THE ROLE OF STIGMA IN WRITING CHARITABLE APPEALS

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I am not who I was when I started my doctoral program. I am who I needed to become. And I am incredibly fortunate. Many stars had to align to build this path. Amazingly, the stars did align, and the path was built with the help of family and friends, pre-existing and recently met.

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This dissertation has my name on it, but it is the result of many influences. I wanted to walk this path because I believed that my experience and point of view would lead to a distinctive approach and contribution. But to get to this point, I relied on the experiences and points of view of many other people. I am thankful for every one.

Ruth K. Hansen

THE ROLE OF STIGMA IN WRITING CHARITABLE APPEALS

This study investigated choices made by fundraisers when crafting appeals to unknown potential donors. Specifically, it asked if and how fundraisers' choices vary depending on whether they were raising money for a population that faced societal stigma. Research on fundraising often focuses on donor behavior, without considering the type of the beneficiary and the discretionary decisions made by fundraisers. This study drew on literature about stigma and literature about fundraising communication. It employed mixed methodologies to explore this research question. The first part of the study used an online experimental survey, in which 76 practicing fundraisers wrote an acquisition appeal letter for a nonprofit after random assignment to benefit either clients with mental illness (stigmatized population) or older adults (non-stigmatized population), then answered attitudinal questions about the beneficiary population. Participants believed individuals with mental illness were more stigmatized than older adults. Analysis of the letters using linguistic software showed that fundraisers used more humanizing language when writing about the non-stigmatized population, compared to the stigmatized population. Several aspects of the appeal letters, identified through existing theory, were examined but did not vary at statistically significant levels between the groups. Exploratory factor analysis showed several patterns of elements recurring within the letters. One of these patterns, addressing social expectations, varied significantly by client group. In the second part of the study, semi-structured interviews with fifteen participants showed that writing for the stigmatized client population raised special concerns in communicating with potential donors: many interviewees described

identifying client stories and evidence to justify helping stigmatized clients in a way that wasn't thought as necessary for non-stigmatized clients. They also attempted to mitigate threatening stereotypes to maintain readers' comfort levels. Fundraisers regularly evaluated how readers were likely to think of different kinds of clients. Fundraisers' own implicit assumptions also came into play.

Lehn M. Benjamin, Ph.D., Chair

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF FIGURES

CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION

> "…fundraisers facilitate an alchemy of virtue: they empower those with financial resources to convert the dross of their money into the gold of a better society."
>
> – Arthur C. Brooks (2014)

Arthur C. Brooks' quote, above, attributes not just agency but an almost magical ability on the part of fundraisers to turn wealth into virtue. But as a fundraising professional I noticed how this magic seemed to work more for some causes than for others. For example, it was easier to raise money for an afterschool program than for a homeless shelter. I also was aware of the need to appeal to donors, and how this sometimes resulted in editing important information about the issue or cause that might not be comfortable, such as the prevalence of alcohol use or lack of family support for homeless men. In the case of a multi-service organization, one issue might be almost entirely neglected in donor communications in favor of another issue that is seen as more popular. I began to wonder if the choices made in writing donor communications was systematically patterned according to fundraising staffs' understanding of what was acceptable to the community, and if so, if those decisions had any impact on the donors' understanding of the issue, as well as the larger public's perceptions. I also wondered how this dynamic might interact with the continued underfunding for some causes, like mental illness, substance abuse, and homelessness.[1] And, if these patterns and

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[1] Although human services organizations account for more than one-third of registered charities, they receive a disproportionately small share of revenues – about one-eighth – and an even smaller share of charitable contributions, at less than one-tenth of the sector overall (Giving USA, 2017; McKeever, 2015; McKeever & Pettijohn, 2014). Human services organizations often serve highly vulnerable populations, but their ability to stay open relies more on their access to resources than on the needs of the area's population (Grønbjerg & Paarlberg, 2001; Twombly, 2003). Recent trends in the structure and financing of human services have tended to emphasize market logics such as pay-for-performance, which tend to incentivize strategies such as "creaming" – helping those who are easy to help, rather than complex, chronic issues such as those mentioned above (Smith, 2018).

interactions are evident, what are the implications for the *better society* envisioned by Brooks, and those who work within and contribute to nonprofits in search of it?

Fundraisers play a boundary-spanning role in persuading the public to support an organization for the benefit of its clients (Kelly, 1998). Fundraisers and fundraising practice exist within a social context; examining how these individuals adapt their practice to social context is important to understanding the profession of fundraising and what it can accomplish (Burlingame, 1997). Through their intercessions with potential donors to benefit organizations serving specific client populations, fundraisers' choices may also affect individual and social-level attitudes toward stigmatized beneficiaries.

This research takes the boundary-spanning role of fundraisers as its primary focus, and considers how they may tailor appeals in systematic ways, specifically in light of different client groups served by organizations, with particular focus on the social acceptability of those groups. Next, in the Problem Statement, this chapter addresses the issues that serve as the context and prompt for this research study. Then it presents the purpose of the study, and its significance, followed by the research questions guiding the inquiry. Definitions of key concepts underlying the work are offered. Then, the chapter introduces the organization of the rest of the dissertation, and concludes.

