

# Health Communications Short Course

May 14, 2025

Engaged Health Communications



**Welcome!**

**Icebreaker:**

**What is a quote or saying that you tell yourself when life is challenging? Put it in the chat.**

*Please note that we are recording today's session to share with anyone who misses it and for future uses of mini-presentations.*

# This Short Course is Designed for YOU



Inspire and support deepening of understanding of foundational topics relevant to NC public health communicators



Provide real-time reference and easy access to related resources



Hold space for sharing and networking

**Special Thanks to the Contributors to this Short Course!**

# Health Communicators Short Course Structure

Session 1:  
Health  
Communicators'  
Roles

October 1



Session 3:  
Communication  
Campaigns and Materials

October 15



Session 5:  
Connection &  
Collaboration

October 29



Survey &  
Completion Award

Session 2:  
Engaged Health  
Communication

October 8



Session 4:  
Storytelling to  
Improve Public  
Health

October 22



# Individual Session Structure

1. Welcome & Overview
2. Mini-Presentations
3. Q&A, Sharing & Discussion
4. Resources & Closing Circle

Please feel free to  
use the chat and  
come off of mute to  
share thoughts,  
questions, and ideas!

*Please keep your camera on as much as you can  
and engage through the chat and verbally.*

# Today's Overview: Engaged Health Communication

## What to Expect in This Session:

- Developing strategic health communication messages
- Implementing strategies to address mis/disinformation
- Engaging with community partners and members in the HC process

*Please keep your camera on as much as you can  
and engage through the chat and verbally.*



**Jack Schaat**

@NormWeaver3



How did humans survive for the last 100,000's years without vaccines and modern hygiene? It's either a bloody miracle or the human body's immune system is perfectly fine and naturally effective.



**Jack Schaat**  
@NormWeaver3



How did humans survive for the last 100,000's years without vaccines and modern hygiene? It's either a bloody miracle or the human bodys' immune system is perfectly fine and naturally effective.



**Mikel Jollett** ✓  
@Mikel\_Jollett

**The kids died.**

**That's what happened.**

**People had more kids because half of them died.**



# Health Literacy

- Individual health literacy refers to skills related to obtaining, understanding, and acting on health information
  - Made up of various types of literacy, such as: reading/writing, scientific literacy, numeracy, media literacy, and more
- Applies at individual and broader levels (interpersonal, organizational, structural)
  - Broader levels influence individual-level health literacy
  - May be considered a social determinant of health (Nutbeam & Lloyd, 2021)
- Helpful to consider health literacy in strategic messaging, as part of navigating mis/disinformation, and working in and with communities to strengthen health communication...our topics for today!

## Jeremy McClayton (he/him)



Jeremy is co-founder, political organizer and strategist with JS Consulting and Marketing. Jeremy has more than 14 years of experience specializing in community organizing, union consulting, and more. His passions include baseball, politics, and hiking with his beloved dog.

[www.jsconsultingco.com](http://www.jsconsultingco.com)



