SUMMARY

The session emphasized the **urgent need for better communication strategies** to increase public understanding and urgency around hypertension. Communications expert **Frank Luntz**, a stroke survivor, shared powerful personal experiences and emphasized the **emotional and visual** dimensions of effective public health messaging. Branding strategist **Laura Ries** expanded on this by detailing the **principles of positioning**, underscoring the power of simple, emotionally resonant, and visual storytelling to embed messages about hypertension in the public consciousness.

KEY POINTS & TAKEAWAYS

1. John Clymer's Framing

- Data alone isn't changing behavior; communication must evolve.
- **Current messaging around hypertension isn't working.**
- Public health must **engage people emotionally** and **meet them where they are.**

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2. Frank Luntz: Lessons from Personal Experience & Communications Research

A. Visuals Are More Impactful Than Facts

- People respond more powerfully to what they **see** than what they hear.
- **"The most impactful way to get people to make the right decisions is visually."**

B. Emotion Drives Action

- Regret is a powerful motivator: People fear missing out more than making mistakes.
- Emotional appeals such as:
    - "Missing your granddaughter's wedding"
    - "Losing your ability to walk or speak"
      create urgency more than statistics ever will.

C. Use of Storytelling and Before/After Imagery

- Create **5-minute videos** with real people showing life before and after stroke or heart disease.

    - Three stories = evidence, not anomaly.
    - Use professions (teachers, athletes, scientists) to create **relatable narratives**.

D. Contrast with Conditions Like Cancer or ED

- Hypertension is **silent**, its invisibility makes it harder to market.
- Consequences must be made **visible and relatable**.
    - "This is what will happen to *you* if you don't act."

E. Language to Use with Patients

- Focus on **consequences**, **regret**, **meaningful and measurable impact**, and **quality of life**.
- **"Your medication will have a meaningful, measurable impact on how you live your life."**

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3. Laura Ries: Applying Brand Positioning to Hypertension

A. The Power of Positioning

- Success in communication depends on what sticks in the **mind**, not what's said.
- To be memorable, messages must be **simple**, **focused**, and **repeated**.
    - Example: Tesla = electric car, Red Bull = energy drink, Komen = breast cancer.

B. Use of Visual Hammers

- Words alone are processed slower and are less emotional.
- Visuals are processed faster and with more emotional impact.
- **Successful campaigns use visuals + emotion** to drive change (e.g., anti-smoking campaigns, Viagra's rebrand).

C. Hypertension's Unique Challenge

- It's invisible and silent.
- Most people associate it with an arm cuff, not with **heart health or risk of stroke**.
- Suggests repositioning it as a **heart condition** to make it more emotionally resonant.

D. Obesity as a Visible Proxy

- Weight is visible and emotionally charged—an ideal focus.

- **Excess weight = overworked heart**, a simple metaphor that resonates.
- Public narratives (e.g., Oprah, Kathy Bates) miss an opportunity to link weight loss to **reduced blood pressure and stroke risk**.

E. Simplicity and Repetition Are Key

- Avoid long lists like "Life's Essential 8." Focus on one or two priorities.
- Suggests promoting the **"Big 4" metrics**: blood pressure, glucose, cholesterol, and bone density.

F. Social Media & Cultural Moments

- Use visual storytelling and emotionally resonant messages across **short-form video platforms** (e.g., TikTok).
- Pair **celebrity and everyday stories** to create **sustainable public awareness**.

MEMORABLE QUOTES

Frank Luntz

- "I'm an example of what not to do rather than what to do."
- "We regret more what we *don't* do than what we *do*."
- "You have to make the invisible *visible*."
- "This is how you change people's behavior—and that is your responsibility."

Laura Ries

- "Words are not emotional. Visuals are."
- "Obesity is visible. High blood pressure is not. Let's make the connection."
- "Eight may be great, but it's too many. Focus to get in the mind."
- "Stories, repetition, and emotion build lasting public health awareness."

OVERALL THEMES

- **Emotion over intellect:** Facts alone don't drive behavior change—feelings do.
- **Visual storytelling:** Before-and-after imagery and videos are essential.

- **Positioning matters:** Simplicity, clarity, and repetition make messages stick.
- **Make it personal:** Use both public figures and relatable individuals.
- **Reframe hypertension:** Link it visibly to outcomes people care about—mobility, family, legacy.