

TALKING JUSTICE

A guide for
community
legal centres



Community
Legal Centres
NSW

Disclaimer

Talking justice is a messaging guide. As such, the statements related to policy and law reform may not reflect the current position of Community Legal Centres NSW or our member organisations.

Acknowledgment of Country

We wrote *Talking justice* on unceded Gadigal Country. We pay our respects to Gadigal Elders, both past and present. We recognise that the roots of our legal system stem from the legal fiction of *terra nullius* and the denial of Aboriginal sovereignty. We commit to challenging colonialism and supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in their quest for self-determination and justice across all aspects of our work. Sovereignty was never ceded. Always was, always will be, Aboriginal land.

Contact

Community Legal Centres NSW
Gadigal Country
102/55 Holt Street
Surry Hills, NSW, 2010
Telephone: (02) 9212 7333
Email: clcnsw@clcnsw.org.au
Website: clcnsw.org.au

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The community legal centres movement

For almost 50 years, community legal centres have built a powerful movement that challenges inequality and injustice, creates more equitable and fairer laws, and has reshaped how people access free legal help.

A brief history of free legal help

In 1970, in response to the continued injustice of colonial laws, institutional brutality and police harassment, a group of Aboriginal activists joined together to form the Redfern Aboriginal Legal Service in Sydney, New South Wales. It was the first free shop-front legal centre in the country and was established with an underlying philosophy of Aboriginal community control and self-determination. As Gary Foley writes, “the repercussions of what this small group of Redfern activists achieved were felt nationwide”.¹

The Aboriginal Legal Service in Redfern was Australia’s first free legal service. Its model inspired the birth of community legal centres, which were subsequently established in Victoria.

In 1975, a group of lawyers, volunteers, academics, social workers, and community activists met in Redfern to explore the concept of “community control of legal services”.² The group advocated that everyone should be able to access justice, regardless of their financial means. This was the impetus for the birth of the broader community legal centre movement in New South Wales.

Local community legal centres soon developed in Parramatta and Marrickville, and then in inner-Sydney and Kingsford. It soon became apparent that local community legal centres could not service all areas of legal need. Demand for support from the community in some areas required a more focused and specialised response than local centres could provide. So, specialist community legal centres formed to cater to specific legal needs and specific groups in areas including disability rights, immigration, tenancy, welfare rights, seniors’ rights, and environmental law.

We've evolved into a diverse movement dedicated to social justice. There are over 170 community legal centres nationally, with 42 in New South Wales.

Community legal centres today

Community legal centres are a movement of independent organisations that provide free legal help to people going through tough times. Every year, community legal centres in New South Wales support tens of thousands of people experiencing violence and abuse, financial hardship, housing insecurity, discrimination, and other social and legal issues.

From Broken Hill in the Far West to the South Coast and inner Sydney: we are there supporting communities, challenging injustice, and advocating for a fairer society.

As community legal centres are not part of government, we play a unique and important role as advocates for law reform and social justice. We use the knowledge gained from providing legal support to challenge social and economic injustices, unjust laws and policies, and effect positive change on-the-ground.

We believe that our society and laws can be more just, fair, and inclusive, and we work hard to make this vision a reality.

Our vision

Our communities need the right conditions to grow and thrive. With laws and policies that are developed in the public interest, we can help our communities to be resilient, caring, and safe places to live.

This means ensuring that everyone is housed, fed, safe, cared about, and has the support they need to thrive and participate. Essential to this vision for justice is respect and self-determination for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

About this guide

Talking justice provides guidance on using language that is respectful and humanising towards the people we support, reflects our values, boosts understanding of community legal centres and your organisation, and builds public support for policy and law reform.

Why we developed this guide

- ▶ We're stronger together, and we need a cohesive shared narrative about what community legal centres do, and the change we want to see. Having a set of foundational principles helps us to develop a strong collective voice and find persuasive ways to champion social justice.
- ▶ Language is political, and at times, we can unintentionally (or intentionally) use language that is stigmatising, harmful, or disempowers and excludes the people we work with.
- ▶ Crafting stories takes time. This guide pulls together some best-practice recommendations so that our language can be alive, precise, and easier to connect with.

This guide has been developed for people who work at community legal centres, those passionate about social justice, or people who work at other community-based organisations.

Who this guide is for

Using humanising and accessible language is important when it comes to working in a client-centred and trauma-informed manner. Whether you are a community lawyer, social worker, intake officer, director, law reformer, Aboriginal legal access worker, communicator, or volunteer: this guide is for you.

When to use this guide

We encourage you to implement these recommendations across your work. You can use these recommendations in many aspects of your work, for example, when you:

- ▶ Provide legal help
- ▶ Talk with people in your community
- ▶ Educate people in your community about their rights and responsibilities
- ▶ Train volunteers
- ▶ Work with pro-bono partners
- ▶ Communicate with the public, through digital or traditional media
- ▶ Design campaigns
- ▶ Engage with government and decision makers
- ▶ Advocate for fairer laws and policies
- ▶ Partner with other community organisations

The framework we've drawn on: values-based communications

This guide draws heavily upon the Common Cause approach, which is a values-based communications framework developed by Anat Shenker-Osorio of ASO Communications. A key underpinning of values-based communications is the notion that, “most people are able to think about any issue from multiple and often conflicting perspectives”.³ In other words, peoples’ perspectives and values are generally not fixed; they are generally open to being changed and persuaded.

The Common Cause approach suggests that it is the language we use, the message structures we employ, and the way in which we frame issues that have a significant impact on whether someone can be persuaded to care about (or take action on) social and environmental issues. Facts and evidence are important, but it’s the context (or the narrative) in which they are placed that is critical.

Each of the Common Cause guides are based on comprehensive message testing across different focus groups, including advocates, a supporter base, people who are persuadable, and steadfast opponents. Please see the list of key resources that informed the development of this guide at the end of this document.

“A great message doesn’t say what’s already popular – a great message makes popular what needs to be said.”⁴

— Anat Shenker-Osorio

Disclaimer

This guide has been developed to provide guidance on how to speak about our clients and communities, community legal centres’ work, and the social issues that we care about.

It is not intended to override your organisation’s voice. In some forums – such as Parliamentary hearings, policy analyses, or budget submissions – technical and specialist language may be more appropriate. In other forums, such as when you are working with clients, using more informal or context-specific language will be more relevant. In other words, use this as a guide, not a rulebook!



Cheat sheet

Use the ‘people do things’ rule

When describing inequality or barriers to justice, name the source of the problem as specifically as possible. Stating problems without making clear who causes them can reinforce deficit narratives and turn systemic issues into individual failings. Use active voice. Assign an actor and a cause to the problems you describe – this shows a subject, person or thing that acts.

