

Part I

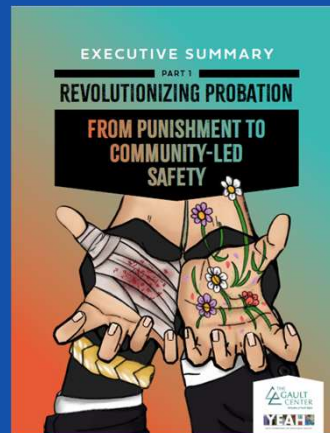
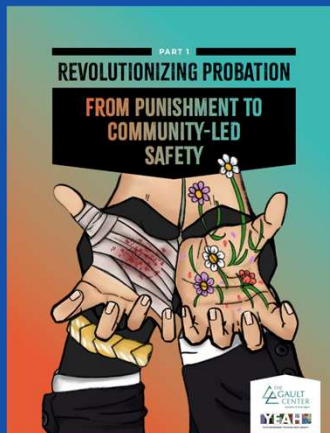
Revolutionizing Probation

From Punishment to Community-Led Safety



1

Report Overview



Upcoming Report

Revolutionizing Probation, Part I

2

Today's Flow

- WHY** the need for change
- WHAT** alternatives to invest in instead
- HOW** to achieve narrative change

3

The Gault Center's Why

- Support national community of youth defenders
- Grow and build litigation strategies
- Advance national and state policy
- Work collectively to connect advocacy efforts

www.defendyouthrights.org



4

Our Collective Why

The Juvenile
Probation System

5

What Is A System's Purpose?

The best way to deduce the system's purpose is to watch for a while to see how the system behaves.

Purposes are deduced from behavior, not from rhetoric or stated goals.

Donella Meadows, *Thinking in Systems: A Primer* (2008)

6

Juvenile Probation

Q1

Stated goals &
Common rhetoric



What is the **stated purpose** of juvenile probation?

What is the **common rhetoric** that juvenile courts and probation say is the purpose of probation?

7

Juvenile Probation

Q2

Behaviors &
Treatment



What are common **behaviors** of juvenile probation?

How does the juvenile probation system **treat** youth and families?

8

What Youth Are Saying

“It put me in a constant state of fear and like I was being watched.”

“Everything you do is like you’re getting monitored, like you’re on a leash.”

“I was depressed about the fact that I may just end up back in jail and that took its toll on me.”

Juvenile probation

Surveils

Controls

Punishes

9

What Is A System’s Purpose?

Stated Goals

Treatment

Service

Rehabilitation

Behavior

Surveils

Controls

Punishes

10



11

History of Juvenile Probation

1825 1st House of Refuge

1841 Probation

1857 *Dred Scott Decision*

1865 *Enslavement of Black children and adults*

1896 Juvenile Court

1899 *Separate but Equal (until 1954)*

1930s Convict Leasing

1940s *Suppression of civil rights activities*

1950s Jim Crow Era

1970s War on drugs and crime

1980s *"Nothing works" & "Superpredator" myth*

1990s *'Superpredators' Arrive*

Should we cage the new breed of vicious kids?

12

"There is an America that is more free — where there's more equality, where there is more justice, where there is less bigotry — and I think it's waiting for us. But I don't think we can ... create that America while we remain burdened by this history that too many refuse to talk about, too many refused to acknowledge."

BRYAN STEVENSON

13

Our Collective Why





14

Revolutionizing Juvenile Probation

YEAH PHILLY AS A MODEL ALTERNATIVE

KENDRA VAN DE WATER & JAMES AYE



YOUTH EMPOWERMENT FOR ADVANCEMENT HANGOUT

THE GAULT CENTER

1




Poll #1
What is the Role of Probation in Your State?

2

Probation Webinar

Visual settings Edit

When poll is active respond at [PollEv.com /gaultcenter598](https://PollEv.com/gaultcenter598) Send gaultcenter598 and your message to [22333](https://text.22333)



What is the role of juvenile probation in your state?

Loading...

Nobody has responded yet.

Hang tight! Responses are coming in.

