do as communicators is condescend and disrespect the people we talk to. Rather, we should remember that even people who we don't often agree with share many of our motivations and want to do the best they can. For example, a large body of research<sup>12</sup> shows that everybody shares the same set of values—a set that ranges from benevolent care for others through to concern for personal success—though we differ in how much we are driven by these values.

### 2 | CREATE COMMON GROUND

*It can be difficult to imagine you have anything in common with some people. But if you want them on your side, this division is standing in your way.* Find ways of expressing your shared identity and building the 'we' and people will be much more supportive.

### 3 | TALK ABOUT CHANGE

*It's easy to imagine that showing people a problem would be enough to motivate a response.* But people need to see that a problem can be solved, and that they have a role to play in the change, in order to be motivated to act.

### 4 | MAKE IT REAL

*We often mistakenly believe that we need to communicate to our audience through rational and coherent arguments alone.* However, as well as (sometimes!) considering the evidence, our decisions are often primarily based on our prior understanding, our beliefs, how we feel, what we value, and how the facts are packaged. Avoid relying on the facts alone, and instead tell stories and use powerful images.

### 5 | DON'T THINK OF AN ELEPHANT

*It's easy to get dragged into being reactive, particularly when there's so much misinformation and so many attacks to deal with. But doing so can reinforce the very beliefs you're trying to counteract.* We should try to avoid getting people to think of an elephant by asking them not to: for example through mythbusting. Instead, assert your own framing proactively.



## DIY: SUMMARY

### Your key messages

*Refer to your framing tasks.*



### The values and emotions of your frame

*What do you want people to feel? What will motivate them?*



### Your framing in five words

*Imagine your message on the side of a bus.*



### Your medium

*What format will your messages be seen in?*



### Your messenger

*Who do and your audience both trust to tell this message?*



### Put it all together and what have you got...

*Bibbity bobbity boo.*



## 1 | SPEAK TO PEOPLE'S BEST SELF

Appealing to the *emotions* and *values* of people's better selves—the side that most people want to believe themselves to be—can significantly reduce people's prejudices.

In particular:

- + Appeal to **common values** of humanity, kindness, and affiliation.<sup>13</sup>
- + Remind people that they're **good** people.<sup>14</sup>
- + Make people **laugh**.<sup>15</sup>
- + Tell people that the change you seek will make society **nicer**.<sup>16</sup>
- + **Respect** the journey our audience may have to go on—acknowledging their discomfort, without reinforcing it.

Many campaigners will recognise these negative ways of motivating with right-wing populism:

- **Fear** and **guilt** can act as serious demotivators: making us feel closed and defensive.<sup>17</sup>
- Talking about **money** and economic benefits often encourages people to think from a more selfish perspective. Research shows people become less concerned about social issues after reflecting on money.<sup>18</sup>
- Making people feel **insecure** about themselves, their families or their countries encourages people to be more closed-minded.<sup>19</sup>

### EXAMPLE: FLOWERS IN ESTONIA

Campaigners directed their energies towards a hugely positive, human campaign. They appealed to the Estonian spirit—saying that Estonia is too small to leave people behind—and talked about common values. They made it personal through LGBTI people and their allies writing their stories and sending them to MPs. Over 400 parents of LGBT people wrote letters.

Rather than tackling opponents head-on, which they saw they couldn't win, they focused on maintaining a 'good atmosphere' through positive messaging, expressing how many people in society were in support.

For the reading of the bill, they covered the outside of Parliament with flowers: creating a moving and beautiful image. It was a sharp contrast to the negative, fear-dripping banners of their opponents.

And lastly, they used humour to good effect: a Facebook page entitled 'Thank you, but my traditional family doesn't need your protection' quickly amassed tens of thousands of likes.

Making people feel fearful, concerned about money, or bad about themselves can encourage closed-minded thinking.



# HIV STIGMA: NOT RETRO, JUST WRONG

YUK, HOW DID SHE GET IT?

HIV is no longer a death sentence. However people's attitudes mean living with HIV can be really hard. It's time to end HIV stigma.

[WORLDDAIDSDAY.ORG](http://WORLDDAIDSDAY.ORG)

## EXAMPLE: HUMOUR IN A UK HIV CAMPAIGN

The World AIDS Day 2016 theme #HIVNOTRETRO gently pokes fun at its audience. It acknowledges the discomfort that a general audience might feel about HIV/AIDS and lays it out in all its glory as outdated and old-fashioned. The note of caution for campaigners is in ensuring that in ridiculing a belief in this way that a) it isn't given so much airtime that it accidentally reinforces the belief itself (see p.82) and also that it doesn't insult your audience.

# HIV STIGMA: NOT RETRO, JUST WRONG

I'D NEVER GET HIV COZ I DON'T SLEEP AROUND

HIV is no longer a death sentence. However people's attitudes mean living with HIV can be really hard. It's time to end HIV stigma.

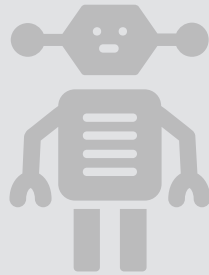
[WORLDDAIDSDAY.ORG](http://WORLDDAIDSDAY.ORG)

# 1 | DIY: BEST SELF

Draw your audience



What future do they want?



Who are they kind to? Who do they care about?



What do they care about?



What makes them happy?



What stories of their country are they proud of?



How can you frame your issue to appeal to their better side?



Use each of these to create a new frame, or to change an existing one.



## 2 | CREATE COMMON GROUND

The sense of being part of the same 'group' helps people to empathise with and support each other.

Communications will be most successful when they build on common ground with their audience:

- ★ **Find and express your shared identity:** Such as values and interests. Reminding people of a common identity can significantly reduce people's negative attitudes: for example, saying 'we are all Irish', or reminding people of shared experiences.<sup>20</sup>
- ★ **Connect with people personally:** At events, on the street, or knocking on doors; depending on how safe this is in your context. Personal interaction between different groups reduces negative attitudes towards each other.<sup>21</sup> People who know a lesbian, gay, bisexual or trans person are 10-25% less likely to be LGBTI-phobic.
- ★ **Ask people to take another perspective:** Draw on experiences that are commonly understood in your context, and connect them to the issue. For example, you might ask people to remember or imagine a time when they have been excluded. Remember, though, that people sometimes struggle to imagine being of the minority group in question if the experience feels too extremely different from their own (such as being bisexual or black if they are straight and white). Try saying 'imagine being in a similar position' rather than 'imagine this is you'.
- ★ **Use messengers who are trusted by your audience on the topic in question.** This can help to normalise the issue.

