



Do's and Don'ts

When talking about Opportunity Youth

Do...

Emphasize the importance of adolescent development and explain it as a period of opportunity where young people are growing socially and emotionally and discovering who they are.

Don't...

Focus on risks and vulnerabilities — a counter-productive narrative about young people is already exaggerated in public understanding.

Be explicit about how factors like racial discrimination and poverty shape the experiences of Opportunity Youth.

Present data on racial disparities between Opportunity Youth and other young people without providing an explanation for why those disparities exist.

Talk about the ways in which policies and programs can create successful outcomes for all Opportunity Youth.

Focus only on individual stories of success or failure.

Talk about similarities to other adolescents' needs and supports — and the fact that they need more of them.

Talk about Opportunity Youth as uniquely troubled and unlike other young people.

Point out the benefits to their communities and society that result when Opportunity Youth thrive.

Talk the importance of ensuring Opportunity Youth do well without providing the “why.”

Above are framing recommendations for communicating about Opportunity Youth in positive, asset-based, and explanatory ways. These recommendations were synthesized from *existing* FrameWorks research on communicating about adolescence and foster youth. *Though more research is underway into specific framing strategies for communications related to Opportunity Youth*, we believe the recommendations above provide a strong foundation for communicators to begin, or continue, advancing a positive narrative in their messaging.