Replace deficit language with strength-based stories

Deficit language – words like “vulnerable” and “disempowered” – can obscure the cause of harm or vulnerability. Tell stories that are grounded in strength, community knowledge, and truth, while recognising the injustices that people face.

Tell our story (never negate)

Begin from the place of truth – say what we are *for* and what *is*, rather than what is *not*. This means not falling into the trap of busting myths.

Be reader-friendly and use plain language

Communicating effectively means adjusting your message to suit your audience. Think about who you want to reach, and what forms of communication will enable those people or communities to understand, participate, and engage.

Tell compelling stories of change

When communicating about policy or law reform, it’s important to be solutions focused. Talk about the outcomes and paint a picture of the future or transformational change that we want.

Tell human stories

Foreground human stories, lived experience, and expertise. Facts, evidence and legal analysis are important, but messages that focus on statistics are dry and difficult to connect to.

Lead with values and visions

Map out the values that underpin your message. Tell stories that activate collective and community strength, rather than individualistic or protective thinking.

Know your audience

One-size-fits-all messages are rarely effective. Our language needs to be tailored to our different audiences, given that the people and organisations we communicate with are diverse. Tailoring our communications means that we can better meet the needs of different groups of people.

Use the ‘people do things’ rule

“Our messages need to stop shining the gaze on our wounded bodies, and instead shine the gaze on the bullets fired at us, and the people firing them.”⁵

— *Passing the Message Stick*

When describing inequality or barriers to justice, name the source of the problem as specifically as possible. Stating problems without making clear who causes them can reinforce deficit narratives and turn systemic issues into individual failings.

Naming a specific person, government, force, or decision maker can be a powerful way to overcome deficit framing. This also helps our audiences to understand that change is possible by providing a clear path for action, policy, and law reform.

Ask yourself

- ▶ Who caused this problem? Be as specific as possible. Name a government, minister, department, institution, company, leader, decision-maker, someone in a position of power or authority, or a political force (eg ongoing colonialism, capitalism, patriarchy, ableism).
- ▶ What are they doing?
- ▶ Why are they doing it?

Use active voice, rather than passive voice

When we communicate publicly, always adhere to the ‘people do things’ rule. Use active voice and assign an actor and a cause to the problems you describe – this shows a subject, person or thing that acts. Passive voice, on the other hand, centres the person who is acted upon.

Examples of the ‘people do things’ rule

Replace	Embrace
Incarceration rates of Aboriginal people are rising.	Police disproportionately target Aboriginal people.
Zara struggled to change the gender marker on her birth certificate to reflect her identity.	Zara struggled to change her birth certificate, as the <i>Births, Deaths & Marriages Act 1998</i> makes unreasonable demands of transgender people.
Khalid experienced wage theft. \$15,000 of his wages were back paid to him.	Khalid’s boss wouldn’t pay him what the law said he should. We helped him get the \$15,000 he was owed.
Aboriginal children are more than twelve times as likely to be removed from their family than non-Indigenous children.	The NSW Government removes Aboriginal children from their family at more than twelve times the rate of non-Indigenous children.
For Naomi, who is deaf, it was difficult to watch the government press conferences and keep up with the changes to Covid-19 rules.	During the pandemic, the Federal Government did not provide Auslan interpreters at press conferences. This excluded Naomi, who is deaf, from keeping up with changes to Covid-19 rules.
The gap between the health outcomes of rich and poor people are widening.	The Federal government maintains a low rate of income support, which forces people who are out of work, people with disabilities, and young families to live below the poverty line.
An application for compensation was submitted on behalf of Jo-Ann.	We helped Jo-Ann apply for compensation.
Our right to protest is under threat. It is increasingly difficult for communities to have their say when it comes to the environment. Meanwhile, precious land and waterways are being destroyed for profit, and people are being put behind bars for protesting. This injustice needs to be reversed. We are calling for the <i>Inclosed Lands Protection Act 1901 (NSW)</i> to be repealed.	Over the last ten years, the NSW Government has introduced laws that make it increasingly difficult for people to have their say when it comes to the environment. While the government allows private companies to destroy precious land and waterways for profit, police are locking people behind bars for protesting. But it is within this government’s power to reverse this injustice. We are calling on the NSW Attorney General to repeal section 4B of the <i>Inclosed Lands Protection Act 1901 (NSW)</i> .

Replace deficit language with strength-based stories

Deficit language individualises structural problems and obscures the cause of harm or vulnerability. Tell stories that are grounded in strength, community knowledge, and truth, while recognising the injustices that people face.

Why retire deficit language?

Deficit language can reinforce stigma, create shame, perpetuate stereotypes, and obscure the harm inflicted by other people, governments, and institutions.

There is no such thing as vulnerable or disadvantaged people, places, or populations. Vulnerability and disadvantage are not intrinsic qualities that we are born with. Vulnerability and disadvantage are made: it is an experience that is produced through laws, decisions, policies, and actions.

Avoid deficit language

At-risk of	Illiterate	Powerless
Disadvantaged	Low knowledge of rights	Slipped through the cracks
Disempowered	More likely to be homeless	Traumatised
Dysfunctional	More susceptible to	Unskilled, lack of skills
Hard-to-reach	Most incarcerated	Voiceless
Helpless	Overrepresented	Vulnerable

“The term ‘vulnerable’ should be used with care. It comes from the Latin word for ‘wound’ and can suggest that people with disability are frail and in need of protection. We aren’t inherently vulnerable because of our disability, but rather because of the acts and/or omissions of the society in which we live. For example, government spending cuts that might result in us being imprisoned in our own homes with minimum support.”⁶

— *People with Disability Australia*



Avoid deficit framing

Homeless people are some of the most vulnerable people in Australia.

Aboriginal people are the most incarcerated people in the world, making up just three percent of our population, but 29 percent of the prison population.

Our service supports hard-to-reach populations who often slip through the cracks.

Community legal centres provide services to vulnerable and disadvantaged people.

We give voice to the voiceless.

People on temporary visas are over-represented in cases of family violence.

The kids in our youth program come from dysfunctional families.

People seeking asylum need your help.

Overcoming deficit language

It is time that we retire deficit language, embrace strengths-based messages, and articulate the root causes of the problems people experience. If someone is experiencing vulnerability, we need to articulate what that means and why that is the case. See the ‘Tell strengths-based stories’ and ‘Use the people do things rule’ sections for guidance on how to shift your use of deficit language.

