

Language matters and it starts with us: How to talk about drugs to advocate for reform more effectively

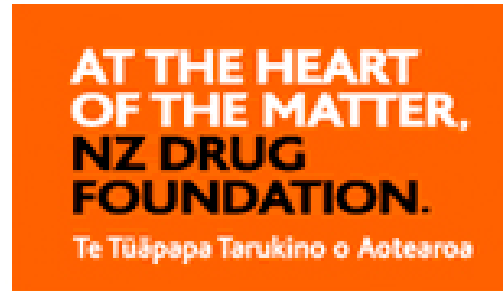
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Acknowledgments

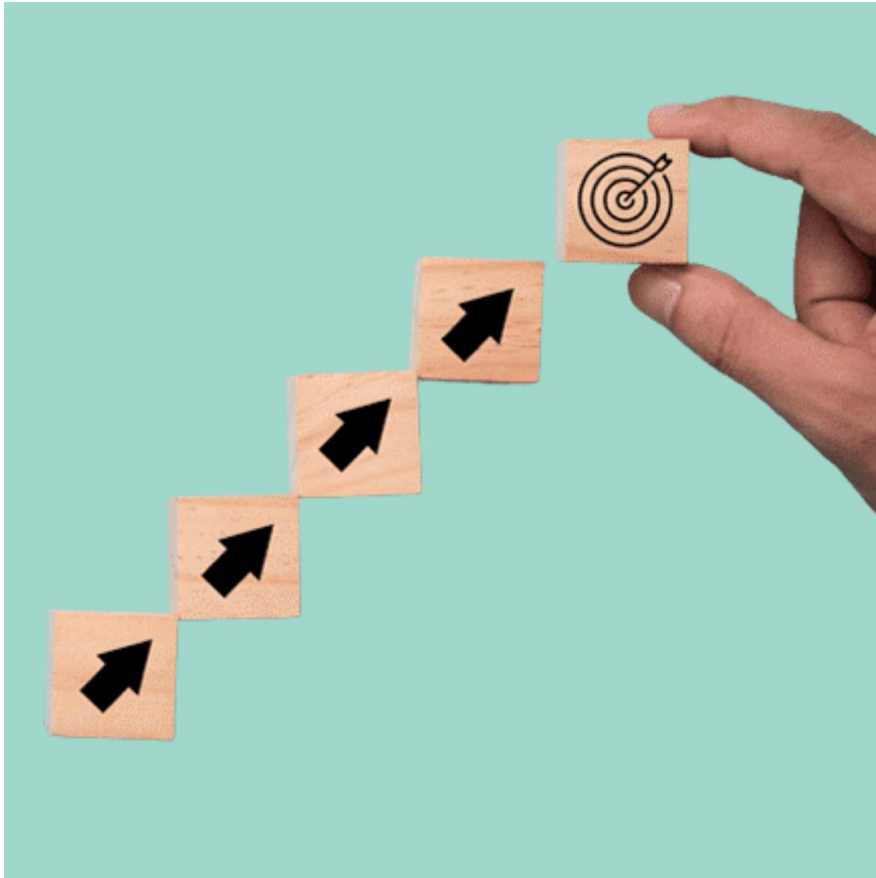
I acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the land on which I live, work and raise my family the Bidjigal and Gadigal people and pay respects to elders past, present and future. These lands were never ceded.