### EXAMPLE: LISTENING IN FINLAND

When campaigners for marriage equality in Finland went to talk to politicians, they found it was more important to listen than talk. They didn't ask about how they were going to vote; they found that people often just got stuck in the first position they took. Instead, they asked questions like *what are your questions about this issue?* or *what are your doubts?* And listened, answering their questions when appropriate.

Campaigners reported watching people change their mind simply because they were heard in a non-judgmental way. They said it felt like the best way to allow people to really work out their own minds.

They also decided to frame the campaign positively: rather than saying *Finland is a backwards country*, they tried to maintain the position that *we can do it—there is a positive future ahead*. They centred their campaign on inclusivity and used the term 'we' ubiquitously to connect and include. They enlisted the support of 1000 (!) Finnish companies and organisations in using the rainbow flag in their materials and logos for the duration of the campaign, which also creates a sense of shared identity. Lastly, the campaigners drew heavily on the Finns' shared sense of identity with other Nordic countries in encouraging this move.

### EXAMPLE: ALLIES IN POLAND

In the push for legal gender recognition in Poland, campaigners attributed much of their success to cis and straight allies who could speak without being accused of 'personal interest', from a position that the target audience (also cis and straight) could readily identify with. This probably helped the audience imagine themselves also as supportive.

### EXAMPLE: NAIL TRANSPHOBIA IN THE UK

The idea of the living library has been around for a while: having a space in which people can go to take a person out like they'd take out a book from a library and hear their story. It's been shown to be a phenomenally good way of making connections with people and challenging assumptions. Charlie Craggs has taken this idea to the next level. She uses spaces (such as libraries) to 'fight transphobia fabulously' by giving people—who may never have met a trans person before—free nail art and teaching them how to be an ally to trans people.

Charlie says: "I get the chance to bond with them while I paint their nails—they can ask me questions and I can teach them how to be an ally. But what's most important is just having a chat and a laugh because what I'm really trying to do with my campaign is humanise the issue and show that trans people are just normal (actually rather nice) people. I'm trying to change hearts and minds a nail at a time. I use nails as my catalyst for change because doing someone's nails is such an intimate interaction, I get to touch people, not just physically—as in touching their hands, but touch them on a deeper level too. As a result hopefully they'll go away with more than just a manicure, they'll go away with a new perspective—they'll go away an ally."

Read / watch more at:

[nailtransphobia.com](https://nailtransphobia.com)

[is.gd/G4dpDu](https://is.gd/G4dpDu)

[is.gd/3wUUlh](https://is.gd/3wUUlh)



## 2 | DIY: COMMON GROUND

### DIY: MAP YOUR MESSENGERS

Who are the people who both you and your audience would trust as messengers? How could these people bridge the ground between you and your audience?

Use the space below to think about messengers for your audiences.

Messengers	Why does your audience trust them?	What's their connection to your issue?

Can you use any of these ideas to help frame your messages?

### DIY: COMMON GROUND

Values are our broadest motivations: guiding principles, influencing how we think and act over the course of our lives. The values map on the following page shows the set of values that decades of research around the world have shown are common to everyone (we just differ in the importance we place on particular values).

**Pick five values that lie behind concern for your issue.** Try to construct a message that appeals to them. Hint: values of universalism, benevolence & self-direction are related to tolerance, acceptance & non-discrimination.





## 3 | TALK ABOUT CHANGE

Campaigns will be most successful when they seek to show that change is possible, and that their audience can be involved in the solutions.

- Seeing that a problem is important can actually act to demotivate people if they can't see a way to change the situation.
- People are also demotivated if they can't see their own role in the change.

For example, in attempts to reduce prejudice against black people, research has shown that appealing to a **common identity** reduces people's prejudices but, simultaneously, reduces people's support for affirmative policies.<sup>22</sup> The shared identity covers up that there is a problem.

Similarly, when people are simply **shown the solutions** for climate change (such as solar panels), although they feel more positive about their ability to act, they see climate change as less important and are less *motivated* to act.<sup>23</sup>

However, simply showing the negative also doesn't work as a motivator. When people are shown negative images of people with mental health, or poor people in far away countries, they may feel that the problem is important, but the vicarious fear, insecurity, guilt or other negative emotions actually suppress their sense that there's anything we can do about it. In fact, negative emotions tend to close down our problem-solving capabilities.

The lesson is to present a healthy balance of both positive and negative; problem and solution.

### EXAMPLE: CHANGE FOR CHECHNYA

The horrific news about gay and bisexual men (and those perceived to be so) in Chechnya being imprisoned in 2017 was met by a number of groups—AllOut, Amnesty, Avaaz—creating petitions for their immediate release and further action to be taken. ILGA-Europe also created space for donations to help, as well as suggestions for how to mobilise at a national or local level. These type of actions can both be effective in pushing decision-makers to change policy and also in empowering individuals to be involved and feel as though they can be a part in the change.

[ilga-europe.org/chechnya](http://ilga-europe.org/chechnya)  
[go.allout.org/en/a/chechen-100](http://go.allout.org/en/a/chechen-100)

### EXAMPLE: FINNISH CAMPAIGN FOR MARRIAGE EQUALITY

One of the key lessons from the Finnish campaign for marriage equality that campaigners identified was the multiple levels of ways they gave people to get involved, saying 'if you want to help, this action will take you 1 min / 3 min / 1 hour / 1 day...'

## 3 | DIY: TALKING CHANGE

### DIY: ONCE UPON A TIME...

**Write a story that represents the change you want to see in the world: moving from the problem to the solution, and including the motivation.**

Start with 'once upon a time' or 'a long time ago, in a galaxy far far away' and end with 'and they all lived happily ever after' or just 'the end'. Keep it to four sentences. What else do you want to happen in your story? What's the problem? Who are the characters?

*A LONG TIME AGO IN A GALAXY FAR, FAR AWAY...*

1.

2.

3.

4.

*THE END*

**Discuss your stories.**

Where can your audience be involved?  
Is the change the whole change?

### DIY: CHANGES IN STAGES

**What change (in behaviour, policy, belief etc.) would solve everything?  
How would your audience be involved?**

**What change could happen in the next five years?  
How would your audience be involved?**

**What change could happen this year?  
How would your audience be involved?**

**What change could happen tomorrow?  
How would your audience be involved?**

## 4 | MAKE IT REAL

We don't often just change their minds in the face of facts and evidence: particularly if it contradicts our existing beliefs.<sup>24</sup>

### People don't think in graphs and numbers.

Communications will be most successful at changing minds when they embed factual evidence within a broader message that draws on the values and emotions of an audience.