Strengths-based language

Strengths-based language uses words that respect and acknowledge an individual as a whole person. This framework allows us to honour the complexity of peoples’ lives, their expertise, and their knowledge. Talking about peoples’ lives in deficit terms, on the other hand, can lead people to feel excluded, misunderstood, and isolated. Using strengths-based messaging is particularly important if you are not speaking from a position of lived experience.

As community legal centres, one of our core principles is that people and communities are the experts in their own lives.

“The experts on poverty are the people who live it.”⁷

— *Antipoverty Centre*

Strengths-based messaging does not mean we ignore the truth. We still need to talk about the unfair barriers, discrimination, racism, sexism, inequality, and injustice that people experience. If we need to use words like ‘vulnerability’, use them as nouns (something that people experience, which changes over time), rather than as an adjective (a descriptor, or a quality that someone is).

Examples of strengths-based language

People are...	<p>strong powerful self-determined experts in their lives knowledgeable capable wise complex leaders creative skilled</p>	...despite the ongoing injustice they might face.
Communities have...	<p>expertise values experiences hopes dreams solutions ideas and visions desires aspirations for their lives knowledge strength power</p>	...in the face of an unjust system.

Embrace strengths-based framing

People seeking asylum are calling for your solidarity.

People with cognitive disabilities are experts in their own lives, despite experiencing discrimination in schools and the healthcare system.

When seeking safety, women who have experienced domestic violence often face a confusing and hostile legal process. The women we work with know what they need to find safety. It's our role to support them on that journey, to make their own decisions, and retake control of their lives.

Aboriginal-led community organisations have an extraordinary history of success and are best-placed to make decisions for Aboriginal people and Country.

We acknowledge that while strengths-based language is able to be applied in most contexts, describing who a service is designed for (and who it excludes) can be more difficult. See the 'Words that work' section for further guidance.

Tell our story (never negate)

We sometimes use negation when we want to dispel a myth or challenge a damaging stereotype. However, negation can end up reinforcing harmful narratives.

Don't think of an elephant. Do not think about an elephant. Do not think about an elephant. Now, what are you thinking about? An elephant?

Lead from a place of truth and say what we are *for*

Negations are words like 'no', 'not' and 'never'. It is often used to bust myths or unfair stereotypes. However, negation can simply reinforce harmful narratives.

Instead of negating, begin from the place of truth – say what we are *for* and what *is*, rather than what is *not*. Lead with, and focus on, what we are *for* as opposed to what we are *against*.

As the *Passing the Message Stick* authors write, “By associating our communities with something we're 'not', we're doing the opposite of what we intend. We are reinforcing the opponent's story. It's important we never negate the opponent's frame. Instead, we need to learn the art of reframing, so we're always speaking from our power”.⁸

The refugee rights sector has made big progress on this front. Through sustained research, they have shown that if we want to challenge the harmful (and inaccurate) view that seeking asylum is 'criminal', we are best to reinforce the fact that seeking asylum is a fundamental human right. This way, we are both speaking the truth, reframing the terms of the debate, and implicitly challenging the opposition's argument.

If you are drawn into discussion regarding oppositional terms, acknowledge that you are addressing myths or lies, and then reframe the debate back to your truth.

Avoid	Embrace
Seeking asylum is not illegal No human is illegal.	It is legal to seek asylum. When people cross borders their human rights come with them.
Closing youth detention centres will not make our communities more dangerous.	Our communities are safer when the government provides kids with proper support and care in community.
Raising income support payments is not a waste of taxpayer money and won't hurt the economy.	Raising income support payments means that all people are supported to live with dignity.
Aboriginal people are not innately criminal.	Police unfairly target Aboriginal people.

Be reader-friendly and use plain language

Speak in ways that connect with people, are accessible, and ground our stories in real world experience.

Craft messages with your audience in mind

To communicate effectively adjust your language to suit your audience. Think about who you want to reach, and what forms of communication will help those people or communities to understand, participate, and engage.

Use reader-friendly principles to address literacy barriers for people who are not familiar with English, people who require support with literacy, people who may want to process information quickly, and people with cognitive and intellectual disability.

- ▶ Familiarise yourself with reader-friendly principles.
- ▶ Use Easy Read documents to present information.
- ▶ Translate materials into languages other than English.
- ▶ Follow Web Content Accessibility Guidelines.
- ▶ Embed the principles of inclusive design in all aspects of your work.

How to be reader-friendly

43% of Australian adults can find everyday reading and writing challenging.⁹

Communicating effectively means you are reader-friendly, according to Jo Medlin from the Australian Council for Adult Literacy.¹⁰ This means:

- 1. Understanding:** Knowing your readers
- 2. Designing:** Using simple strategies to make your information quicker and easier to read.
- 3. Re-imagining:** Presenting your information in different ways – consider language, layout, and location.



Plain language tips

Avoid	Embrace	Why
<p>Acronyms or contractions</p> <p>CLCNSW CLCs</p>	<p>Full names</p> <p>Community Legal Centres NSW community legal centres</p>	<p>Acronyms can exclude people. Our missions and values are in our names: we should use them as much as possible.</p>
<p>Jargon, legalese, bureaucratic terms, specialist language.</p>	<p>Lucid language, which is alive, precise, and expresses complex ideas in ways that can be understood by people outside the community legal sector.</p>	<p>Specialist language and legal jargon can make our language impenetrable.</p>
<p>Convoluted, lengthy, or crammed sentences</p>	<p>Simple, precise and clear sentences.</p>	<p>A common plain English guideline says an average of 15–20 words per sentence. Stick to one key idea in each sentence.</p>
<p>Passive voice, where the subject is acted upon.</p> <p>\$10,000 was awarded to you by Victims Services.</p> <p>Our anti-discrimination laws need to be fixed.</p> <p>Your inquiry will be responded to within 10 working days.</p>	<p>Active voice, where a subject performs an action denoted by a verb. An active agent is named.</p> <p>Victims Services awarded you \$10,000.</p> <p>The government needs to fix our anti-discrimination laws.</p> <p>We will respond to you in 10 days.</p>	<p>Use active verbs as much as possible. Active voice is confident, concise, and clear. Active voice also helps us to convey the source of actions.</p> <p>Passive language can be dull, harder to understand, and convoluted.</p>
<p>Hedging language is cautious, vague, and non-committal language. The extra verb creates an unnecessarily long sentences and dilutes the impact of our work.</p> <p>We are committed to providing...</p> <p>We seek to...</p> <p>We aim to support...</p> <p>We work to create....</p> <p>We hope to maintain...</p>	<p>Assertive language is clear, confident, and direct.</p> <p>We do...</p> <p>We are...</p> <p>We create...</p> <p>We maintain...</p> <p>We provide...</p>	<p>Scan your communications for hedging language. Cut it out where you find it. Assertive language is confident and bolsters our credibility. Our sentences will be stronger and shorter.</p> <p>Where something has legal consequences, hedging might be necessary (eg use of the term “alleged”).</p>