Dr Amanda Roxburgh

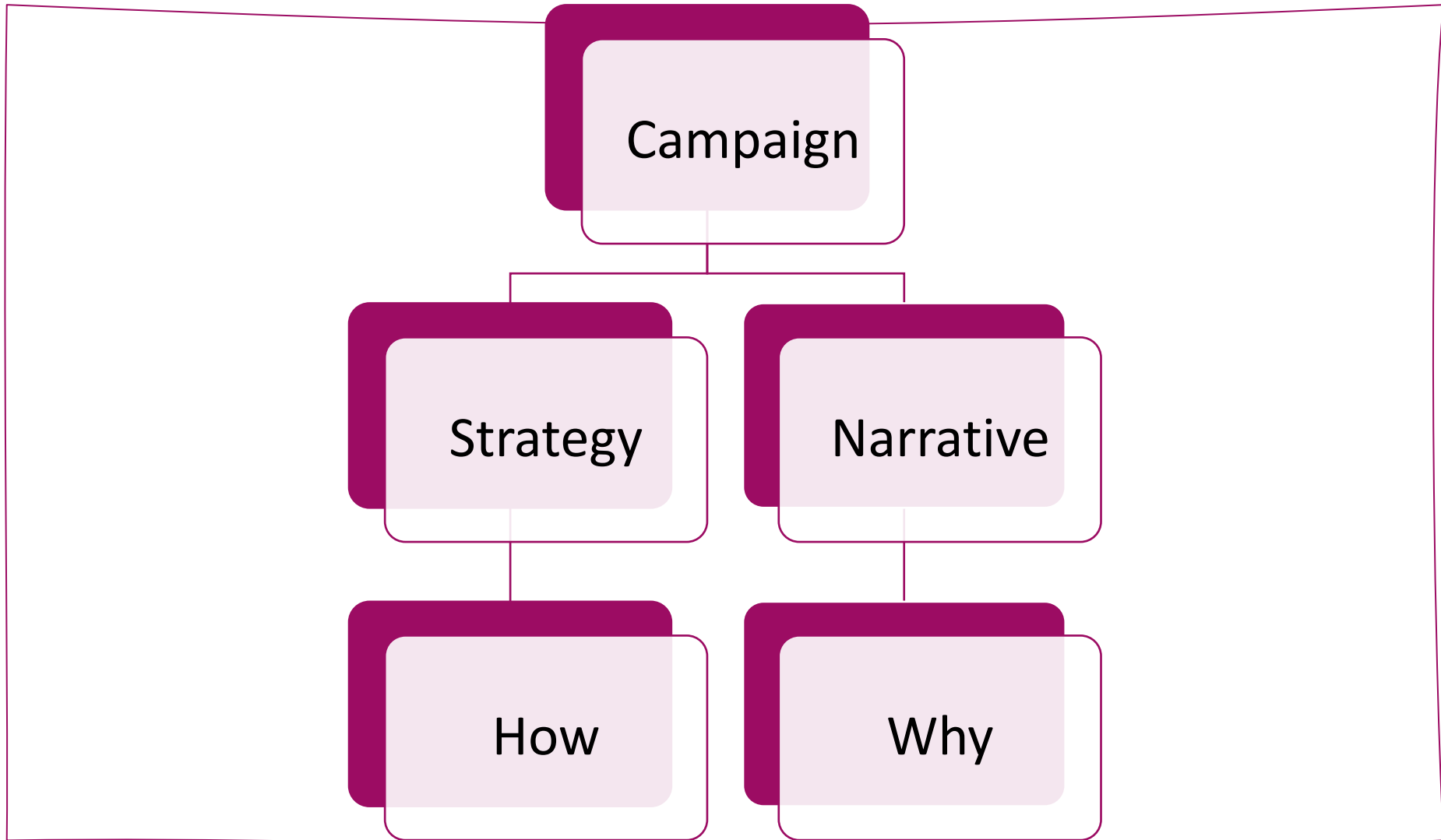
No interest to declare

Fair Treatment

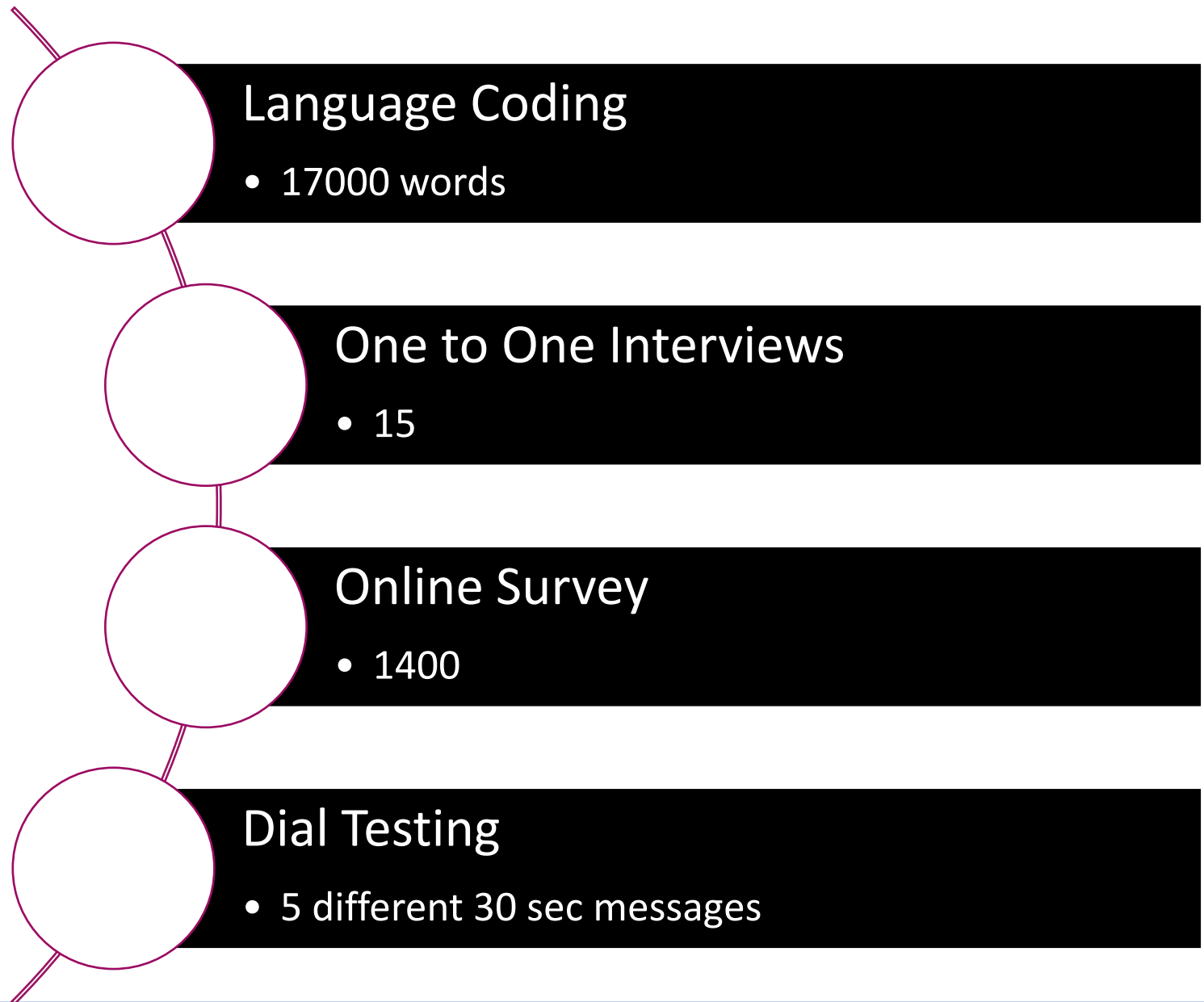


Goal

- Decriminalisation of personal use and possession of all drugs in NSW /ACT.
- Double funding for treatment, especially in rural and regional areas