Problem Statement

Scholars of philanthropy often focus on giving – the motives, experiences, and typically the good works of those who voluntarily give money or time to benefit others. As noted by Ostrander & Schervish, (1990) ideally, this may create a relationship of care between those who give and those who receive. But that ideal is often mediated by not only an organization, but an individual within the organization whose role is that of a liaison between the organization and potential donors – functionally, a fundraiser (Alborough, 2017; Breeze, 2017; Kelly, 1998). In recent years, more emphasis has been placed on donor-centered fundraising (e.g. Burk, 2003; Lagasse, 2016). And why shouldn't it? Donors give voluntarily; they have interests, and these are worth recognizing and honoring. This is a "supply side" orientation, a focus wherein fundraisers serve philanthropy, using their skills to help shape an outcome that is meaningful for donor and the recipient (Breeze, 2017, Ostrander & Schervish, 1990; Rosso, 2016).

The "demand side" is also worth attending to. From a consequentialist perspective, the value of an act is judged by its results, which must include the clients of charitably supported organizations (e.g. Levy, 2002; Ostrander & Schervish, 1990). And in granting charitable status, the United States federal government has continued a tradition rooted in Elizabethan England, when the Statute of Charitable Uses (1601)[2] identified certain causes as deserving of special treatment because of their benefit to society (Fishman, 2008). This legal philosophy continues in the public goods theory of today's charitable income tax deductions (for donors) and in the recognition of public benefit for the exemptions given to the charitable organizations (Joint Committee on Taxation, 2001, 2005). If we grant preferential tax treatment to organizations with charitable missions on the theory that those missions benefit the public, then those organizations ought to accomplish their missions well: this theory clearly implicates the well-being of people who are clients of the charities. While fundraisers may encourage

[2] Formally, 43 Elizabeth I, c. 4.

joyful giving, they are also instrumental in securing resources needed for organizations to function, and for staff to remain employed, in order to offer these beneficial services to the public.[3] And any number of fundraisers who have lost sleep over whether a colleague's position will be funded can attest that the "demand side" of fundraising is, indeed, demanding.[4]

Considering the demand side of fundraising, we can look at the *why* and the *how*. The *why* branch looks at desired or actual outcomes of fundraising. Clearly, one function of fundraising – indicated in the name of the role – is to support the gathering of funds voluntarily given to an organization or cause. Successful fundraising practice is, not surprisingly, considered a factor in raising more money for one's organization or cause (e.g., Kelly, 1998; Ritzenhein, 1998; Sargeant & Shang, 2016). However, fundraising practices are not the only factor: other factors also affect an organization's ability to raise funds, including the age of the organization, its size, and the popularity of its clients (Steinberg & Morris, 2010). Indeed, the uneven distribution of charitable donations in any given year bears evidence that some causes and, by extension, some populations receive less voluntary funding than others. A similar analysis shows that not only is voluntary funding uneven, revenues from other sources are also unevenly distributed. For example, more than one-third of registered charities are human services organizations, but these receive just one-eighth of the total revenues of the charitable

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[3] Access to financial and human resources is positively correlated with nonprofit organizations persisting, rather than shutting their doors (Twombly, 2003; Grønbjerg & Paarlberg, 2001).

[4] This is particularly true for mid-sized human services organizations, defined as those with expenses of at least $250,000 and less than $1 million. While larger human service agencies tend to have greater reliance on government funding, mid-size organizations are more reliant on donated income. One in five organizations rely more on donated income than any other source; primary reliance on donations rises to half of all mid-size human services organizations (Boris, de Leon, *et al*., 2010). Regardless of organizational size, donated income is likely to be unrestricted, and thus available for meeting operating costs.

sector, and less than one-tenth of charitable contributions (2013) (McKeever, 2015; McKeever & Pettijohn, 2014). Human services agencies are likely to have a wide range of categories of people in need, some of whom are considered more socially acceptable than others. For instance, children are likely to be considered more favorably than, for example, convicted felons. This idea of "unpopularity" can be due to a social stigma, "a deeply discrediting attribute" that socially diminishes individuals or groups (Pescosolido & Martin, 2015). Relative stigma or social acceptability may, then, affect fundraising success, as measured by donations.

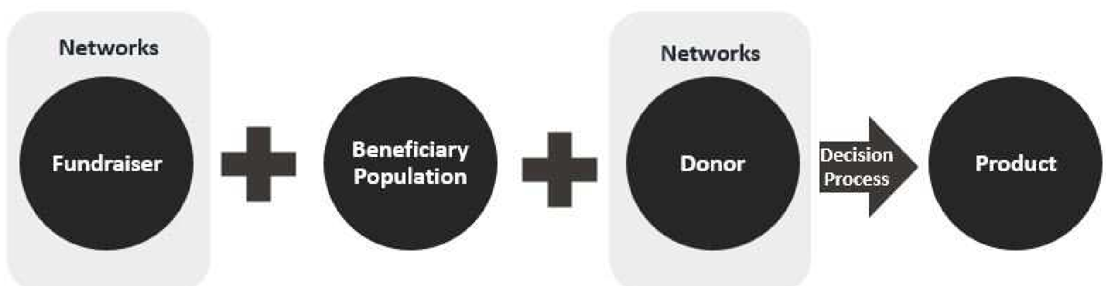
The *why* aspect of fundraising also includes other possible beneficial outcomes of fundraising activities, including cause advocacy, public education, and engagement of members of the public (Breeze & Dean, 2012; Dogra, 2007; Steinberg, 1991).

