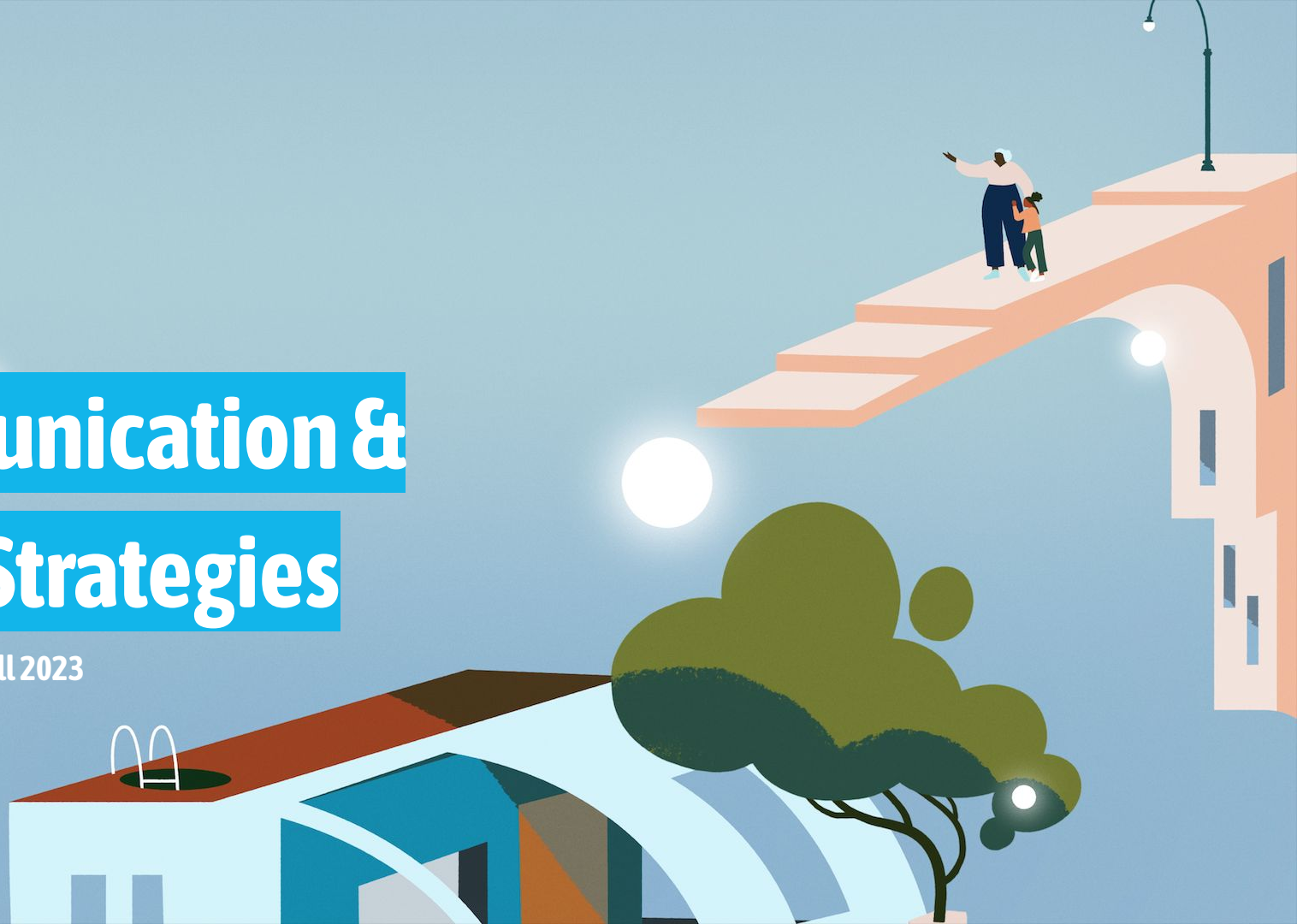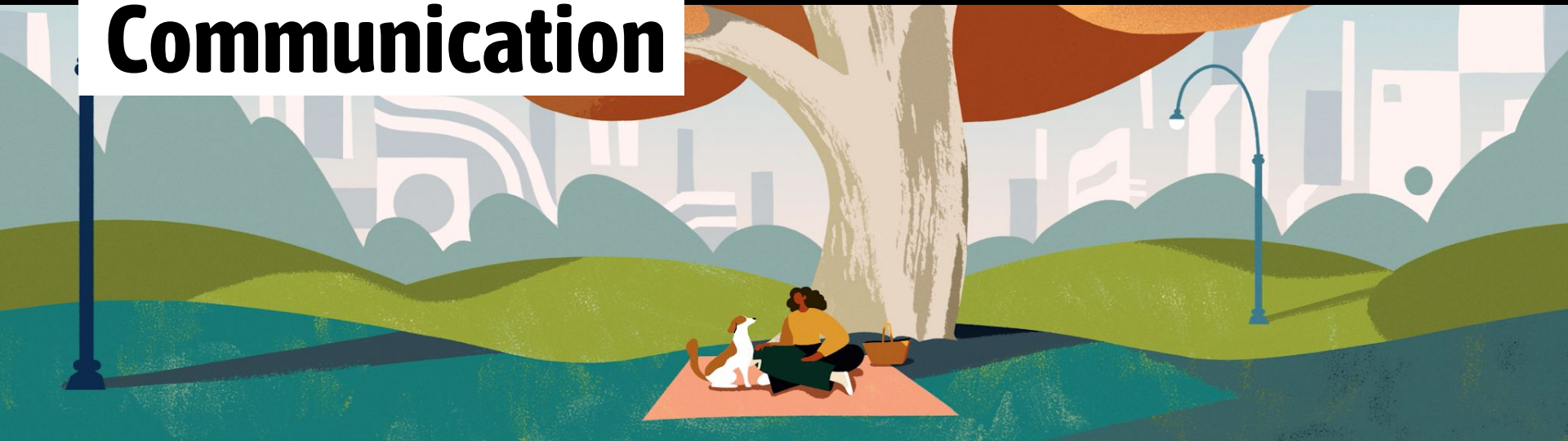# Communication & Policy Strategies