Plain language tips (continued)

Avoid	Embrace	Why
<p>Impersonal or indirect language</p> <p><i>This service...</i> <i>The client...</i> <i>The member of the public...</i></p>	<p>Personal and direct language</p> <p><i>I am here to support you...</i> <i>We care about...</i> <i>Join us as we...</i> <i>Together, we can...</i> <i>We worked together to...</i></p>	<p>Using personal language in the first and second pronouns can help us to foster a sense of connection and community.</p>
<p>Lengthy paragraphs of text, no use of colour or images</p>	<p>Use lists, visuals, headings, and a logical structure</p>	<p>Documents are easier and quicker to digest if we put time and thought into utilising headings, visuals, design elements such as colours, and bulleted lists. A logical document structure with clear headings is also an important aspect of digital accessibility for people with low vision.</p>
<p>Abstract terms</p> <p><i>Better life outcomes</i> <i>Improved wellbeing</i> <i>Positive resolutions</i></p>	<p>Use concrete and conversational language</p> <p><i>Housing</i> <i>Healthcare</i> <i>Enough money to live on</i> <i>Reduced stress</i> <i>An end to violence</i> <i>Community connection</i></p>	<p>Concrete language can paint a real-world picture of our impact or the barriers that someone faces. Abstract terms are often opaque and difficult to connect with.</p>

Tell compelling stories of change

“Rather than drilling down into the detail of exactly how the income support system needs to be fixed (the ‘recipe’ to get the outcome we need), we talk about what it would mean for people to have enough income to cover the basics (the ‘cake’, which is the outcome of winning the campaign).”¹¹

— *Raise the Rate For Good Guide, Australian Council of Social Service*

Be solutions focused. ‘Talk about the cake, not the recipe’

When you open a cookbook, it is the images of the cakes – and not the written explanation of the baking process – that makes you want the cake. The cake is the outcome. It is unlikely you can use a printed image to convey a policy or law reform issue, but you can talk about the outcomes and describe the future or transformational change that you want.

Our communications can quickly become impenetrable if we let our language be bogged down in the detail of processes, casework, legislation, and policy. Avoid focusing too heavily on policy detail, costs, or processes. Leave legalese, bureaucratic or impersonal language out of your public-facing communications.

In certain forums, such as submissions to government, this policy detail is of course extremely important! Even where a level of detail is important (for example, in a submission), make sure you give the reader a story.

“People need a story about what they’re fighting for, and what they’re demanding from their governments. Not a laundry list of political demands—a vibrant story of how we win a safer, fairer world for all – and specifically, what that looks like.”¹²

— *The Years of Repair*

Examples of compelling stories of change

These will vary depending on the situation! You might speak about helping families to stay connected, finding stable housing, debt being paid off, someone gaining independence or financial stability, keeping kids with their community, someone receiving quality healthcare or education, a woman being able to live free from violence, or receiving compensation for violence.

All of these real-world examples are more compelling than phrases such as ‘positive outcome’ or ‘improved quality of life’.

Tell human stories

“Issues are often difficult to comprehend in the abstract, but a person can bring them alive.”¹³

— Alisa Roth, American Civil Liberties Union

We want to be telling human stories as much as is possible. Stories give texture to the structural, bringing the issues or causes we care about to life. They can be a powerful way for people affected by injustice to speak on their own terms.

Facts, evidence and legal analysis are important, but messages that are lists of statistics can end up being dry and difficult to connect to. It’s important that these don’t overwhelm our communications work.

We want to foreground the lived experience, expertise, and voices of people affected by injustice in our storytelling work, and support these stories with a base of sound evidence.

The challenge for us in community legal centres is how we balance the need to tell human stories with the legal and ethical requirements of our work.

“Stories are powerful. They can cut through prejudice, build understanding and motivate people to challenge injustice. Storytelling can empower individuals and communities by recognising their experience and expertise and promoting their agency. Storytelling also gives rise to difficult ethical questions and risks for clients, communities, community legal centres and campaigns.”¹⁴

— Rachael Ball, *When I tell my story, I’m in charge: Ethical and effective storytelling in advocacy*



Key principles for ethical and effective storytelling

Rachael Ball's research report, *When I tell my story, I'm in charge: Ethical and effective storytelling in advocacy*, provides a practical set of considerations specifically for community legal centres wanting to share human stories, or support clients to share their own stories.

The following principles and considerations were developed for community legal centres by Rachael Ball in the research report, *When I tell my story, I'm in charge: Ethical and effective storytelling in advocacy*.¹⁵

Key principles

- ▶ Consent
- ▶ Participation
- ▶ Self-determination
- ▶ Situate stories in the context of broader campaigns

Forms of client involvement

- ▶ Direct testimony
- ▶ De-identified case studies
- ▶ Community-led storytelling

Why should we include storytelling in our advocacy?

- ▶ Stories are an important part of effective advocacy for systemic change. They can cut through prejudice, build understanding, create a platform for discussion and motivate people to challenge injustice.
- ▶ Story telling can empower individuals and communities by recognising their experience and expertise and promoting their agency.
- ▶ Stories contribute to participatory democracy by ensuring that a diversity of voices is heard in public debate.

How can we include storytelling in our advocacy?

- ▶ People can tell their stories at public events, parliamentary hearings and in meetings with decision-makers.
- ▶ We can create and distribute video and audio recordings of people telling their stories.
- ▶ We can assist and support people to tell their stories through the media.
- ▶ Written stories can be included in submissions, reports, and letters to decision-makers.

The following principles and considerations were developed for community legal centres by Rachael Ball in the research report, *When I tell my story, I'm in charge: Ethical and effective storytelling in advocacy*.¹⁶

What risks should we consider before embarking on a storytelling project?

- ▶ Potential harm to individuals, their families and communities.
- ▶ The possibility that focusing on one particular story serves to exclude other voices and perspectives.
- ▶ The risk that lawyers and other professional advocates disempower clients and communities by seeking to control the way their stories are told.
- ▶ Certain legal and professional risks and obligations (including confidentiality, legal professional privilege, and defamation) should be kept in mind.

How do we minimise the risks and maximise the benefits of storytelling in advocacy?

