Media Advocacy & Public Health

Turning the Tide, The Lerner Center for Public Health Promotion
Columbia University

April 27, 2018

Lori Dorfman, DrPH, MPH
• Research on news coverage of public health issues

• Media advocacy training and strategic consultation for community groups and public health advocates

• Professional education for journalists
Mmm.
You deserve better than water.

starbucks
NEXT TO GATE A3

the coffee bean and tea leaf
ACROSS FROM GATE A9

eat & shop
on the fly
“Would you tell me, please, which way I ought to go from here?”

“That depends a good deal on where you want to get to,” said the Cat.

“I don’t much care where——” said Alice.

“Then it doesn’t matter which way you go,” said the Cat.

“——so long as I get somewhere,” Alice added as an explanation.

“Oh, you’re sure to do that,” said the Cat, “if only you walk long enough.”
What do you want to change in the world?

How will you change it?

Why do you want it to be changed?
YES on D

Berkeley vs. Big Soda

Paid for by Yes on Measure D, Healthy Child Initiative Ballot Measure Committee.
It takes more than a message.
Media advocacy is the **strategic** use of mass media to **support** community organizing to **advance** a social or public policy initiative.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Brand X Media</th>
<th>Media Advocacy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Individual Focus</td>
<td>Issue Focus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Warns &amp; Informs</td>
<td>Pressures &amp; Mobilizes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Change</td>
<td>Policy Change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Message</td>
<td>Voice</td>
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<tr>
<td>Information Gap</td>
<td>Power Gap</td>
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Education Can’t Compete
Man Drinking Fat. NYC Health Anti-Soda Ad. Are You Pouring on the Pounds?
Air cover for ground troops.
Frames as Mental Structures
Just a few clues…
...might surprise you

BUPJ IG J JFAI TJ J
What’s on the slate?
Competing Values

**Market Justice**
- Personal responsibility
- You’re on your own
- Duty to your family
- Government interferes

**Social Justice**
- Shared responsibility
- We’re in this together
- Duty to the collective good
- Government protects

A mashup of Daniel Beauchamp 1976 & Jared Bernstein 2006
## Competing Stories: Obesity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>You Are What You Eat</th>
<th>What Surrounds Us Shapes Us</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Poor parenting</td>
<td>Junk food marketing</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bad habits &amp; personal choices</td>
<td>Neighborhood connectivity &amp; safety (transit, recreation)</td>
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<td>Overactive thumbs, underactive legs</td>
<td>No time for physical activity in school</td>
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<tr>
<td>Exercise, and exercise willpower</td>
<td>Local, state, &amp; federal policy (taxes, advertising, zoning, etc.)</td>
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The Need to Reframe

- Institutional Accountability
- Personal Responsibility
HOME TO THE OLDEST UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA CAMPUS, IN 2014 IT BECAME THE FIRST CITY IN THE U.S. TO APPROVE A SODA TAX
Joey Zych, 4, of Lakeside waited for his mother to get change out of her purse so he could get a drink at a vending machine. (David Brooks / Union-Tribune)
two communities, two debates:

News coverage of soda tax proposals in Richmond and El Monte

February 2014