Methodology



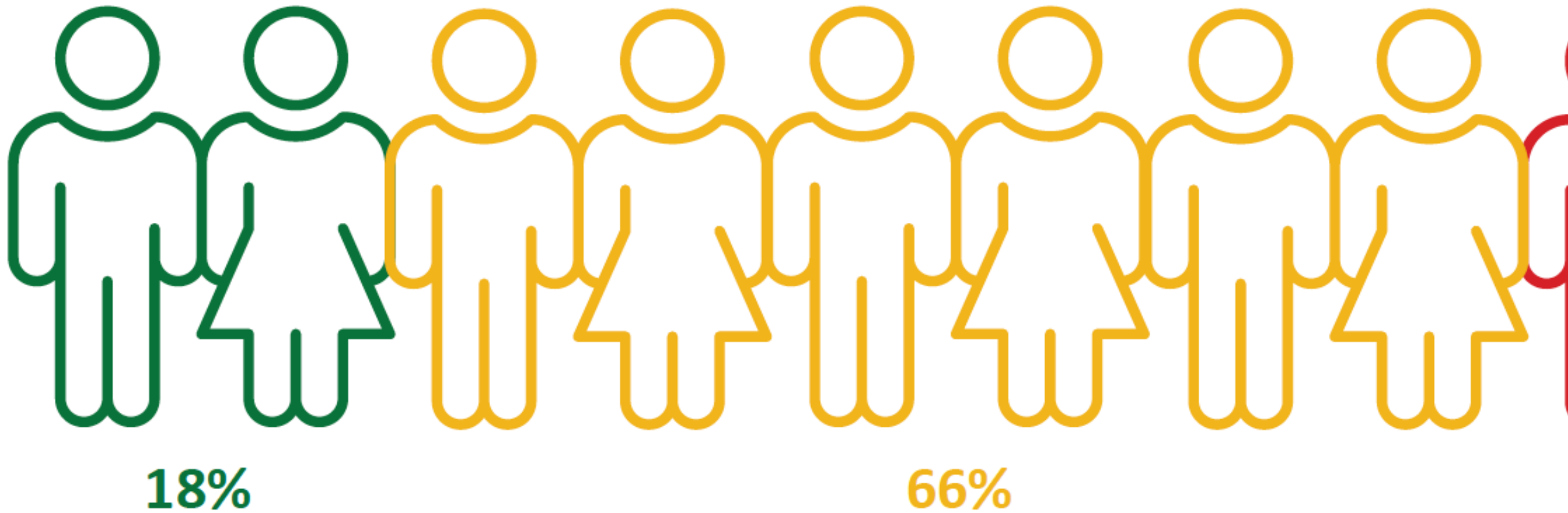
Purpose



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Creating Space for Our Base



Frames

- Frames are mental structures that shape the way we see the world *George Lakoff*
- Cognitive bundles / brain pathways
- Metaphors

