



Conservation Council of New Brunswick
Conseil de conservation *du* Nouveau-Brunswick

Nurturing caring values, communicating in a pandemic

While not undermining environmental
protection now and in the future

Louise Comeau, April 2020

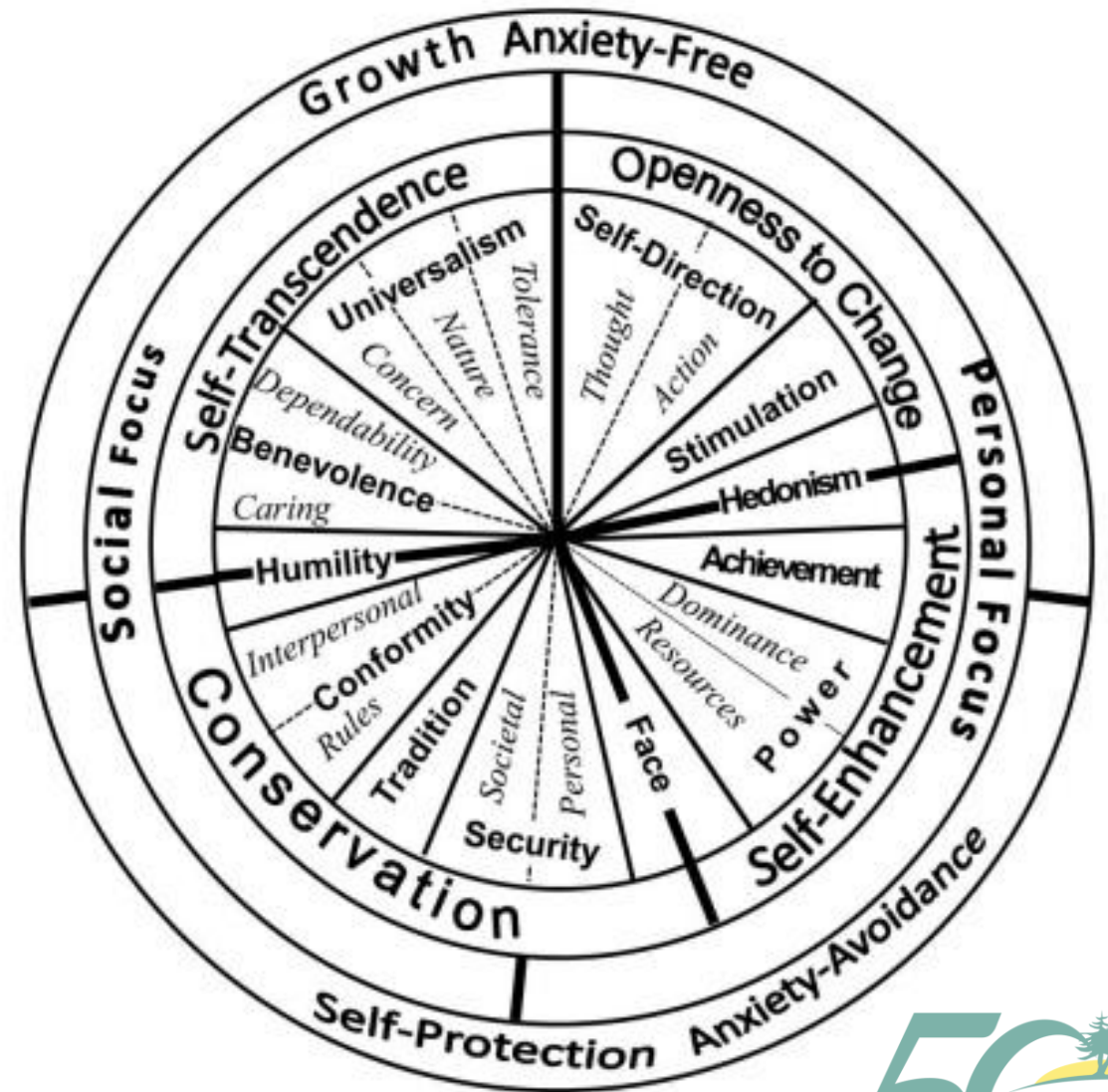




Shifting ground, growing opportunity

- People are concerned about safety, security and well-being right now. We are focused on taking care of each other. Think about communications through a #BeWell lens
- There is an opportunity to situate environmental protection and social justice as critical to our capacity to take care of each other.
- This is a time for care and interconnectedness framing