### Think of your frame as a story. This could be a personal story or a story about society.

There are lots of ways of making your message more real:

- ✔ Give it a human face.
- ✔ Tell it as a story.
- ✔ Show, don't tell: use lots of images.

#### EXAMPLE: HUMAN RIGHTS WITH A HUMAN FACE IN MALTA

Trans spokespeople—such as Joanne Cassar, who fought for eight years for the right to marry—gave human rights a human face in the Maltese campaign for legal gender recognition. Campaigners felt this was a crucial element in turning what was otherwise a very technical, medicaly-framed issue into something that was understandable and relatable to the broader public.

Visibility like this isn't safe or comfortable in many contexts. But finding ways to make your issue more than graphs, numbers and technical terms is vital.

#### EXAMPLE: EXTENDING THE SIGN OF PEACE IN POLAND

A campaign to promote acceptance and connection between the religious community and LGBT people in Poland by the organisation KPH relied on creating common ground: appealing to a sense of shared identity and equality on a number of levels.

The poster campaign was incredibly simple but proved powerful: two hands being shaken peacefully; one with a rainbow bracelet, and one with rosary beads, around the wrist. The slogan was short—'Let us offer each other the sign of peace'—and referred to a famous letter written by Polish bishops to German bishops in 1965.

The campaign provoked much debate, and was very successful.



Read more at: [znakpokoju.com](http://znakpokoju.com)

## EXAMPLE: NO FEAR IN MOLDOVA

Campaigners in Moldova chose their target audience carefully in their campaign in the run-up to 2016's Pride event.

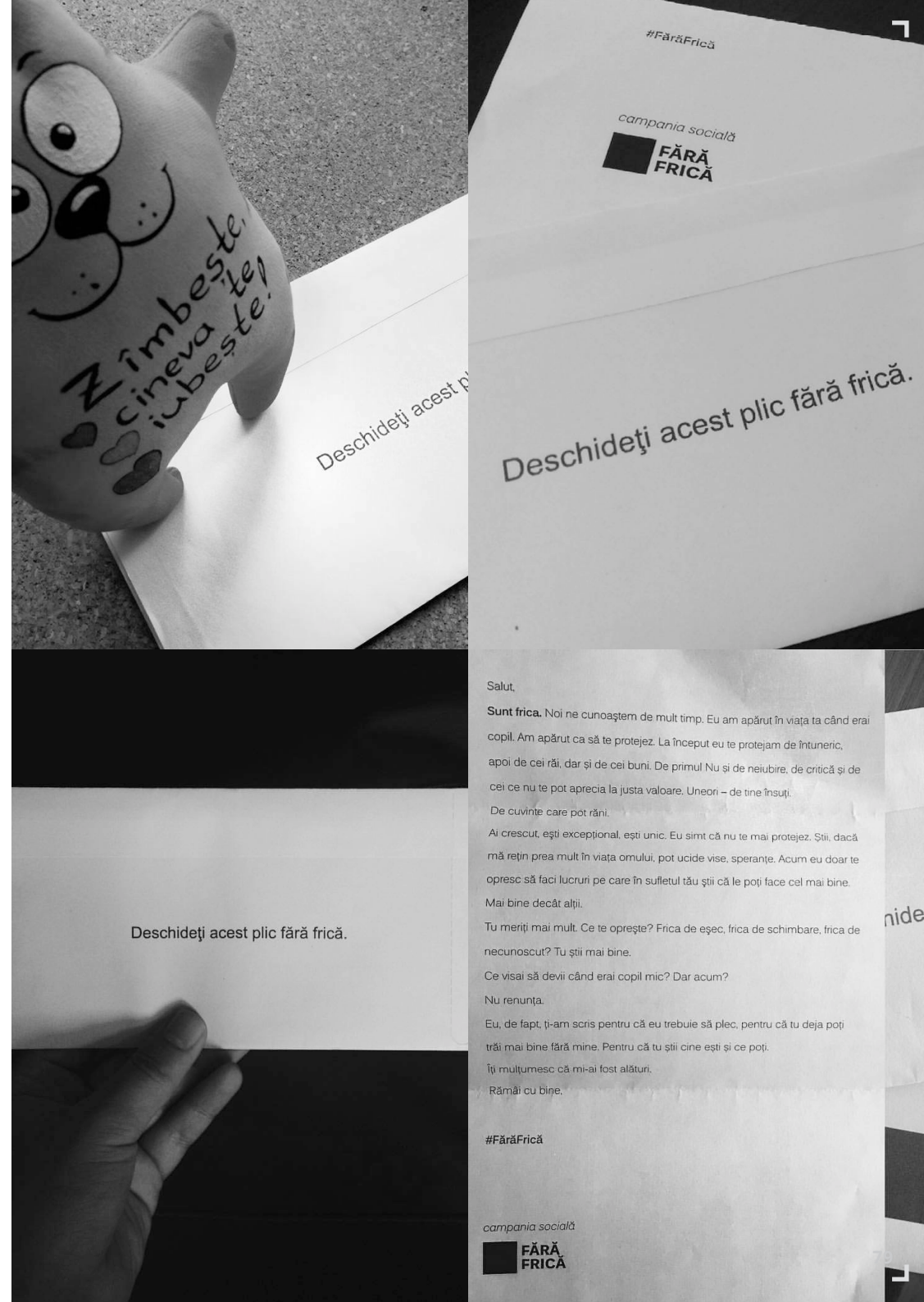
Acknowledging the high levels of LGBTI-phobia in the country, they chose to focus on broadening and strengthening their base of support. Their 'moveable' audiences were politicians who were privately, but not publicly, supportive of rights for LGBTI people; members of the LGBTI community themselves; and those who might privately (and weakly) hold homophobic views, despite being generally supportive of human rights.

Following **audience research**, consisting of focus groups and interviews, they decided to use a frame of **common humanity**, through the shared experience of being held back by fear.

The campaign *No Fear* was born.

Video was the key **medium**; cis, straight and LGBTI people talking about their fears were the **messengers**. But the runaway success was the letter campaign. People received letters from Fear, who said it was leaving because it was no longer helpful to the person. The positive, poignant and humorous campaign had a great **medium** and **message**, with many people posting pictures of the letters they'd received on social media.

*The solidarity march of May 2016, following this campaign, had double the number of participants on the previous year.*





## 4 | DIY: MAKE IT REAL

### DIY: PAINT A PICTURE

*Find, or draw, a picture that represents what you want to say.*

*How does it make you feel?  
How can you make it relate to your audience?*

### DIY: USE YOUR STORY TO MOTIVATE OTHERS

Personal stories—of challenges faced, choices made, and change created—can be a powerful way to connect with and motivate others. There is an art to telling motivating stories. See the further reading for links to examples of people doing it, as well as longer worksheets and resources. Do this by yourself or to develop campaigns in groups: for example, IGLYO use storytelling to develop strategy with groups of young people.