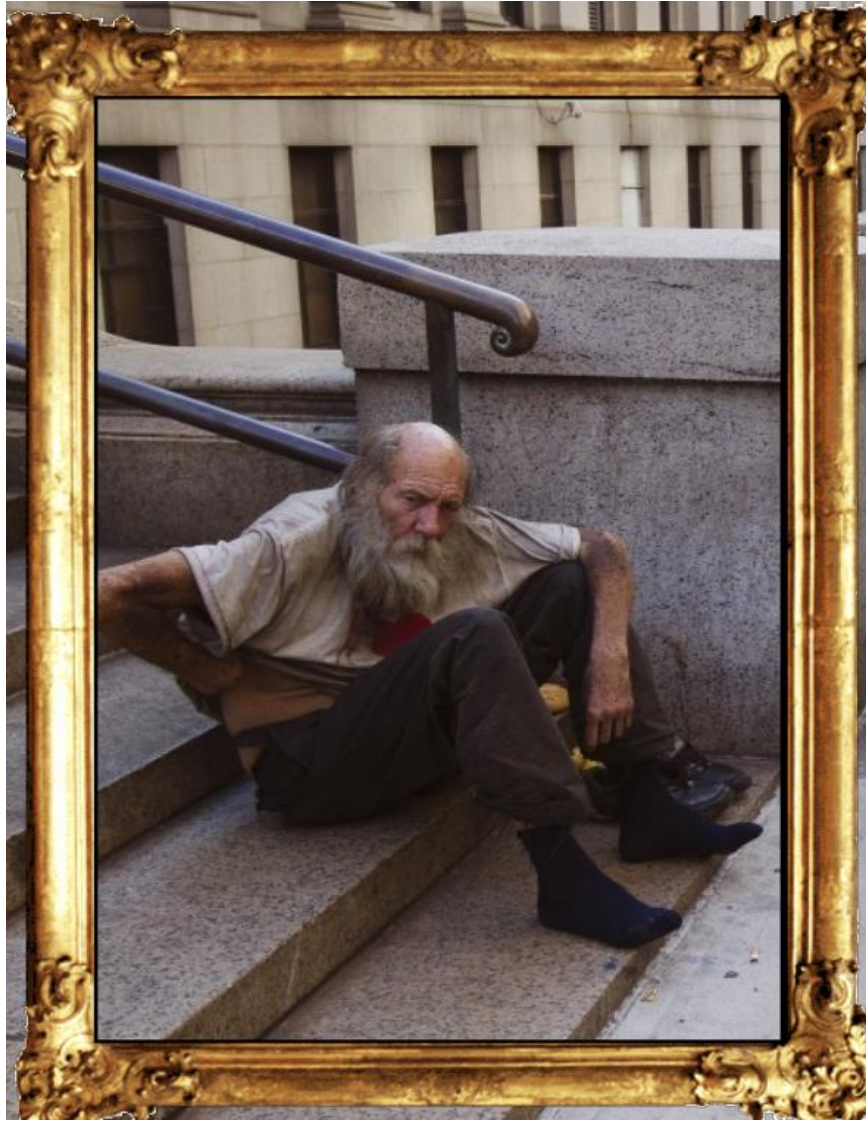
Common Cause





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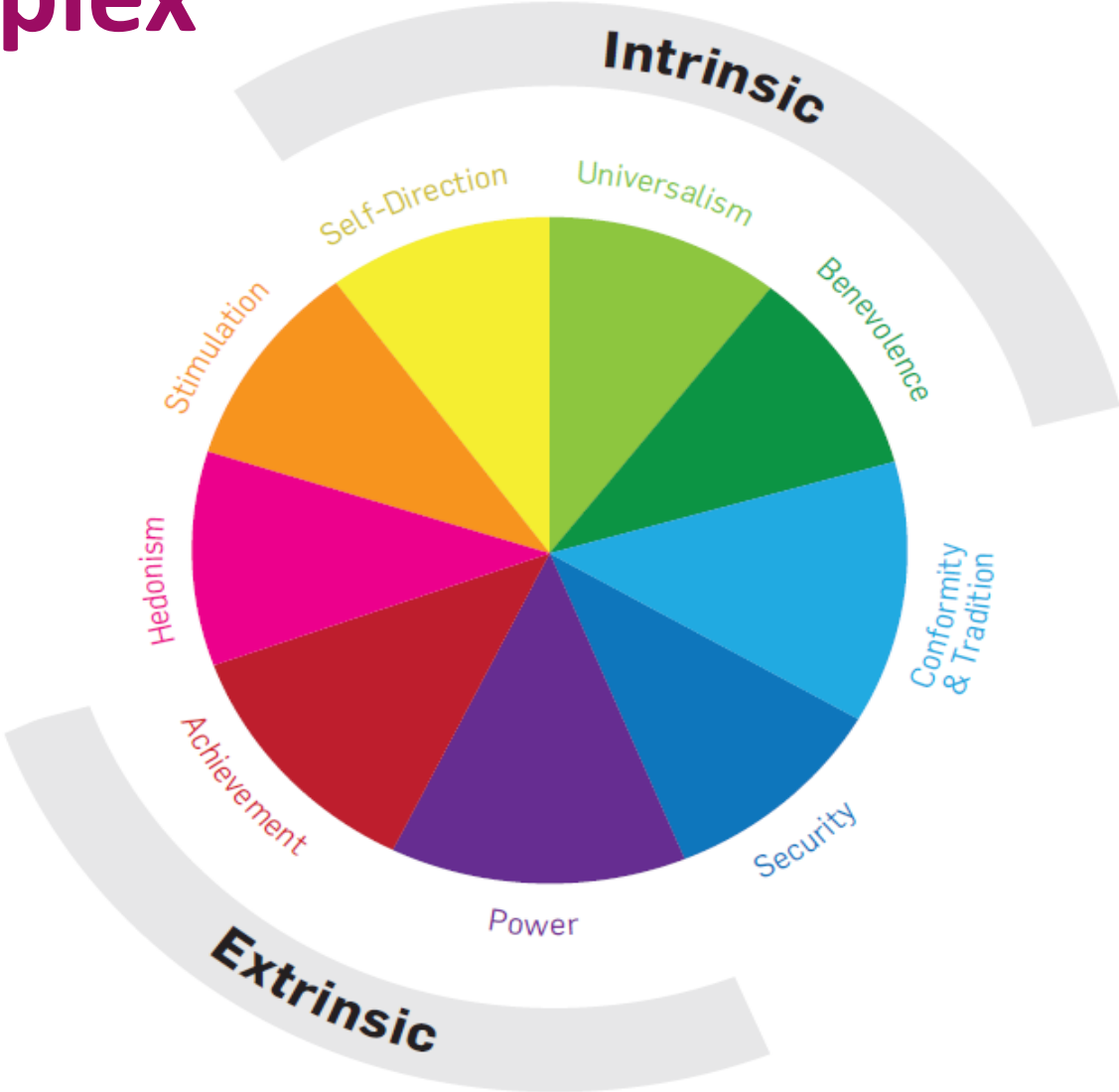
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Frame by Values

