

Narrative Initiative

We Build Narrative Power Through Narrative Organizing

April 2024

Definitions

Narrative The themes and ideas that permeate collections of stories

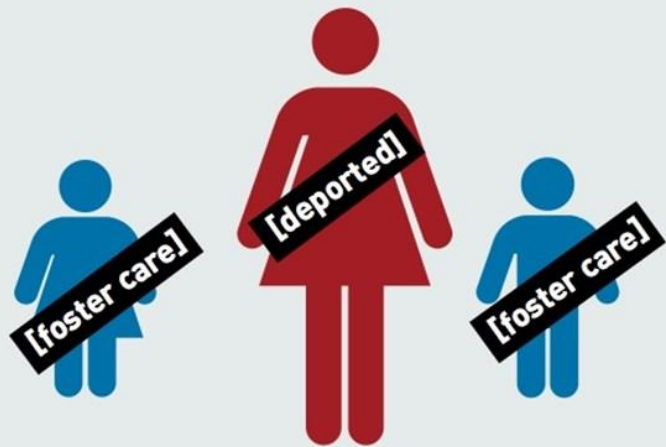
Deep Narrative The stickiest themes and ideas that have permeated stories for more than 50 years

Strategic Communications Tactics for creating frames, messages and stories to influence a short or medium term policy or practice outcome (e.g. support pending legislation or policy approaches)

Narrative Concepts

Strategic Communications	Narrative Change
Time bound 6 months to 3 years	Decades broken into smaller chunks
Attached to current policy processes and demands	Can influence policies but tries to create a new lasting authorizing environment for ambitious changes
Run by communications directors, content creators and message researchers	Led by everyday narrators, long term strategists and organizers
Based on currently shared values	Tries to elevate or establish new values, and get them shared
Is one social change strategy among others, including advocacy, organizing, and cultural change	Helps shape storytelling across all social change strategies, including communications