- ▶ Consent for the use of a story should be fully informed and freely given.
- ▶ Prioritising participation can make storytelling more effective and empowering.
- ▶ Working with community groups and networks can circumvent issues that arise in the context of a lawyer–client relationship.
- ▶ Storytelling should be part of a broader campaign that incorporates a strong evidence base, robust partnerships and coalitions, strategic legal and political interventions, grassroots support, and high-level champions.

Ethical and legal considerations – consent and client stories

Workers in community legal centres have ethical and legal obligations to the people and communities that we support. According to Rachael Ball, “Informed consent means that people should be aware of why and how their stories will be told and of the foreseeable risks and benefits, including outcomes that are not likely”; freely given consent can be more difficult to determine, as “a client’s sense of obligation or gratitude for receiving a free legal service may also muddy the quality of consent”.¹⁷ The process of ensuring that consent is fully informed and freely given will differ depending on the context. For example, processes for obtaining consent for a written case study in a submission will look different to planning a video project.

Ethical and legal considerations – a checklist

To protect clients' confidentiality, community legal centres will sometimes create de-identified case studies, which are an amalgamation of various clients' experiences that include no identifying information. These do not require permission from a client as it is not their story.

While considering how to balance the power of sharing clients' stories alongside ethical and legal risks, it is important to consider:

Considerations before you ask the client:

- ▶ Are there any professional risks or obligations to the organisation, such as confidentiality and legal professional privilege?
- ▶ Is it in the client's interest to tell this story or in your organisations' or the public interest?
- ▶ Should you refer the client for legal advice about whether they should consent and what they are consenting to?
- ▶ Is it lawful for a client to tell their story or are they otherwise at risk of being in breach of a restraint against telling their story? For example, is there a Deed (or similar) with a confidentiality clause which restrains them from telling their story? For a family law matter, section 121 of the *Family Law Act 1975* makes it an offence to publish proceedings that identify persons or witnesses involved in family law proceedings. This prohibition also extends to the publication of any picture.
- ▶ What form does the identifying information take? This could range from a first name on a case study to appearing in an online video.
- ▶ Is there any potential harm to the client, their community, or anyone involved in their life or matter (including the other party)? Will it affect their legal prospects?
- ▶ Is there any risk to the client where their safety is an issue – eg is there a risk of someone finding them or their children?
- ▶ Is there a risk of an action in defamation?
- ▶ What support might the person want or need if they decide to share their story publicly? Can you provide this or provide financial resources to access support? What are the expectations in terms of ongoing support?
- ▶ Are there any barriers that might affect someone's ability to understand the long-term consequences of giving consent or to freely give consent? Eg a permanent digital footprint for a young person, age, language barriers, barriers in communication, decision-making capacity, trauma.
- ▶ Is the client in a position to withhold consent? Do they feel obligated to consent?

Considerations when asking the client

- ▶ What are you specifically asking the person to consent to?
- ▶ What information about the client will the story contain?
- ▶ What will the story be used for? What is the message it conveys?
- ▶ What imagery will appear with the story (eg is there a photo of a client standing in front of a fridge that has their power bill with their address on it? Is there a crowd shot at a community stall and your client is in it? Is it a stock photo that might upset the client?)
- ▶ What format does it appear in (eg a presentation, website, social media,

publications, print and online media, television, or radio)?

- ▶ What is the reach (eg a presentation to ten people, an international media outlet, digital media)?
- ▶ How frequently will it be used? Is it a one off, closed event, or is it an online article that exists in perpetuity?
- ▶ Is the client consenting to a single use or ongoing use?
- ▶ If the story is used more than once, will the information be rewritten or is it static?
- ▶ Before publication, has the person had a chance to review the story? Will the client be contacted for consent each time the content is used?
- ▶ After publication, is the person able to withdraw consent? Is this an option if it has been published? Do they understand they may not be able to “take it back”?
- ▶ What is the process for withdrawing consent?

For further information on your legal obligations, please consult the **Australian Solicitors’ Conduct Rules (Rule 9)** and the **Community Legal Centres Australia Risk Management Guide**. Of particular importance is the need to protect client confidentiality. Solicitors have an obligation to ensure that there is no possibility that a client’s confidential information is disclosed unless “the client expressly or impliedly authorises disclosure” (Rule 9, Australian Solicitors’ Conduct Rules).



Lead with values and visions

Tell stories that activate collective and community strength, rather than individualistic or protective thinking.

The stories we tell are inevitably underpinned by our values. When we communicate, we should lead our messaging with these values, which are our guiding principles and broadest motivations. Values help us to present a positive vision, meaning that our messages will convey the credible alternatives we have for a fairer, more just future.

Value-led and future-focused messages can help us to:

- ▶ Demonstrate the alternatives and ideas we have for a better world
- ▶ Bring people together over shared or common ground
- ▶ Make our messages stronger and more persuasive
- ▶ Help build sustainable connections and community
- ▶ Compel people to act

“To build a more sustainable, equitable and democratic world, we need an empowered and durable movement of citizens. We cannot build this kind of movement through appeals to people’s fear, greed or ego [...] Fostering “intrinsic” values – among them self-acceptance, care for others, and concern for the natural world – has real and lasting benefits. By acknowledging the important of these values, and the “frames” that embody and express them; by examining how our actions help to strengthen or weaken them; and by working together to cultivate them, we can create a more compassionate society, and a better world.”¹⁸

— *Public Interest Research Centre*



Prime intrinsic values

Values-based messaging primes (or prepares) values that are helpful for our cause and suppresses unhelpful ones. In our messaging, we want to prime ‘intrinsic values’, which are those which are inherently rewarding. We might also understand these as the cluster of values that make up ‘social justice’.

Community	a sense of connection and belonging
Care	ensuring everyone has what they need to live well. Everyone is both cared <i>for</i> and cared <i>about</i> . No person is treated as disposable.
Collaboration	working together, building strength, human connection, solidarity, collective struggle
Fairness	a fair go for all, without discrimination or prejudice
Diversity	strength in difference, embrace difference
Equality	equal opportunity for all
Freedom	freedom of action and thought, free from coercive institutional or inter-personal violence
Helpful	working for the wellbeing of others, committed to collective care
Health	community wellbeing
Broadminded	open to different ideas and beliefs
Forgiving	willing to pardon others
Protecting the environment	importance of nature, preserving Country, respect for other beings
Responsible	professional, trustworthy, reliable
Social justice	fairer communities, addressing injustice
Safety	dignity, bodily autonomy, respect, safer communities

Examples of intrinsic value framings (to embrace!)