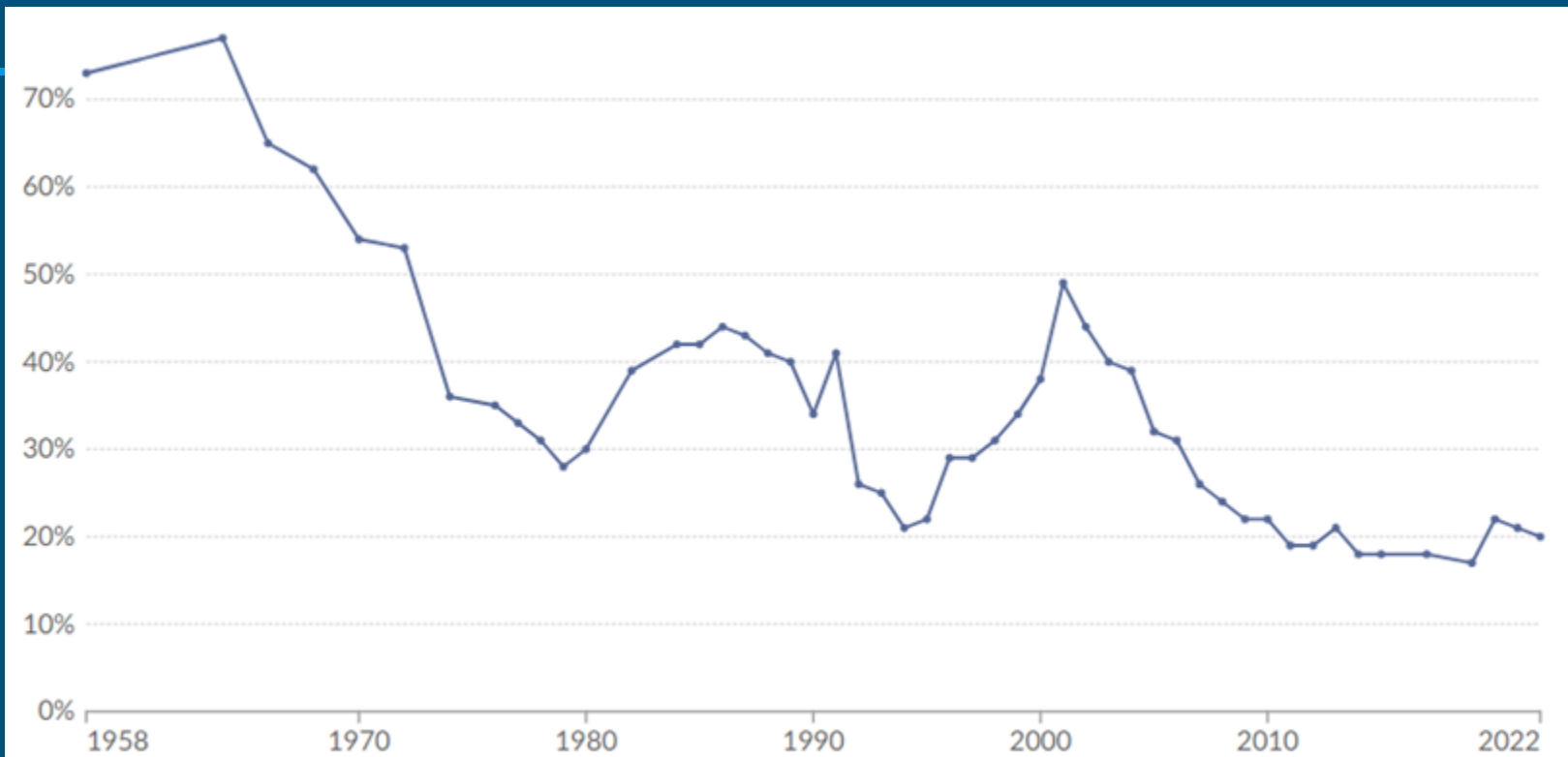
# Strategic Messaging

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JS Consulting & Marketing LLC



