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**Reframing the Conversation: Mental Health Campaign Uses Research to Refine Communications Approach**

*May is Mental Health Month: Let’s Talk Colorado Campaign Encourages Mental Health Conversation*

DENVER – *(insert your own date),* 2018 – Starting an open, honest and statewide discussion about mental health is no simple task, so members of the [Let’s Talk Colorado](http://letstalkco.org/) campaign, organized to encourage Coloradans to talk with each other about their mental health, recently enlisted some high-profile help.

The FrameWorks Institute, a Washington, D.C.-based social research and communications firm, conducted extensive research with mental health experts and ordinary Coloradans to find the language and communications strategies to break through long-held misconceptions about mental health.

Interviewing mental health experts and citizens from various backgrounds, FrameWorks found that misconceptions often prevent people from talking about mental health as a positive state that everyone has and works to support.

“The most important implication of this research is that mental health advocates need to start going beyond communicating the idea that stigma is wrong or undesirable,” said Moira O’Neil, director of Research Interpretation and Application at FrameWorks. “Communicators also need to emphasize that improving the mental health system of care is not just important for people who experience mental health issues or the people who are close to them. People need to be consistently reminded of the benefits good mental health can have for the entire community.”

Researchers also found that while participants agree it is wrong to stigmatize people with mental health issues, they nevertheless engaged in patterns of talk that “othered” people, such as defining people with mental health challenges as “abnormal” and blaming individuals for their own mental health issues.

The Institute’s findings are guiding the second phase of the Let’s Talk Colorado campaign which focuses on the statewide advantages of positive mental health, such as a stronger economy, and the role all Coloradans play in supporting one another’s mental health.

Let’s Talk Colorado is a community-driven coalition of organizations including:

Aurora Mental Health Center, Boulder County Public Health, Broomfield Public Health, Centura, Children’s Hospital Colorado, Clinica Family Health, Community Reach Center, Denver Public Health, Doctors Care, Douglas County Government, Jefferson Center for Mental Health, Jefferson County Public Health, Kaiser Permanente, Mental Health Center of Denver, Metro Community Provider Network, SCL Health, 9Health Fair, Tri-County Health Department and UC Health.

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