The *how* side of fundraising is concerned with the process of fundraising activities. Both research and practical how-to books are largely silent on how fundraising for different populations affects the practice of fundraising. While it is possible that there is no difference, either in best-practice or in general practice, this has neither been tested nor positively asserted. Given that the popularity of an organization's clients has been identified as a possible factor in differences in fundraising outcomes, this is a recognizable gap in how we think about fundraising. Social theories also support the possibility of differentiated practices, as will be described in more detail in Chapter 2.

Another issue with the *how* side of fundraising is that it is almost exclusively analyzed as an organization-level phenomenon. I follow Kelly (1998) and Breeze (2017) in asserting that individual fundraisers have a great deal of discretion in how they perform their activities. Especially considering the centrality of communication to fundraising practice (e.g., Ostrander & Schervish; Breeze, 2017), the experiences, perceptions, motivations, and skills of the individuals inhabiting this organizational role ought to be considered. Thus, fundraising appeals are an act of communication written by an individual (the fundraiser), to individuals (the prospective donors), in which the fundraiser is indirectly representing a group of people (the clients) who are served by the organization for which he or she works.

I have previously modeled the factors fundraisers may take into account when crafting their communications as shown below in Figure 1.1.

Figure 1.1
Factors Influencing Fundraisers' Messaging Decisions



In this model, in deciding the tone of a letter, how to frame the request for support, and what information to include or metaphors to draw, fundraisers consider their own perceptions and preferences, influenced by their personal and professional networks, including the culture at the organization for which they work; traits of the beneficiary population; and the perceived perceptions and preferences of the prospective donor population, influenced by their likely networks (Hansen, 2017a). With this model, the fundraiser's perceptions of how the donors' preferences would interact with the organization's beneficiaries (clients) will affect how the letter is written. This proposition bridges the considerations of *how* one fundraises for beneficiaries and the fundraiser as an individual-level unit of analysis.

By focusing on the individual actors within the organization, it follows logically that the discretionary choices of the individuals who are writing fundraising appeals will affect the financial success of the appeals – a proposition supported by fundraising how-to books and workshops that help individuals develop their skills in this writing genre (e.g. Brooks, 2012; Warwick, 2008), but until recently generally unrecognized by scholarly research.[5] If a client population is thought to be less socially acceptable, two of the possible beneficial outcomes – the *why* aspects – of fundraising may come into conflict. The function of raising money may affect how the fundraiser communicates about clients: he or she may make choices that either mitigate or reinforce stereotypes. In so doing, the fundraiser may also have an effect on the attitudes and expectations of the people reading their letter, which may, over time, influence their social and professional networks. Here, the *why* fundraise and *how* to fundraise considerations throughout this section all come together in a professional dilemma.

The issue of support for stigmatized populations is thrown into sharp relief by current discourse. When people react to a stigmatized population, their response is influenced by the norms of the community, the local and mass media, the people with whom they spend time as a co-worker and as a neighbor, and discussions and policy that exist from local through state and national levels (Pescosolido, Martin, Lang, & Olafsdottir, 2008). On the issue of mental illness, one often stigmatized condition, organizations such as the National Alliance for Mental Illness (NAMI), Coming Out

[5] Breeze (2017) explores this topic in major gift fundraising. Chapter 2, Review of Literature, expands on this topic.

Proud, and Active Minds focus on advocacy, leadership, and mutual support; recent efforts show similarities to previous AIDS and gay liberation activism in their tactics to reduce stigma (Active Minds, 2017; Coming Out Proud Program, 2017; Hansen, 2016; NAMI, 2017). Mental health advocacy has also recently gained the support of celebrities such as Glenn Close and Demi Lovato (Bring Change to Mind, 2016; Silverman, 2015; Weaver, 2017). Patrick Kennedy, former Congressman from Rhode Island, founded the Kennedy Forum to encourage leaders in research and policy to focus on behavioral health issues (Kennedy & Fried, 2014; The Kennedy Forum, 2017). These combined steps seemed aligned with the likelihood – and certainly the intent – of reducing stigma and mobilizing public support for treatment and the life opportunities of people with mental illness.