#### **Story of Self: What of your story illustrates change you want to see?**

What experiences are at the root of your vision?

What stories can you tell about important choices you've made or challenges you've faced?

#### **Story of Us: How does this story connect a wider group?**

Who is the 'us' you want to call on?

What values and experience do we share?

#### **Story of Now: What does this tell us about where we need to go?**

What challenge are we facing that you want to overcome?

What lessons can your experience tell us about overcoming this challenge?

### DIY: MORE TOOLS & READING

Some great examples of public narrative: [is.gd/AxochC](https://is.gd/AxochC)  
Marshall Ganz talks about public narrative: [is.gd/bZGEVi](https://is.gd/bZGEVi)  
Marshall Ganz's written resource: [is.gd/Lv3jFq](https://is.gd/Lv3jFq)  
Beautiful Trouble on thinking narratively: [is.gd/9J9awl](https://is.gd/9J9awl)

## 5 | DON'T THINK OF AN ELEPHANT



Research shows that, as the linguist George Lakoff says, for people to obey a demand 'not to think of an elephant' is impossible.<sup>25</sup>

**Directly responding to something by saying 'x isn't true' simply reinforces the original belief in someone's mind.**

In one study, people shown a myth-busting guide about vaccinations not only recalled the falsehoods as true afterwards, they attributed it to the health organisation attempting to quash them.<sup>26</sup>

Similarly, asking people not to think of a stereotype about a stigmatised group (*we are not paedophiles, I am not a crook*) has been shown to simply make that stereotype more prominent in people's minds.<sup>27</sup>

This means that campaigns should not aim themselves directly at responding to the opposition. (In addition to reinforcing their story, your opponents will generally have more money to promote theirs).

**In practice**, this is something that is incredibly difficult for campaigners, particularly when those who are against their causes are often so liberal with the truth. But many will be familiar with the situation of having been drawn into a debate with someone in which constantly rebutting their points feels somehow like a waste of time. It is.

### EXAMPLE: THE IRISH YES CAMPAIGN

Campaigners **refused to be drawn into debates with the opposition**, learning early on that it simply fueled their fire. Campaigners instead told strong stories about families and family values without reinforcing notions of the patriarchal family of the **natural order** model. The stories centred on a story of Irish society that was fair, equal and generous, and a **citizenry that was relational** rather than reproductive. The campaign focused heavily on ideas of **common humanity, love**, and the **reality of diversity**.



## 5 | DIY: ELEPHANT

### DIY: KNOW YOUR ELEPHANTS

Fill in the following worksheet, print it out, and keep it nearby.

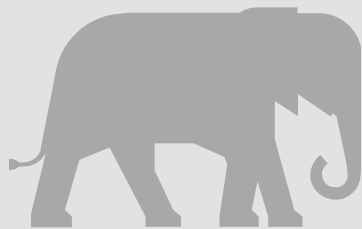
These are the things you want to avoid in your framing wherever possible. You could stick these next to a jar so that every time anyone uses it, they have to put money in the jar.

**What are the unhelpful frames around your issue?**

**When might you reinforce this?**

**Unhelpful values?**

**Unhelpful emotions?**



**AVOID!**

### DIY: AVOID YOUR ELEPHANT

You'll have to face your elephant sometimes. But it's good to know when to bother responding, and what to say when you do.

**Write the most common attacks you hear.**

**Who says them? Where?**

**Do you need to respond?**

Circle the people & media that your audience would hear and find persuasive. The ones that you haven't circled (such as comments sections of news sites, or far-right social media pages) are the ones you should not respond to.

**Practice responding to these attacks with friends, allies or colleagues.**

Try the ABC method: **acknowledge** the question ("that's a great question"), build a **bridge** from the question to your talking points ("I think the important issue is"); and **communicate** your message ([insert frame!]).

**Write down your best responses as a cheat sheet:**

Attack	Bridge	Your framing

[beautifultrouble.org/principle/stay-on-message](https://beautifultrouble.org/principle/stay-on-message)

## DIY: FRAMING SUSHI

Use the board below to try doing something new with your messages once you've had a go at drafting them.

Challenge an assumption	Tell it as a story	Add more people
Express the value of equality	Make me laugh	<b>FRAMING SUSHI</b> 
Make common ground	Simplify	
Tell me your vision	Express connection	Tell me how I can get involved

Pick one at random and see what happens to your message when you've used it. It might spark a new thought, or help challenge your assumptions.

Connect to your audience's journey	Say it in 10 words	Tell it to a five-year-old
Take something away	Write it as a tweet	Tell me how it benefits us both
Add a picture	Tell me why there's hope	Pick a new passenger
Tell it to your grandma	Tell me how it makes society better	Take a different perspective





**test &  
refine**

## SUMMARY



Framing is just a beautiful idea until you see how it works in the real world. Now that we have an idea of how to tell our story, we need to find out whether that story really works with others.

### Seeing how people actually respond to what you're saying is an irreplaceable piece of framing development.

There are three key stages to this. It's a good idea to **test** your frames before they go live in the world. Next, **measure your impact** by monitoring them when they are live and evaluating them after some time has passed. At each of these stages, you should get helpful feedback to help you **refine** what you're saying.

This section covers each of these in turn.

#### 1 | TEST

Without testing, successful framing can be hit or miss. Good testing can be expensive, but there are many ways to do it without much budget. And any testing is better than no testing! This might just be asking a few people who haven't been involved in the framing process for their responses: the closer these people are to your audience, the better.

Testing involves:

- Knowing what you are looking for;
- Choosing your methodology;
- Preparing messages to test;
- Finding people to test;
- Looking for what works.

There are lots of ways to do testing: focus groups, interviews, surveys and polls. You can do all of these on big budgets and on small ones. We'll talk you through the processes.

#### 2 | MEASURE IMPACT

It's a good idea to monitor and evaluate the impact your communications are having in order to know what actually works and what doesn't. This is particularly true for bigger campaigns or other communications with a broad reach.

There are lots of ways to monitor how your framing is going over time: and this should allow you to tweak it if you need, or think about trying different media.

Evaluation will help to define your framing task better next time.

#### 3 | RINSE AND REPEAT

And now you can go back and refine your original goals: have you moved on? What next...?