- Use messaging that connects strongly to altruistic and open-minded values.



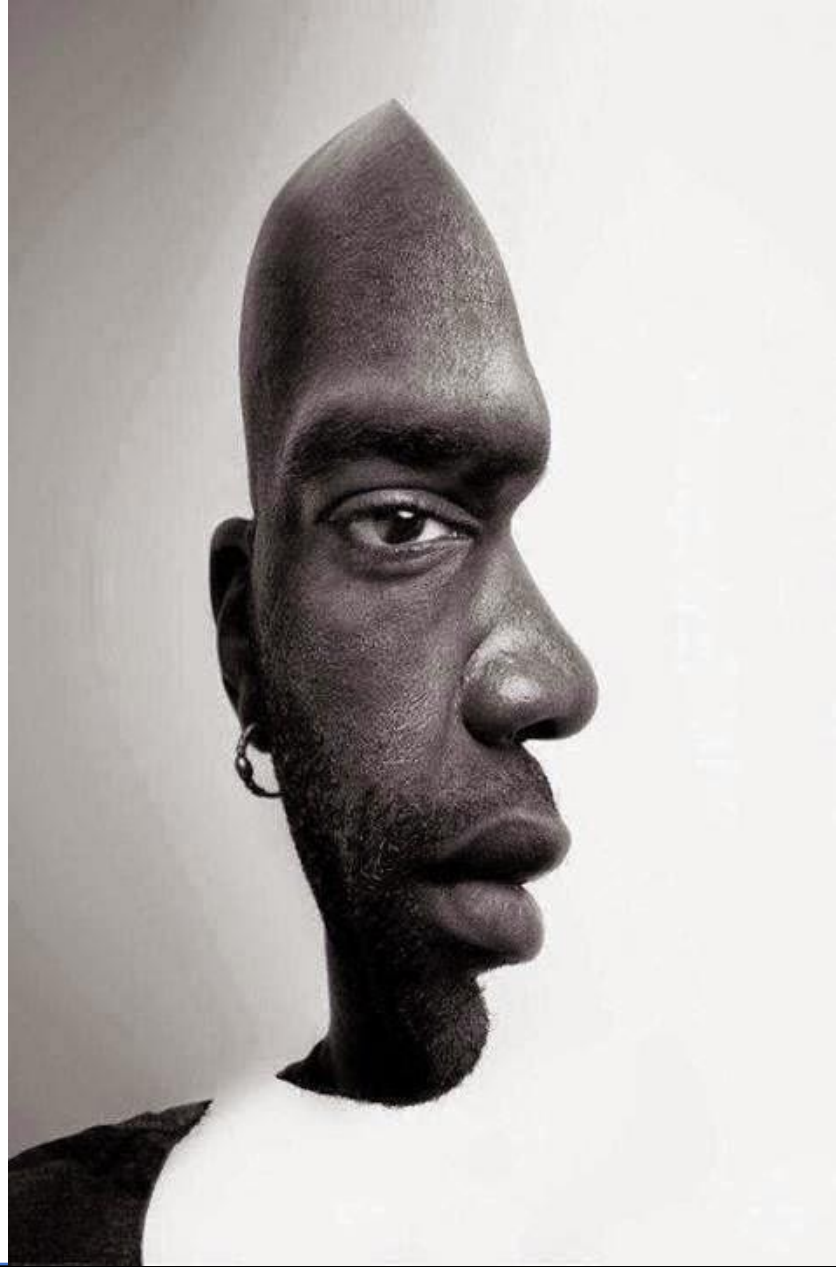
Values Circumplex



Common Cause

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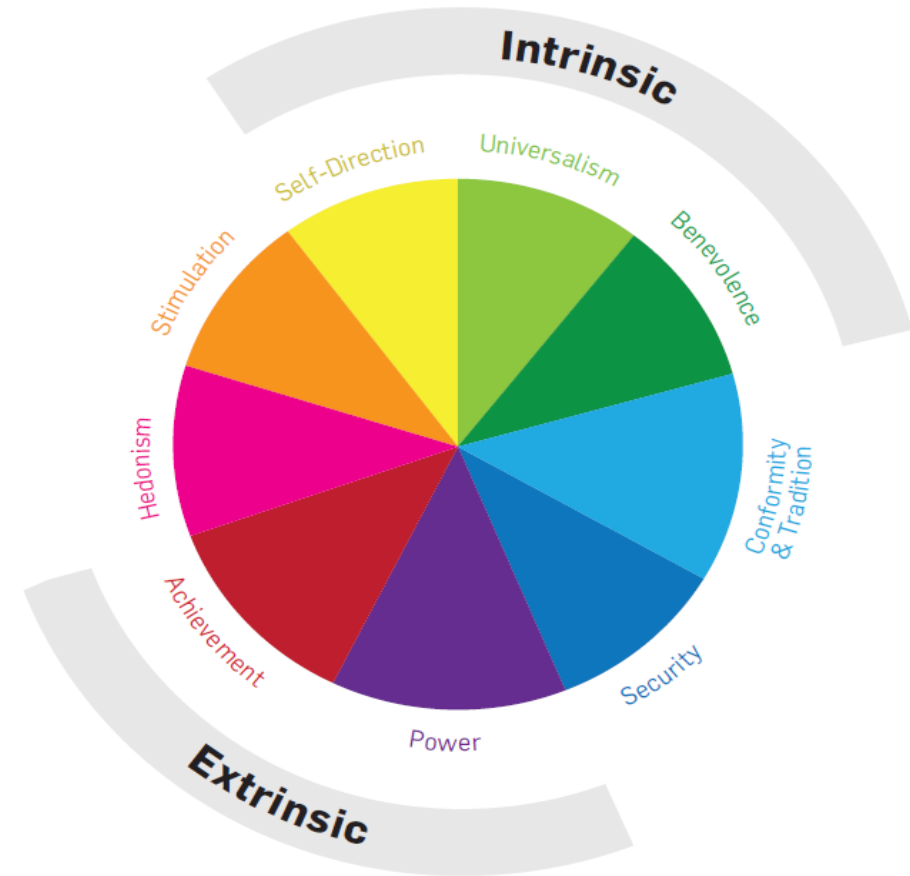
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See-Saw Effect