3

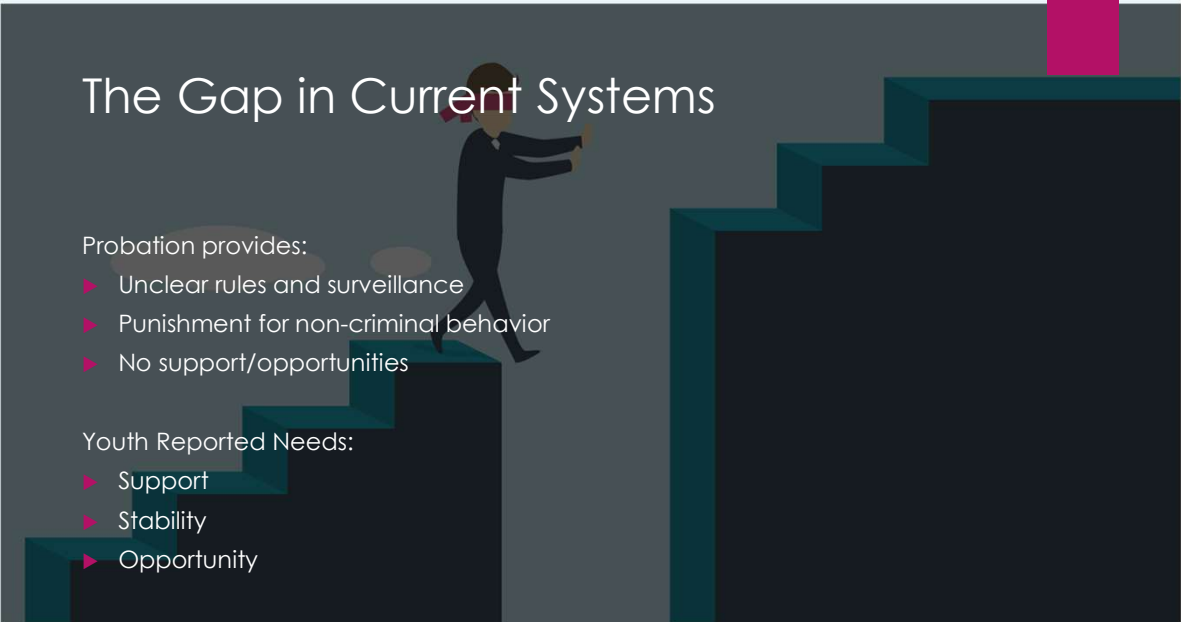
YEAH Philly History

- ▶ Created in 2018 to elevate youth experiences in our communities.
- ▶ Acknowledges lack of services for young people caught in the cycle of violence.
- ▶ Provide services for young people who do not receive traditional support.
- ▶ Challenges the status quo of how we treat and talk about young people.
- ▶ Utilizes direct service to push legislation and make transformational change.
- ▶ Addresses root causes & advocates against racism, harm etc.



4

The Gap in Current Systems




Probation provides:

- ▶ Unclear rules and surveillance
- ▶ Punishment for non-criminal behavior
- ▶ No support/opportunities

Youth Reported Needs:

- ▶ Support
- ▶ Stability
- ▶ Opportunity

5



What Youth Actually Need

Fierce advocates	Consistent relationships	Opportunities to mess up & regroup
Safe spaces	Economic opportunity	Mental health support

6

YEAH Philly: An Innovative Approach

Community-based alternative focused on:

- Support over surveillance
- Opportunity over punishment
- Relationships over "compliance"
- Progress over recidivism
- Harm reduction vs anti-violence

7

What YEAH Philly Does

- ▶ Acknowledge young people as experts of their own lives
- ▶ Paid job/skills opportunities
- ▶ Protects young people
- ▶ Conflict resolution & peer mediation
- ▶ Leadership development
- ▶ Safe community spaces
- ▶ Allows mistakes/sets consequences
- ▶ Autonomy/Gives choice