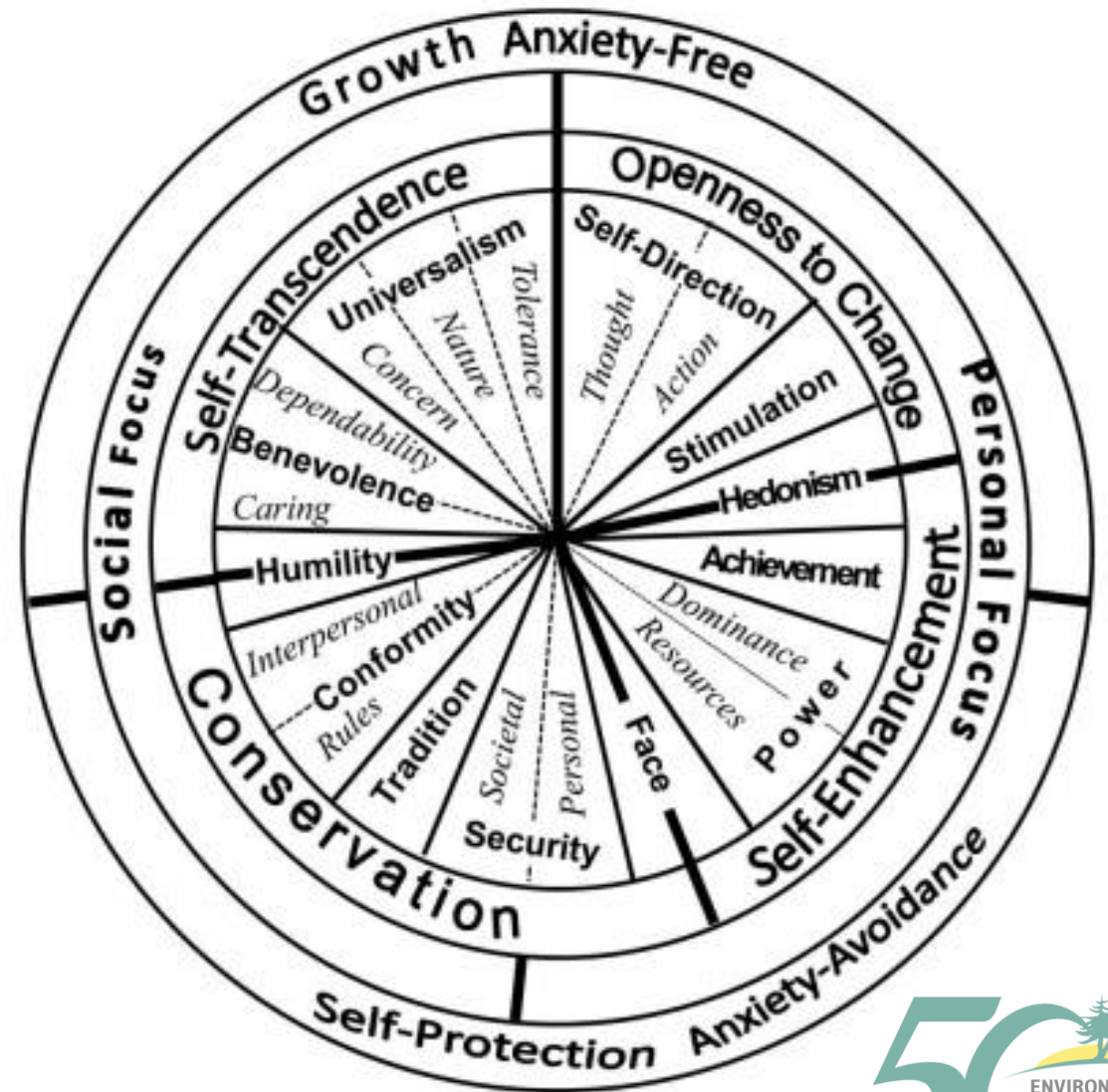
Shalom Schwartz Circumplex of values



Social and personal security threats like COVID-19 activate conservation, self-protection and anxiety-avoidance values (bottom quadrant)

