

Better Together: Toolkit

Better Together: Activities and Messaging Toolkit	2
Audiences: Who are yours?	3
Message Themes of Better Together	5
Ladder of Engagement	8
Better Together Portraits	9
Creating Portraits and Sharing Stories	10
Story Collection	10
2. The Big Picture	11
3. Sharing the Portraits	13
Values phrase basket	14
General questions to ask (deep listening) – glossary/worksheet	15
Building Value-Based Messages	16
Words that Work	18
Phrases and tips to pivot messages to what you want to say	19
What you can say to bring up these messages and to keep your message on track (pivoting)	21
Concerns we hear from people possible refugee champions and how to bring them around	22
Additional training to have better conversations – resources	25

Better Together: Activities and Messaging Toolkit

As people working to extend the welcome of refugees to building communities where everyone benefits, we are well aware of the ways that communities across Canada benefit from the presence of people who are seeking refuge and building new lives. At the same time, many of us also know of community members and relatives who may have a lot of misperceptions about people who arrived as refugees, including misperceptions about all the ways that communities actually benefit.

Better Together, is an initiative to help all of us get better at sharing stories, initiating better conversations and driving more productive community narratives that involve those who came to Canada to seek refuge from persecution. Specifically, more and more people are interested to hear about how people who arrived as refugees have brought positive economic and cultural benefits to communities across Canada.

The activities and messaging suggestions in this toolkit are intended to help communities collect and share local stories in order to connect with and encourage the support of people who are more interested in constructive conversations. As such, the audiences *Better Together* seeks to engage are people often referred to as the ‘persuadables’ in Canada, or the ‘anxious middle,’ in the US and the UK. Briefly, these are community members who are usually around 40% of Canada’s public who do not entirely support more generous refugee policies, but who are also not opposed to it. It is, therefore, an opportunity to engage with these key audiences in a variety of ways. One of the primary ways is to collect and share these stories that all of us working and volunteering in this sector are well aware -- that when we work together to build community, that all of us benefit.

This toolkit offers a mix of resources: from collecting stories, to creating portraits to share in your community [[insert link to Canva templates](#)], to sharing one another’s stories respectfully, to creating messages that shift people’s perception of those who seek refuge here, by defining them less by their struggles and more by their triumphs (also known as “reframing” in communications theory). You will notice that the messaging themes of *Better Together* are pragmatic and are designed to draw out stories about all the ways communities benefit economically through welcoming refugees. What should be emphasized, though, is that at the core of these messages, is the belief that communities across Canada are much better off when everyone feels like they are a part of it. That is why the storytelling activities also include a call to share stories of those who are working (either in the sector or through community volunteering). ‘Persuadables,’ need to see themselves reflected and find a point of entry into the larger positive narrative that we are all better together.

Audiences: Who are yours?

Activating more voices, starting with ourselves along with the 'persuadables' who represent approximately 39% of the Canadian public. Remember 'persuadables' can be persuaded to support better and more generous refugee policies, or go the way of the opposition. The messages and activities of Better Together are designed with these audiences in mind. Addressing those who strongly and directly oppose the presence of refugees, or better refugee policies, requires a different set of strategies and messaging.

Who in our communities might be more open to listening to these messages?

<p>Faith Communities</p> <p>They may be members in churches, mosques, synagogues and other faith-groups who are sponsoring, volunteering, or simply supporting through donations.</p> <p>They may not always be vocal about more generous refugee policies, but they still provide material (money, donating materials, time, space) and moral support to people seeking refuge, because they are called by their faith or personal history to do so.</p>	<p>Community Members (non-religious)</p> <p>They may not be part of your faith community, but they are active in parts of building your community. From local parents associations or other informal groups, ie: local moms groups, reading groups, employee clubs, sports clubs, (the possibilities are endless!)</p> <p>They are an integral part of building community, which means there are opportunities to connect with them about building local community.</p>
<p>Business Community Leaders</p> <p>Business leaders in your community can include local business owners, or members and leadership in your community's Chamber of Commerce, employee volunteer and community groups in any sector (technology and banking are common ones) credit unions -- are just a few examples of audiences who want to see growing economies in their region. This means bringing in new customers or attracting new talent.</p>	<p>Members and Leaders of Local Institutions</p> <p>Employees and leaders in local institutions, ie:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● municipal councils● libraries● museums and galleries● schools● recreational and community centres,● even offices of economic or labour market development -- <p>are responsible for providing services and reaching different audiences in their communities.</p> <p>They have an interest in developing more connections between their work and different parts of the community. They succeed when they can show that their department or institution is helping communities succeed.</p>

Questions to identify audiences

Think about the people in your community you who might be open to productive messaging and conversations about all the benefits to communities when refugees are welcomed and supported. Do they match any of the categories of audiences in the chart, above? Or are they part of another category of audiences? Once think of general audience categories, brainstorm with your team or group and reflect on some of the questions, below. These questions will help you get a better picture of who you are creating and sharing messages with.

Your Turn!

Describe their demographic background: (age, race, socio-economic background / work and occupation)

Values - Think / Feel / Do

- What do they care most about? Do their values overlap with your organization or groups work?
- Do you know what their day-to-day lives look like?
- What might be some barriers to them supporting better refugee policies?
- Who influences them and who do they trust? (In the community, family, media).