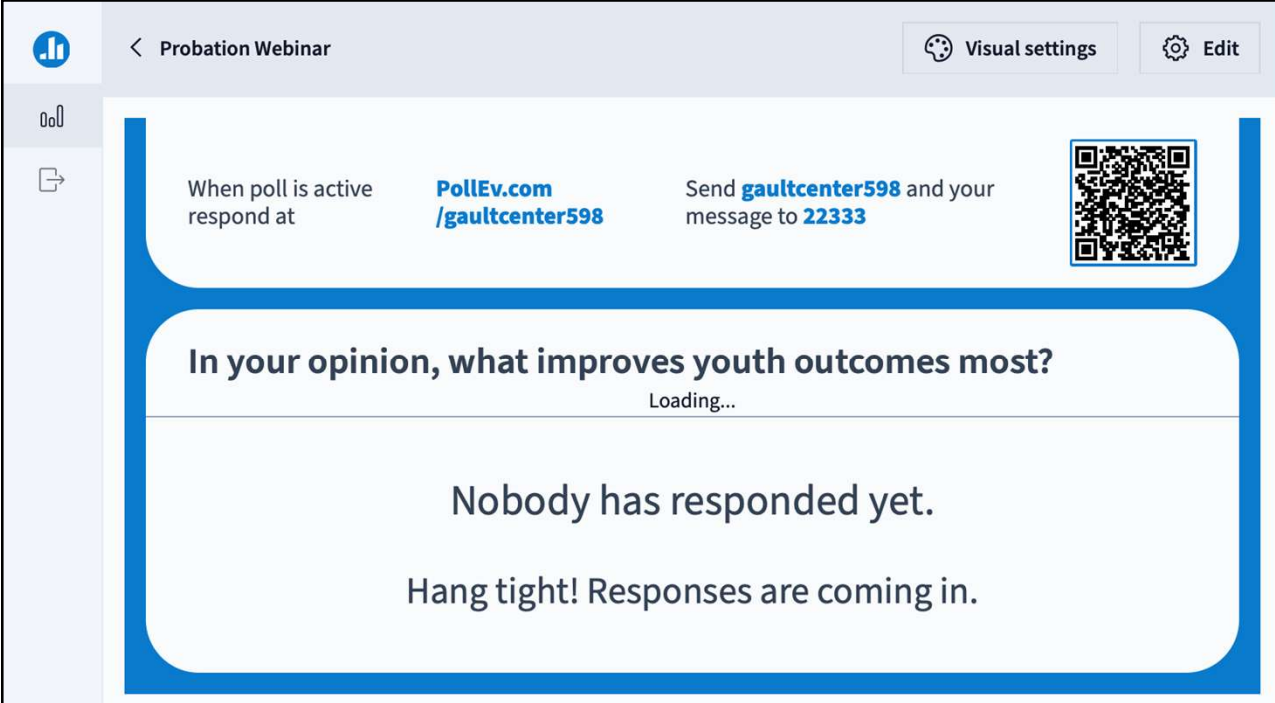


8



Poll #2: What Works?
IN YOUR OPINION, WHAT IMPROVES YOUTH OUTCOMES MOST?


9



Probation Webinar

Visual settings Edit

When poll is active respond at [PollEv.com /gaultcenter598](https://poll-ev.com/gaultcenter598) Send gaultcenter598 and your message to [22333](https://text59822333)



In your opinion, what improves youth outcomes most?
Loading...

Nobody has responded yet.

Hang tight! Responses are coming in.

10

Why YEAH Philly Works

Meets immediate & real needs (income, safety)

Builds trust and relationships

Reduces isolation and stress

Creates real pathways forward

Utilizes fierce advocacy

Challenges racism, harm, systems

11

Accountability Without Carceral Punishment

- ▶ Showing up for community
- ▶ Repairing harm through restorative processes
- ▶ Strength & growth focus
- ▶ Consequences vs. carceral punishment
- ▶ People investment in real time
- ▶ Earn/Incentivize



12

Community Violence Intervention

- Interrupts cycles of violence
- Supports youth in real time
- Provides alternatives to system involvement
- Addresses root causes of violence and problems
- Provides individualized, holistic support
- Develops young people as leaders to reduce violence
- Does not feed information to law enforcement

13




Poll #3: Should the topic of juvenile probation be labeled as a public health issue?

