

We will get started soon,
please introduce yourself
in the chat:

Your name & pronouns

Your location

berkeley **media** studies group



Reporting on home:
Analyzing U.S. news to
advance housing justice
and health equity

Webinar with Housing Now!
October 18, 2022

berkeley **media** studies group



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Housing Now!

- Broad and diverse coalition: 150+ orgs in CA
- Goal: Engage communities to build power, make housing affordable, combat displacement crisis
- Support for 3 P's policies: Protecting renters, preserving and adapting existing homes, producing new homes
- Stability & opportunity for all renters
- Led by tenants and recognition of disproportionate impact in working class communities of color



Berkeley Media Studies Group

- Research on news coverage and other narratives about public health and social justice issues
- Media advocacy training and strategic consultation for community groups and public health advocates
- Professional education for journalists

What's the difference?



Social Marketing

Individual Focus

Warns & Informs

Personal Change

Message

Information Gap



Media Advocacy

Issue Focus

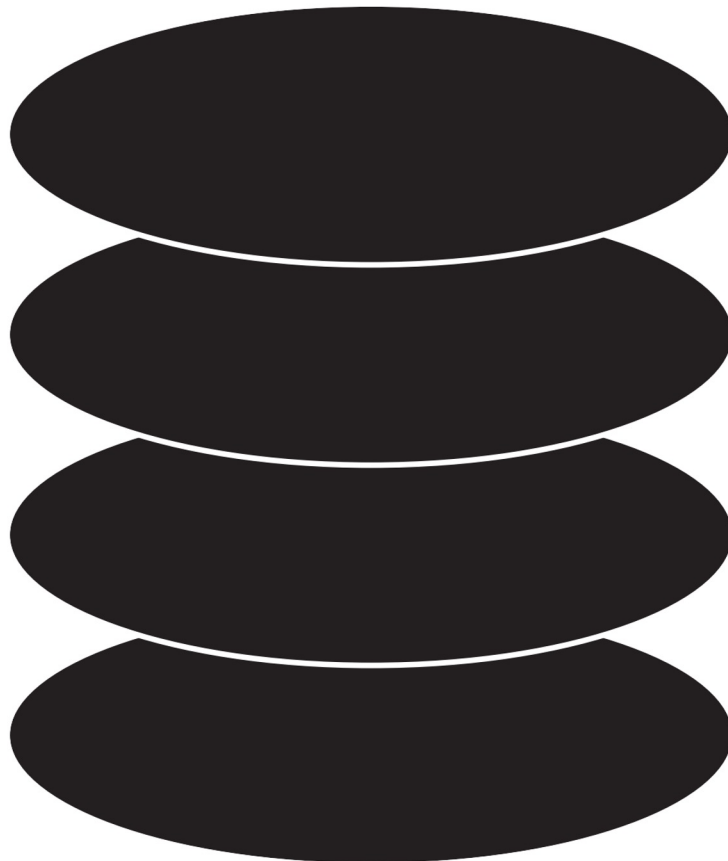
Pressures & Mobilizes

Policy Change

Voice

Power Gap

Message is never first: The layers of strategy



Overall strategy

Media strategy

Message strategy

Access strategy

Message strategy: Why framing matters



If all someone knew about housing and health equity was from media coverage...

What would they know?

What would they NOT know?

Why the news matters

Setting the agenda



What we think **about**

Shaping the debate



How we think about it

Reaching opinion leaders



What we **do** about it

New BMSG research

Housing, equity, and health in U.S. news, 2020-2021: Findings and recommendations

Learn more
bmsg.org/housing-news



Recommendations for communicating about housing, equity, and health

- Bring racial and health equity into the frame.

Bring racial and health equity into the frame: What we found

- Equity rarely appeared in the news.
- Only occasionally did reporters or opinion authors explicitly connect housing, racial equity, and health.

“Homelessness is an issue of racial injustice since it disproportionately affects Black Americans. It is also an issue of health inequality, a phenomenon well-documented in the medical literature: being homeless puts people’s health at risk.”