Where do they get their news and information?

- Local paper's columnists?
- Church newsletters and bulletins, faith magazines and newspapers?

- News outlets (print, digital, radio, tv)

All of these questions will help you draw a better picture of the ‘persuadables’ in your community. Moreover, these points will help you craft messages, stories, and deliver them in more effective ways. By getting a better idea of the audiences you want to reach and influence, you can craft messages that speak to theirs and the community’s values, find the right messengers of the messages (who they value and trust) and disseminate the messages to where your audiences are at.

Message Themes of Better Together

Research on effective messaging in supportive of refugees shows that addressing people’s values and emotions are the most impactful ways to persuade those in the public who are considered, ‘persuadables’ or those in the ‘anxious middle.’

Storytelling is one of the more powerful ways we can connect real people and lives and get beyond the terms that can evoke stereotypes that eclipse individuals and their stories. What are the type of stories that work when it comes to sharing refugee stories? Stories that lead with values, as discussed in the section on Storytelling that lead with value-based messaging, that paints a picture of empowerment and agency (ODI, 2017).

Similarly, research on public opinion messaging also shows that the ‘persuadables’ or ‘anxious middle’ are interested in seeing stories of the ‘welcomer’ in the frame and localize the case for ‘doing our part.’ (ODI, 2017). In other words, stories about community members who’ve volunteered their time, sponsors, business owners who’ve donated items, opened up their homes and community centres -- are all narratives that will play a valuable role in broadening support.

*Overseas Development Institute, Public perceptions of refugees and migrants: the role of politicians, the media and civil society. February 2017.

<https://euagenda.eu/upload/publications/untitled-92767-ea.pdf>

Better Together Messaging

We’re Better Together.

1. People who have come as refugees, through their presence, renew and benefit communities across Canada, economically, socially and culturally.
2. Communities across Canada work with newcomer refugees. When we work together to build our communities, we are creating a better future for all of us.

Underlying, shared values:

- Building community together
- Improving opportunities for us all, including the most vulnerable.

- Upholding human rights
- Acting for humanitarian reasons

To stay focused on the values-based messaging, we will:

- Talk about community-based impacts, not just individual successes.
- We need to keep solutions front and centre, rather than focusing on the problems alone.
- Must emphasize refugee-led efforts: there are many stories and ways to lead with this
- Leading with shared values of community, togetherness, building towards a future
- Acknowledging that people move and people who seek refuge in Canada are moving for the same reasons and values any of one moves: to build and find better lives.

With the message themes:

- Our community is stronger/ better together by welcoming refugees and ensuring that all of us have opportunity to build their lives and to shape their communities they live in. There are many story and real-life inspirations to use to popularize and remind ourselves and our communities of this message.

Some Examples:

- **Connecting real people and lives to the stories of people who arrive as refugees in Canada,** through storytelling, showing faces/impacts; share how ordinary stories bring extraordinary benefits to us all. This can be done through the series of Portraits which the CCR will be making available to Members. The template for how to make your own portraits with stories from your communities, will also be made available, along with a “How to Use” and a style guide book on how to upload the template from the free tool, [Canva](#).
- **Other examples in the media:**
 - o the local school remains open
 - o Former refugees are taking care of the most vulnerable in our community, including the very young (daycare and early childhood educators) and the elderly (caregivers)
 - o traditional businesses remain open:
 - [https://www.theglobeandmail.com/business/small-business/managing/article-syrian-refugee-fishermans-friend-how-a-retiring-couple-found-a-new/;](https://www.theglobeandmail.com/business/small-business/managing/article-syrian-refugee-fishermans-friend-how-a-retiring-couple-found-a-new/)
 - <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/ottawa/lake-ontario-fisherman-bequeaths-company-to-syrian-refugee-1.4782540>
 - o new businesses bring new opportunities – employment, revenues - to the community
 - Antigonish NS – The high profile of ‘Peace by Chocolate’, created by former refugees
<http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/nova-scotia/peace-by-chocolate-antigonish-h>

[adhad-syrian-refugees-business-1.4283023](#) (and is also increasing tourism to the community)

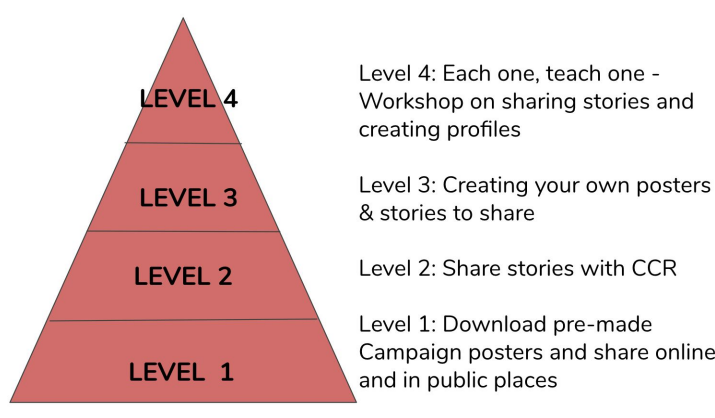
- Revitalization of Windsor ON after welcoming Syrian refugees (as compared to Detroit MI) -
<http://windsorstar.com/news/local-news/syrian-stories-refugees-building-new-lives-in-windsor> VS
<https://www.detroitnews.com/story/news/politics/2018/03/26/refugees-michigan-decline/33284833/>;
<https://www.detroitnews.com/story/news/local/michigan/2017/10/17/refugees-economic-impact-metro-detroit/106752860/>

