

RESILIENT VERMONT ~ MESSAGING TOOL KIT

This tool kit contains everything you should need to integrate the updated resilience messaging into your own communications: a detailed Messaging Guide, a Glossary of Terms, and a section for Stories to inspire our collective work. **For questions, suggestions, for help with implementing messaging, or to share a story, please email VRMP@vermont.gov. We would love to hear from you!**

RESILIENT VERMONT ~ MESSAGING GUIDE

You can use this guide to practice the messaging, to incorporate it into your own messaging, and to share with colleagues.

HOW TO USE THE MESSAGING

The updated Vermont Resilience Messaging can be used as the foundation for any written or verbal communications... and it has been designed to complement your own messaging.

For maximum impact, it would be helpful if

- We all use the common definition of resilience (the capacity to thrive, individually and collectively, in the face of adversity);
- We provide a consistent answer to the question: How is Vermont working towards resilience? The answer is: “We are creating an integrated statewide system where all Vermonters can find and fully utilize the resources they need to thrive, individually and collectively, in the face of adversity”.

WHAT IS RESILIENCE?	The capacity to thrive, individually and collectively, in the face of adversity.
HOW IS VERMONT WORKING TOWARDS RESILIENCE?	We are creating an integrated statewide system where all Vermonters can find and fully utilize the resources they need to thrive, individually and collectively, in the face of adversity.
VALUE PROPOSITION: WHY DOES RESILIENCE MATTER?	When we are all able to access the psychological, social, cultural, and physical resources that support well-being, we all thrive and our communities flourish.

EXPLAINING “WHY”:

To help people understand “why” resilience matters and further validate the current and potential impact of resilience work statewide - and to strengthen any communications about resilience (including grant proposals, campaigns, policy updates, etc), it helps to use:

- The value proposition: “When we are all able to access the psychological, social, cultural, and physical resources that support well-being, we all thrive and our communities flourish” and
- The proof points: Strengths-based, Forward-Thinking, Collaborative, Inclusive, Responsive:

PROOF POINTS: WHY WILL VERMONT SUCCEED IN THIS WORK?	
STRENGTHS-BASED: An approach focused on mitigating or eliminating risk and promoting well-being	COLLABORATIVE: Drawing strength and creating impact from a tightly connected web of public and private partners
FORWARD-THINKING: Consistent with Vermont’s innovative, progressive response to challenges and opportunities	INCLUSIVE: Drawing upon the wisdom of each partner and community to establish key priorities
RESPONSIVE: Achieving collective goals through community-specific actions	

INFLUENCING YOUR AUDIENCE:

The audience messaging below can help you tailor communications to your various stakeholder groups. It has been designed with two things in mind:

1. What each stakeholder group **wants/expects from you**, and
2. What **you want them to do** when they see your messaging.

As you create communications tools for these groups, ask yourself:
“Does my communication to this group convey the message in the toolkit?”

RESILIENCE MESSAGE BY AUDIENCE SEGMENT

PEER ORGANIZATIONS (others working to build resilience)	The state of Vermont is in the unique and enviable position of being able to create an integrated statewide system where all Vermonters can find and fully utilize the resources they need to thrive, individually and collectively, in the face of adversity. Let's talk about how we can collaborate to make that happen, and to engage others in this work.
BUSINESSES AND ORGANIZATIONS	The state of Vermont is in the unique and enviable position of being able to create an integrated statewide system where all Vermonters can find and fully utilize the resources they need to thrive, individually and collectively, in the face of adversity. You can play a vital role in advancing that work so that all individuals, families, and communities can flourish.
POLICYMAKERS	The state of Vermont is in the unique and enviable position of being able to create an integrated statewide system where all Vermonters can find and fully utilize the resources they need to thrive, individually and collectively, in the face of adversity. In order to make that happen, policy decisions must ensure seamless statewide access to those vital psychological, social, cultural, and physical resources.
FUNDERS	The state of Vermont is in the unique and enviable position of being able to create an integrated statewide system where all Vermonters can find and fully utilize the resources they need to thrive, individually and collectively, in the face of adversity. You can play a vital role in advancing that work so that all individuals, families, and communities can flourish.
GENERAL PUBLIC	Resilience matters to us all. When everyone is able to access the psychological, social, cultural, and physical resources that support well-being, we all thrive and our communities flourish. Learn more about how you can become more resilient yourself, and foster resilience within your community.

RESILIENCE MESSAGING IN ACTION: AS APPLIED TO COVID-19:

COVID-specific messaging is provided here as an example of how you can adapt the messaging to your organization’s own area of focus.

EXAMPLE OF USE:

Resilience is the capacity to thrive, individually and collectively, in the face of adversity. As we work together to recover from the impacts of COVID-19, Vermonters will need to rely on that capacity more than ever. By providing clear, compelling messaging & communications, we will engage all individuals and communities in the work of building a resilient Vermont, ultimately hastening and strengthening the state’s COVID-19 recovery efforts.