14

Probation Webinar

Visual settings Edit

Join by Web [PollEv.com /gaultcenter598](https://PollEv.com/gaultcenter598) Join by Text Send gaultcenter598 to 22333




Should the topic of juvenile probation be labeled as a public health issue?

0%	0%	0%
(A)	(B)	(C)
Yes	No	Not sure

15

From Probation to Community Solutions

- ▶ Reframe the narrative and shift from:
- ▶ Compliance → Support
- ▶ Surveillance → Relationships
- ▶ Punishment → Opportunity
- ▶ Real investment in people



16

What This Means for Your Role

Judges: Reduce reliance on probation

Gov/Probation: Shift toward support-based models & change internal policies

Lawyers: Advocate for alternatives & find resources

Funders: Invest in community solutions

Family/Community: Reduce reliance on probation – rely on community

17

What You Can Do In Your Role

Advocate	Advocate for alternatives
Challenge	Challenge the status quo
Shift	Shift practice
Fund	Fund community orgs
Learn	Learn more by joining JPAC

18

The Role of JPAC

- ▶ Building a national movement to:
 - ▶ Center youth voice and experiences
 - ▶ Highlight community-based solutions
 - ▶ Create campaigns and legislative action
 - ▶ Expose the harms of probation with youth led research
 - ▶ Release data and information to inform



19

Close

- ▶ We don't need to fix probation.
- ▶ We need to invest in what works.
- ▶ We need to challenge and address structural & systemic racism.
- ▶ YEAH Philly is one example of that future.



20



YEAH Philly:
Our Roads
Lead To
Liberation

NARRATIVE CHANGE TO REVOLUTIONALIZE PROBATION



INSTITUTE OF WOMEN & ETHNIC STUDIES

MARCH 26, 2026

1

IWES STAFF



Community-based public health non-profit

Community engaged research, media production & narrative change, program development & delivery, training & advocacy

Focal Areas:

- Resilience & Mental Health;
- Maternal & Child Health,
- Adolescent Health, Healing Justice



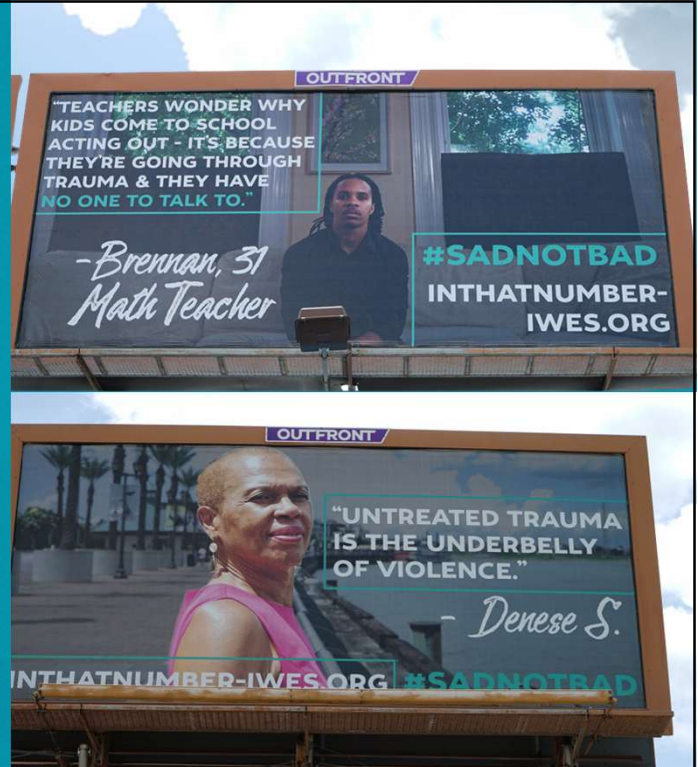
Denese Shervington, MD, MPH
Psychiatrist, Public Health Practitioner



Iman Shervington, MFA
Filmmaker, Communications Specialist

2

WHAT IS NARRATIVE CHANGE?