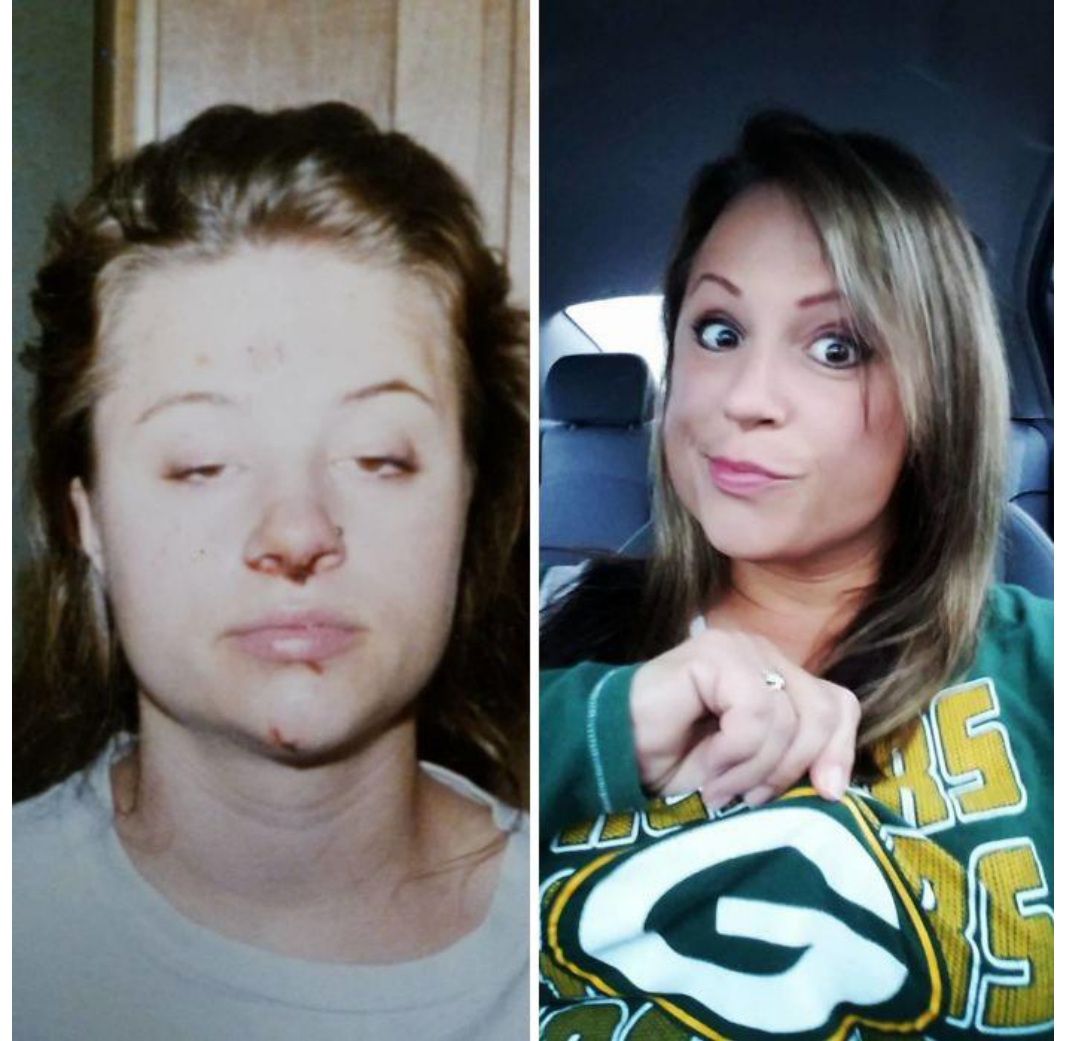


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Don't scare people

- Avoid messaging that activates fear and disgust or implies that all drug use is necessarily problematic.



Avoid law and order frame

- Avoid justifying drug policy reform or drug treatment services from the perspective of reducing crime or increasing community safety.