- **Think about the long-term benefits of welcoming refugees (through data and through stories) in contrast to the short-term costs.** Examples include:
 - o Refugees contribute more than most Canadians after 25 years:
<https://vancouversun.com/opinion/columnists/douglas-todd-refugees-earn-more-than-most-canadians-after-25-years>
 - o Refugees and other newcomers drive small business growth, despite unique challenges:
<http://www.theglobeandmail.com/report-on-business/small-business/sb-managing/many-syrian-refugees-launched-businesses-when-they-came-to-canada-how-are-they-faring-now/article34799676/>; Business Ownership and Employment in Immigrant-owned Firms in Canada -
<https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/11-626-x/11-626-x2016057-eng.htm> ; on challenges unique to former refugee entrepreneurs:
<https://www.theglobeandmail.com/business/article-recent-refugees-face-unique-challenges-with-business-ventures-in/>
 - o Contributions of the next generation:
<https://ici.radio-canada.ca/nouvelle/1117978/refugies-vietnam-politique-societe-immigration-integration-quebec-archives>
 - o Positive economic returns on investment by hiring refugees:
<https://www.thestar.com/opinion/contributors/2018/06/25/hiring-refugees-is-an-opportunity-for-canadian-businesses.html> (lower turnover rates among former refugee employees, eases hiring: 'Once employers work through the initial logistics of hiring refugees from one country of origin, they're more likely to see other refugees from that same community applying for jobs at their company. Hiring from other refugee communities also becomes easier.')

Ladder of Engagement

Not every organization and every group will have the capacity to participate and engage with the suggested community engagement activities, including collecting stories and creating their own portraits to share with their community. That's alright! Be sure to check the [Ladder of Engagement](#) to see which activities fit your needs, time and resources. You can always work with your team or group towards the different levels.

There are **four levels of engagement mapped out**, depending on your organization's time and resources.



Suggested Activities

Collecting and sharing stories and distributing in community through many channels, including public venues and through social media.

Tools Available:

1. Creating and Sharing portraits for print, online and on social media - Jump to the section of this toolkit that has suggestions about how you can start gathering and writing stories about yourself and your community. Remember to obtain consent [\[insert CCR consent forms\]](#).
2. [Pre-designed portrait templates](#) with instructions on how to upload photos, add text, add your group or organization's logo.
3. Sharing the portraits - this toolkit also has suggestions on how and where you can share the portraits.

Sharing research findings, data, and quotes. Creating posters and materials that simplify complex research findings and data, also helps to drive a different narrative that is currently in the public.

Tools Available:

1. Creating and Sharing infographics for print, online and on social media.
2. [Pre-designed infographic posters](#) - Use the ready-made templates and choose from a set of colourful infographics. Remember to follow the style guidelines provided by the CCR (this helps keep visuals consistent across member groups and organizations). There are also instructions on how to upload photos, add text, add your group or organization's logo.

Engaging in better conversations, Resources on how we can improve the way we talk with and about refugees in our communities, including activity suggestions.

Tools Available:

Engaging in conversations about people and issues we are passionate about can be difficult precisely because we feel very close to the issues. It is not always easy to stick the messages and values, especially in emotionally-charged conversations. If the person / people you are engaging in conversation with, whether that is your colleague, family member or friend, is open to listening, we can try to listen, too.

Better Together has developed a few tools, below, including short phrases that you can use in your daily conversations, or even as taglines or posting portraits, infographics or messages on social media, or sharing them with your colleagues.

Values phrase basket

General questions to ask (deep listening) – glossary/worksheet

Building Value-Based Messages

Words that Work

Phrases and tips to pivot messages to what you want to say

What you can say to bring up these messages and to keep your message on track (pivot)

Concerns we hear from people possible refugee champions and how to bring them around

Additional training to have better conversations – resources

Better Together Portraits

Depending on your group or organization's time and capacity, there are different ways to use the Better Together Portraits. Remember, there are [pre-designed portrait templates](#) ready for you!

Level I: You do not have the time to collect stories and create portraits of your own using the templates.

- Share templates, style guide and 1-page briefer with other partner agencies and groups who might be interested!
- Go to CCR's website and print or download the ready-made portraits and share at community events and meetings (for a list of suggestions and other places to share, see below, "Sharing Portraits")
- If you choose to share online, either on your website or social media, be sure to see the tips, below!

Level II: You have the time to collect stories and create portraits, or there is someone part of your group or staff who has time. Great! Follow the steps below, "Creating Portraits and Sharing Stories."

Creating Portraits and Sharing Stories

1. Story Collection

Start by gathering the elements you need to tell great stories. Below are a list of questions to help prompt your story collection and writing.

Important to note: as we collect stories with people who arrived as refugees and with community members, remember that not everyone wants to have their experiences or pictures shared with broader audiences. The heart of Better Together is to empower refugees by fully communicating the strengths, agency, and empowerment that they bring to new communities.