# Today's World - Communicating w/ Inherent Distrust



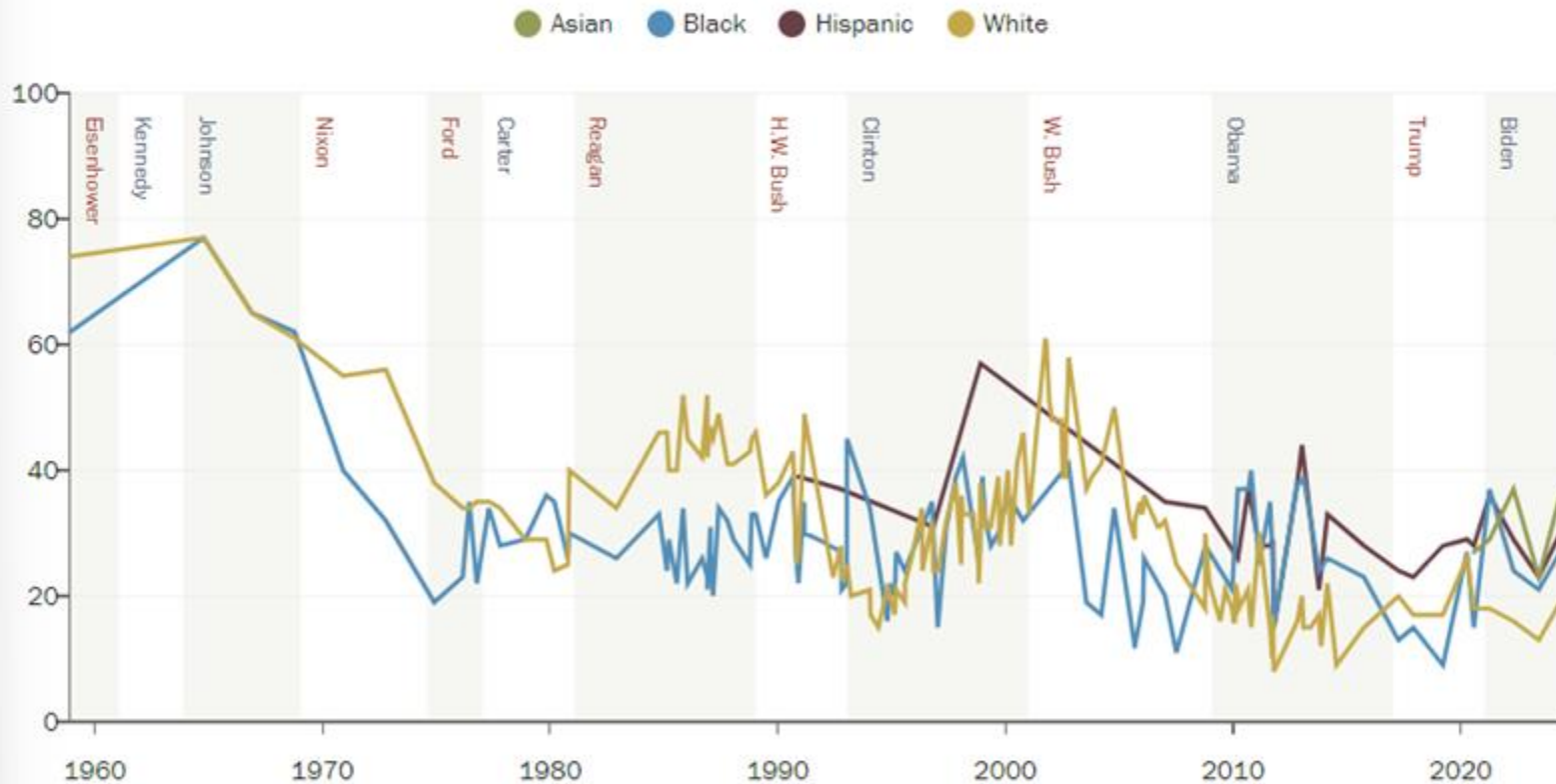
Data source: Pew Research Center (2023) - [Learn more about this data](#)

OurWorldinData.org/trust | CC BY



## Trust in government by race and ethnicity

% who say they trust the government to do what is right just about always/most of the time



# Controlling Your Narrative

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~~What's the story you want the constituents you serve in your region to hear?~~

~~What do you want them to know?~~

*What's the story that constituents need to hear for you to get the result you want?"*

# Rule of Operations

1

## DETERMINE THE OBJECTIVE & DESIRED OUTCOMES

*What is it that you want people to know?  
Why do you want them to know it?*

2

## DETERMINE THE TARGET / KEY AUDIENCES

*Who are do you want to hear your message?  
Why is it important that they hear your message?*

3

## DETERMINE STRATEGIES TO IMPLEMENT

*What is the best communication channel(s) for your message  
to reach your target audience? Why is that so?*