However, there have been some recent setbacks to these attempts to change public opinion for the better. Media in the United States is more likely than that in other Western countries to depict individuals with mental illness as criminals (Olafsdottir, 2010). There is also a pervasive narrative tying mental illness to gun violence, and thus to danger and threat. On the night of October 1, 2017, a gunman opened fire on a concert in Las Vegas, NV in what is being called "the worst mass shooting in modern US history" (Shapiro & Allen, 2017). On the morning of October 3, without evidence as to motive, there was immediate attribution of mental illness. President Donald Trump described the shooter, Stephen Paddock, as "a demented man" and "a very sick individual" (MSNBC, 2017, Oct. 3). That same morning, when asked to comment on gun legislation in the wake of the event, Speaker of the House Paul Ryan instead used his response to speak about mental health, choosing this as an apparently socially acceptable explanation for the shooting (Live On-Air News, 2017, Oct. 3). In the absence of positive knowledge of a diagnosis, or even a factual basis regarding likelihood, these narrative choices were simple attribution in the face of otherwise unexplained motivation, reinforcing stereotypes of those with mental illness as dangerous and violent.[6]

The pattern repeated approximately a month later after a shooting in a rural Texas church on November 5, 2017. Reporting that same day, *The New York Times* printed the following report:

> Speaking at a news conference in Japan… President Trump called the shooting a "mental health problem at the highest level" and not "a guns situation," adding the gunman was a "very deranged individual" (Montgomery, Mele, & Fernandez, 2017).

Once again, the attribution was immediate, and came without any evidence at that point as to a likely cause.

These instances could be taken as merely a continuation of established patterns of attribution that reinforce existing stereotypes (e.g. McGinty, Webster, & Barry, 2013, Wahl, 2006), but it is noteworthy that these statements were made at the highest levels of government, affecting national discourse.[7] The unusually sharp turn toward a high-level tone of aggression and exclusion generally was noted by former president George W. Bush in a public speech in which he noted, "Bullying and prejudice in our public life sets a national tone, provides permission for cruelty and bigotry, and compromises the moral education of children," (Bush, 2017). Later, he added, "We have seen our discourse degraded by casual cruelty…" leading to an "[escalation] into dehumanization" (Bush,

[6] That same day, after the comments by the president and the speaker of the house, David A. Graham wrote in *The Atlantic* that "…there is so far no evidence to support the idea that Paddock was mentally ill, and his brother said he didn't know of any [evidence]" (2017).
[7] As previously noted, national context is also a factor in how stigma is perceived and acted on at the micro and meso levels, an idea expanded on in Pescosolido, Martin, Lang, & Olafsdottir (2008).

2017). If one accepts these observations, the national dialogue, the mass media, and some personal and professional networks – the social fabric in which our norms are embedded – have recently experienced intensified speech that functions to increase the likelihood of labeling, prejudice, separation, and discrimination: in short, increased stigma.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this mixed-methods study is to examine whether fundraisers systematically use different solicitation strategies if a beneficiary population is perceived as stigmatized, and if so, how, and why. In particular, I collect and analyze acquisition appeal letters written by practicing fundraisers to a common prompt, using an experimental design to vary the client population. I also explore the process of decision making for writing appeal letters by interviewing fundraisers about their letters, and asking them how they would change tactics or strategies if the client population changed.

Significance of the Study

The study contributes to our knowledge of fundraising practice. It explicitly focuses on two aspects of fundraising largely ignored in existing studies: the fundraiser's discretionary role in framing communication to and with donors, and differences in social desirability of different beneficiaries. In so doing, it pulls together knowledge across several disciplines, including microsociology, social psychology, nonprofit management, and communications to focus on a practical phenomenon. This study responds to the importance of understanding how "the social, political, and economic contexts in which fund raisers work influence how they practice and what they accomplish" (Burlingame, 1997).

While studies have approached fundraising from the aspect of how donors respond to requests for gifts, and to a much lesser extent how beneficiaries respond to fundraising materials, even less is known about how individual fundraisers communicate in actual practice. Existing studies that do focus on communication practice select their samples based on the letter being part of an appeal that raised a large amount of money. In contrast, this study is a controlled experiment, followed by in-depth interviews. The experiment asked several practicing fundraisers to write an appeal for one of two fictional nonprofits, identical except for their client base. Subsequent interviews with a select subgroup allowed me to explore why they wrote letters as they did. This design allows us to focus on the choices made by fundraising professionals more generally. It also specifically asks participants to focus on beneficiary groups not well represented within fundraising research, allowing us to determine what expressive aspects, if any, may differ among these groups.

There are implications for practice. By better understanding how the social acceptability of a client base affects fundraiser decision making, fundraisers will have more evidence to inform their choices, and professional development programs can intentionally address issues of stigma in fundraiser education. Practitioner-friendly results will be shared with professional development groups that assisted in recruitment and indicated an interest in the results.

And there are implications for policy. By better understanding the process and trade-offs involved in raising funds for different groups, nonprofit leaders and funders can be better informed both about the broader resource dynamics for organizations serving vulnerable populations, and implications for the broader mission activities of their organizations.

Research Questions

This study seeks to answer the following main question: What is the effect of a stigmatized beneficiary population on fundraisers' choices in writing donor appeals, when compared to a non-stigmatized population?

In addition to this primary question, this study investigates a number of subsidiary questions. Thinking of the fundraiser's position as an employee at an organization that serves a population of clients, is there a difference in the written emphasis given to the people served compared to the organization itself when the beneficiary population is varied?

Do fundraisers use different types of words, such as positive emotions, negative emotions, etc., in persuading people to support one population compared to the other? What do these word choices tell us about how those populations are viewed, compared to each other?