Here are a few strategies to collect stories in your community, your sponsorship group or organization. You may already have a process in place, in which case, that's great! These are suggestions to start you off:

- Make an announcement! Let your colleagues, friends, families, church, community members know that you're collecting stories. Be clear why you are asking them to identify stories.
- If they have never shared their stories before, if possible, meet directly with the people whose stories you are sharing.
- **Before or during your meeting,** explain clearly what Better Together is about, why you are collecting their story, where the portraits might be shared (All of this is on CCR's **Consent Form**)



- Print out copies of the **Consent Form** (available on CCR's website) or email electronically for an electronic signature.
- If the participants have agreed to share their stories and have photos taken for the portraits, remind them the day of your meeting. Alternatively, ask them to provide photos they would like to use (CCR will be producing a style guideline for Better Together portraits, available on the CCR website).
- Prepare a list of open-ended questions you would like to ask them. Record direct quotes to get their perspectives! You can use the list of questions, below.

What are the steps to good storytelling? Here are some questions to ask yourself, colleagues, group members, and community members.

A note about terminology: The purpose of Better Together is to popularize stories and messages that broaden support for all who have sought refuge in Canada, no matter how they arrived. While there might be a tendency to explain the differences between statuses, PSRs, GARs, refugee claimants, refugees, asylum-seekers, the focus of Better Together, is to target messaging for the current base of supporters and 'persuadables.' Explaining the legal details between each category eclipse the main message, story and purpose of these materials.

- Who is the story about? Who are the main characters? Do you know them directly or is this through your group / organization / friend?
- What were the circumstance that brought them to your community? For now, remind yourself whether this person or family arrived as GAR, PSR, Refugee Claimant. If this story is about the community volunteers or private sponsors, make a note about that.
- If this is a story about people who are supporting refugees, how did that support start? What inspired it or what was the first community activity?
- What has this person / group / family brought to your community?
 - If the story is about newcomer refugees or people who arrived as refugees many years ago, it can be as delightful as "Adiam provides critical nursing care in one of Calgary's busiest hospitals, treating children in the intensive care unit."
 - If this story is about community volunteers or sponsors, describe what are they trying to contribute?
- How is your community better as a result?
- What would this person / groups neighbours, employers, teachers, etc. say about them (real life quote if possible)?
- What is the situation today?
- What can we learn from this story? What opportunities do we have to support this person's work in the community?
- How does this story fit into one of the messages / themes for Better Together?

2. The Big Picture

Once you've brainstormed and listed some stories and the main elements you'd like to share, if you'd like to use the portrait templates from *Better Together*, **you'll need to distill the stories into brief points**

for the poster. Here are a few questions to help get to the heart of the stories for the *Better Together* portraits:

- Who is in the story? Where does the story begin? For example, if someone who arrived as a refugee is sharing the story, and they are a nurse, doctor or in the medical profession now, the story could begin with the moment they were inspired to take up the profession, rather than when they arrived in Canada.
- What is the greater truth we want to tell about ourselves and our communities?

*Adapted from **Welcoming America, *Reframing Refugees Messaging* toolkit.**

<http://www.welcomingrefugees.org/resources/reframing-refugees-messaging-toolkit>

Story Inspirations from Canada and CCR Members

Hassan, Vancouver, BC:

- The owner of a home renovations business in Syria, Hasan arrived on the west-coast of Canada, eager to rebuild a life with his family.
 - He's now launched a Flooring and Tiling business in BC, where Hasan and his team help others in his community renovate and build their dream homes.
 - Hasan says, "Anybody looking for work, I try to help them...I feel so happy because everyone who needs help, I can help them."
- *Story inspiration from BC Refugee Hub

Frewat, Calgary, AB:

- With her beautiful hair and wig creations, Frewat brings smiles to cancer patients in her community and others who experience hair loss.
 - Frewat, who arrived in Canada through the Refugee Assistance Program, is also the owner of a limousine and professional cleaning services business in Calgary.
 - Quote: "Sponsoring refugees and supporting new lives in Canada enriches Canadian society. We bring and share talents and skills."
 - For more stories like Frewat, visit
- *Story inspiration from [Canada Lutheran World Relief](#)

Chefs of Tayybeh, Vancouver, BC:

- The all-female team of Chefs at Tayybeh started their full-service catering company with a sold-out pop-up dinner in Vancouver.
- Arriving from Syria just few years ago, they met one another on Canada's west-coast while working to rebuild their families lives in their new communities.
- The Tayybeh chefs are thriving. "Success means many things: finishing university, learning the language...we're offering this food that people love and ask for!"

*Story inspiration from BC Refugee Hub: <http://bcrefugeehub.ca/category/success-stories/>

3. Sharing the Portraits

Where can you share the Portraits?

Formats:

- Newsletters in print and digital
- Congregation Bulletin / newsletters
- Submit to relevant publications
- Presentations in print or digital



Who / Where:

- Your organization, between members of your sponsorship group, with your place of worship, other community partners and agencies, public libraries, or other public displays, ie; city hall, community centres
- Who else has overlapping messages of inclusivity?
 - Approaching local immigrant employment councils and offering them materials (TRIEC, Immigrant Employment Council of BC, and others)
 - Local Immigration Partnerships (LIPs) and other community partners, business partners
- Do you, friends or family have employee public awareness programs at your office? Many corporate employers, such as credit unions and banks have diversity and inclusion days or offer special programs for newcomer refugees and immigrants to set-up accounts. You can offer these materials to the employees.