“Acting CEO of the **prominent AOD organisation** said a contested proposal to effectively decriminalise drug use - that's reportedly being considered by Cabinet - would help reduce crime and make NSW safer”

Don't myth-bust

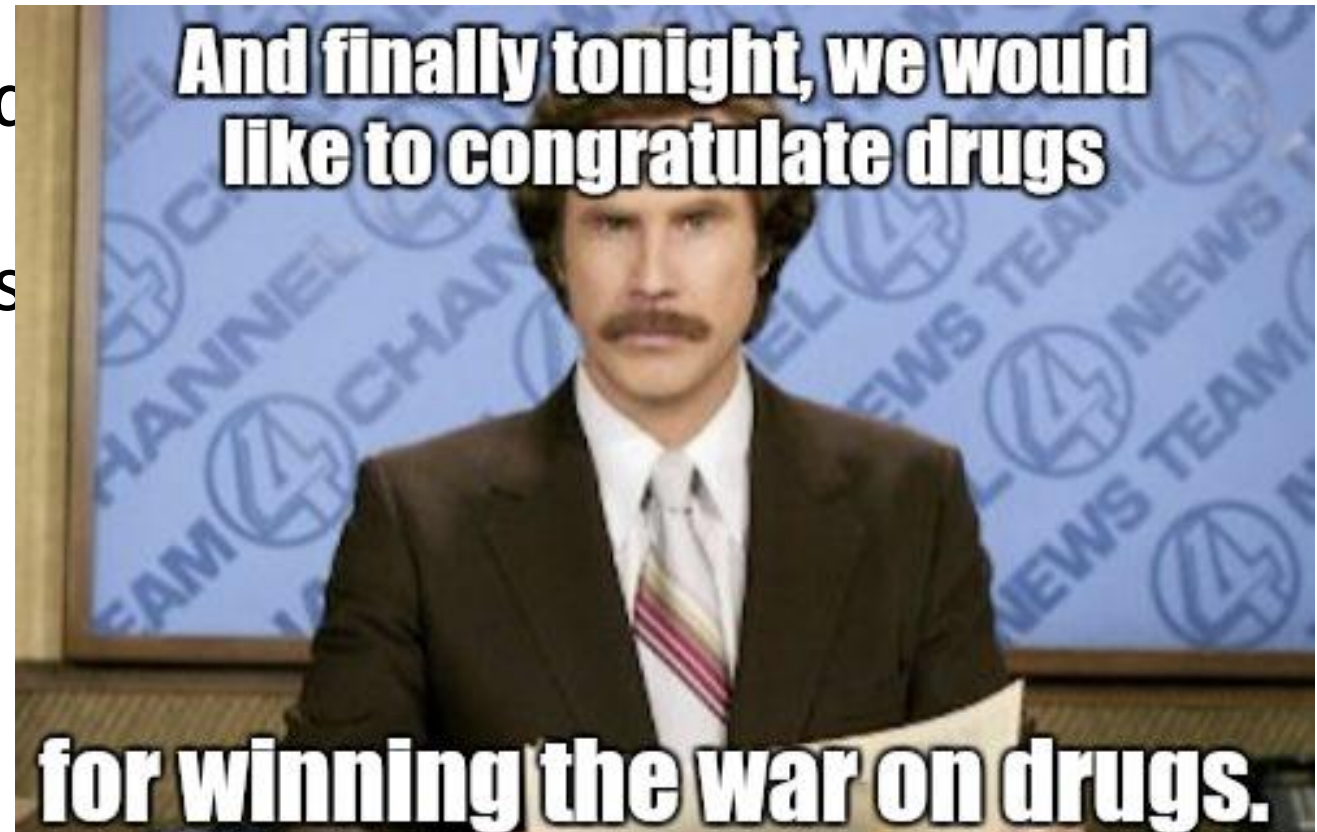
- Stop reminding people of unhelpful ideas and tell your story instead.

