Best Processes for Strategic Communication of Program Results

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Key Strategic Questions

1. <u>Why</u> communicate program results?

2. <u>How</u> to communicate program results?

   - To Whom to say it?
   - What to say?
   - When to say it?
   - Where to say it (via what channels)?
   - How to say it (e.g., stories, evidence, figures, statistics)?

3. Is there potential for <u>unintended negative consequences</u>?

Why Communicate Program Results?

The Processes of Changing Behavior, Institutional Practices, and Policies are Complex
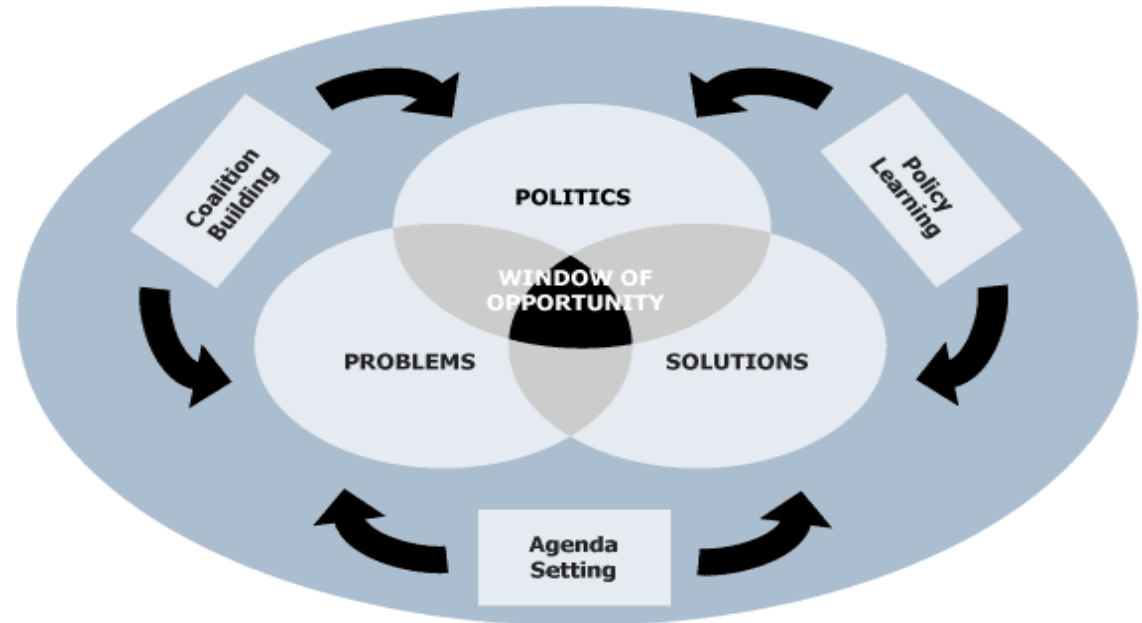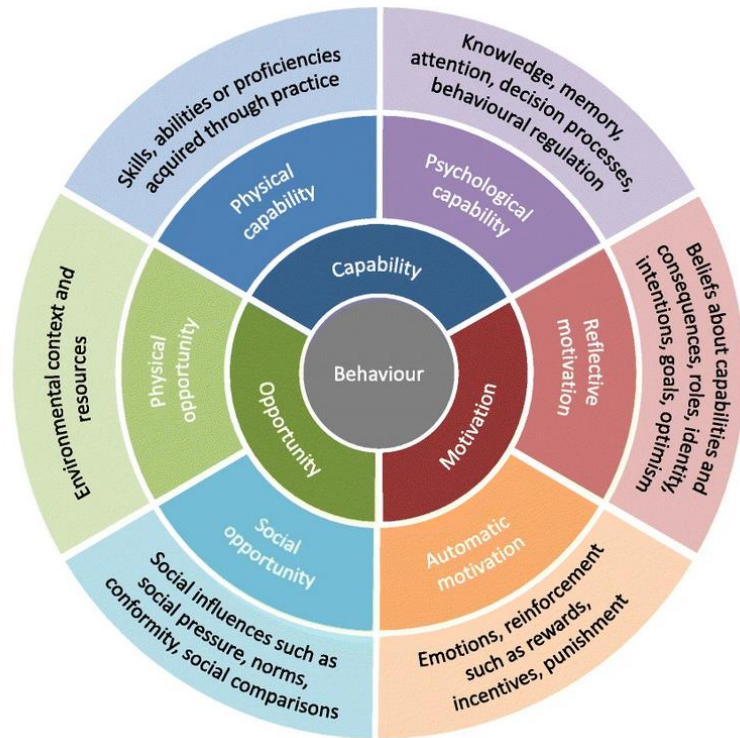
A Few of the Ways Evidence Can Inform Practice and Policy