Online:

If you decide to share Better Together posters on social media, here are some sample tweets and tips:

- Always tag with #bettertogether. This is an easier way to gather analytics if we have a centralized hashtag
- Please tag @ccrweb and any other affiliated partners and institutions you would like to include
- Keep the message simple:
 - We're sharing stories about how we work together - newcomer refugees & people across Canada - because we're #bettertogether!
 - For more stories about how we're thriving together -- newcomer refugees & communities across Canada - visit #bettertogether visit ccrweb.ca/stronger-communities
 - We're sharing stories about how we work with each other—refugees and communities across Canada—because we're #bettertogether!
 - Other ways to engage on social media:
 - Ask audiences if they have stories they'd like to share, either about 1) the ways refugees renew and benefit communities across Canada, be it economic, cultural or through community engagement, 2) The ways communities, including volunteers and sponsors, work together to welcome refugees and how they're communities have been transformed.

Values phrase basket

When we're in conversations with family, friends, co-workers, or just going about our daily lives in our communities, sometimes we need to have a few easy phrases in our 'back pockets' that help to get our message across. Below, are a few sentences and phrases of what we mean "leading with values" means. These are easy phrases that you can use in your conversations, or even in the text of some of the promotional materials your group or organization creates. Either way, these are phrases that lead with one of the core values of Better Together: Living and working together is something our communities value.

Can you think of ways these phrases can be connected back to personal stories of either local communities working together to help newcomer refugee families settle, or when discussing stories about refugees who are artists, entrepreneurs or teachers?

Connecting and linking stories with these phrases is also another way of popularizing and making use of these value-based messages.

When leading with values about our connectedness and underscoring that: We are all connected; our futures are connected and that we're stronger when we work together.

"Now, more than ever, we know that our lives are all connected, which means that the only way forward is to value each other's contributions and to work together."

"Our communities thrive when we work together to face the future."

"In this interconnected world, we really are stronger when we work together. When we do, it's beautiful."

"In this moment in our lives, I think most of us recognize that our world is so interconnected. Our actions have consequences beyond ourselves. Our fates are linked. That's why our community / our group is working together."

"When we work as a community to solve problems, we all move forward."

"Because we're all connected, bad policies hurt all of us – threatening what we value: standing together values and disrupting our communities."

"This is really about Community Values: Are we going to acknowledge that we're all in this together, and that we need to look out for each other?"

"Look, in this group / in our community, we're all on the same team. We know that Canada thrives when we draw on our Community Values to solve problems and that is the only way in today's interconnected world."

When sharing stories to underscore that we're protecting human rights:

"We know that moving your family to make a better life is one of the hardest things a person can do. Sometimes even moving across town is hard enough! Just imagine what it must be like if we are forced to move, to save our lives."

"If we arrived as immigrants here or our families did, then we all know how hard it is to pick-up and move. Moving is a difficult choice to make. That's why I / we in this community / group / want to welcome people who are seeking refuge here."

"Today, as always, people move to make life better for themselves and their families. No matter our differences, most of us want pretty similar things."

"When we look at the history of those who found refuge here, regardless of how they arrived, refugee newcomers have always renewed, enriched and contributed so much to communities already here."

General questions to ask (deep listening) – glossary/worksheet

Worksheet title: How to be an active listener (for social change):

R – Receive (pay attention to the person, actively listen, lean in)

A – Appreciate ('hmm...', 'oh', 'okay')

S – Summarize (So...')

A – Ask (ask questions afterwards)

(from: [Five ways to listen better](#) - 7 minutes worth watching!)

Here are some ways to stay at ease, curious, inviting and keep the conversation flowing:

- Tell me more about...(If your curiosity is piqued)
- This is what I heard you say... is it what you meant? (If your instinct is to counter another's statement)
- What led you to this point of view? (If you are with someone who begins advocating for a fixed position)
- What is most important you in a leader? (If you are with someone who begins championing/criticizing a leader who has taken a position on this issue)
 - I notice your passion on this issue; what makes this so important for you? (If someone begins lecturing and intellectualizing)
 - What if the opposite were true? (If you are with someone who always agrees with you)
 - Can you say that in another way? (If you suspect you don't understand)
 - I'd like to offer another point of view... (If you hold a different opinion)
 - I'm wondering if you have some thoughts or feelings about what you've been hearing... (If someone has been silent)
 - If what you are proposing came to pass, how would things be different? (If someone's ideas are very abstract)

(from the [Bread and Borders toolkit](#))

Some other tips:

- Be respectful in one's language and tone to and avoid "demonizing" those with perspectives that are different from your own
- Avoid personal criticism or labelling
- Be prepared for uncomfortable conversations. We MUST have them to arrive at greater understanding and dialogue.

(from Andrew Griffith, '[We can have open, respectful debates on immigration](#)')

Building Value-Based Messages

Building Blocks	Values
Values Lead with values and vision. Starting with shared values helps audiences to "hear" our	Opportunity for Everyone Inclusion Diversity.