Specifically, how does writing for a more stigmatized group compare to writing for a less stigmatized group? Is there a systematic difference in whether the client population is presented as being close to the readers? Do fundraisers make different choices in framing an appeal positively or negatively depending on the beneficiaries? Are different kinds of evidence supporting the appeal offered for different groups? Do appeals vary in emphasizing indirect benefits to the potential donors? Given a choice of *emotional approaches*, which tend to include client stories, *rational approaches*, which tend to include facts or statistics, or a hybrid between the two, are there differences according to the beneficiary group? Are there differences in what kind of services are highlighted? What concepts or themes are raised in the letters, and do they vary by type of beneficiary group?

What factors are considered by fundraisers in preparing an appeal letter? What goals do they have for their acquisition appeals? How do they attempt to attain those goals through their choices while writing? Do people who view a given population as more stigmatized (or as less stigmatized) identify different goals, tactics, or considerations? Do those choices change when the beneficiary population changes?

How does intentional fundraising practice encourage voluntary funding for individuals who are less popular? How does it attempt to mitigate any difficulties due to stigmatization?

Do fundraisers consider advocating for positive perceptions of client groups an important objective of fundraising communication? Why, or why not? If so, how do they support this objective in practice?

Because so little is known about how fundraisers use their understanding of their donors and their client base in crafting persuasive communication, and further, because little is known about how fundraisers specifically seek to align the interests of stigmatized populations with those of their donors, this study contributes to our understanding of the role of fundraisers in encouraging voluntary engagement with those marginalized by society.

Definition of Key Concepts

This study examines the choices fundraisers make when writing appeals for client groups of differing levels of social acceptability. I provide definitions for three key concepts below: Fundraisers, Fundraising Appeal Letter, and Stigma and Stigmatizing Attributes. Under the idea of Stigma, I also define four additional concepts important to this study: Negative Stereotypes, Diminished Expectations, Threat, and Social Power.

Fundraiser: Fundraisers are the population studied here. Merriam-Webster defines the word "fund-raiser" as "a person employed to raise funds" (Merriam-Webster, 2017). The AFP Fundraising Dictionary (2017) has a broader definition for "fundraiser" or "fund raiser": "a person, paid or volunteer, who plans, manages, or participates in raising assets and resources for an organization or cause." AFP (2017) notes that a "professional fundraiser" is one paid for his or her work, and further distinguishes from commercial solicitors. For the purposes of this study, individuals had to indicate that within the past six months they were employed as a fundraiser for a charity, or as a fundraising consultant working with charities. While donations have been studied extensively from the point of view of the donor, little research has been done on actual practice as a fundraiser.

Fundraising Appeal Letter: Direct mail pieces asking for a response from a prospective donor, who may or may not have made previous gifts to the organization. Although interest around internet-based giving is high, a recent survey of American and Canadian nonprofits (N = 1,019) reports that more than nine out of ten organizations use appeal letters delivered through the mail to solicit donations. In the United States, more than half of responding organizations reported increased donations from direct mail when compared to the previous year (Nonprofit Research Collaborative, 2017). A fundraising direct mail appeal has several elements, including a letter, an outer envelope, a response mechanism, and possibly other inserts (Warwick, 2008; Spears, 2002). For this study, participants were asked to create a written message for an acquisition appeal – a letter to individuals who have not previously supported an organization. A few study participants also offered suggestions for images or additional inserts. The written messages written by participants are the primary data under analysis for the experiment. For the purposes of this study, the appeal text needed to correctly identify the organization, its client base, and include a request for funding support.

Stigma and Stigmatizing Attributes: Writing about stigma in mental illness, Patrick Corrigan and Petra Kleinlein state that "stigma is a complex phenomenon that is understandable at many levels" (2005, 11). One who is stigmatized experiences labeling, stereotyping, prejudice, and discrimination; they are excluded from the fullness of society. Life opportunities are curtailed, fault is attributed, and actions and words are perceived through an interpretive veil that discredits taking the individual at face-value (Link & Phelan, 2001; Corrigan & Kleinlein, 2005; Holstein, 1993). While celebrities and others who have demonstrated excellence in one field are often considered, therefore, to have favorable attributes across the board – a so-called "halo effect," individuals who are stigmatized experience rather the opposite – what is sometimes called a "pitchfork effect" – in that evidence of one attribute deemed a flaw is considered predictive of other, more general flaws. Four of these manifestations are negative stereotypes, diminished expectations, perceived threat, and lower social power; they are described below. A stigmatizing attribute is some aspect of a person – for example, a mental illness, a physical deformity, or some aspect of race or gender – which is viewed within a given community or setting as “less than” other, full members of that community.

Negative Stereotypes: A stereotype is a commonly held belief about a group of people, which is then applied to an individual member of that group. Negative stereotypes often assign an individual a wide range of undesired characteristics on the basis of an observed attribute (Goffman, 1963/ 1986; Corrigan, 2004).

Diminished Expectations: An individual who is stigmatized is discounted, considered less than a normal, whole individual. His or her opportunities in life are diminished, as are expectations of what goals and ambitions are proper. Further, individuals are assumed to be unreliable, and irresponsible; attempts to defend oneself from such assumptions are often interpreted as part of the individual’s defective nature (Goffman, 1963/ 1986; Holstein, 1993).

