

Talking about trauma:  
Tips and tools for  
communicating effectively

A training for Southern California  
members of the ACEsConnection  
community  
Los Angeles, CA  
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**berkeley media studiesgroup**

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### Berkeley Media Studies Group

- 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




### Goals for today

- **Explore** media framing and what it says about trauma;
- **Discuss** how trauma and adverse childhood experiences appear in the news;
- **Identify** how to make the best use of ACEsConnection tools to build, inform and engage community.




### Today's Trainers

- Pamela Mejia, MS, MPH
- Julieta Kusnir, MPH



### Why are we here?

- Where are you in the process of creating a trauma-informed community?
- What spark are you seeing in your community?
- What challenges are you facing?




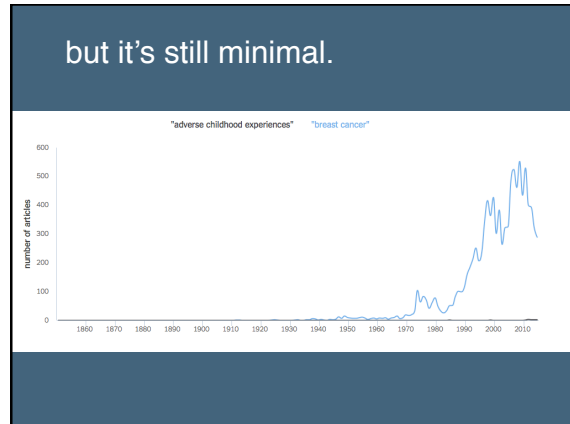
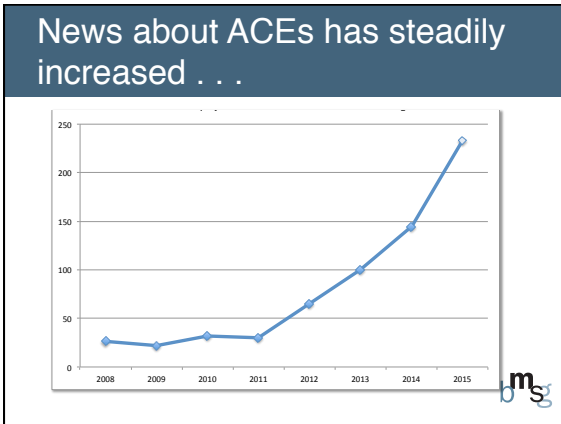
### Key Functions of the News

Setting the Agenda  
↳ What we think about

Shaping the Debate  
↳ How we think about it

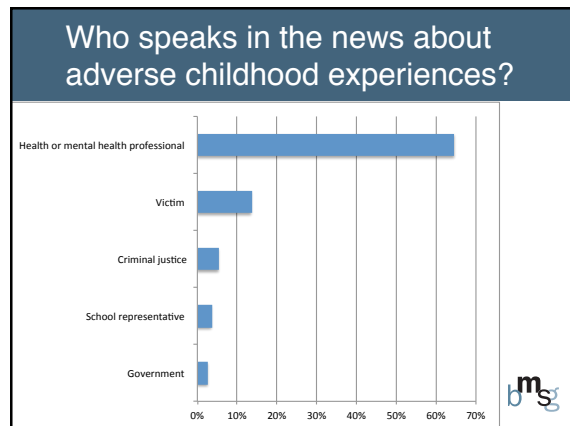
Reaching Opinion Leaders  
↳ What we do about it





### The news about adverse childhood experiences (ACEs)

- . . . is driven by events and initiatives.
- . . . frequently discusses solutions.
- . . . focuses on treatment, not prevention.
- . . . is dominated by health professionals.



### Where did trauma appear in business or education news?

### Childhood trauma rarely appears in education stories . . .

District officials have warned schools to be prepared for students who may be afraid to enroll or who could experience separation anxiety and grief. Some have suffered trauma from witnessing violence.

From "Open arms: LA Unified center helps enroll the influx of young immigrants who have fled Central America," August 14, 2014

... but it could!

“Programs across the city have highlighted the specific issues facing boys and men of color, including community violence, mental health needs, lack of male role models as well as offering academic and personal support to send the students to college . . .”

“Oakland program for black males on White House radar”  
SF Chronicle, March 12 2014

“Last December, the 2-year-old brother of one student – and cousin of another – was shot...It makes it harder to know what motivates each child. Many of them have a lot bigger things than math to take care of.”

From “Nine-hour school day is the norm – and a national model – at Oakland middle school”  
February 16, 2014



Childhood trauma *never* appears in business news, but it could.

Starbucks is changing its scheduling policies to give baristas more “stability and consistency,” following a New York Times report about the havoc created in a young mother’s life by having to work unpredictable shifts determined by the company’s scheduling software . . . the news also comes in the midst of a growing debate about the quality of the bottom-tier of U.S. jobs and the strain they create among workers.