<p>messages more effectively than do dry facts or emotional rhetoric.</p> <p>Research and experience show that shaping messages around core shared values can help people better hear new, unfamiliar, or even uncomfortable arguments.</p> <p>Think through your own values, and the values you share with your target audience of Persuadables.</p> <p>If we present only a series of facts and rhetoric that conflict (or appear to conflict) with an audience’s core values, they will often disregard those facts completely.</p>	<p>Integrity and Transparency / Fairness</p> <p>Basic human rights</p> <p>We are all connected</p>
<p><u>Problem</u></p> <p>Frame problems as a threat to our vision and values.</p> <p>This is the place to pull out stories and statistics that are likely to resonate with the target audience.</p>	<p>Reactionary policies that force them into the shadows haven’t worked, and are not consistent with our values. Those policies hurt us all by encouraging exploitation by unscrupulous employers and landlords.</p> <p>ex: Flawed refugee policies are threats to opportunity, equality, and community.</p> <p>Choose facts carefully. We all have a lot of evidence to support our claims. However, facts do not tend to change minds if the facts are not couched in values.</p> <p>After priming audiences with values, present one or two pieces of evidence that make your case. Break facts and statistics down to manageable pieces of information, into stories that people can digest.</p>
<p><u>Solution</u></p>	<p>Avoid issue fatigue – offer a positive solution</p>
<p><u>Action</u></p>	<p>What can your audience concretely do? The more specific, the better.</p>

Adapted for Canadian context from the [Opportunity Agenda: Building Value-Based Messaging](https://toolkit.opportunityagenda.org/building). Available at: <https://toolkit.opportunityagenda.org/building>

Words that Work

What type of words and phrasing work when trying to change deeply held perceptions and beliefs about people who are seeking refuge? What words are persuasive? Based on research on ground-breaking research to find the words that work and that change the debate around people seeking refuge, these are words that help target **Persuadables**.

Move Towards	Shift from	Because...
Live in peace, care or children, live free from danger, safety	Security, survival	Portrays people who seek refuge as people with dignity and agency
Seeking safety, rebuilding lives where it's safe, looking to set up a safe home	Fleeing persecution, violence and torture	Explaining positive motivations rather than the push factors increase understanding
Flourish, prosper, thrive	Survive	While in many cases, it is true that people seeking refuge are in situations of war and violence, and may be the argument used at refugee hearings, research shows that public opinion tends towards more hopeful language.
It is legal to seek asylum; when people cross borders their human rights come with them	It is not illegal to seek asylum; not a security issue; myth busting in general	Negating a frame brings the frame you want to avoid to top of mind. Best to say what we are for.
As caring people; join together across all of our differences, we [insert an advocacy point or demand]	As Canadians...	You might need to adapt this to your audience. However, be mindful that evoking national identity as an argument is also known to provoke "us/them" narratives that might make people less receptive to refugee rights. Collaborative calls to action motivates our current supporters / base and persuades the middle.
People move	Nation of Immigrants	Be mindful that phrases like, "Canada is a nation of Immigrants," also implies volition, which erases indigenous communities, and doesn't

		recognize histories of enslaved Africans here in Canada. This isn't rooted in the lived experience of many audiences.
People seeking asylum. People seeking refuge.	Refugees.	This is difficult because in communications, we are trying to be brief. However, just be mindful that mass nouns evoke stereotyping effects and eclipse the individuals and their stories. Helping audiences focus in on real people, not imagine an undifferentiated mass of moving bodies.

*Adapted from [Anat Shenker-Osorio and ASO Communications. https://asocommunications.com/](https://asocommunications.com/)

Phrases and tips to pivot messages to what you want to say

Pivoting is a technique that can be used to move from negativity or distraction back to our positive message, to taking back the power. This requires message discipline. Depending on the context, your job is not to educate. Your job is to use their question as an opportunity to deliver your strongest message as effectively as possible.

Example: Isn't refugee intake a major drain on our economy? How can we really afford it?

Three parts to a pivot:

- **Connect** to the value(s) in question

Example: "I'm glad you asked about public finance, We all want to make sure our country is prosperous."

- Contrast and **reframe the idea.**

Example: I'm sure you'd agree that we need to look at the value of investing in refugees with both the short and long term lens. The short term costs of resettling refugees is made up for in spades by long term outcomes... (insert facts and figures and supporting arguments) ...'

- **Deliver your message.** What you want to talk about?

Example: "Data clearly shows that refugees over the long term give back in so many economic and other ways..."

Phrases to use to help bridge or pivot to what you want to say:

"Actually..."

"That's a good question. (pause) Here's how I think about this issue..."

“The real question is...”
“The important thing to remember is...”
“What we are really talking about here is...”
“What matters most is...”
“To put this in broader perspective...”
“I would like to emphasize that...”
“Let’s not lose sight of the core problem...”
“At the heart of the matter is...”
“Taking a closer look what we see is...”

Tips for handling difficult questions:

- Look for what you and questioner have in common: Reality, experience, perspective, beliefs.
- Stay respectful.
- Take a stand and explain patiently why you hold these views.
- Move from problem to solutions. Connect your proposition to the person, to vision and values.
- It’s alright if you don’t know the answer.

- tips based on a CCR webinar [‘How to counter and pivot negative messages about refugees’](#)
with Jennifer Story of StoryStiles communication

What we want to say (alongside ‘We are better together economically, socially and culturally’):

What are examples in your local community that could help highlight these points?

Keep solutions as the main focus, rather than problems.