- ▶ We will treat you with respect and dignity and provide independent, practical legal advice.
- ▶ Justice for us means that everyone in our community has housing, safety, and the support they need to participate and thrive.
- ▶ Tackling climate change provides an opportunity to create a more sustainable and healthier future for us all, from your local community, to waterways, animals, and the air we breathe.
- ▶ Everyone deserves to have housing, enough money to live on, healthcare, and dignified employment or social security. Let’s not leave people in our community behind.

“Where something is the right thing to do, we demonstrate that by showing how it helps people/planet. A ‘better economy’ is not our end goal. We want a better society, a healthier planet, a better life.”¹⁹

— Lily Spencer, *Australian Progress*

Avoid extrinsic values

Extrinsic values are centred on external approval or rewards. It is tempting to tailor communications to appeal to the dominant motivations of different groups of people, but we need to remain true to our core values as much as possible.

Community legal centres are valuable because we provide free legal help for people in need, are independent and connected to our communities, and we advocate for a fairer society. Arguments based on extrinsic values, like value-for-money, are compromised and flimsy – they do not centre our truth, they lack the durability to withstand the tests of time.

Wealth	value for money, material gain, cost-benefit
Social order	tough on crime, law and order, public safety
Self-reliance	individual strength, boot straps narratives
Power	authority, control, discipline
Security	national or personal security, fear, exclusion

Extrinsic frames to avoid	Why
We run on the smell of an oily rag and do more with less, providing the most cost-effective legal services in the legal assistance sector.	Focuses on a ‘better economy’, rather than speaking to how community legal centres help people.
Our model of early intervention reduces the strain on courts and prisons, saving taxpayers millions of dollars per year.	Focuses on a ‘better economy’, rather than speaking to how community legal centres help people.
The evidence shows that we can prevent crime and promote public safety when governments invest community legal centres.	Repeats harmful ‘tough-on-crime’ frame.
We need to keep coal in the ground to protect our Australian way of life and promote community stability.	This nationalist frame reinforces harmful, exclusionist values. Climate justice means wellbeing for all people, animals and places.
Raising the rate of Centrelink payments will stimulate economic growth.	Focuses on the economy, rather than the real reason to raise Centrelink payments: all people deserve to have the support they need to live well.

How to structure a values-based story

1. Establish the value

Start with a shared value. Use a common-sense statement to hook in your audience.

2. Introduce a barrier, problem, or conflict

Introduce the problem, issue, or source of the barrier. This can be framed as a threat to our vision and values. We can use statistics and personal stories here. Be as specific as possible when establishing the cause of the problem, what they are doing, as well as who is responsible for fixing it or taking action.

3. Demonstrate solutions, practical ideas, or a barrier overcome

Share your clear idea, ask, or solution for overcoming the problem or barrier. Demonstrate community strength, power, and capability. Make sure the solution addresses the problem.

4. Vision, outcome, or resolution

Finish with a vision or a clear story of a positive, hopeful future. For a campaign, you might ask your audience to act. For a case study, you might tell the story of how someone has achieved justice or overcome a barrier.



Examples of values-based stories

These examples show how you could use the values-based messaging structure. This structure can be easily shortened or lengthened depending on the detail required in the medium you are using to communicate.

Example client story: Teresa's story and safety at work

Everyone deserves to feel safe at work.

VALUE



Teresa worked for a childcare company in South-West Sydney. She loved looking after children, and especially loved to help them learn to read. One day when she was leaving work, Teresa's manager yelled at her and called her names. Teresa made complaint to the childcare company. However, the company did not do anything about the complaint. Teresa's manager continued to yell at her every day and sent her abusive text messages.

BARRIER



To avoid the abuse, Teresa began to skip work and her manager threatened to fire her.

When Teresa came to us for help, she wanted her manager to stop abusing her as she said she felt sick and scared going to work. She was worried about losing her job.

SUPPORT



We wrote to the childcare company and asked them to take action to stop the abuse, and we helped Teresa to find a counsellor to speak to.

Because of Teresa's strength and bravery to speak up about the abuse, the company apologised to Teresa for not taking action and paid her compensation. They asked Teresa to stay and fired her boss. Now that she is no longer subject to abuse, Teresa has been able to regain her confidence. A year later, Teresa has the manager position and has worked with the childcare company to improve their policy about staff complaints.

OUTCOME



Teresa continues to work in a job she loves. We were proud to stand with her as she stood up for her right to be safe at work.

Example social and policy change narrative by *Passing the Message Stick* authors

No matter where we live, or who we are, every kid should be safe at school.

VALUE

However, ignorant teachers leave Aboriginal kids feeling unsafe at school and more likely to leave without a full education.

BARRIER

When Aboriginal teachers are in the classroom, First Nations children and all children have better learning outcomes.

SOLUTION

When we have community-led schools our kids can learn safely and graduate with the talents and skills they need to thrive.

OUTCOME

Example law reform narrative by *Raise the Age* campaign

Every child should be free to go to school, have a safe home to live in and be supported to learn from their mistakes.

VALUE

But right now, politicians are sending children as young as ten years old to be locked away in prison. Politicians have the power to change the laws to keep children safe, supported and free from prison.

BARRIER

That's why I am calling on [my local MP / my state/territory government / the Attorney General] to raise the age of criminal responsibility to at least 14 years old and instead invest in solutions that work.

ACTION

It's proven that community-led solutions work because they focus on helping children learn from their mistakes, and take responsibility for their actions.

VISION

Know your audience

Tailoring messages for diverse communities

One-size-fits-all messages are rarely effective. Our messages need to be tailored to our different audiences, given that the people and communities we communicate with are diverse. Tailoring our communications means that we can better meet the needs and values of different groups of people.

For example, if we want to attract funding for a new service for migrant workers in Western Sydney, the language we will use in communications with government funders will be very different to the language we use with local organisations or with prospective clients.

How to map your audience

It can be a good idea to ‘map’ out your different audiences before embarking on a new project. You can make a quick map of the group based on the following factors:

- ▶ **Demographics** (age, gender, race or ethnicity, language spoken, income, education, family status).
- ▶ **Language** (will English communications exclude our core audience?)
- ▶ **Geography** (where do they live and work).
- ▶ **Attitudes and beliefs** (preferences, cultural and social values, political leanings).
- ▶ What communications **channels** does the target audience use?
- ▶ Which **messengers** are most trusted? Is it best coming from you, or is there someone you can equip to share the message?
- ▶ What **design**, visuals, and colours might best-engage this audience?



A good message will

1. **Energise** our allies and supporters. Resonate with our communities and the people we support.
2. **Persuade** people who might be undecided or may not know about an issue, and engage them to care about your service or social justice issue.
3. **Discredit**, disprove and diffuse the power of dominant, harmful narratives.