4

## DETERMINE CORE MESSAGING FOR AUDIENCE

*What is the key message you want to convey to this audience?  
Why do you want this audience to receive this message?*

5

## DETERMINE TACTICS TO IMPLEMENT

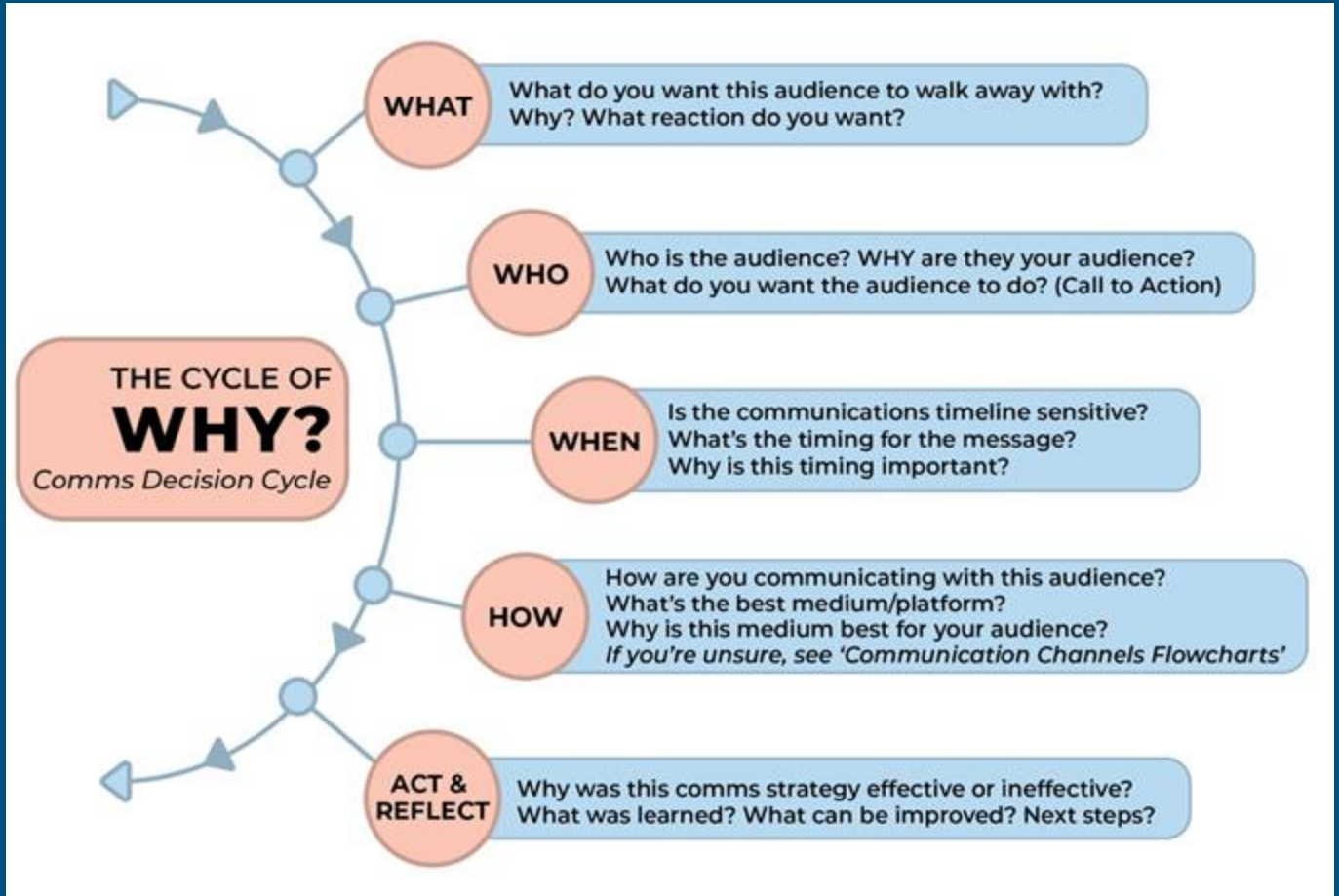
*What communications tactics will be most impactful for  
this specific audience?*