3

“

“The narratives that build the public imagination of a country are in the hands of people who already have a lot of power. They are the ones who dominate in the production and distribution of narratives. They play a role in keeping things as they are.”

– ELENA MEJIA JUICA

4

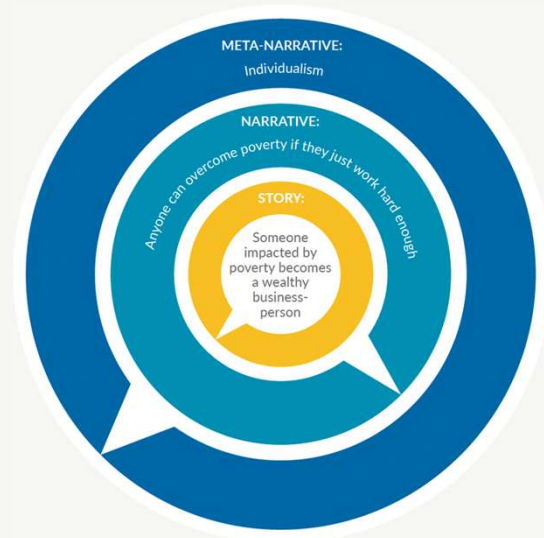
Narrative change is about **shifting** definitional **power** to **advance** broader **social change**. It is the effort to challenge, modify, or replace existing narratives that perpetuate inequity and uphold an unjust status quo, through the creation and deployment of new or different narratives.

Measuring Narrative Change: [Understanding Progress and Navigating Complexity](#) | ORS Impact

5

NARRATIVE LEVELS

What levels of narrative are most relevant to your work?



6

STORY – *individual stories*

A man of Honduran descent has been living in Los Angeles for over 30 years and has a green card. He lives with his wife and children, who were born and raised here in LA, as well as his two grandchildren, who he reads bedtime stories to almost every night. He has had a variety of odd jobs throughout his life, and his most recent job is at a restaurant in East LA, where he has worked for nearly 10 years. Last week on his way to work, ICE “agents” chased him down at the gas station and unlawfully detained him, without allowing him the right to counsel or proving that he had committed a crime.

NARRATIVE – *the broader narrative of all of the stories*

The “American Dream” is not true for all immigrants, especially those from minoritized backgrounds.

META-NARRATIVE – *the broader belief/metaphor/existential question*

Individualism, xenophobia, American exceptionalism, racism

LEVELS

7

NARRATIVE FUNCTION

How will your narrative function?



Creating



Countering



Amplifying

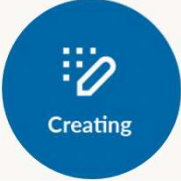






Reframing



Attaching

8

CREATING	COUNTERING	AMPLIFYING	REFRAMING	ATTACHING
 <p>Creating</p>	 <p>Countering</p>	 <p>Amplifying</p>	 <p>Reframing</p>	 <p>Attaching</p>
<p>Create a brand new narrative around an issue where no prior narrative exists</p>	<p>Undermine an unfavorable narrative by disseminating an alternative narrative that decreases its impact</p>	<p>Expand the reach and increase the audience (and thus impact) of a narrative with new messengers and channels</p>	<p>Reimagine a more favorable way of viewing the same issue, undermining the logic of the current frame</p>	<p>Connect the issue you are working on to a broader narrative, or expand the narrative to include your issue</p>

FUNCTION

9

☰ Poll

NARRATIVE FUNCTION

How would you most like your narrative to function?

Join by Web

Pollev.com/gaultcenter598

SCAN
HERE



Join by Text

Send **gaultcenter598**
to **22333**

10

Probation Webinar

Visual settings Edit

When poll is active respond at PollEv.com/gaultcenter598 Send gaultcenter598 to 22333

How would you most like your narrative to function?

