

Bridging Nature & Health

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Message Guidance

Frameworks and examples for funders, practitioners, and advocates to communicate the power of nature for health and wellbeing.

Nature connects across issues—health, education, climate, and more—creating common ground for collaboration and impact. This companion resource builds on insights from Rethink Outside’s message testing to offer talking points and framing recommendations that help you communicate nature’s role as a powerful lever for healthier communities.



Messages that resonate

Not every message lands the same way. Through testing, three narratives stood out for their ability to bridge health and nature, spark interest, and invite action:

1. Nature as Preventive Health and Cost Savings
2. Health Equity = Nature Access
3. Freedom to Enjoy Nature, Freedom to Thrive

Our message testing suggested that audiences were most engaged with frames rooted in shared values, such as care, fairness, and freedom, rather than those simply describing nature’s benefits. While messages about mental or physical health performed reasonably, they didn’t generate the same level of action or connection.

These findings indicate that values-based messages can help people see nature not just as good for you, but as part of who we are and what we all deserve.

Nature as Preventive Health and Cost Savings

Core message: “Time outside is just what the doctor ordered. Support prevention that pays off. Discover how funders are leveraging nature-based strategies to lower healthcare costs and improve lives.”

Why it resonates: Messages framing nature as prevention and emphasizing cost-savings drew the strongest engagement from health audiences. This framing links time outside with familiar healthcare goals such as reducing chronic disease and decreasing long-term healthcare costs.



How to apply it:

- Use when making the economic case for nature-based investments like parks, trails, or outdoor learning programs.
- Link public health outcomes (lower healthcare costs, reduced ER visits, improved well-being) to community design or green infrastructure.
- Encourage funders and policymakers to view nature as a cost-effective public health intervention that delivers both social and fiscal returns.

Health Equity = Nature Access

Core message: “Communities facing health disparities often lack safe, nearby access to nature — a gap that drives even deeper inequities. Let’s change that.”

Why it resonates: Connecting health equity and nature access resonated most with public health professionals and government audiences. This framing aligns with public-sector priorities for equitable infrastructure and community health, emphasizing safety, justice, and place-based investment that improves quality of life and reduces long-term costs.

How to Apply it:

- Use when engaging public health departments, city planners, or policymakers to position outdoor access as essential public infrastructure for health and wellbeing.
- Incorporate into policy briefs, funding proposals, and coalition materials to highlight how nature access advances public health, safety, and equity goals.
- Partner across sectors (housing, transportation, and parks) to demonstrate how expanding access to nature strengthens community resilience and benefits entire municipalities.



Freedom to Enjoy Nature, Freedom to Thrive

Core message: “Learn how our health thrives when we have the freedom to exist in nature. It’s time we all connect more with nature.”

Why it resonates:

This message taps into a shared value that perhaps crosses political regional boundaries, uniting audiences who believe in personal freedom, health, and community wellbeing. By appealing to both individual liberty and collective care, it holds potential to build bipartisan support for nature-based health solutions.

How to Apply it:

- This frame works well when communicating across political or geographic divides — for example, in public statements, legislative briefings, or coalition-building efforts.
- Emphasize shared values like dignity, belonging, and the freedom to enjoy nature safely, reinforcing that outdoor access is something we can all agree on.



Learn More

These frameworks are part of Rethink Outside’s Narrative Hub, helping funders and practitioners share a more powerful story about how nature and time outside strengthen our communities. Visit rethinkoutside.org/narrativehub to explore additional resources and case studies.