– The Philadelphia Inquirer

Bring racial and health equity into the frame: What to do

- Frame racial equity as part of the solution and not just the problem



- Uplift Black, Indigenous, and People of Color as leaders and experts

Recommendations for communicating about housing, equity, and health

- Bring racial and health equity into the frame.
- Connect housing to health in the context of COVID - and beyond.

Connect housing to health in the context of COVID - and beyond: What we found

Health is regularly mentioned, but mainly in the context of COVID.

“Safe, affordable housing is [a] public health necessity ... we do not want to see anyone lose their homes, especially during the winter and holidays but even more so during a pandemic.”

– The Baltimore Sun

Connect housing to health in the context of COVID - and beyond: What to do

- Illustrate that long before COVID, decades of problematic policies exacerbated racial and health inequities
- Demonstrate connections among equity, housing, and health

Recommendations for communicating about housing, equity, and health

- Bring racial and health equity into the frame.
- Connect housing to health in the context of COVID - and beyond.
- Position “characters” to broaden the frame around housing.

Position “characters” to broaden the frame around housing: What we found

- Landlords – not unhoused people, tenants, or advocates – are portrayed as “heroes.”

“Without an end in sight or any sort of financial relief whatsoever being offered to the city’s housing providers, many will be forced into foreclosure.”

– The Washington Post

Position “characters” to broaden the frame around housing: What we found

- News may reinforce harmful frames about unhoused people.

“[Residents] constantly reported hostile interactions with encampment occupants who demanded money, started fights, and grew particularly angry whenever ‘outsiders’ so much as glanced at them.”

– The Seattle Times

Position “characters” to broaden the frame around housing: What to do

- Cultivate messengers across diverse sectors and communities.
- Prepare messengers to be clear and effective in high-stakes situations with reporters

Recommendations for communicating about housing, equity, and health

- Bring racial and health equity into the frame.
- Connect housing to health in the context of COVID - and beyond.
- Position “characters” to broaden the frame around housing.
- Expand the frame around the role of government.

Expand the frame around the role of government: What we found

- Government officials are regularly quoted (25% of articles) – and government actors are blamed for housing problems and responsible for solutions.

“Without a quick and significant federal intervention, there will be a wave of evictions ... Really the wave has already started. Our work now is to prevent it from becoming a tsunami.”

– The Baltimore Sun

Expand the frame around the role of government: What to do

- Be specific about which government actors and agencies must act – and what they should do.
- Hold government accountable for racial equity in housing solutions
- Tie housing solutions to your long-term vision for change

Summary: Recommendations for communicating about housing, equity, and health

- Bring racial and health equity into the frame.
- Connect housing to health in the context of COVID - and beyond.
- Position “characters” to broaden the frame around housing.
- Expand the frame around the role of government.

Reactions and reflections

- What surprised you?
- What do you want to learn more about?



Additional resources

A graphic featuring a photograph of a modern, multi-story residential building with a mix of brown, grey, and white siding. The text is overlaid on the left side of the image.

New BMSG research

Housing, equity, and health in U.S. news, 2020-2021: Findings and recommendations

Learn more
bmsg.org/housing-news

A dark blue graphic with a faint, light blue heart shape in the background. The text is white and yellow.


From our latest blog:

6 media advocacy lessons from a campaign for housing justice and health equity

“If the groundwork around diversity hasn’t been laid, important voices will likely get left out, no matter how well-intentioned an organization is.”

-Melissa Jones, executive director, BARHII

Read more at bmsg.org/blog

A graphic featuring a photograph of a modern, multi-story residential building. The text is overlaid on the left side of the image.

WEBINAR

How health departments can use strategic communication to engage in housing work & build community power

May 24, 10-11:30am PT

A dark blue graphic with a faint, light blue heart shape in the background. The text is white and yellow.

From our latest blog:

6 media advocacy lessons from a campaign for housing justice and health equity

“Different audiences can hear things differently. For some audiences, I would say ‘housing is a human right’; for other audiences, I would say ‘housing is a building block of a healthy community.’”

-Will Dominie, former policy manager of housing and equitable development, BARHII

Read more at bmsg.org/blog



Thank you!

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