“Starbucks vows to change unpredictable barista work schedules,” *Contra Costa Times*, August 14 2014



When writing for ACEsConnection, consider . . .

- Goal and strategy
- Audience
- Persona
- Content

Content



- How do you decide what to write about?
- Creating news
- Piggybacking

The importance of news monitoring and piggybacking




The importance of news monitoring and piggybacking

### What makes a story “newsworthy”?

- Breakthrough
- Broad Interest
- Local
- Injustice
- Irony
- Conflict
- Anniversary
- Seasonal Link
- Celebrity



### Activity: Brainstorming news hooks

In pairs, brainstorm upcoming news hooks (dates, events, etc.) that could inspire a post on ACEsConnection, then report back to the group.



### Writing for web: Blogging best practices




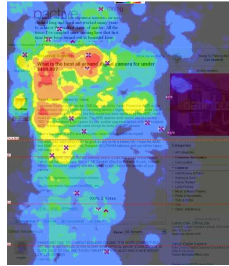
- Headline, teaser and lead
- Length and user experience
- Tone and writing style




### Headlines and leads: How people read on the web

Yahoo eye-tracking study

- Scanning
- Quick decisions



### Headlines: Do’s and don’ts




Aug 31 **Improving Outcomes While Reducing Time In Residential Treatment**


The 2015 Prescription Drug Abuse Summit

April 17, 2015

Domestic violence archives now online 0 comments



### Headlines: Do’s and Don’ts




**Does Sex and Violence Really Sell Products?**

How sex and violence in commercials can backfire for advertisers. 11 min


Posted Jul 27, 2015

**When Young Men Are in an Abusive Relationship**

Nine() other



People view dating abuse victims as being overwhelmingly female. However, one in three teens experience some form of dating abuse, including male victims. And 35 percent of girls reported being the perpetrator at some point in their lives, while 37 percent of boys reported victimization.



### Teasers and leads


JUNE 11, 2015, 11:01 AM

Similar to Hurricane Katrina, when the nation's attention turned to the abject poverty in the South, the unrest following the death of Freddie Gray has unveiled the deep-seated and longstanding neglect in Baltimore. Over the past century, Baltimore has become a tinderbox, easily ignited and difficult to extinguish. The young people who looted and set fires after Gray's death were portrayed in the media as hooligans taking advantage of a chaotic situation to misbehave. But closer to the truth, the uprisings are the culmination of decades of public indifference and misguided policies.

**Helping children can prevent criminals**


CRIME AND punishment! There have been letters and comments in the Albuquerque Journal recently saying that there should be more consistent, just punishment for violent crimes. I think that most of us agree with that as well as punishment for non-violent crimes.

As part of the discussion of the serious issues of crime and punishment, I would like to read and hear recommendations for reducing the incidence of violent and property crime. Perhaps, those advocating only for more punishment are not aware that the incidence of criminal behavior varies between different neighborhoods and different social and economic circumstances.




### Blog length and user experience

- Easy-to-scan text
- Short paragraphs
- Short sentences
- Headings, lists, images



### Tone and writing style

- Minimize self-promotion
- Use plain language
- Keep sentences active and lean




Enjoy your lunch!

### Activity: Blogging practice and first steps

Each person select a topic;


Each person write a lead for that topic and sketch out main points for a blog post.

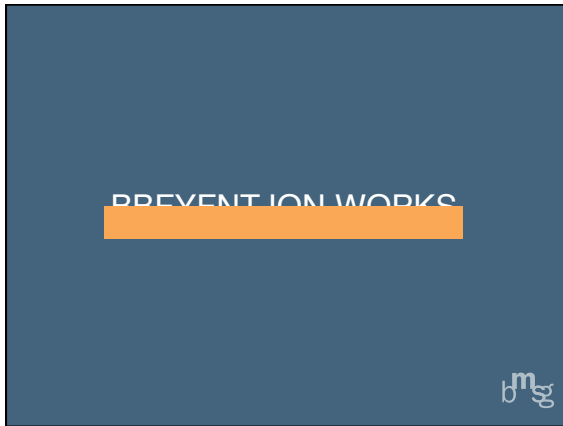


### Activity: Feedback and discussion

In pairs, share and discuss your lead and outline with your partner;


Discuss feedback, highlights, lessons learned with the larger group





### What values connect with your work?

- What values motivate *you* to do this work?
- What stories could you share to illustrate those values?



### Lakoff's Conceptual Levels


- Level 1: Overarching **values** like fairness, responsibility
- Level 2: **Issues** like poverty, children's health, domestic violence
- Level 3: Specific **strategies** like ACE screenings, trauma-informed schools and businesses, early childhood education, etc.

Thanks to the Rockridge Institute



### Components of a message

- Problem statement  
*What's wrong?*
- Policy objective  
*What should be done?*
- Values dimension  
*Why does it matter?*



Questions?

Thank you!

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