## SUMMARY DIY



### 1. Find three people to talk to about your material.

*If you can find people outside of the community—for example, someone's parent, random people in a cafe or your local librarian—so much the better. If you can get others to have a conversation about it in front of you, even better!*

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### 2. Show them the material you want to test.

*This might be options for a poster, a number of images, or even a speech.*

### 3. Ask them questions to see whether what you've produced meets your framing task.

*For example:*

*How do they feel when they see or hear this?*

*What does it make them think of?*

*Can they see a solution to a problem here?*

*Would they act on this? What would they do?*

### 4. Does anything you've heard suggest you should pick one option over another, or change your material?

### 5. You can repeat this process as many times as you like until you feel you've got it right.

**Then you can send it out into the world!**

*After some time has passed...*

### 6. Have a look at how your frame has worked out in the world. Revisit your framing tasks.

**Did it meet these?**

**Would you change anything?**



# 1 | TESTING YOUR COMMS

**Testing is an important part of creating effective messages: it will help you develop them and decide which ones to use.**

Without testing, success can be hit and miss. An example: several years ago, a UK environmental group released a campaign video featuring people in everyday situations, including school children, being violently blown up for not taking climate change seriously. It was intended to be funny, but many found it offensive and it was immediately withdrawn.

There was an existing frame around 'militant' or 'extreme' environmentalists, who care more about climate change than people, and this only served to reinforce this. Any testing of this video would probably have indicated that it wasn't a good idea to release.

Often campaign messages are developed under huge pressure, in a small team, and sent straight into the world. These messages are based on assumptions rather than evidence of how an audience will react and they are therefore more likely to be hit and miss.

Testing helps you examine your own assumptions about what will work and why. It's an opportunity to get outside your immediate bubble and make contact with the people you are hoping to motivate with a campaign.

Testing can be expensive but there are many ways to do it on low or even zero budget. It's better to discuss it with a couple of cis/straight, non-activist allies, friends or relatives, than not test at all.

**The fundamental lesson is that:  
*any testing is better than no testing.***

To test messages, you need to identify:

- A. What methodology you will use:** You need to decide whether methods like focus groups and interviews are appropriate, or methods like surveys.
- B. What you're going to test:** Here, you are may be looking to compare messages, different media, or different messengers.
- C. What outcome (of success) you'll measure:** Your *framing tasks* should provide the basis for this. You should be looking for your messages to be memorable and relatable to your audience, but more importantly, for them to shift how your audience thinks about LGBTI equality.
- D. Who you are going to test:** The people you test are known as your *sample*. Ideally, you will probably want to test your messages with members of your *target audience*, based on your strategy.

## EXAMPLE: THE LITHUANIAN GAY LEAGUE (LGL)

**What did they test?** In January 2017, LGL tested three different messages in response to the anti-gender movement, judged to be different enough to compare. **What outcomes?** They used a basic interview script as a guide, with only three main question areas: comprehension (e.g. 'What do you think this message is trying to say? Can you summarise it back to me in one sentence?'), attitudes (e.g. 'Are there any bits of the message that you agree / disagree with? If you were in charge of editing this message, how would you tweak it?') and feelings (e.g. 'How do you feel about this message, generally?').

**What methodology?** They ran short street interviews to test some messages. They did this with their volunteer team, on virtually no budget. **Who?** For their sample, they stopped passers-by in public spaces and collected basic background information (age, gender, religion, education). Aiming to interview around five people per message, they managed to talk to 16 individuals.

## A | CHOOSE YOUR METHOD

Most methods of testing can be done on a high budget or a shoe string. Below, we outline some common testing methods.

**Get help!** Many of these methods require specialist support (e.g. for sampling, moderating or analysing). You can approach national polling companies, marketing firms, small recruitment agencies, universities and, of course, ILGA-E and PIRC! Go to our [full briefing](#) for more information.

What is it?	Good because...	Less good because...	How to do it on a budget?
<p><b>FOCUS GROUPS</b> Small groups of people (usually 6–8) who are brought together for an hour or so to have a discussion about a topic or product.</p>	<p>They give rich data on how people think about a topic, offer multiple perspectives and give us a sense of social desirability (what's judged to be OK to think and say in society).</p>	<p>The conversation can be strongly affected by the dynamic of the group (for instance, when some people dominate conversation); they take a lot of time; and you don't get the input of a large number of people.</p>	<p>Use a <i>snowball method</i> (see p.101); and free venues, or ask a contact in a university if students would be interested. Discussions can be analysed straight from audio or video recordings. <i>Seek advice from trained moderators.</i></p>
<p><b>SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS</b> One-on-one conversations that follow a script loosely, with flexibility to follow the thoughts and interests of the participants.</p>	<p>They can give you detailed insight into individual's attitudes and reactions and encourage people to share things they might not be confident or comfortable enough to share in a group setting.</p>	<p>They can be time-intensive, so you can't test many people. They also depend on the participant feeling comfortable to speak freely.</p>	<p>Done in public spaces, stopping random members of the public to have a conversation about the messages. (See LGL on p.95)</p>
<p><b>ONLINE SURVEYS</b> Surveys to test messages will usually involve asking people to read a message and then answer some questions. The results will tend to be analysed with statistics.</p>	<p>They allow you to collect bigger samples of people that are more representative. Because they yield numerical data, the data is presented as objective and factual, which can be persuasive.</p>	<p>You don't get the detail you get when talking to people.</p>	<p>With a free platform, like SurveyMonkey or Google Forms. You can find participants with the help of your networks. It won't be very reliable, but it will give you some idea.</p>
<p><b>THE ASK-A-FRIEND TEST</b> Asking someone to give you a quick response to it.</p>	<p>Even a short conversation can help check whether your intended meaning is coming through.</p>	<p>Your friend probably isn't your main audience, so beware making strong conclusions!</p>	<p>Talk to someone who is unfamiliar with the campaign. Ask them how it makes them feel.</p>
<p><b>THE TELEPHONE GAME</b> Testing if your message is memorable.</p>	<p>A fun and easy way to test whether your message is memorable or <i>sticky</i>. Get a sense of what is strong, weak or confusing in your message and adapt it.</p>	<p>It won't give you any insight into whether it's shifted anyone's thinking.</p>	<p>Like the game, you pass a message from person to person and see how it comes out at the end. See what's forgotten and what gets transformed or twisted.</p>

## B | PREPARE YOUR MATERIALS

Now you've chosen a methodology, you're ready to refine your materials. Some rules of thumb:

### Know what is going on in the message

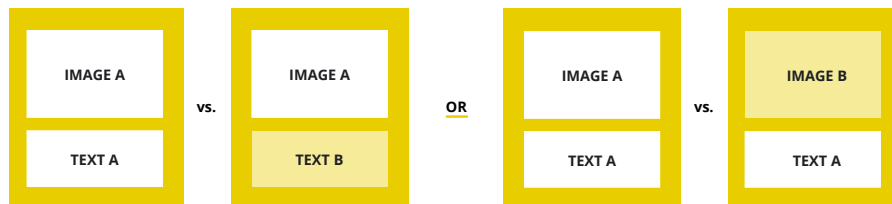
Think hard about your research question and hypotheses. You need to bring out the 'active ingredient' clearly in each message. That might be value, an emotion, a metaphor or a messenger. Focus on that and minimise any content that might dilute or distract from that.