1. <u>Agenda Setting</u>

   - This is a problem/program/policy important to discuss

2. <u>Persuasion / Framing / Direct Advocacy</u>

   - You should address this issue / fund or support this policy

   - This is an important way to think about this problem/ program/policy that aligns with your goals/values

3. <u>Coalition Building / Mobilization</u>

   - Let's work together on this problem/program/policy

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Best Process: Identify Goal and Theory of Change

1. Agenda Setting

   • Broad dissemination, frequent exposure

2. Persuasion / Framing / Direct Advocacy

   • Direct communication with decision-makers or at-risk people

   • Craft messages that align with audience values

3. Coalition Building / Mobilization

   • Identify which people/groups could be engaged, connect with them and/or engage with knowledge brokers who already do

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How to Communicate Program Results – <u>To Whom</u> to Say It?

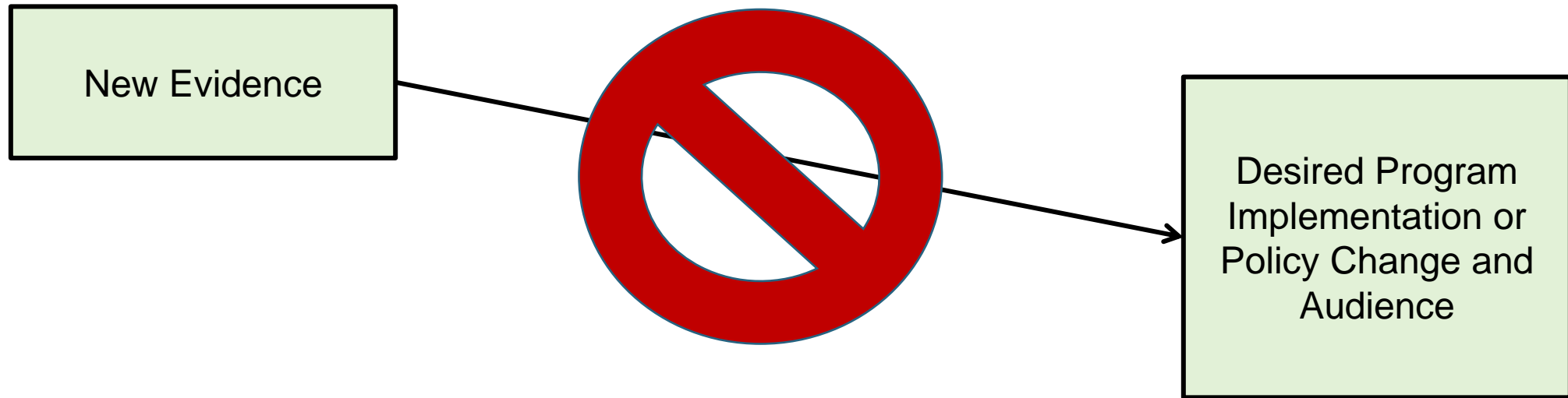# How to Communicate Program Results – <u>To Whom</u> to Say It?

- Depends on goals of dissemination and theory of change

- Successful program dissemination strategists know the values and beliefs of key audiences and craft messages that are tailored to those audiences