- ‘We should be scaling up teamwork, not dissension’ to resolve a long-standing leadership vacuum on affordable housing options. ([‘Stop blaming refugee claimants for problems we’ve chosen not to solve’](#))

Highlight the long-term benefits of welcoming refugees (through data and through stories) in contrast to the short-term costs. Examples include:

- Refugees contribute more in taxes than comparable Canadian-born populations 20 years later: <https://vancouver.sun.com/opinion/columnists/douglas-todd-refugees-earn-more-than-most-canadians-after-25-years>, <http://ccrweb.ca/en/refugees-pay-more-income-tax-canada-millionaire-migrants>, other support: <https://www.nature.com/articles/d41586-018-05507-0>
- For resettled refugees: ‘...you find a steady improvement in their economic fortunes over time, [and] refugees end up with the same income distribution at the household level as other Canadians and also with the same level of home ownership’ – Dan Hiebert, <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/british-columbia/refugees-canada-economy-1.4055809>
- Revitalization of Windsor ON after welcoming Syrian refugees (as compared to Detroit MI) - <http://windsorstar.com/news/local-news/syrian-stories-refugees-building-new-lives-in-windsor> VS <https://www.detroitnews.com/story/news/politics/2018/03/26/refugees-michigan-decline/332>

84833/;

<https://www.detroitnews.com/story/news/local/michigan/2017/10/17/refugees-economic-impact-metro-detroit/106752860/>

- Antigonish NS – The high profile of ‘Peace by Chocolate’, created by former refugees, is increasing tourism to the community:
<https://globalnews.ca/news/3755499/how-chocolate-selling-syrian-refugee-family-defied-skeptics-made-their-dream-in-canada/>
- <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/report-on-business/small-business/sb-managing/many-syrian-refugees-launched-businesses-when-they-came-to-canada-how-are-they-faring-now/article34799676/>
- Keeping traditional businesses open:
<https://www.theglobeandmail.com/business/small-business/managing/article-syrian-refugee-fishermans-friend-how-a-retiring-couple-found-a-new/>;
<https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/ottawa/lake-ontario-fisherman-bequeaths-company-to-syrian-refugee-1.4782540>
- Contributions of the next generation:
<https://ici.radio-canada.ca/nouvelle/1117978/refugies-vietnam-politique-societe-immigration-integration-quebec-archives>

Tell relatable, human stories. [Stories of individuals](#) or a group of identifiable individuals are easier to empathize with than statistics or stories about large groups of people.

Share how ordinary stories bring extraordinary benefits to us all. Talk about community-based impacts, not just individual successes. Emphasize efforts that are refugee-led.

Show how group efforts have an impact at the community level. (Sponsorship groups, Syrian women creating a pop-up kitchen)

Cautions:

- *Put forward shared values and positive messages, don't 'bust myths':* [Research](#) shows that ‘busting myths’ may serve to legitimize the point we are debunking. Myth-busting is also only effective to people who are already convinced. We need to respond to concerns by offering solutions in a positive and values-based way.
- *Don't focus on those who can't be persuaded:* Once you've established you are speaking with someone who's opposing, negative views of refugee contributions are entrenched, move on. We cannot hope to change everyone's mind.

What you can say to bring up these messages and to keep your message on track (pivoting)

‘We want to highlight the energy, ideas and skills of refugees and community members when they come together and contribute to our common success.’

‘Not enough attention has been paid to the positive contributions of refugees over the long-term.’

‘We want to _____. That is why we are here today.’

'It's important to talk about what we are doing well in _____ (name of town, city) too. For example, _____.'

What you can say if someone asks you about something outside of our messages (for example: recent political changes, current events, myths and misconceptions about refugees, etc.):

Politely decline to engage the person on the point. Try to avoid using the negative words or ideas brought up by the person you are speaking with, and re-state as soon as possible our positive messages.

'We're not talking about _____. We're talking about how our communities are stronger when we welcome and protect refugees and newcomers, and when we make the best use of everyone's skills and ideas for our common good. We are all better off when we understand the challenges that one another faces and how we can work together to overcome them. **One example:** _____.'

'When resettled refugees and refugee claimants have the chance to get involved, take up leadership opportunities and to show what they can contribute, people realize that welcoming refugees and newcomers can be extremely positive for the community. We all win. **One example:** _____.'

Speaking tips

- Keep your message simple and short. Use language that everyone will understand (nothing technical, unless it is critical to what you are saying).
- Speak slowly and clearly.
- Share (short) stories and examples that others can relate to (at a common place in your community – like a school, a well-known business or niche a business is filling, a park, place of worship, for example).
- Appeal to emotions. Emotions help people remember your message much more than logic and statistics! Sharing a joke or a laugh is helpful too.
- Be brief. Don't describe all of the small details.
- If someone asks you a question or about details you don't want to talk about, direct your answers to something you want to say (see phrases above).
- Invite people to act: people will remember your message if they can do something. How can they find out more? How can they get involved in the community efforts you're talking about?
- **Practice** what you want to say in advance. Figure out how to tell stories effectively and in a few words. Have a friend ask you questions (even tough ones!)

What to avoid:

- The opposition's language (bogus refugees, queue-jumpers, etc.) Don't use these words: Repetition is powerful. We want people repeating our messages, not someone else's.
- Naming opponents to our views (like the names of neo-Nazi groups, Conservative Party critics, etc.). Don't use their names: We want people to remember the faces and stories behind refugee contributions and community collaborations: we are better together.