### Keep it short and simple

Try to keep messages concise so people can absorb them without too much effort. Aim to contain your message within a short paragraph, and ensure the language is accessible. *Don't try to do too much!* If you've chosen a survey, it is particularly important that the message is simple and concise. This is because you will not be present when participants read it, so it is harder to establish whether they have understood and engaged. If you really want reactions on longer or more complex material, a qualitative technique (focus groups or interviews) will be more suitable.

### Compare like with like

You should compare text with text, or images with images. If you want to use both, only vary one thing at a time:



At the same time the content needs to be **sufficiently different**. Messages that are too similar will be unlikely to yield results. Your research question and hypothesis should tell you what you are comparing.

### EXAMPLE: MESSAGES ON DISABILITY AND CONSERVATION

These are messages taken from a study called [No Cause is an Island](#)<sup>28</sup>:

Message 1 (**Independence and care** frame):

*Scope works with disabled people and their families at every stage of their lives. We believe that disabled people should have the same opportunities as everyone else, enabling them to live the lives they choose. Yet today, disabled people are more likely to live in poverty, more likely to experience negative attitudes or prejudice, and are more likely to live alone. They still face marginalisation and discrimination. We help to address the barriers that cause disabled people to be treated unequally, support them in making decisions about what they want to do, and help them put those choices into practice. With the right reassurance and practical assistance, disabled people can live independent lives.*

Message 2 (**Economic considerations** frame):

*Scope works with disabled people and their families at every stage of their lives. We believe in giving disabled people the chance to achieve greater success in their lives, so that they can fully contribute to the economy. Yet today, disabled people are more likely to be unemployed and receiving benefits. We deliver a range of low cost early interventions—helping to address these issues, while delivering considerable cost savings for both disabled people and the state. Early intervention represents a great return on investment. For example, one initiative costs around £65,000 to set up—that's just £500 each for the 130 or so families that can be reached over the course of a year.*

Run your messages past the rules of thumb on the previous page:

- Q Do you know what's going on?
- Q Are they short and simple?
- Q Are you comparing like with like?



## C | CHOOSE WHAT OUTCOMES TO MEASURE

Ultimately you need a way of demonstrating that one message ‘works’ better than another in relation to your framing tasks.

We’re mostly interested in whether the way the message is framed shift *how* people think about LGBTI equality. This can be measured by observing how people talk when they are presented with a message, or by collecting survey data on attitudes and beliefs.

### EXAMPLE: QUESTIONNAIRE ON MENTAL MODELS IN LITHUANIA

Based on the themes that came from our research (see p.38), we designed a 35-question survey, drawn from existing questionnaires, to measure beliefs about gender, sexuality and related topics. When a *representative sample* of 2000 Lithuanians completed the survey, we could check the mental models we’d outlined.

So, for example, we asked questions like ‘There are only two biological sexes, male or female’ and ‘All people identify as either male or female’ (relating to a **gender and sex binary** model); and questions like ‘Children should be brought up in strict discipline’ and ‘This country needs a strong and courageous leader which the people will follow’ (part of an authoritarian **natural order** model).

This was useful for us because we could then see how LGL’s messages impacted specifically on how people thought: we could conclude that one message *Everyone has a gender, even your Grandma* (about the experience of women in Lithuanian society from the Soviet era until now), successfully shifted people to less binary thinking about sex and gender.

**How will you will assess what you want people to think and feel?**

## D | CHOOSE WHO YOU’LL TEST

If you start by thinking through your ideal sample, you can then develop the sampling strategy that fits your budget. Here are three simple questions you can ask:

- ❓ **Focus:** is there an audience you are particularly interested in testing the message with?
- ❓ **Exclusion:** are there people you don’t want to test?
- ❓ **Comparison:** is it useful to be able to compare groups of people?

Some ways of sampling:

A **nationally representative sample** accurately reflects the population in your country (e.g. in terms of age, level of education, race). You’ll need the help of an agency or polling company.

A **random sample** is where everyone in a population has an *equal chance* of being picked, which probably requires a polling company to do properly. If you simply pick people ‘at random’, you should consider who might be excluded, and whether you can compensate.

**Targeted sampling** is when you already have a specific group in mind, based on your strategy: for example, women aged between 35-50. Use *screening questions* (e.g. asking people their age or where they live) in order to select only your target group.

A **snowball sample** is a way of finding people through acquaintances and networks. The idea, like a snowball, is to start small and then build up quickly as people spread the word. It is not random or representative, but the bigger the sample gets, the more useful the data will be.

**Consider which sampling method is best for you and, importantly, who might be unintentionally *excluded* in your sampling method.**

## EXAMPLE: FOCUS GROUPS IN SLOVENIA

Legebitra ran three **focus groups** with a professional research agency and then three more with the help of university professors and students. Despite facing significant constraints (they couldn't hire venues, pay participants, meet the sampling criteria or transcribe the conversations), the students produced high quality results that were very similar to the professional ones.

### Who did they test?

Legebitra chose to test their messages with a *targeted sample* of the 'moveable middle' in Slovenia, which meant designing a screening questionnaire that excluded supporters and opponents. They knew some of these characteristics from their own research into audience (for example, they wanted to talk to people between 30 and 45 years old). With an agency, they created further criteria, drawing on existing survey data. For example, one screening question was developed from the European Values Survey which asks 'who would you not like to have as neighbours?' People ranked 'LGBT people' among a longer list (which includes people from another race, drug addicts etc.) and then Legebitra excluded anyone who put LGBT people at the high or low extremes. Because of stark gender differences in attitudes towards LGBT people in Slovenia, they decided to run one focus group with just women, one with just men, and another mixed.

### What did they test?

Legebitra created three messages based on their framing tasks. They turned their messages into three short videos, using friends, and tried out different slogans (which they got feedback on in the focus groups). Each video had a clear hypotheses for why it would be successful: one of them was using humour and appealing to benevolence values, for instance, and another one appealed to common ground by demonstrating that the everyday life of a gay man is no different to anyone else. In contrast to the videos, they also discussed a series of old campaign messages.