Meth Myth 5: All Methamphetamine Users Are Violent

Reality: Research shows that although violent crime is observed among methamphetamine users, these crime rates are comparable to those seen in groups that use other illicit drugs.

Abandon the War on Drugs

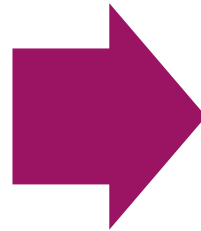
- Stop talking about the failed war on drugs. It traps us in an unhelpful frame and fails to move persuadable audiences



Put people who perpetuate stigma in the frame

- To shift the focus off people who use drugs, frame those who use perpetuate drug stigma as the problem.

“Shouldn’t warnings, fines and referral to treatment be available for all people who use drugs, not just those who use the drugs **society** feels more *comfortable* about or those groups of people that **society** feel are more *deserving* of a second chance.”



“Shouldn’t warnings, fines and referral to treatment be available for all people who use drugs, not just those who use the drugs **politicians** feel more *comfortable* about or those groups of people that **politicians** feel are more *deserving* of a second chance.”

Paint a new picture of people who use drugs

- Point to the diversity of people who use drugs in Australia to undermine simplistic stereotypes
- Bring alcohol into the frame.



Many people use drugs – but here's why ...
theconversation.com



Drug use factors - Drug and Alcohol ...
drugs.ie



22 Reasons Why People Use Drugs ...
emeraldcoastjourneypure.com



Why do people use alcohol and other ...
adf.org.au



UNODC Online Training to Support People ...
unodc.org



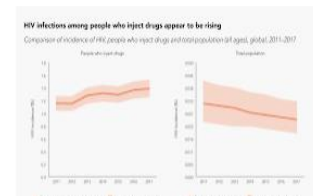
People who Use Drugs and the Covid-19 ...
dianova.org



How to Address Addiction When Licit ...
americanaddictioncenters.org



In Vancouver, people who use drugs are ...
pri.org



Don't build empathy through enjoyment

- Framing drugs as enjoyable does not build empathy for people who use drugs



Frame dependance as a symptom



- Explain why substance dependence happens rather than imply it can happen to anyone

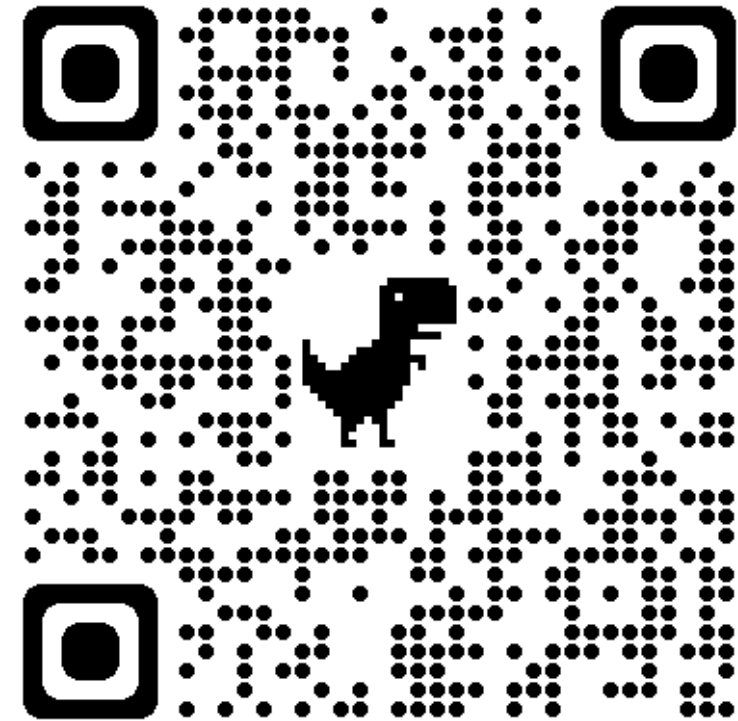
The Reframe Game

If you want to reduce drug use, you need to give people access to treatment and guide them in that direction instead of into the criminal justice system.

Reframing is Social Change

“THINKING
DIFFERENTLY
REQUIRES SPEAKING
DIFFERENTLY...
WORDS MEAN
THINGS AND THE
ONES WE USE
MATTER”

ANAT SHANKER-OSARIO



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