

The Race Equity Project

A Special Project of Legal Services of Northern California

Framing Exercises

1. You are preparing to represent a Hmong client in a disability hearing. The client does not have a single impairment that meets a disability listing. She has a combination of impairments, which include depression and a posttraumatic stress disorder. The Administrative Law Judge handling tends to rule against refugees claiming psychological impairments, perhaps believing that they are crashing the good life in America and just don't want to work. Use the framing principles we discussed to frame the opening paragraph of your hearing statement.
2. This evening you will be speaking before the Board of Supervisors in support of an inclusionary housing ordinance. Many in the community equate "affordable housing" with people of color and use the term as a proxy for race. Your challenge is to frame a statement that accomplishes two goals. First you should frame your argument in deeply held American Values. Second the racial implications of the board's actions should be placed on the table so that they must consider the impact on a diverse community.
3. The police are planning to conduct a series of raids on local homeless campsites. In the past, the raids resulted not only in the widespread displacement of the homeless but also the confiscation of their belongings. You have scheduled a meeting with the Police Chief and the Officer in charge of the project. Using the framing principles provided, frame an argument that will either stop, delay or, more likely, soften the tactics of the police as they conduct their raids.
4. Prepare an opening statement in an unlawful detainer action where you are representing an African American mother and children who face eviction from a public housing project because the housing authority contends that she has an unauthorized guest. The "alleged" guest is the father of the children who visits the kids each day after school to help with homework or just visit. The neighbors and housing authority staff will say that he is seen there too often not to be living there and that he has been incarcerated several times. In order to win you will have to create a frame where your client is most likely to win.