Threat: Individuals who are stigmatized are often considered to be a danger to themselves or to others. This common perception of threat has a social function as rationale for exclusion from the broader group, and for treating the affected people differently, and usually less well (Goffman, 1963/ 1986; Link, Phelan, *et al*., 1999).

Social Power: The ability to influence the behavior of others in the way in which one intends (Robbins & Judge, 2015). Power is a function of dependence – if *A* is dependent on *B*, then *B* holds a degree of power over *A*. If one is perceived as undependable, or is socially excluded, one’s social and political power will be reduced (Schneider & Ingram, 1993). Types of power that may be negatively affected include legitimacy, which relies on status; personal appeals, which rely on existing relationships; and coalitions, which may rely on existing or new relationships (Raven, 1993). Thus, being excluded or avoided diminishes the availability of power. Further, the application of stigma to another group relies on a power differential – one group must have power in order to stigmatize another (Link & Phelan, 2001).

Summary and Organization of Dissertation

This chapter has presented the rationale for studying whether fundraisers' solicitation strategies for stigmatized groups differ from those for more socially acceptable groups. It has presented the primary research questions and defined key concepts. Chapter Two presents an overview of literature relevant to the study. Specifically, it addresses fundraisers and fundraising, communications in fundraising, and stigma and its effects on targeted individuals and those around them. Chapter Three presents the study design and methods of analyzing data used for this research study. It discusses the pragmatic research paradigm, the use of multiple methods in this study, the role of the researcher, and an overview of recruitment decisions and study participants. The chapter describes the procedures and instruments used to collect data and addresses data analysis. Chapter Four describes the findings of the experimental portion of this study. Chapter Five describes the findings of the interviews conducted as part of this study. Chapter Six summarizes the study, discusses the themes and implications of the study, and concludes.

CHAPTER TWO
REVIEW OF LITERATURE

This chapter presents an overview of topics important to understanding this study's place within the research and, to a lesser extent, practical literatures. First, I address fundraising professionals in the United States. Next, I review what we know about fundraising communication, including a general introduction to research on fundraising, and fundraising communication, specifically with a focus on appeal letters. Then, I review literature that clarifies the concept and application of stigma, its directionality, and the role of social identity. I conclude by reviewing attempts to measure stigma, and the applicability of existing scales to the situation this research study.

Fundraisers in the United States

What is a Fundraiser?

The role of fundraising was described by Hank Rosso as "a servant to philanthropy," with the fundraiser a practitioner of "the gentle art of teaching the joy of giving" (Rosso, 2016; Konrath, 2016). While it is tempting to consider the work of fundraising as one of simple solicitation, both practitioners and researchers argue that long-term development work is necessary to cultivate an enthusiastic base of donors (Kelly, 1998; Breeze, 2017), and that this bidirectional, long-term relationship work is more gratifying both to donors and to the fundraisers working on behalf of their organizations (Tindall & Waters, 2010). Indeed, Alborough (2017) argues that the fundraiser's role in long-term development work is one that assumes the reciprocal obligations of a full-fledged gift relationship on behalf of the organization and its clients.

Breeze (2017) identifies three sets of tasks that fundraisers accomplish:

> - Fostering the philanthropic culture within the charity and among potential supporters and donors.
> - Framing, which involves raising awareness of the nature and extent of need and the charity's ability to solve or mitigate them.
> - Facilitating the involvement and ongoing engagement of potential supporters. (Breeze, 2017, p. 17)

People have accomplished these activities within the context of advancing projects deemed in the common good since antiquity, as evidenced by passages in the New Testament instructing the faithful to collect funds to help the poor and hungry. In 1643, clergymen from colonial Boston used a printed pamphlet to support their personal visits with Londoners for the purpose of raising funds for Harvard and the evangelization efforts to New England Native Americans (Breeze, 2017). The text of the pamphlet (much longer than a single page) informs readers that "great works need many hands, many prayers, many teares" and asks them to contribute theirs to the cause (New Englands First Fruits, 1643, p. 21). However, the idea that these activities defined a particular job with distinctive titles is much more recent.[8]

The Merriam-Webster dictionary first records the use of "fund-raiser" in 1957 – more than twenty years after the American Association of Fund-Raising Counsel was founded in 1935, and forty years after the Red Cross launched the first national

[8] Although there are many titles given to individuals whose professional function on the activities above, and indeed some evidence that the titles adopted may affect the individual's effectiveness in marshalling public support (James, 2016b), I use the terms "fundraiser" or "fundraising professional" inclusively, in accordance with the AFP Fundraising Dictionary (2017).

fundraising campaign in 1917 (Aldrich, 2016; Merriam-Webster, 2017). Kelly (1998) defines four eras in American fundraising:

1900-1917	fundraising carried out by non-specialists
1919-1941	specialists as fundraising consultants
1946-mid-1960s	a period of transition between reliance on consultants and hiring dedicated fundraising staff
1965-present	fundraising carried out by nonprofit staff members.