Option	Percentage
CREATE a new narrative	0%
COUNTER an unfavorable narrative	0%
AMPLIFY your narrative	0%

SEE MORE




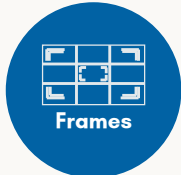

11

ELEMENTS OF NARRATIVE

What elements of narrative are you trying to change?

- Language
- Stories
- Voice
- Frames
- Messages

12

<h3>LANGUAGE</h3>	<h3>STORIES</h3>	<h3>VOICE</h3>	<h3>FRAMES</h3>	<h3>MESSAGES</h3>
<p><i>the words we use to describe or talk about something</i></p>	<p><i>the unique stories we tell about an issue</i></p>	<p><i>the lens through which we understand a story</i></p>	<p><i>how we set up the way to look at an issue</i></p>	<p><i>core takeaways from the language, stories, and frames</i></p>
 <p>Language</p>	 <p>Stories</p>	 <p>Voice</p>	 <p>Frames</p>	 <p>Messages</p>
<p>Use humanizing terms. E.g. “people living with HIV” instead of “HIV positive.” Immigrants, migrants, refugees, guests, etc. instead of “illegal aliens.”</p>	<p>E.g. Share stories about immigrants’ humanity, their struggles to live everyday lives, & how they can add to communities, instead of reinforcing the idea that they are criminals, take people’s jobs, etc.</p>	<p>Elevate marginalized voices on issues that the dominant culture framed for them. E.g. Hear from DREAMers telling their stories about who they are, why they’re here, etc.</p>	<p>E.g. Use humanizing language, tell stories that show immigrants contribute to society, hear directly from them, use real photos, build story through order/placement</p>	<p>E.g. Since inception, the US has been a country of immigrants. Immigrants are welcome & have a right to be here. Immigrants enrich & contribute to society.</p>

ELEMENTS

13

☰ Poll


NARRATIVE ELEMENTS

What narrative element do you most want to change?

Join by Web

PollEv.com/gaultcenter598

SCAN HERE



Join by Text


Send **gaultcenter598** to **22333**

14

Probation Webinar

Visual settings Edit

When poll is active respond at PollEv.com/gaultcenter598 Send `gaultcenter598` to 22333




What narrative element do you most want to change?

LANGUAGE commonly used	0%
STORIES usually told	0%
VOICES usually heard	0%
FRAMES typically used	0%
MESSAGES commonly shared	0%

15

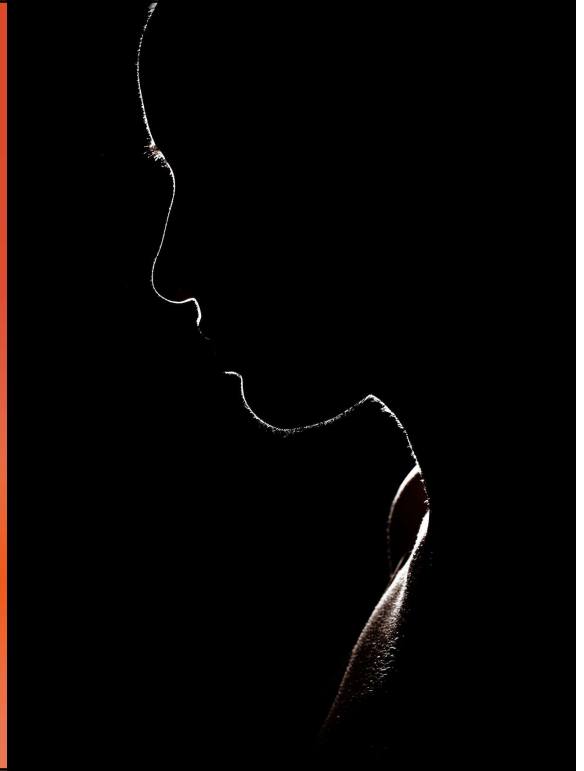
AUDIENCE

Who are you trying to reach with your work?



16

PSYCHOLOGICAL FRAMEWORKS



17

The Psychology of Public Persuasion How Do You?



