



Shared Narrative
Storytelling Resource
rethinkoutside.org

Words to Watch

Message testing and interviews with external audiences (funders, policymakers, and other leaders representing the health/healthcare, education, children & youth, environment, and corporate sectors) revealed the following “words to watch.” These words were most likely to evoke negative feelings or confusion with external audiences, or were found to not resonate. These words should be used with caution and should be paired with language that provides additional explanation and context.

Nature

Seen as far away, grand, something you “go to.” Sounds elitist. Conjures images of undeveloped, isolated places. Resonates the most with “inside the tent” audiences.

Outside

More expansive term than nature, but less action-oriented. “Right outside the door.” Seen as inclusive of manmade environments. Least popular term tested.

Outdoors

The most accessible of the terms to new audiences. Simpler, more traditional language. Seen as less judgmental, less political than other terms. Connotes elements of activity. Resonates the most with urban audiences.

Stewardship

Often linked with ‘conservation’ and both are problematic and poorly defined by new audiences. Inside the tent jargon. Raises questions of if and how time outdoors correlates to future stewardship.

Resilience

Buzz-wordy. Overused. Can be misunderstood. Best to avoid.

Healthy Communities

Concept tests well, but needs definition for some audiences. Showing common threads of personal health, education, and environmental care are important descriptors.

American(s)

Triggers biases towards non-citizens, raises immigration issues. Seen as exclusionary. Use “all people” or “everyone” as alternatives.

Safe / Safety

Needs context and explanation. Resonates differently for communities of color. Most audiences lack widespread awareness of safety differentials outdoors.

Access

Needs to be paired with examples of why access is an issue, and how lack of access leads to disparities. Most resonant when paired with ‘nature,’ as access to the ‘outside’ has different meaning in an urban setting.