### What outcome did they measure?

During the focus groups, the moderators asked numerous questions to see whether the message of the video was understood, what kind of emotional reactions people had, and whether people identified with the actors. They asked questions like: *What did you remember the most?; What is this video trying to tell you?; How strongly did you identify yourself with this video?* The discussions provided great insight into people's beliefs. One particularly useful outcome was getting a sense of people's boundaries: the point when they stopped going along with a message and had a strongly negative reaction. In the all male focus group, for example, watching a scene with two men kissing provoked such a negative reaction that they couldn't concentrate on the content or intention of the message.

*"One thing that became clear in the focus groups was that people in Slovenia really understood the issue of rights and discrimination for lesbian and gay people, on a rational level. People could clearly articulate the need for protection under law, and rarely provided arguments against that. However, on an emotional level there was still resistance, and the emotional reaction tended to trump the rational arguments. Our big challenge now is to connect with people emotionally rather than rationally."*

—Simon Maljevac, Director of Legebitra



# 1 | DIY: TESTING

Here's a quick template to help you do your testing. Good luck!

**How are you going to test? (Why?)**

**What will you test?**

**Who will you test it with?**

**What will success look like? Who will you test it with?**

**Afterwards...**

**What do you need to change?**

## DIY: READ MORE

Read much more on testing in our special testing briefing, available online: [publicinterest.org.uk/testing](https://publicinterest.org.uk/testing)

## 2 | MEASURING YOUR IMPACT

Once your frame is out in the world, it's a good idea to monitor and evaluate the impact in order to know what works and what doesn't. This is particularly true for bigger campaigns or communications with a broad reach.

**It will help to define your framing task better next time.**

### DEFINE YOUR IMPACT MEASURES

The first step, just as with testing, is to define what success looks like—what sort of change you're looking for—and how you're going to measure these.

There are many tools that will allow you to measure reach online, particularly on social media (how many people have engaged with your communication). But it is also helpful to measure change: such as in how your issue is being framed more widely, or in shifting attitudes. Below are outlined some examples of the types of things you might be looking for and how you might measure them.

Impact	Measure
Shift in media framing	Google NGrams; media journal
Attitude changes	Polls; focus groups; interviews
Behaviour changes (such as hate crime decrease)	Crime and reporting statistics; surveys
Change in policy	Policy reporting
Referendum votes	Voting records
Social cohesion changes (such as increased levels of trust)	Polls; focus groups; interviews

### MONITORING

**Monitoring is the act of observing your impact over time.**

It generally involves keeping a record of where your framing is being heard and any shifts in framing in these places. If you use social media, there are some really simple tools for keeping an eye on your reach, and you can tweak some of these to see wider impacts. You might also want to try keeping a media journal or similar for your issue.

Monitoring your impact can also allow you—in many media—to troubleshoot as you go. You might see, for instance, that one of the images you've used is much more popular than another, and decide to use that one more frequently. Or you might see that the comments provoked by a particular social media post suggest that you may be reinforcing some unhelpful beliefs, and adjust the wording accordingly.

### EVALUATING

Evaluation is the act of reflecting on the impact and achievements of your framing. It's a critical bit of learning for you and your team in what has changed, and what has worked. It will also enable you to best decide how to act next.

To evaluate your framing efforts, you should gather information about the impacts—particularly from your audience—and assess how well your frame achieved your goals.



## 2 | DIY: MEASURING IMPACT

### DIY: KEEP A MEDIA DIARY

This is something you could do alone or as part of a team with a shared document to monitor the impact your frame is having. The idea is to keep a record of the conversation your frame is provoking in others. You could choose to do this daily, or just when you see something significant.

#### Date

#### Medium

*E.g. Newspaper, email,  
Facebook comments, Twitter*

#### Message

*What people are saying*

#### Change?

*Why is this conversation different:  
e.g. shifts in language or sentiment,*

#### Date

#### Medium

*E.g. Newspaper, email,  
Facebook comments, Twitter*

#### Message

*What people are saying*

#### Change?

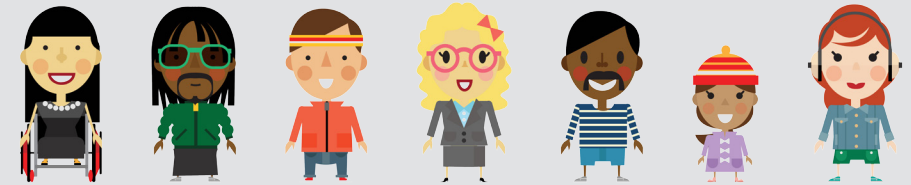
*Why is this conversation different:  
e.g. shifts in language or sentiment,*

### DIY: EVALUATING MOST SIGNIFICANT CHANGES

The Most Significant Change technique is a model for doing evaluation collectively. It aims to move away from collecting numbers which often don't show meaningful impacts. Below is a brief outline of a process you could follow. Read more here: [is.gd/YHfrDO](https://is.gd/YHfrDO)

#### **Pick a number of people who have been involved in the process.**

You probably want this to be at least five people who represent a variety of different groups, including your audience and the people who have designed and implemented your framing.



**Ask these people for a story that represents a significant change or impact to them.** Record these. Probe to get the richness of the depth of changes of feeling and attitude, etc.

**Get these people together to discuss which changes are the most significant.** Spend time assessing the impact, and how to report and respond to this.

### DIY: MORE TOOLS & READING

You can check trends on social media using hashtag searches on Twitter or Facebook, or use tools like Keyhole to monitor trends in real time: [keyhole.co](https://keyhole.co)

Use tools such as Google Trends to measure change in the usage of terms over time: [trends.google.com](https://trends.google.com)

See platforms such as [betterevaluation.org](https://betterevaluation.org) for more ideas.

### 3 | RINSE & REPEAT

The testing and impact assessments you do should give you some good insights into how to refine and improve your framing.

You should also be able to get a good idea of whether you need to run another campaign or intervention, and if so, what it should look like. You can revisit your purpose with a better understanding of your audience and set new framing tasks, and do the process all over again.

Nice job. You are now a qualified framer.

Things to remember:

You're already doing lots of great things.

Celebrate and build on them.

Connect with others.

Remember that they are humans and they're trying to do good.