# Know Your Audiences

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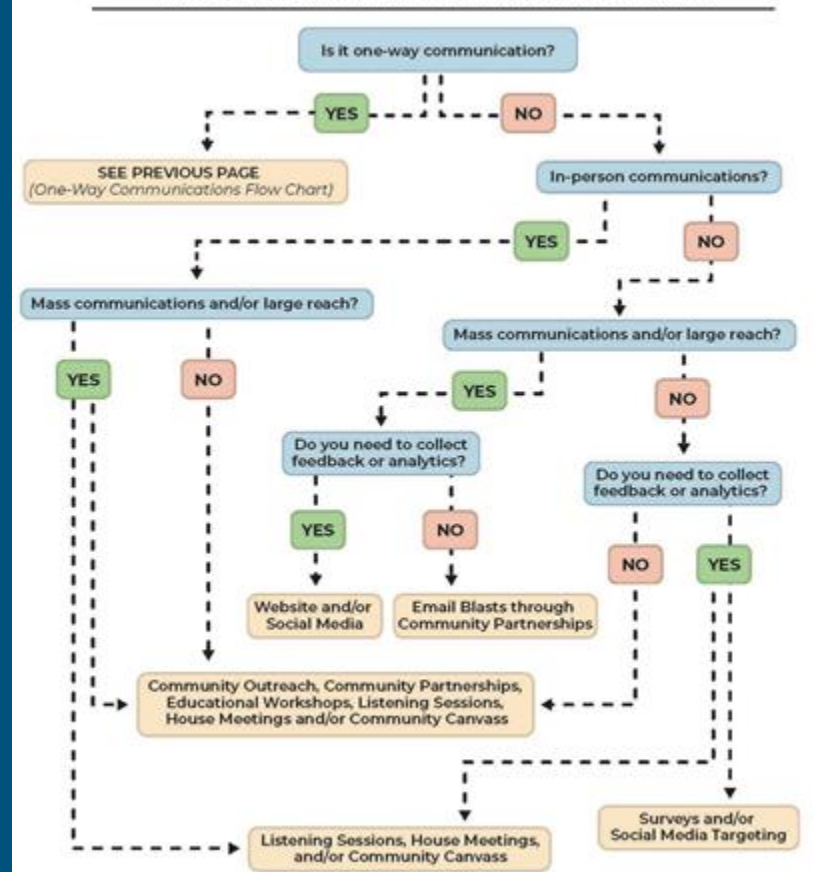
- A. **General Public:** Residents of North Carolina, including families, individuals, and community groups.
- B. **Statewide Policymakers:** State and local legislators, as well as government officials.
- C. **Local Policymakers:** Local elected officials and county/town/city management officials.
- D. **Local Health Departments**
- E. **Community Leaders:** Business owners, religious leaders, and other influential figures within North Carolina communities.
- F. **Healthcare Professionals:** Doctors, nurses, and other healthcare providers.
- G. **Media Outlets:** Local and statewide news outlets, as well as online publications..
- H. **Students:** K-12 students, college students, and educators, Retirees/Retirement Buildings