COVID MESSAGE BY AUDIENCE SEGMENT	
PARENTS	The ability of children and families to be resilient—to thrive in the face of adversity— is more important than ever. You can build resilience by tapping into your unique strengths as a parent and taking advantage of resources that offer the additional skills and supports you need to make sure your child — and your family as a whole — is safe, secure and happy.
BUSINESSES AND ORGANIZATIONS	The ability of individuals and organizations to be resilient—to thrive in the face of adversity— is more important than ever. As we work together to recover from the impacts of COVID-19, it’s crucial to ensure that all Vermonters have access to the psychological, social, cultural, and physical resources that support individual and collective well-being.
POLICY	The ability to be resilient—to thrive in the face of adversity— is more important than ever. As we work together to recover from the impacts of COVID-19, we need to make policy decisions that ensure seamless statewide access to the psychological, social, cultural, and physical resources that support individual and collective well-being.
FUNDERS	The ability to be resilient—to thrive in the face of adversity— is more important than ever. As we work together to recover from the impacts of COVID-19, it’s crucial to prioritize resources so that all Vermonters can access the psychological, social, cultural, and physical resources that support individual and collective well-being.
OLDER VERMONTERS	The resilience of our older Vermonters is more important than ever. In order to help them achieve their very best quality of life, we need to ensure that they have access to the psychological, social, cultural, and physical resources that support individual and collective well-being.

RESILIENT VERMONT ~ GLOSSARY OF TERMS

These are terms that we find most consistent with the way we are talking about resilience.
We welcome any suggestions or comments.

Health Equity	<p>According to Healthy People 2020, health equity is defined as <i>"the attainment of the highest level of health for all people. Achieving health equity requires valuing everyone equally with focused and ongoing societal efforts to address avoidable inequalities, historical and contemporary injustices, and the elimination of health and health care disparities."</i></p> <p>Not everyone in Vermont has equal access to the conditions that favor health. Some people live in areas where there aren't many doctors or dentists and have to travel greater distances for care. Some live in areas where it's hard to access healthy food or where it's not safe to take a walk. Some face prejudice or discrimination because of the color of their skin, their gender, sexuality, gender identity, age, country of origin, socioeconomic status, geography, or for having a disability. These conditions or characteristics can affect a person's ability to lead a healthy life – and can result in health disparities, or unequal health outcomes – based on their group membership.</p> <p>By viewing public health through a health equity lens, we are more likely to reach the people and communities most in need of our support.</p>
N.E.A.R. Science	<p>The acronym "NEAR" refers to neuroscience, epigenetics, ACEs and resilience as a framework for building thriving communities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Neuroscience: early brain development and adaptations to experience● Epigenetics: how our environment influences gene expression● ACEs study: makes the connections to later outcomes clear● Resilience: shows that even those who have been deeply affected by adversity can become more resilient and flourish, and those with resilience withstand life's challenges better. <p>This framework is at the core of Vermont's statewide Building Flourishing Communities' initiative.</p>

<p>Racial Equity</p>	<p>Racial equity is both an outcome and a process. As an outcome, we achieve racial equity when race no longer determines one’s socioeconomic outcomes; when everyone has what they need to thrive, no matter where they live. As a process, we apply racial equity when those most impacted by structural racial inequity are meaningfully involved in the creation and implementation of the institutional policies and practices that impact their lives.</p> <p>When we achieve racial equity:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● People, including people of color, are owners, planners, and decision-makers in the systems that govern their lives. ● We acknowledge and account for past and current inequities, and provide all people, particularly those most impacted by racial inequities, the infrastructure needed to thrive. ● Everyone benefits from a more just, equitable system. <p>(source: Center for Social Inclusion)</p>
<p>Racial Trauma</p>	<p>Racial trauma (also known as race-based traumatic stress) refers to the stressful impact or emotional pain of one’s experience with racism and discrimination. Traumatic events that occur as a result of experiencing or witnessing racist events, discrimination, or enduring the effects of systemic racism can have a profound and lasting impact on the physical and psychological health and well-being of individuals exposed to and targeted by those events.</p>
<p>Resilience</p>	<p>The capacity to thrive, individually and collectively, in the face of adversity.</p>
<p>Social Determinants of Health</p>	<p>Social determinants of health are conditions in the environments in which people are born, live, learn, work, play, worship, and age that affect a wide range of health, functioning, and quality-of-life outcomes and risks. They are typically referred to in the following categories:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Economic Stability <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Employment ○ Food Insecurity ○ Housing Instability ○ Poverty ● Education <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Early Childhood Education and Development ○ Enrollment in Higher Education ○ High School Graduation ○ Language and Literacy ● Social and Community Context <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Civic Participation ○ Discrimination ○ Incarceration ○ Social Cohesion ● Health and Health Care

