

Words / Phrases to Encourage

Overcoming the 'Us Vs. Them' and the Fatalism (Too Big To Fix) Mental Models

- ✓ All of us / We / Our
- ✓ Community-driven
- ✓ Human potential –
Unlocking / Unleashing
- ✓ Flourishing / Thriving / Vibrant
communities
- ✓ Public service / Public good
- ✓ Well-being
- ✓ Progress
- ✓ Wise investment
- ✓ Preventing / getting ahead of
issues
- ✓ Revitalized economy

People First Descriptors

- ✓ People experiencing
(Rather than “living in”)
 - ✓ People / Families facing adversity
 - ✓ Families with low income / wealth
 - ✓ Working with / Alongside families &
communities (rather than “for”)
- *Remember to use examples from
across the lifespan

Constructing Well-Being

- ✓ Essential bricks and mortar
- ✓ Key building blocks
- ✓ Foundation (Building a strong;
Strengthening)
- ✓ Like a well-built home...
- ✓ Weathering life's storms /
Inevitable ups and downs
- ✓ Involves many different skilled
workers with different specialties
- ✓ Including families on the design
team and construction crew
- ✓ Equipping /having the necessary
equipment to get the job done

Solution-Oriented & Pragmatic

- ✓ Advancing what works
- ✓ Building common ground
- ✓ Leveraging data insights
- ✓ Modernizing policies / Systems to
match today's realities
- ✓ Moving / Working toward
- ✓ Practical
(Ideas, Tools, Options, Steps, etc.)
- ✓ Within our reach
- ✓ Right now / Currently (to signal
what is being done now)

Words / Phrases to Encourage

Metaphors that can work alongside construction, especially when considering design of a well-planned, inclusive community.



Laying Down Tracks

- To connect people to community resources and supports
- To design and lay down pathways to **economic opportunity and mobility** for all

Our economy is like railroad tracks—the way it's built determines where people can go and what they have access to. Creating a revitalized economy means laying down new tracks and repairing old ones so that everyone has access to quality schools, jobs, health care, and community resources that make it possible to thrive.



Power Grid

- To connect people to community resources and supports
- To design and lay down pathways to **economic opportunity and mobility** for all

Opportunities to build a better life for ourselves and our families is like a power grid. We need to be able to connect to people and resources—like education, job training, networking—that make it possible to get ahead. Right now, access to the opportunity grid is uneven—in some communities, access is patchy or almost nonexistent. We can repair and strengthen the grid so that all Americans have access to opportunity to move ahead toward financial stability and a better life.



GPS Navigation

GPS is a powerful tool for visualizing and navigating complex terrain—human services professionals serve this function, drawing on a wealth of **data** to chart out routes from where we as a community are to where we want to be.

Words / Descriptors to Avoid

Triggers Us vs. Them

- ✗ At-risk (children, populations)
- ✗ People in need
- ✗ People with special needs
- ✗ Poor people / Low-income families
- ✗ The ____ (poor, wealthy, disabled, homeless, etc.)
- ✗ Disenfranchised
- ✗ Disadvantaged
- ✗ Delinquent
- ✗ Marginalized
- ✗ Normal
- ✗ Mentally ill
- ✗ Substance abusers
- ✗ Vulnerable
- ✗ Independence
- ✗ Self-sufficiency
- ✗ Self-determination

Triggers Government Dependency

- ✗ Safety net
- ✗ Welfare (recipients, system, etc.)
- ✗ Eligibility determinations
- ✗ Issuing / Providing [public] benefits
- ✗ Government-funded
- ✗ [Public] Programs

Triggers Fatalism (Issues Too Big to Fix)

- ✗ Poverty / Intergenerational poverty / Breaking the cycle / Anti-poverty / “War on”
- ✗ Reform / Transformation (of government)
- ✗ Siloes / Siloed funding (concept of siloes itself is confusing)
- ✗ Unaffordable / Unsustainable
- ✗ Unmet need



In times of crisis, like the COVID-19 pandemic, keep a vigilant lookout for problematic words that appear frequently in the national narrative—such as vulnerable people—and actively try to shift the mental models that can flow from those descriptors (see next slide).