Concerns we hear from people possible refugee champions and how to bring them around

- Some refugee families require more financial support than predicted. What now?
- Refugee families aren't succeeding as we would have hoped.

Response: Often we need to look to the long-term successes:

- o Look long term – note: statistics on tax contributions of former refugees vs. other Canadians: 'Refugees earn more than most Canadians after 25 years': <https://vancouver.sun.com/opinion/columnists/douglas-todd-refugees-earn-more-than-most-canadians-after-25-years>; other support: <https://www.nature.com/articles/d41586-018-05507-0>
- o Successes of refugee-led small businesses outstrip the success of small businesses started by other Canadians
- o Look to second-generation successes: Thousands of descendants of South-East Asian boat people work as medical professionals in Quebec (pharmacists, doctors, etc.) With a current shortage of media personnel, how much worse would the situation be without these vital skills?

Include local examples here!

- Refugee families are moving to urban areas, rather than staying here.

Response: Small communities are vital to helping refugee families springboard into a new life in Canada. Your efforts make a difference.

Include local examples here or refugees who have moved elsewhere and who have returned to thank first sponsors (eg.

<https://www.thewesternstar.com/opinion/letter-to-the-editor/letter-thank-you-to-refugee-families-supporters-254933/>)

- We have limited housing options in our community already. We can't house refugee families too.

Response:

- o 'We should be scaling up teamwork, not dissension' to resolve the long-standing leadership vacuum on affordable housing options. ('[Stop blaming refugee claimants for problems we've chosen not to solve](#)')

Include local examples here!

- Recent reports of crime by refugees are sparking concerns over security in the community.

Response: Point to statistics showing that crimes by refugees and newcomers are very rare, and even lower than other population groups (see: ccrweb.ca/en/welcoming-newcomers-decreases-crime and other resources at ccrweb.ca/en/myths-facts).

In times of tragedy, there is strength in community. Use any opportunities to start conversations and learn about our neighbours, rather than resorting to stigmas.

Speak about refugees around you, what they are like and the contributions they are making. Encourage notable community members to do the same. Isolated incidents should not overshadow the hard work and progress in creating better and stronger communities together.

You might also speak about how future generations of refugee families are giving back in ways that strengthen our communities. Among them we find [police chiefs](#), thousands of medical personnel, care providers, and others playing critical community roles, as [visible leaders](#), [lesser known Canadian icons](#) and unsung, [everyday heroes](#). *Include local examples here!*

- Others in our community need our help. We can't help everyone.

Response:

Refugees are giving back, whether it's in making donations after disasters (money, blood banks, hair extensions) or in boosting local economies, starting businesses (examples: <https://www.cbc.ca/dragonsden/blog/successful-refugee-business-owners-in-canada>), creating jobs. *Include your local examples here!*

Additional training to have better conversations – resources

Bread and Borders: Exploring Fears, Facts & Impacts About Refugee Claimants in Manitoba, A resource for engaging in meaningful dialogue -

<https://spcw.mb.ca/dev/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/BreadBordersToolkit2017.pdf>

Five ways to listen better -

https://www.ted.com/talks/julian_treasure_5_ways_to_listen_better?language=en#t-62187

Reframing Refugees Messaging Toolkit

-<http://www.welcomingrefugees.org/resources/reframing-refugees-messaging-toolkit> (note: the key messages here are tailored to audiences and popular values in the US rather than ones tested and recommended we use in Canada)

Telling an affirmative story -

<https://opportunityagenda.org/explore/resources-publications/telling-affirmative-story>

Narrative insurgency -

<https://jonathansmucker.org/2011/01/31/narrative-insurgency-grassroots-communications-tips-pt3/>

The Opportunity Agenda - <https://opportunityagenda.org/> (Using the Value, Problem, Solution, Action Model from

<https://opportunityagenda.org/explore/resources-publications/campaign-community-values-message-toolkit>)

Battle of the story worksheet -

<https://network.progressivetechnology.org/system/files/sMbattleofthestoryworksheet.pdf>

How to counter and pivot negative messages about refugees (Canadian Council for Refugees):

<http://ccrweb.ca/en/how-counter-and-pivot-negative-messages-about-refugees-part-protecting-refugees-stronger-communities>

Effective Public Messaging Based on Research

Anat Shenker-Osorio and ASO Communications. “Immigrant Rights Style Guide: Words that Work”

https://img1.wsimg.com/blobby/go/ece6dfc1-8e05-49ad-9c27-9388708f911f/downloads/1coc9glt9_739843.pdf

Messaging this Moment: A Handbook for Progressive Communications

<https://communitychange.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/C3-Messaging-This-Moment-Handbook.pdf>

Overseas Development Institute. Working Paper: Understanding public attitudes towards refugees and migrants. 2017. <https://euagenda.eu/upload/publications/untitled-92767-ea.pdf>

OHCHR, Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. Shaping the public narrative on migration.

2016. <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/Migration/Pages/Shapingthepublicnarrativeonmigration.aspx>

For local organizers:

Living Room Conversations - <http://www.rop.org/wp-content/uploads/What-is-a-LRC.doc>