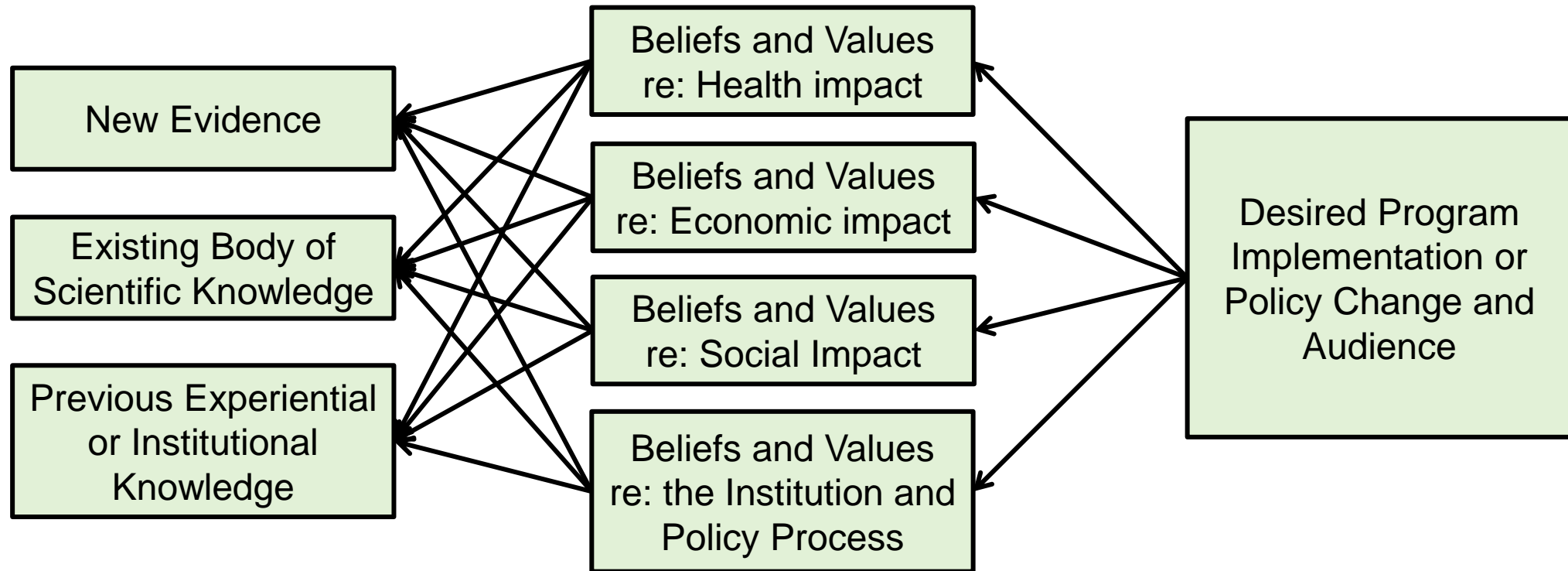# How to Communicate Program Results – <u>To Whom</u> to Say It?

1. Institutional Decision Makers?

   • Persuade those who are opposed or mobilize supporters?

2. General Public?

   • Persuade those who are opposed or mobilize supporters?

3. Practice Communities?

   • Incremental or paradigmatic change? Benefit or harm?

4. Scholarly Communities?

   • Incremental or paradigmatic change?

How to Communicate Program Results – <u>What</u> to Say?

Best Process: Think About the Desired Outcome and Work Backward

New Evidence

Desired Program Implementation or Policy Change and Audience

Best Process: Think About the Desired Outcome and Work Backward

New Evidence

Existing Body of Scientific Knowledge

Previous Experiential or Institutional Knowledge

Beliefs and Values re: Health impact

Beliefs and Values re: Economic impact

Beliefs and Values re: Social Impact

Beliefs and Values re: the Institution and Policy Process

Desired Program Implementation or Policy Change and Audience

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How to Communicate Program Results – <u>When</u> to Say It?

Program Implementation and Evaluation Have Long Time Horizons

Identify Gap in Evidence →
Design Program and Study to Address Gap →
Secure Funding for Program, Implement →
Implement Program and Analyze Study →
Publish Study Results in Journal →
Disseminate Results More Broadly →
Identify Next Gap In Evidence…
(rinse and repeat)