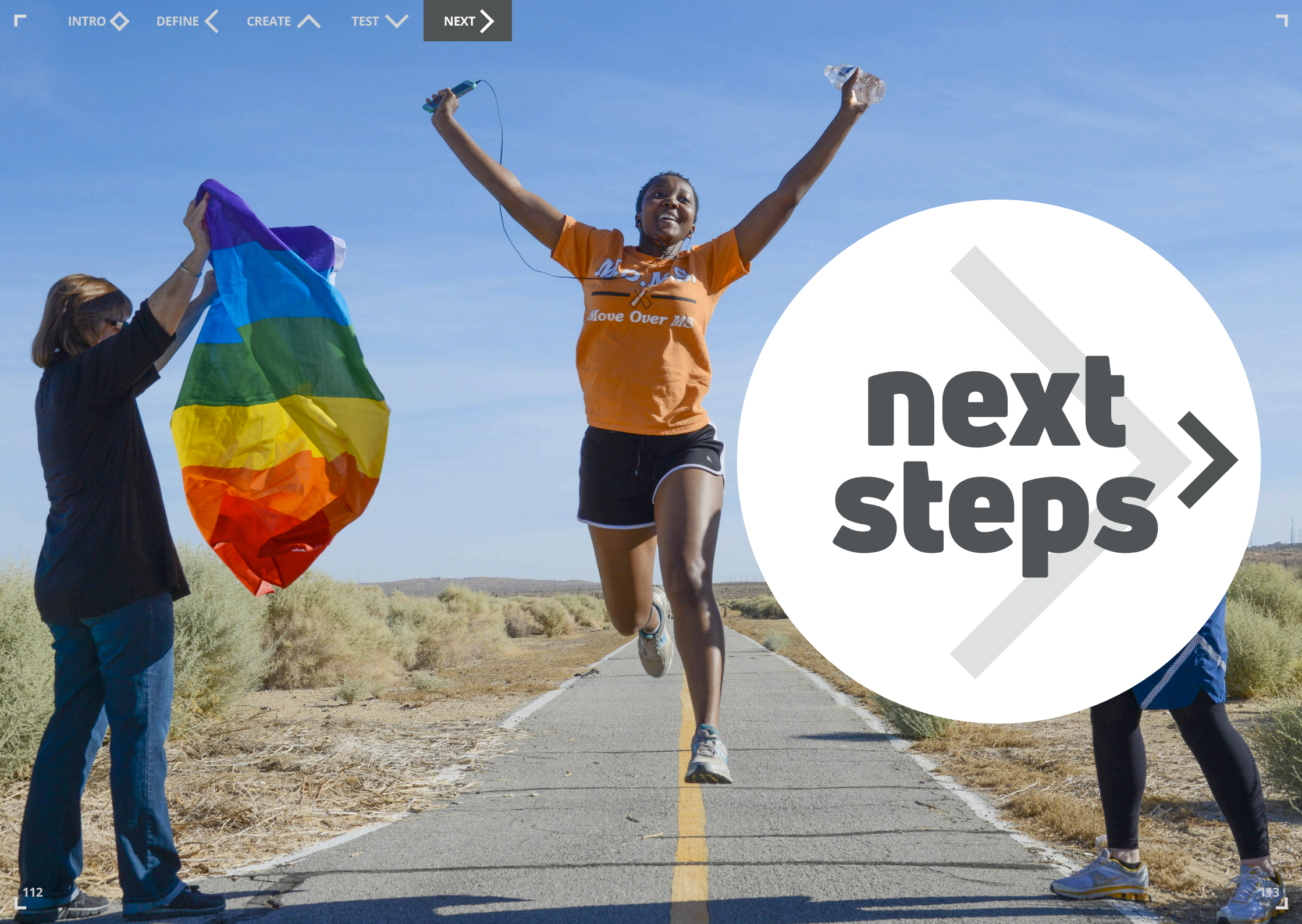
Be brave.

You've experienced so much and you've shown such courage. Keep it up and show us what you've got.

*Now, go create...*







next  
steps



## FURTHER RESOURCES & READING

### TESTING

Go and read our testing briefing, at [publicinterest.org.uk/testing](https://publicinterest.org.uk/testing)

### FRAMING THEORY

The Centre for Story-Based Strategy have a great book on framing for social change. You can order a copy here: [is.gd/lkD9TZ](https://is.gd/lkD9TZ)

The FrameWorks Institute have an e-workshop on strategic framing that gives a great overview. Do the workshop here: [is.gd/l7mscq](https://is.gd/l7mscq)

### FRAMING PRACTICE

Council of Europe: We Can: Taking action against hate speech with counter and alternative narratives: [is.gd/jUgdt2](https://is.gd/jUgdt2)

The Centre for Story-Based Strategy also have some great tools and worksheets for thinking about framing and story. Get them here: [is.gd/mdO7Uz](https://is.gd/mdO7Uz)

Using family as a frame in social justice activism: [is.gd/Hw9UiV](https://is.gd/Hw9UiV)

SOGI Campaigns: [is.gd/GHwni7](https://is.gd/GHwni7)

MAP: The Movement Advancement Project: [is.gd/0Tywg2](https://is.gd/0Tywg2)

### VALUES AND CULTURAL CHANGE

The Common Cause Handbook: [is.gd/o0XcLd](https://is.gd/o0XcLd)  
(full of references for even more reading!)

Valuing Equality: [is.gd/MRAggW](https://is.gd/MRAggW)

### DEVELOPING STRATEGY

And lots more besides, at: [is.gd/dSy0u4](https://is.gd/dSy0u4)

### ADVOCACY

ILGA-Europe Advocacy Guide: [is.gd/JKgPTG](https://is.gd/JKgPTG)

### CAMPAIGNING

Toolkit from 350.org on facilitating workshops with groups in order to build and implement campaigns. It's been designed for climate campaigners, but it's totally transferable to other issues outside of the environmental movement: [is.gd/qobo6j](https://is.gd/qobo6j)

Beautiful Trouble have a beautiful toolkit for campaigners and activists: [is.gd/s15boY](https://is.gd/s15boY)

And from the New Economy Organisers Network: [is.gd/TfUXQ7](https://is.gd/TfUXQ7)

### DEVELOPMENT & EVALUATION

Loads of great methods here for developing and building your work, thinking about your audiences, and monitoring and evaluation: [is.gd/JiTPOo](https://is.gd/JiTPOo)

### AND LOTS MORE RESOURCES FROM US....

ILGA-Europe: [is.gd/lolp9N](https://is.gd/lolp9N)

PIRC: [is.gd/0WSTyR](https://is.gd/0WSTyR)



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## ENDNOTES

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**“If they cannot  
love and resist  
at the same time,  
they probably  
will not survive.”**

**Audre Lorde**



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