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Access to Health Care ○ Access to Primary Care ○ Health Literacy ● Neighborhood and Built Environment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Access to Foods that Support Healthy Eating Patterns ○ Crime and Violence ○ Environmental Conditions ○ Quality of Housing
Social-Ecological framework of resilience	A Social-Ecological framework for resilience “seeks solutions that address the intersection of interpersonal relationships, community norms and environments, and the effect of social policies upon individual behaviors.” (Institute of Women and Ethnic Studies, New Orleans, LA).
Protective Factors	Protective factors are characteristics or strengths of individuals, families, communities or societies that act to mitigate risks and promote positive well-being and healthy development. Most often, we see them as attributes that help families to successfully navigate difficult situations.
Protective Factors Framework	A protective factors framework (such as Strengthening Families - see below, or Youth Thrive) is an organized set of strengths-based ideas that are used to guide programs, services, supports and interventions aimed at preventing child maltreatment and promoting healthy outcomes.
Strengths-Based Approach	As opposed to a deficit centered approach: a strengths-based approach focuses on developing the positive attributes and protective factors that build up resilience rather than focusing solely on treatment of the negative effects of trauma or trauma exposure.
Strengthening Families Approach	<p>Strengthening Families is a research-informed approach to increase family strengths, enhance child development, and reduce the likelihood of child abuse and neglect. It is based on engaging families, programs, and communities in building five key Protective Factors.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Parental resilience ● Social connections ● Knowledge of parenting and child development ● Concrete support in times of need ● Social and emotional competence of children
Toxic stress	<p>Toxic stress results from strong, frequent or prolonged activation of the body’s stress response, in the absence of a buffering supportive adult relationship and environment. Multiple stressors frequently resulting in a toxic stress response include child abuse or neglect, caregiver substance abuse or mental illness, and exposure to violence.^[i] For more detail, see the Appendix.</p> <hr/> <p>^[i] Adapted from Oregon Health Authority, Addictions and Mental Health Division, Trauma Informed Services Policy</p>
Trauma	“Trauma” refers to either a physical injury, such as a broken bone, or

	<p>psychological injury. Psychological trauma refers to extreme stress that overwhelms and individual’s ability to cope. Trauma involves events or experiences that confront the person directly or as a witness to a real or perceived threat of death, bodily harm, coercive exploitation or harassment, sexual violation, violence motivated by ethno-cultural prejudice, gender, sexual orientation, or politically based.</p> <p>Psychological trauma has a direct impact on the brain, development and life-long health outcomes through associated physical, neurological, and stress response systems. These experiences directly and indirectly affect mood, memory, judgment, and involvement in relationships and work. The trauma impacts an individual’s perception towards self, others and the world. The potential for reactivity to safety concerns must be consciously and thoughtfully planned to create an environment conducive to building resilience, healing and recovery.^[i]</p> <hr/> <p>^[i] Adapted from State of Connecticut, Department of Mental Health & Addiction Services, Trauma Services Policy</p>
<p>Trauma-informed system</p>	<p>A trauma-informed system is the best context within which to develop resilience - and adheres to key principles rather than a prescribed set of practices or procedures. Services and supports must be trauma-informed, build on the best evidence available and focus on consumer and family engagement, empowerment, and collaboration in order to support the individual’s capacity to thrive.</p>

RESILIENT VERMONT ~ STORIES

Stories bring the messaging to life... the more stories we tell, the easier it can be to engage key stakeholders.

The Power of Messaging to Move Minds

Tricia Long, LCMHC, the Director of Resilience Beyond Incarceration at the Lamoille Restorative Center, shared with us this story of developing a resilient community through shared messaging:

Our Resilient Lamoille workgroup has been doing resilience work for many years. Over the past couple of years we recognized the need to shift the paradigm away from an understanding of resilience-building as mostly an individual responsibility toward seeing it as more of a community responsibility. It was also important to make the connection between resiliency and access to resources. We developed our Pathways to Resilience toolkit to reflect that perspective. When we found out about the Vermont Resilience Messaging Project we hoped that the statewide messaging would follow a similar approach. It was wonderful to know that our input was welcomed, and our prior work acknowledged. We appreciated that the VRMP team listened thoughtfully to what we had been thinking and communicating.

In our own work around messaging, and through this subsequent statewide process, we have seen the value of using clear, consistent, compelling messaging. It has made a huge difference to our work. Any

time a member of our group talks with community partners and funders we reinforce that it's not enough to focus only on the individual...that resilience-building is a community responsibility, and that it's also important that everyone has access to adequate resources. The discipline of consistent messaging, accelerated by the realities of COVID, is effectively moving partners and funders towards that sense of community responsibility and the importance of equitable access to necessary resources.

Please share your own story with us at VRMP by emailing: VRMP@vermont.gov



VRMP is funded by Help Me Grow, New England Public Health Training Center, and Vermont Public Health Association