Strategic Communications vs Narrative Change



DROP THE I-WORD

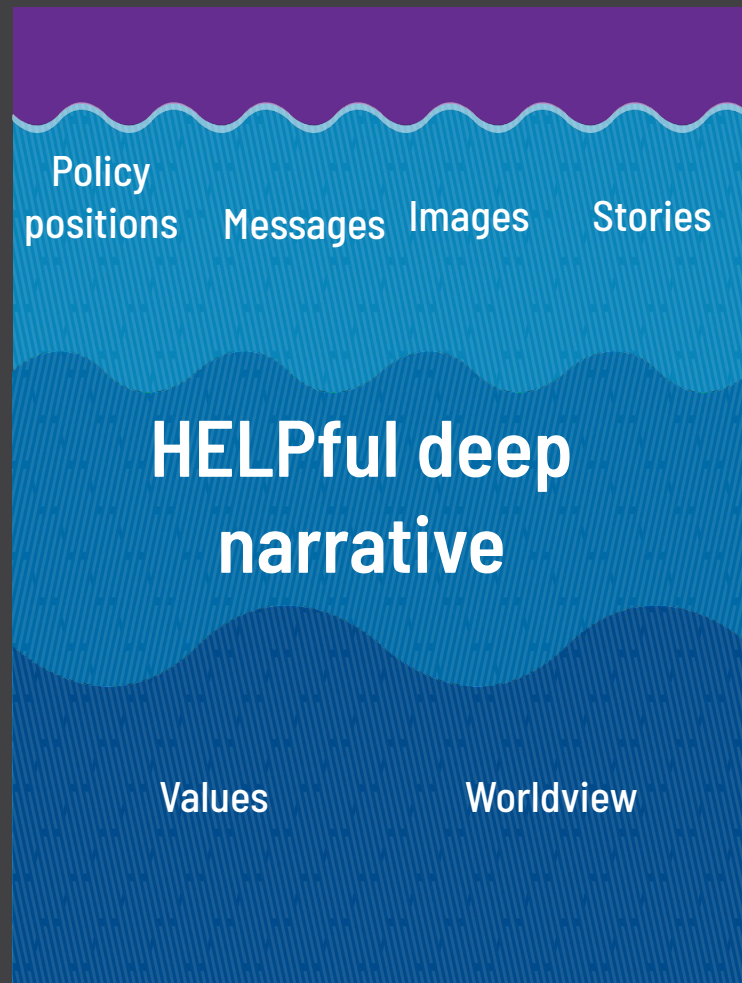
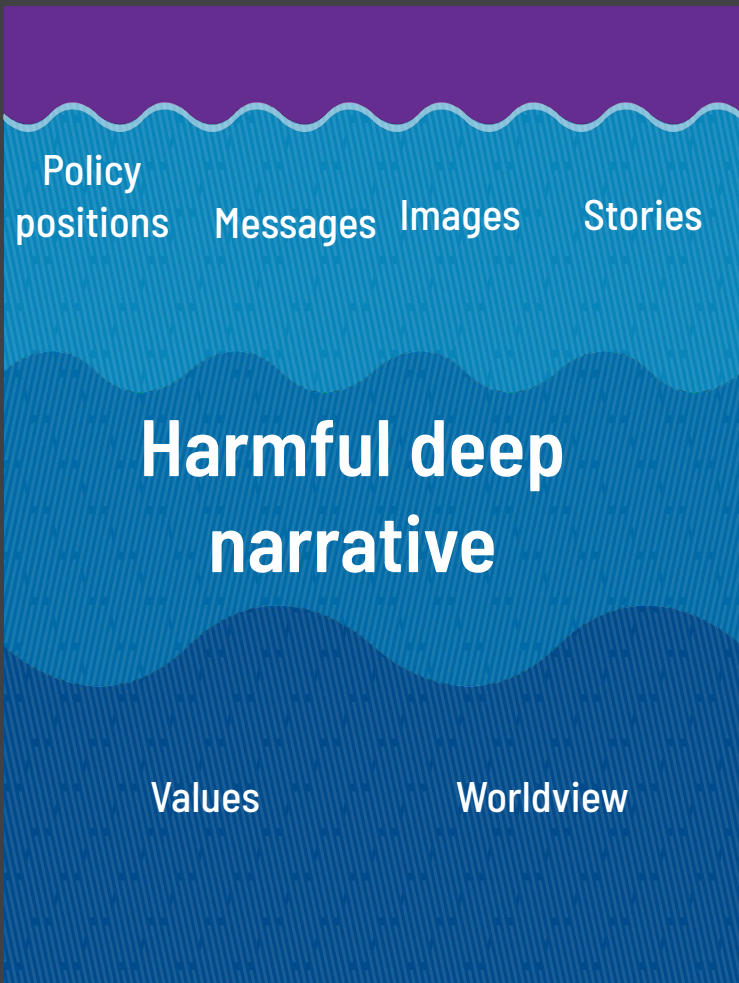
Messages

Stories

Narratives

Values

Worldview



“If you lose your job, you won’t be able to get another one”

“Immigrants will take your job”

Scarcity

Zero-sum thinking
(only one can win)

Survival of the
fittest

Work is mandatory
to meet basic life
needs

Values and Narratives

Harmful: individualism, force, meritocracy, white supremacy, scarcity

Helpful: shared fate, fairness, healing, solutions, "new normal," we save ourselves

Harmful narratives

Themes we surfaced

- American dream
- **Deservingness and personal responsibility**
- **Division amongst workers**
- Fear
- Hopelessness
- Othering
- Racism and classism
- Scarcity

Helpful narratives

Themes we surfaced

- Dignity
- Growing worker consciousness
- Hope
- **Visibility of power dynamics**
- **“Rights to”**
- Worker solidarity
- Movement wins

Bad Habits

- Outrage Amplification
- Overreliance on Data
- Doom and Gloom



Compassion and Information

Help these poor people
Read this brief and repent

VS

Trust and Respect

Look at these contributions!
Acknowledge their agency!

National Domestic Workers Alliance - the work that makes all other work possible.



We organize.



**We develop policy
solutions.**



We change the story.