# Cycle of Why\*\*\*

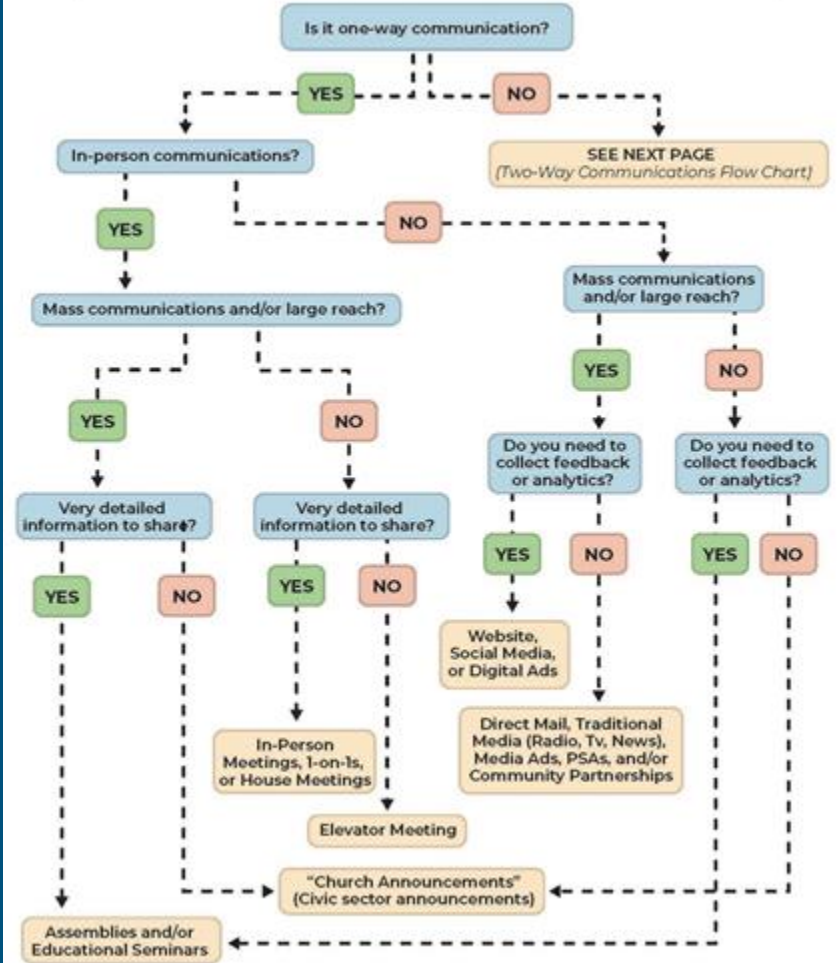


# Choosing Comms Avenues

TWO-WAY COMMUNICATION CHANNELS FLOW CHART



ONE-WAY COMMUNICATION CHANNELS FLOW CHART



# Social Media Example

## MEET MELANIE

"This position has given me the opportunity to gain comprehensive exposure to various communicable disease areas, including enteric, vaccine-preventable, and respiratory diseases. Learning from accomplished leaders and experienced public health professionals has been instrumental in enhancing my skills and confidence."



**MELANIE D'ANGELO, MPH**

Epidemiology Fellow, Medical Consultation Unit



## Emily Ranck (she/her)



Emily is a project coordinator at WNC Health Network, supporting regional health initiatives by enhancing public health communications, facilitating cross-sector collaboration, and developing accessible data tools to drive community well-being. She is passionate about improving community health through strategic communication, data-driven solutions, and collaborative partnerships.

[www.wnchn.org](http://www.wnchn.org)

# Community Engaged Health Communication

Listening to Real Voices to Shape Regional  
Messaging

Emily Ranck  
WNC Health Network



# Why engage the community in health messaging?

Public health campaigns don't land in a vacuum — they land in communities.