But Process of Changing Behavior, Institutional Practices, and Policies are Complex & Non-Linear
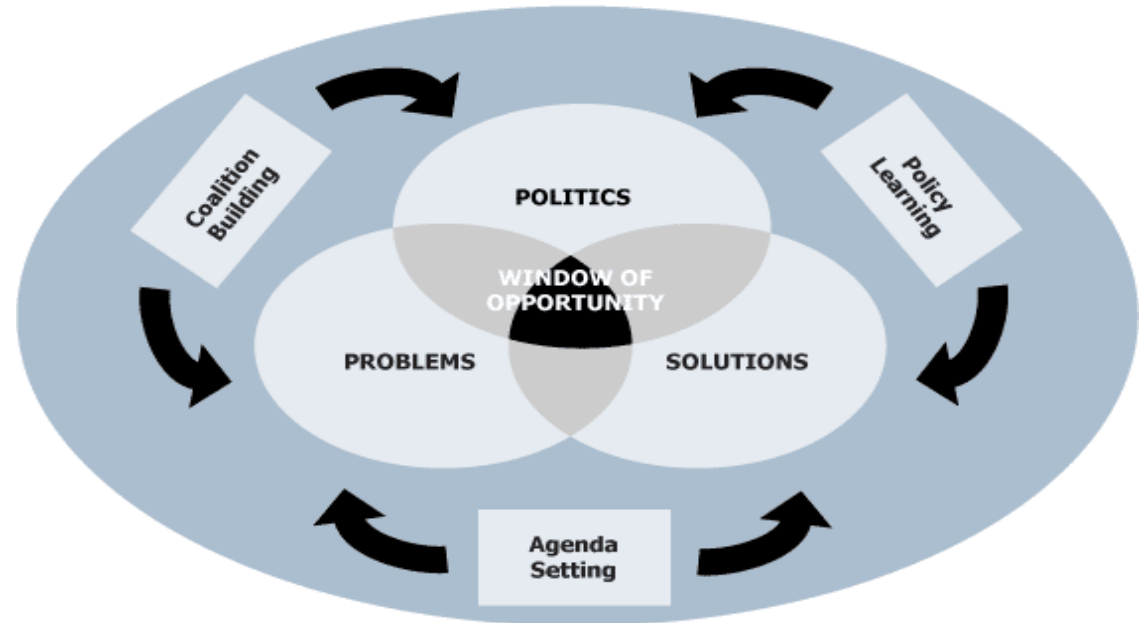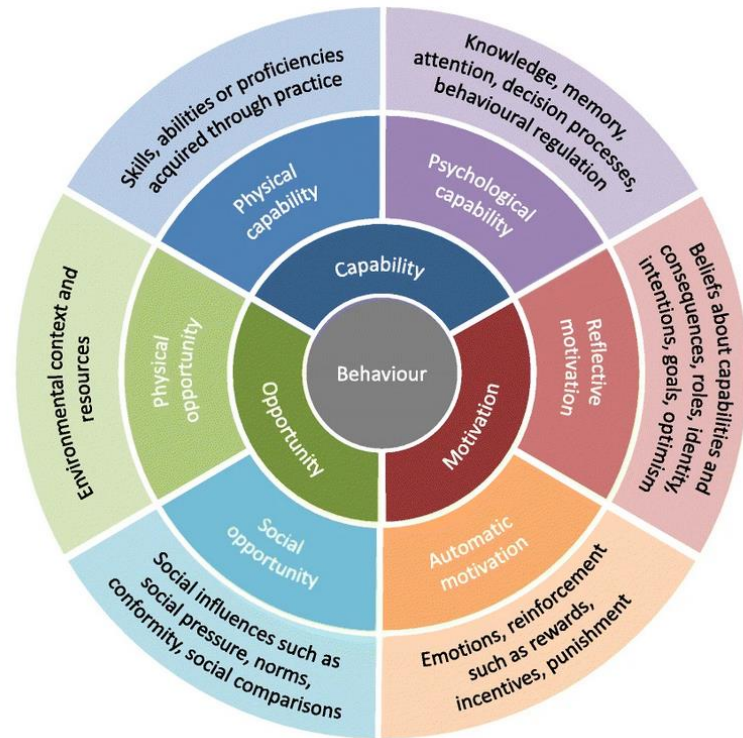
How to Communicate Program Results – <u>When</u> to Say It?

- Need to think about communication strategy from the beginning

1. Institutional Decision Makers?
   - When they come to you, likely not on your timeline
2. General Public?
   - Today, if it is relevant and/or newsworthy
3. Practice Communities?
   - We needed this info yesterday!
4. Scholarly Communities?
   - Dependent on reviewers, editors, journal backlog, etc…

How to Communicate Program Results – <u>Where</u> to Say It?

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- Go where your audiences are, based on your theory of change

  - Social media? (hyper-targeting, politically polarized)

  - Traditional media? (still relevant for decision-makers)

  - Community gatherings / meetings? (mobilization)

  - Interpersonal conversations? (decision-makers)

  - Webinars and learning sessions? (scholar/practice community)

  - Peer reviewed literature? (scholar/practice community)

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How to Communicate Program Results – <u>How</u> to Say It?

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How to Communicate Program Results – <u>How</u> to Say It?

- There are many strategies informed by theory and research

  - Personal storytelling (program participants, etc.)

  - Data storytelling (Corbin's presentation)

  - Evidence and argument

  - Inoculating against oppositional arguments

  - Vision, values, and emotions

Best Process: Consider Potential Unintended Negative Consequences

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- First, do no harm

- Unpredictable, but:

  - Werther effect

  - Losing the narrative / frame

  - Priming stereotypes or individual responsibility

  - Catalyzing oppositional forces