Recent decades have seen a greater interest in and progress toward consideration of fundraising as a profession, tracking with greater professionalization across the nonprofit sector more generally (Haggerty, 2015). The Certified Fund Raising Executive (CFRE) credential was originally established by AFP (then the National Society of Fund Raising Executives), and was subsequently adopted by more than 20 participating organizations worldwide.[9] The certification requires evidence of education, professional practice, and professional performance. The education component can be met with academic education, continuing professional education, publishing, and volunteer leadership (CFRE, 2017).

While more senior fundraisers are likely to have learned "on the job," there has been significant growth in the number of academic nonprofit management programs over the past few decades (Breeze, 2017; Mirabella & Wish, 2001; Mirabella, 2007). The most current figures indicate 292 colleges and universities offering at least one course in nonprofit management, and 91 programs with noncredit practical classes in nonprofit management (Mirabella, n.d.). However, most of these programs focus on nonprofit

[9] CFRE is now administered by a separate organization, CFRE International.

management generally, rather than being content specific to fundraising (Haggerty, 2015). The Nonprofit Academic Centers Council (NACC) includes fundraising as a topic in both its undergraduate and graduate academic curricular guidelines (NACC, 2015).

A third source of professional knowledge is through membership in associations. Professional associations can serve as communities of practice, sharing not only basic skills but fostering the development of a professionally accepted character. Pribbenow (1997b) identifies several elements of a fundraiser who has been socialized into the norms of the role. These include aspects of civic practice, professional practice, and personal practice that, taken together, describe someone who perceives responsibility for one's community, values competence and its well-considered use, and whose sense of integrity incorporates both curiosity and a strong sense of beneficence.[10] Associations can also act as a partial public sphere (e.g. Jacobs, 1999), providing a forum for discussing matters of shared interest, developing opinions, and encouraging action for common benefit (Bloland, 1997).

Who are Fundraisers?

While the fundraiser facilitates the gift process by offering information about needs and opportunities, an invitation to act, and ongoing stewardship, the role is largely ignored in gift narratives. Breeze (2017) notes that we tend to value donor generosity more when it is perceived as innate and spontaneous, rather than as a reaction to a

[10] Pribbenow's (1997b, pp. 119-121) three aspects of civic practice are caring for the other, promoting and facilitating public conversations, and civic friendship. The aspects of professional practice he identifies are informed competence, stewardship of knowledge and expertise, and public leadership. The personal practices he identifies are integrity, curiosity and openness, and choosing caring and good over not caring and evil.

request, which may help explain the relative lack of attention paid to the role of the fundraiser. It follows that there is relatively little research on fundraisers as individuals, although interest is growing (e.g. Alborough, 2017; Breeze, 2017). Past studies have generally relied on surveys and interviews with practitioners, and focused on the identification of personality traits and skills found in successful fundraisers (e.g. Kelly, 1998) and, less often, the demographics of fundraisers (Nathan & Tempel, 2017). Consistent with Pribbenow's (1997b) description of the character of a well-socialized fundraiser, studies often mention integrity, intelligence and curiosity, "passion," and empathy, as well as skills in communicating, persuading, and thinking strategically (Breeze, 2017).[11] Recent scholarship has begun to address fundraisers as individuals within an organizational context, considering how issues such as job fit, organizational commitment, and perceived organizational support affect longevity (Haggerty, 2015), successful management strategies for fundraising teams (Sargeant & Shang, 2016), and how gender considerations affect professional opportunities within management (Dale, 2017).

In the United States, the Bureau of Labor Statistics (2017) estimates 90,400 individuals are employed as fundraisers, but this includes those supporting political campaigns as well as charitable organizations. Another measure of fundraisers comes from the membership of the professional associations serving fundraisers (see Table 2.1). However, this is also an imperfect guide. Membership in professional associations is voluntary, rather than required. Annual dues vary from a nominal amount to several hundred dollars, and individual charities vary widely in terms of their support for staff to

[11] Breeze (2017) includes a helpful summary of seven previous study results in table form, 1988-2016 (p. 61).

participate in professional memberships or training. Membership for each association differs in terms of which job functions are included, whether membership is open to individuals employed by government institutions as well as charities, and the geographic scope, making comparisons difficult. Also complicating our assessment is that while many nonprofit organizations employ individuals dedicated to fundraising, other individuals, including CEOs and executive directors, board members, and volunteers, also contribute to the function of raising funds, and may or may not identify themselves as fundraisers by job title (Hager, Rooney, & Pollak, 2002; Lindahl & Conley, 2002). Finally, these membership numbers reflect some individuals who hold multiple memberships, and exclude many who do not participate in professional associations.