Important to nurture social focus values (Altruism values of caring, benevolence, dependability, concerns, nature, tolerance, top left quadrant)

Want to keep collective values activated; foundation for solving climate change and other social, environmental challenges



The ground is shifting

- The COVID-19 pandemic and post-recovery period can be a strategic and learning moment.
 - Canadians, and people around the world, are facing a challenge unprecedented in recent times.
 - Protective actions are surfacing opportunities for changes in how we live and opportunities to correct faulty mental models (where pollution comes from).
 - There is a greater appreciation of the important role government plays in protecting Canadians.
 - There is greater sensitivity to inequality, and appreciation of lower-paid workers who are sustaining critical food and health systems.

The moment is now
for funders to scale
up

- Social distancing requirements are surfacing the advantages of a slower pace, less commuting, working from home.
- Social change or new social norms could emerge: more acceptance of teleworking, but also a more balanced life overall.
 - There is soaring demand for seeds/gardening supplies: People are easing anxiety and desire for self-sufficiency through gardening
 - Perceptions of air and cruise travel may change
 - Economic disruption can create opportunities for socializing systems change and transformative climate action

Communicating in the time of COVID- 19

Nurturing altruistic values

Communications tips

- Don't talk about economic stimulus: Talk about just recovery, rebuilding, renewing, reimagining
- We too quickly fall into reform thinking and messaging: economic stimulus is all about growth, growth, growth
- We want recovery, economic resilience, ecological resilience and community and personal preparedness and security

Summarizing expert advice: Metaphors to embrace: From MobLab, Frameworks Institute, Public Interest (in UK)

- This is a love story
 - Not a war, fight, race, competition
 - This thinking leads to zero-sum thinking and excuses to abandon environmental protection measures as we have seen in Alberta and the U.S.
- People/country as a body: All parts working together, connected to each other
 - We are:
 - Interconnected
 - Dependent on each other
 - Have responsibilities to each other
 - Can sacrifice for each other's sake
 - Shared humanity

Communications tips: Learning moment

- We have an opportunity to connect with people through their lived experience: #BeWell
- Memes and visual queues that can link to fact sheets, simple factoids about these actions make you feel better and more prepared
- People are cooking, thinking about gardens/food security
- Home-based and lifestyle activities that are good for people and planet. Some memes:
 - Plant a garden
 - Missing your hugs? Hug a tree
 - Tap a tree (maple syrup time)

Summarizing
expert advice:
Communications
tips: From MobLab,
Frameworks Institute,
Public Interest (in UK)

- Moment of connection
 - Resilience is community resilience
 - Emphasize: caring, cooperative, collaborative
 - Solidarity and charity
 - Standing together, responsible for each other
 - These are intrinsic, altruistic values. They are essential to sustaining collective action post-pandemic. We need to nurture them through WE/US language
- Response is a “journey” metaphor
 - Avoid “stimulus” framing in post-pandemic period
 - Focus on “just recovery”, “rebuild”, “renew”, “reimagine”

Summarizing
expert advice:
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- Connect to human rights messaging;
 - Protecting the most vulnerable, liveable incomes/minimum wage
 - Show solidarity
 - Look for the intersectionalities with our issues
 - Nurture setting aside differences and focus on large wins for everybody with emphasis on most vulnerable and most affected: this is the just recovery, re-imagination story

Communications tips: Learning moment

- We can re-educate people on what it means to be prepared.
- That includes having resources on hand at home and in our communities.
- Safe, secure and healthy is achievable in ways that sustain the environment and slow climate change
 - Globalization has undermined our capacity to be prepared.