Learning Session, Fall 2023

Communication

It is natural that people are going to fill in their own interpretations of what is happening.

How do we **develop and share narratives** that help others **understand** our community's story of working to end homelessness and **see themselves** as agents within it?

Who is the actor or stakeholder that we need to behave, think, and be engaged differently in order to make progress?

- **What dominant narratives are they operating from?**
- **What is their current behavior?**
- **What is the desired behavior?**
- **What are the barriers to them adopting those desired behaviors?**
- **What motivates them?** How can we understand their aspirations and what motivates their behavior and beliefs?

Actively opposed / disincentivized

Resistant

Disengaged/ Uninformed

Passively supportive

Champions

Communications Hub

Overview | **Resources**

▸ **About Built for Zero**

▸ **Developing a communications team and strategy**

Communications Hub Link

Are Your Candidates Committed to Ending Homelessness?

Ending homelessness requires a Housing First, data-driven approach. Do your candidates agree?

State and local lawmakers -- like **mayors, city council members, county commissioners, state legislators, and governors** -- play a leading role in how local governments address homelessness.

Election season is around the corner, and we want to equip you with the questions you could be researching and asking your candidates!

Do Some Research!

First things first, look up [who is on your ballot](#)! As you review who your candidates are and decide whom to support, consider how each stands on policies that aim to measurably end homelessness, like collecting real-time data, making this data publicly available, and setting measurable goals for reducing or ending homelessness.

Questions:
- Does the candidate have a policy platform dedicated to housing and homelessness?
- Do they acknowledge the importance of using a Housing First approach to prevent and end homelessness?
- Do they enable a data-driven approach to policy challenges?
- Does their economic plan address housing shortages and barriers?
- Do they have a collaborative approach to policy challenges?

Things to look for...

Housing First

Measurable goals using shared data

Housing is Health care

Centralized leadership managing housing + homelessness

Include people w. lived experience w. homelessness in leadership

Expand capacity of safe havens (low-barrier shelters)

Increase flexibility of City housing vouchers

Increase housing

How do I engage my candidate?

- Attend a campaign event and ask questions
- Organize your own campaign event
- Organize a joint letter to candidates
- Write a letter to the Editor
- Contact campaigns directly
- Engage with candidates on social media

The best time to educate a lawmaker is while they are a candidate

When running for office, candidates are actively in listening mode. They are talking to voters and sharing information about themselves and their approach to community and policy challenges.

Questions:
- How knowledgeable are you about homelessness in our community or state?
- Are you committed to implementing a Housing First approach?
- Do you support setting measurable goals for reducing and ending homelessness in our city or state?
- What do you think the role of emergency shelter is in helping people experiencing homelessness?
- Are you committed to including people with lived experience with homelessness in your leadership and decision-making around homelessness and housing policy?
- Access to affordable housing is a piece of the puzzle to end homelessness. How would you expand access to affordable housing in our community or state?

Questions

Thank You