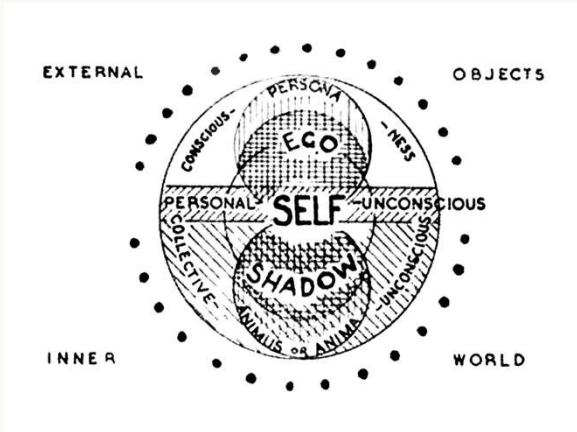
- Persuade attitudes
- Manipulate and change public opinion for a perceived social good
- Guide the public's attitude – Motivation for change

Edward Bernay's (Freud's nephew) "Torches of Freedom" - promotion of smoking in women in the 1920s by branding smoking as feminist

PSYCHOLOGICAL FRAMEWORKS

18

Jungian Theory of Mind



**Personal
Unconscious**



**Collective
Unconscious/
Archetypes**



PSYCHOLOGICAL FRAMEWORKS

19

Developing a Psychological Framework for Narrative Change for Societal Good

1. Most people's opinions and behaviors are driven by **unconscious desires** and **irrational impulses**, combined with **sociocultural identity beliefs and norms**
2. **Motivation** - the desire to repeat previous experiences of pleasure and avoid previous experiences of frustration - filters the present through the past to reach a **decision about action to be taken**
3. **Archetypes** help to understand **inner motives** of a wider group of people (beyond stereotypes) - the **emotional blueprint** that connects the individual to the universal and human condition

PSYCHOLOGICAL FRAMEWORKS

20

The Psychology of Public Persuasion

What Can You Do?

- Can you explore the **sociocultural shadows** in the priority population you are trying to influence?
- How can you **motivate** individual/group **inner desires** to enhance their "Core Self" towards being more Curious, Courageous, Connected, Compassionate?
- Based on that analysis, what **Archetypal pattern** would best 'Pierce' those **shadows**?

PSYCHOLOGICAL FRAMEWORKS

21

Invoking Archetypal Approaches for Behavior Change

Marketing Archetypes

- | | |
|-------------|------------|
| • Innocent | • Lover |
| • Orphan | • Creator |
| • Hero | • Jester |
| • Caregiver | • Sage |
| • Explorer | • Magician |
| • Rebel | • Ruler |



PSYCHOLOGICAL FRAMEWORKS

22

OUTPUTS

*Where do you want to see change?
What can you measure?*

- ATTITUDES/BELIEFS
- BEHAVIORS
- INSTITUTIONS
- MEDIA/CULTURE
- ORG. CAPACITY
- POLICIES
- REACH
- SOCIAL NORMS



23

DISSEMINATION

How will you put your narrative out into the world?




24

WORD CLOUD IMPEDIMENTS

What (or who) is stopping you from changing the narrative about juvenile probation?

Join by Web
PollEv.com/gaultcenter598

SCAN HERE


Join by Text
Send **gaultcenter598** to **22333**

25

Probation Webinar

Visual settings Edit

When poll is active respond at PollEv.com/gaultcenter598 Send **gaultcenter598** and your message to **22333**

What (or who) is stopping you from changing the narrative about juvenile probation?

Loading...

Nobody has responded yet.
Hang tight! Responses are coming in.

26

SELF-REFLECTION: BRIGHT SPOTS

Write down three allies that can help you change the narrative about juvenile probation?

“the youth will remember the people that stood up for them forever”

27



KEEP IN TOUCH!

EMAIL:

dshervington@iwesnola.org

iman@iwesnola.org

SOCIAL MEDIA:

- /IWES.NOLA
- /institute-of-women-and-ethnic-studies
- @iwes_nola
- @iwesnola
- @IwesNola

WEBSITES:

iwesnola.org
mosaic-iwes.com
thisiswhy-iwes.com

28