Who are our allies and supporters?

These are people who care deeply about social justice, and support action to address inequality and injustice. They – we! – are firm in our support. We need our supporters – each other! – to be on board to act as messengers and advocates. These should be reciprocal relationships, given our allies will often need our support and solidarity.

Who could be our allies and supporters?

These are people who mostly agree with our supporters but may also be attracted to harmful, dominant messaging at some level. They are less fixed in their views and will often toggle between conflicting ideas and values. With the right messaging, this cohort can be persuaded to support our cause.

Who will not support us?

This group of people do not support the social justice causes we are passionate about. These people are firmest in their opposition and unlikely to support our cause. We are more persuasive when we tell our narrative, and our truth, rather than watering our asks down to appease the opposition.



Words that work

The following list includes some recommendations on plain language to embrace when speaking with our broader communities. Please feel welcome to adapt any phrasing to suit your individual organisation.

Avoid	Embrace
CLCs Your organisation's acronym Legal assistance provider	Community legal centres The full name of your organisation
Geographic catchment area	Our local community
Service provision	Support, assistance, help
Referral pathways, referral networks	Link people up with other support, like counselling and housing
Clients, consumers	People, communities, the people we support, the people we work with, our community
Justice system, criminal justice system	Legal system, criminal legal system
Early intervention	Early support, early help
Different to [X] service	Community-based, confidential, not part of the government, free, independent
We provide free legal advice, information, representation, and casework services	We provide free, independent legal help
Government investment Injection of government money	Government funding Government support
We can help with family law, civil law, traffic law, criminal law, etc.	We can help with legal issues, like fines, debt, car accidents, domestic violence, discrimination, etc.
Deliver positive client outcomes, positive resolution to the matter	Offer people options, empower people to make a choice. <i>NB: When talking about the outcome of peoples' matters, use concrete language like: Stable housing, paid off debt, gaining independence, financial stability, keeping kids with family, healthcare, living free from violence, etc.</i>
Vulnerable people, disadvantaged people	People on no/low income, people in vulnerable situations, people experiencing violence or abuse, people experiencing deep and persistent disadvantage
Illiterate	People facing literacy challenges, people subject to literacy barriers
Our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, our First Nations people, our Indigenous people	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, First Nations people, Indigenous people.

The following list includes some recommendations on plain language to embrace when speaking with our broader communities. Please feel welcome to adapt any phrasing to suit your individual organisation.

Talking about community legal centres – services and values

- ▶ Community legal centres give free legal help.
- ▶ Our community legal centre gives free legal help to people in financial need.
- ▶ Our lawyers provide free, high-quality legal help.
- ▶ When you are going through tough times, community legal centres are there to help you.
- ▶ We help people stay safe, housed, and have the support they need to live well.
- ▶ Community legal centres support people experiencing financial disadvantage, housing stress, job insecurity, discrimination, and violence or abuse.
- ▶ We support people to make informed choices.
- ▶ Community legal centres work with people to guide them through the legal system.
- ▶ We give people confidence and peace of mind in stressful, dangerous, or confusing situations.
- ▶ Our early, holistic support helps people regain independence, financial security, housing, and the tools they need to live well.
- ▶ We are a community movement that builds fairer, safer, and more-connected communities.
- ▶ We promote social justice to ensure the health and wellbeing of our community.
- ▶ Community legal centres are trusted members of our communities.
- ▶ We respect, care about, and listen to our communities.
- ▶ We equip people with knowledge and clarity so they can make informed decisions.
- ▶ We give people knowledge, clarity, and choice.
- ▶ We help people make informed choices and exercise their rights.
- ▶ We can only provide legal help to people on no/low income, or people experiencing domestic violence.

Talking about community legal education and law reform

- ▶ Our vision is for our communities to be fairer and more-inclusive places, where everyone is housed, safe, and has the support they need to thrive and participate.
- ▶ We take action for a fairer future.
- ▶ We help people understand and exercise their own rights.
- ▶ We are a strong collective movement dedicated to justice, equality, and fairness.
- ▶ We educate people to know and exercise their rights.
- ▶ Our experience working with communities on-the-ground informs our law reform and policy work.
- ▶ We believe in community-led change.
- ▶ We advocate for systemic change to tackle problems at their root.
- ▶ We're independent and proud of it. Advocating to change unfair or unjust laws is what makes community legal centres unique.

The statistics back up our story

Community legal centres provide 185,000 free legal services to over 54,000 people in New South Wales every year.

According to Community Legal Centres NSW's 2021-22 Client Survey report:

99% of clients say that the community legal centre listened to their legal problem.

97% of clients stated they would recommend the community legal service to other people.

96% of clients stated the centre helped them understand how to deal with their legal problem.

94% of clients stated they know where to get help if they have another legal problem in the future.

95% of clients stated that the community legal centre helped them understand their rights and responsibilities.



In our communities' own words

Understanding the way our communities talk about our work, and its impact, can be helpful when shaping our messages. In Community Legal Centres NSW's 2021-22 *Client Survey*, people spoke about community legal centres as a life-saving safety net. They used phrases such as:

“My daughter can now use her walker and is allowed to get up and walk around in class just like everyone else. You guys are incredible and the service was awesome. You were very understanding and took our matter seriously, and were diligent and kind.”

— Client of Australian Centre for Disability Law

“Without the Financial Rights Legal Centre’s help [...] I would not have been able to gain the peace of mind or well-being I now have, with which I can now rebuild my life from today.”

— Client of Financial Rights Legal Centre

“Your help compassion and admirable qualities to help the community are exemplary and irreplaceable. The time, the effort and commitment to help me will be forever appreciated!”

— Client of Financial Rights Legal Centre

“[Without the help of HIV/AIDS Legal Centre] I would have died in silence, fear, and anxiety as well as not knowing how to handle the situation because of the stigma associated with living with HIV.”

— Client of HIV/AIDS Legal Centre



“Legal centre has provided me with life changing support and services...I consider my lawyer my life saver. Knowing that I’m being looked after by them takes all my stress and worries away.”

— Client of HIV/AIDS Legal Centre

“If I hadn’t gotten the help from Illawarra Legal Centre I would have been without money and in an unsafe position. I couldn’t have resolved my problem on my own without them. They were very willing to help me however they could and are an invaluable service.”

— Client of Illawarra Legal Centre

“Illawarra Legal Centre were incredible, they treated me with respect and care. They took the time out to really understand my situation so they could give me the best help possible.”

— Client of Illawarra Legal Centre

“Getting advice and direction offered me a sense of security, conviction and confidence within myself that was lost. Kingsford Legal provided all of the above in a professional environment. If I didn’t speak to them I would be feeling completely lost and defeated.”