Communications tips: Learning moment

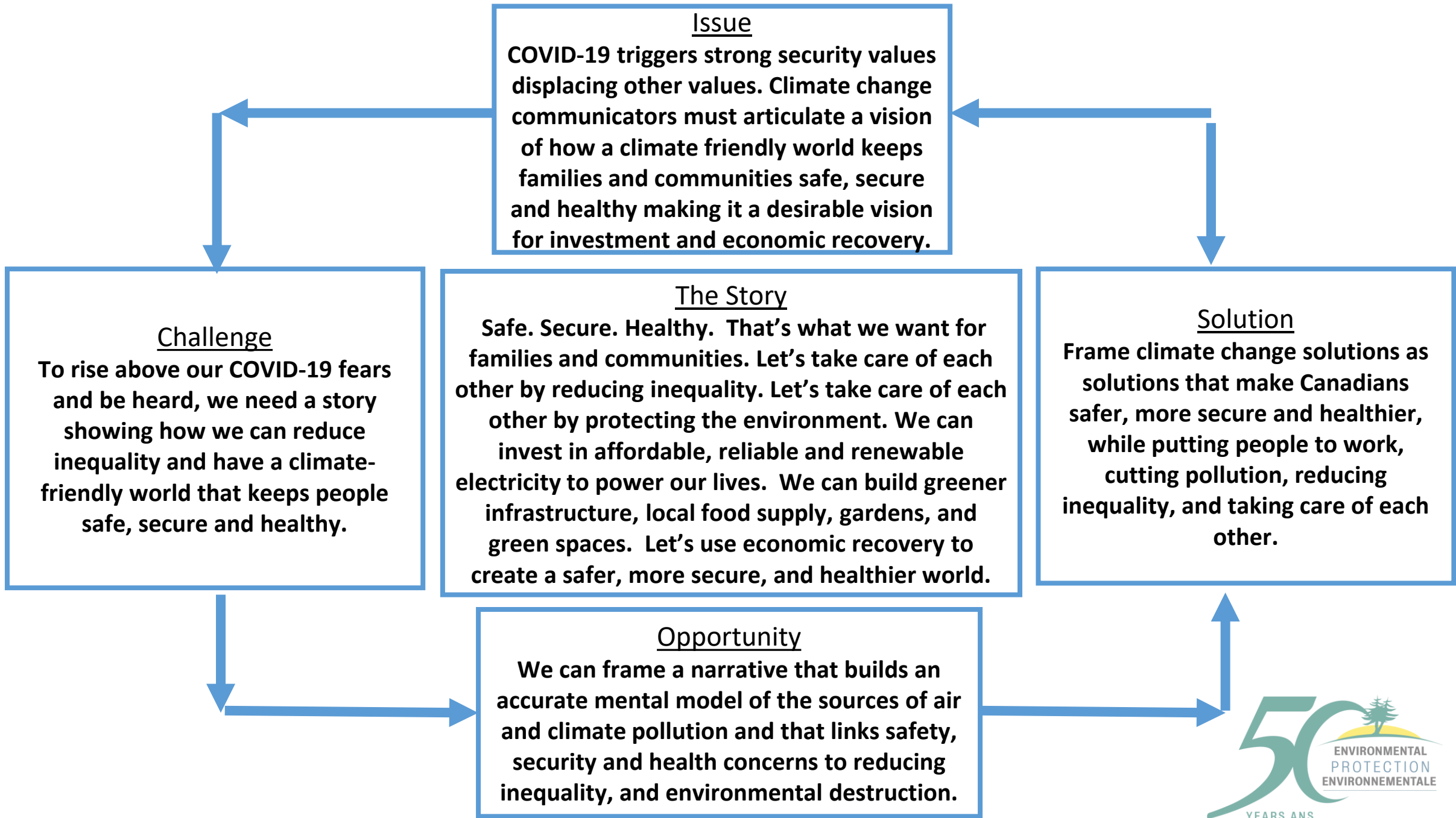
- The slower pace, less commuting, working from home have upsides.
- Could see more acceptance of teleworking, but also a more balanced life overall.
- We can, when timing is right, correct faulty mental models: people can now see how burning fuels in vehicles, factories and businesses generates air pollution (visual cues from maps), and greenhouse gas emissions.
 - The fact that these emissions are now lower is not an opportunity to celebrate but to explain the links to the day-to-day activities and fuel use causing the pollution and call for a post-pandemic response that keeps emissions low and moving downward.

Climate change linkages

Not immediately, but as the opportunities arise

Pandemic
shows why
climate change
emergency
metaphor does
not work

- COVID-19 pandemic IS an emergency generating an emergency response
- The pandemic response demonstrates WHY it is a mistake to call climate change an emergency
- Climate change is not an emergency in the way a non-specialist understands the concept: COVID-19 is
- Climate change is a crisis that weakens our ability to keep each other safe, to protect each other from future pandemics or other extreme events
 - What happens when there is a pandemic and flooding or wildfire and we can't protect people in common locations?





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Thank you

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