MAKING THE CASE FOR HEALTH EQUITY
PLANNING TOOL

Health inequities are preventable differences in the burden of disease, injury, violence, or opportunities to achieve optimal health that are experienced by socially disadvantaged populations. Populations can be defined by factors such as race, ethnicity, gender, sex, sexual orientation, education, income, disability status, immigrant or citizenship status, and geographic location. Creating greater equity requires providing all people with fair opportunities to attain their full potential. To achieve this goal, we must apply an equity lens—assess who experiences the benefits and who bears the burdens of any given program, policy, or practice—and collaborate with multiple sectors to achieve our equity-focused goals. Making the case for equity to different audiences often requires engaging in perspective transformation: seeing and understanding the world in a new way and then acting upon that knowledge. This tool provides a framework to identify the strategies you will need to engage different audiences in your equity-focused efforts.

BACKGROUND

Making the case for equity through perspective transformation often requires changing people's minds. Howard Gardener, a Harvard psychologist known for his Theory of Multiple Intelligences, developed a methodology through research and practice called *Changing Minds: The Art and Science of Changing Our Own and Other People's Minds*. This theory, often used in business and marketing contexts, focuses on different levers or ways in which you can persuade or lead people to change their minds. This framework will help you to think through the elements of perspective transformation in concrete ways and apply it to your work.

The Seven Levers of Mind Change that Gardner presents are:

1. **Reason:** Use a logical approach to build your case. Present facts and analogies that leading to the conclusion that you would like your audience to draw.

2. **Research:** Use facts, evidence, and data to support your argument. Research can include academic studies; quantitative data such as statistics and maps; and qualitative data such as stories, surveys, and feedback from community engagement.

3. **Resonance:** Appeal to the heart and emotions of your audience. Focus on issues of fairness and justice that will resonate with the audience.

4. **Representational Re-descriptions:** Deliver your message many times in many different ways. It isn't enough to deliver a message once; you must repeat it and use different communication strategies such as presentations, videos, storytelling, one-on-one engagement, etc. Also consider using different messengers to communicate similar messages.

5. **Resources and Rewards:** Use incentives and positive reinforcement that align your objectives and goals. People need tangible reasons why they should change their minds. Incentives can move people to action.

6. **Real-World Events:** Use real-life events that will resonate with the audience. Using local data and stories will help people make connections to your arguments.

7. **Resistance:** Understand the ways in which your audience may resist your message. The other six levers must address that resistance in order to be persuasive and ultimately change minds.

WORKSHEET

Now you will walk through a series of questions that help you to think about your goals, key audiences, what moves them to action, and how to apply the Seven Levers of Mind Change to create perspective transformation for each of your audiences and build a case for your equity-focused work.

PART 1: IDENTIFY YOUR EQUITY GOALS

Question 1: What is the equity-focused goal you are trying to accomplish? How will it improve health?
Example: The XYZ Affiliate supports a local increase in the minimum wage because household income level is correlated with health outcome.

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Question 2: Who are the key people, organizations, or entities that you will need in order to accomplish your equity-focused goal? *Example: The XYZ Affiliate will need to support of local business owners, elected officials, community leaders, etc. in order to enact and implement a local increase in the minimum wage.*

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Question 3: Identify your key audiences' perspectives on your equity-focused goal as well as the actions you would like them to take to support the goal. Perspectives can be negative or positive and can reflect the audiences' personal or professional views on the goal. You may need to engage in some research to better understand different audiences' perspectives.

Key Audience	Perspectives on Goal	What You Will Ask Audience to Do
Example: Local business owners	*Example: Understand rationale for increase but concerned about increased personnel costs and staff cuts.*	*Example: Attend meeting with elected officials to express support for change.*

This section will help you to apply the Seven Levers of Mind Change to your key audiences. Start by choosing one of your audiences and explore how each of the 7 Levers can help you make the case for equity to that specific person or group. **When you are finished, repeat this exercise for each of your other key audiences.**

TARGET AUDIENCE: _____

Reason: What are rational arguments you can use to connect your goal to your audience's perspective?

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Research: What relevant qualitative or quantitative data would be most likely to appeal to and persuade your audience? Think of data that you would need to effectively prove your point.

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Resonance: What are the most appropriate communication methods for appealing to the feelings and emotions of the audience? Communication methods may include stories, videos, testimonials, presentations, etc.

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Representational Re-descriptions: How can you use the different types of data and communication methods to complement each other and reinforce your argument (i.e., have them say the same thing but in different ways)? This will help to ensure that your message is getting through to all types of learners.

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Resources & Rewards: What types of resources or incentives could be used to provide positive reinforcement to the audience?

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Real-world Events: How can you tie your arguments to real-life events to which the audience will connect?

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Resistance: What, if any, are some of the reasons why your audience might be resistant to helping you accomplish your goal? Resistance could be political, financial, individual, organizational, etc.

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PART 3: DEVELOPING YOUR STRATEGY

After engaging in the analysis in Parts 1 and 2, compile key points in the matrix below. This will provide you with an **at-a-glance reference sheet** of the strategies you will use to engage with your audiences in perspective transformation throughout all stages of your equity-focused goal. Keep in mind that this process is iterative and you may need to repeat this analysis periodically as you engage in perspective transformation with different key audiences.

	Audience 1:	Audience 2:	Audience 3:
Perspectives on Goal			
Action Needed			
Reason			
Research			
Resonance			
Representational Re-descriptions			
Resources and Rewards			
Real World Events			
Resistance			

	Audience 4:	Audience 5:	Audience 6:
Perspectives on Goal			
Reason			
Research			
Resonance			
Representational Re-descriptions			
Resources and Rewards			
Real World Events			
Resistance			