— Client of Kingsford Legal Centre

“My anxiety is down, I have a roof and money to purchase my medications. I feel strong despite being old.”

— Client of Seniors Rights Service



“I feel safe knowing my solicitor is always available and cultural. I have my life back.”

— Client of Seniors Rights Service

“I cannot express how invaluable the advice and help given to me was. I felt assured I had someone in my corner who knew exactly what my rights were. My stress was considerably lessened after speaking with The Tenants Union representative.”

— Client of Tenants’ Union of NSW

“[Without the help of Western NSW Community Legal Centre] I’d be still lost, brink of going back to abusive relationship. It helped me a lot in mental support and confidence to carry on.”

— Client of Western NSW Community Legal Centre

“The service has empowered me so much, I don’t know where I would be without you all.”

— Client of Wirringa Baiya Aboriginal Women’s Legal Centre

“If I wasn’t able to see you guys, my future wouldn’t have been as bright and I would have lost a lot including my child. The solicitor was very welcoming, always reassured and cared for me and my feelings.”

— Client of Wirringa Baiya Aboriginal Women’s Legal Centre

Resources

General guides & frameworks

The Common Cause Handbook | Common Cause

A guide to values and frames for campaigners, community organisers, fundraisers, educators, social entrepreneurs, activists, politicians, and everyone in between.

Framing issues guide | The Commons Social Change Library

A collection of research and recommendations for narrative and messaging on a range of issues.

Messaging checklist for advocates to build solidarity across difference | Centre for Labour and Social Studies

A conversation about politics and inequality which builds solidarity across ordinary people to address the urgent issues facing society today.

Reader friendly communication: A guide to using plain language | Jo Medlin

This guide includes case studies of those currently providing a great model in making their communications more reader friendly, with a particular focus on addressing adult literacy barriers.

Ageing

Framing age Message guide | Common Cause Australia

This message guide contains recommendations that will help you talk about age, ageing and issues that affect older people in ways that reduce ageist attitudes and behaviours.

Alcohol & drugs

Messaging Guide: Drug stigma | Common Cause Australia & Smart Recovery Australia

This message guide has been written for people who talk about drugs and drugs policy in Australia, including those who use drugs themselves, and are concerned about the high levels of stigma associated with the issue.

The Power of Words: Having conversations about alcohol and other drugs | Alcohol and Drug Foundation

Professionals working in the health, education and justice sectors can dramatically reduce the impact of stigma by reconsidering how they think about people who use alcohol or other drugs (AOD) and choosing words that focus on people, rather than their AOD use.

Climate justice

Climate justice: Message guide | Framing Climate Justice

More than ever, we need to be fighting to win, to shift the narrative, and to build a movement for climate justice.

Disability

A guide to language about disability | People with Disability Australia

This guide has been written by people with disability to assist the general public and media outlets in talking about and reporting on disability.

Economics & social support

How to talk about economics: A guide to changing the story | Australian Progress

The full guide is 50 pages long and details the research process, the key insights into how people reason about the economy, and detailed analysis of the key narrative and language shifts that move ‘persuadable’ audiences toward progressive policy.

Raise the Rate for Good campaign: A guide to telling the story | Australian Council of Social Service

This is a guide to support people and organisations in sharing their own story about why we need a permanent, adequate increase to JobSeeker, Youth Allowance and other payments.

First Nations justice

Passing the Message Stick | Australian Progress

The results of a two-year research project to find messages that are effective in building public support for First Nations self-determination and justice.

Gender equality & gendered violence

Framing gender equality: Message guide | VicHealth

This messaging guide contains recommendations that will help you boost support for gender equality initiatives in Australia.

Voices for Change | Domestic Violence NSW

A report on the Voices for Change project, DVNSW’s first lived experience project aimed at addressing domestic, family and sexual violence through media advocacy.

Pride in Prevention | Rainbow Health Australia

A guide for communications and engagement to support primary prevention of family violence experienced by LGBTIQ+ communities.

Change the story | Our Watch.

A shared framework for the primary prevention of violence against women in Australia.

Human rights

How to talk about human rights | Anat Shenker-Osorio

Using language data from advocacy, opposition, political speech and popular culture, Anat Shenker-Osorio’s research analyses why certain messages resonate where others falter in the human rights sector across Australia, the UK and the US.

Talking about human rights in Australia | Human Rights Law Centre

Messaging guide for promoting an Australian Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms.

Words that work: Making the best case for people seeking asylum | Asylum Seeker Resource Centre

A guide on what language is most effective in persuading people to shift their ideas on people seeking asylum.

Legal

Legal information in languages other than English | Victoria Law Foundation

This research report outlines important factors to consider when producing legal information in languages other than English, including recommendations and best practice examples.

Legal glossary: A plain language guide to common legal terms | Victoria Law Foundation

This guide is intended to help non-lawyers understand legal phrases and to give lawyers guidance in explaining the legal phrases they use.

When I Tell My Story I'm in Charge: Ethical and Effective Storytelling in Advocacy | Rachael Ball

The challenge for progressive lawyers and activists is to develop a framework for storytelling that maximises systemic and sustainable advocacy outcomes and empowers participants while recognising and mitigating risks. The alternative is a policy and law reform agenda that relies on dry statistics and legal analysis and omits the insights and perspectives of people affected by injustice.

Police & prison

Raise the Age Messaging Guide | Raise the Age Campaign

A simple guide to talking to your friends, colleagues and local members of Parliament about why we need to #RaiseTheAge to keep children safe from prison, and invest in the alternatives that work.

Messaging guidance for restorative justice and rethinking discipline | Anat Shenker Osorio Communications

The purpose of this guide is to support advocates, educators, administrators, and allies in making the case to fund the programs and resources that make our schools safe for all while eliminating the police presence that directly impedes learning.

Policing, protest and racial injustice | Race Class Narrative Action

A guide of high-level suggestions on how to message about racial injustice, police violence, and protest.

Endnotes

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- 19 Lily Spencer, *How to talk about economics: A guide For Changing the Story*, (Australian Progress: 2018),13.

Contact

Community Legal Centres NSW
Gadigal Country
102/55 Holt Street
Surry Hills NSW 2010
Telephone: (02) 9212 7333
Email: clcsw@clcsw.org.au
Website: clcsw.org.au

The logo for Community Legal Centres NSW is a white speech bubble with a tail pointing towards the bottom right. Inside the bubble, the text "Community Legal Centres NSW" is written in a dark blue, sans-serif font, stacked in three lines.

Community
Legal Centres
NSW