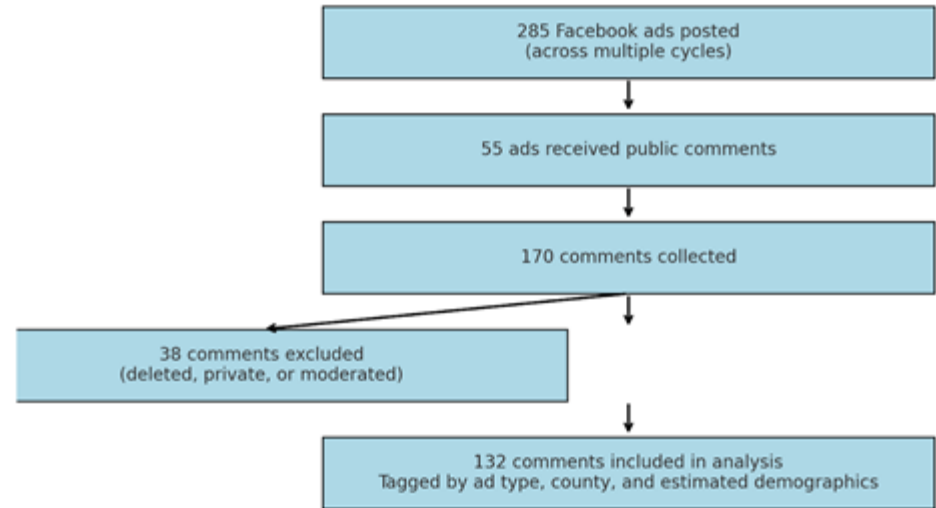
- Messaging around substance use, in particular, brings out strong opinions
- If we want to reduce stigma and increase impact, we have to start with listening

## Using social media as a source of insight

Comments posted on ads that were from a regional health behavior campaign titled *View From Here*

132 public comments pulled, organized with demographic information

- From real people across 19 WNC communities



# From data to dialogue

We brought together public health professionals and community voices

**Question we wanted to gain clarity on:**

- *“What beliefs or perceptions about substance use and people who use substances are present in comments posted to social media ads in WNC?”*

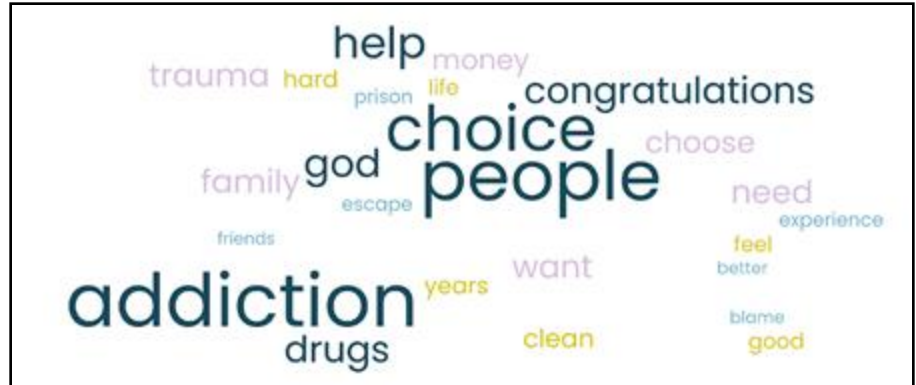
**Centered community voices by:**

- Using lived experience as a key lens
- Prioritizing conversation over conclusions

## Key insights from the session

### Six key themes identified:

- Support and celebration of recovery
- Calls for empathy and education
- Personal responsibility and blame
- Systems are both causes and solutions
- Faith and religion have a role to play
- Societal causes with mixed accuracy



# Community voice makes our messages stronger

## Why Engagement Matters

- Reveals real beliefs shaping public response
- Grounds messaging in lived experience
- Builds trust and credibility
- Encourages shared ownership of solutions

# Q&A Discussion



# Resources & Opportunities to Engage



GILLINGS SCHOOL OF GLOBAL PUBLIC HEALTH  
North Carolina Institute for Public Health



**NCDHHS**

# Resources

## [Understanding and Responding to Health Literacy as a Social Determinant of Health](#)

- D Nutbeam and JE Lloyd in the *Annual Review of Public Health*, 2021

## [The Public Health Communicators Guide to Misinformation](#), PHCC

## [Practical Playbook for Addressing Health Misinformation](#), Johns Hopkins

## [Infodemiology Monitoring Lab](#)

## [Western North Carolina Health Network \(WNCHN\)](#)

# Opportunities to Engage



**Come back to this space now through May 28th!**

Fill out the link in the chat to connect with the NCIPH FC Communications Team.

*Your participation helps build a stronger, more connected public health infrastructure across our state.*

# Next Session: Health Communication Campaigns & Materials



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North Carolina Institute for Public Health



**NCDHHS**