Table 2.1
Some Professional Membership Associations for US Fundraisers

Association	Year Founded	Membership	Professional Scope	Geographic Scope	Sector Scope
Association of Fundraising Professionals (AFP)	1960	30,000	Fundraisers and allied professionals	Worldwide	NPOs, consultants
Association for Healthcare Philanthropy (AHP)	1967	4,500	Executive directors and fundraisers	North America	NPOs, government
Council for Advancement and Support of Education (CASE)	1974	81,000	Alumni relations, communications, fundraising, and marketing	Worldwide	NPOs, government
Apra (formerly the American Prospect Research Association)	1987	"hundreds"	Prospect researchers, data analysts, prospect development, and frontline fundraisers	US	NPOs
National Association of Charitable Gift Planners (CGP)	1988	4,000	Planned giving fundraisers and consultants	US	NPOs, consultants
Young Nonprofit Professionals Network (YNPN)	1997	50,000	Any nonprofit professional	US	NPOs
Grant Professionals Association (GPA)	1998	2,500	Pre- and post-award grants professionals, and consultants	Worldwide	NPOs, government, consultants

Data for each association is taken from that association's webpage, accessed December 9, 2017. Webpages are found in the Reference list.

The Association of Fundraising Professionals (AFP), a voluntary membership professional organization, reported more than 33,000 active members in its US and Canada chapters as of January 1, 2016, including active and retired fundraisers, fundraising consultants, and allied professionals (Feeley, *et al*., 2016). The Council for the Advancement and Support of Education (CASE) has more than 81,000 members in 82 countries, including professionals in alumni relations, communications, and marketing as well as fundraising, and those at state colleges and universities as well as nonprofits (CASE, 2017). A third major association, the Association for Healthcare Philanthropy (AHP), also includes government healthcare facilities and hospitals as well as nonprofits. Its 4,500 members include senior administrators and fundraisers across North America (AHP, n.d.). Other associations serving fundraisers include the National Association of Charitable Gift Planners (CGP; founded as the National Committee on Planned Giving), which has 4,000 members who are fundraisers and consultants working with charitable gifts through estates and trusts (CGP, 2017); Apra (formerly the American Prospect Research Association), which claims "hundreds" of members working in charitable fundraising offices (Apra, n.d.); the Young Nonprofit Professionals Network (YNPN) has 50,000 members in various positions in American nonprofits (YNPN, n.d.); and the Grant Professionals Association (GPA) has about 2,500 members internationally who work with grants as nonprofit or state employees or consultants (GPA, n.d.).

From this membership data, we can conclude that the number of people working as charitable fundraisers is substantial; and that significant numbers participate in professional associations. Further, the US Department of Labor anticipates significantly higher than average job growth for fundraisers over the next ten years, compared to projected job growth for other types of jobs (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2017).

The most recent comprehensive demographic data available is the Fundraisers in the 21st Century survey (Nathan & Tempel, 2017). Survey invitations were sent to members of AFP, CASE, and AHP, and individuals associated with the Lilly Family School of Philanthropy; 1,826 fundraisers participated. Respondents were overwhelmingly white (88%) and female (73%) – similar to the responses to the AFP's 2015-2016 Compensation and Benefits Study at 89% white and 80% female (Nathan & Tempel, 2017; Feeley, *et al*., 2016).[12] Just over one-third of respondents (36%) were under the age of 40; just under half (48%) were between 40 and 60 years old (Nathan & Tempel, 2017). Respondents were well-educated: 46% named an undergraduate degree as their highest educational achievement, 45% held a graduate degree, and 5% held a doctorate (Nathan & Tempel, 2017).

Ethical Standards of Practice for Fundraisers

Voluntary ethical standards for fundraising practice promote public trust, augment formal laws and regulations, and are an integral aspect of professionalization (Tempel, 2016; Watt, 2008). Professional associations commonly publish standards of practice with ethical expectations for members (e.g. AFP, n.d.; AHP, n.d.; Tempel, 2016). Several US organizations, including AFP, CASE, AHP, and others also support the Donor Bill of Rights, a document that states expectations of the relationship between a

[12] While these surveys indicate a striking lack of racial and ethnic diversity among fundraisers, for comparison, in a similar survey Duronio (1997) reports respondents were more than 95% white. This suggests some slow progress in diversifying the field. Results may be subject to response bias.

charitable organization and its donors. Each of these documents highlights the relationship between fundraisers, their organizations, and their donors. The AFP Code of Ethical Principles also explicitly prohibits harm to organizational clients (AFP, n.d.).

In a cross-national analysis of the ethical codes of fundraisers' professional associations, Watt (2008) finds seven common principles, of which four involve substantive action and three involve perception and reputation.[13] Of the standards addressing substantive action, emphasis is given to issues of truth in representation. Tempel (2016, relying on Elliot, 1991) explains that truthfulness incorporates an expectation that substantial facts will not be omitted. These standards underscore both the importance of intentional choices in communication, and of the role of behavioral norms in promoting trust.

But research on the fundraisers' role as communicative liaisons between a nonprofit organization serving a given population and external stakeholders is scarce. The next section reviews research on nonprofit fundraising practices.

Fundraising and Communication

Fundraising in General

Most donations follow an act of fundraising solicitation (Bekkers & Wiepking, 2011). Conceptually and operationally, fundraising as a systematic process has been

[13] The complete list is: (1) Conduct themselves at all times with complete integrity, honesty, and trustfulness; (2) Respect the dignity of their profession and ensure that their actions enhance the reputation of themselves and their fundraising association; (3) Act according to the highest standards and visions of their organization, profession, and conscience; (4) Advocate within their organizations adherence to all applicable laws and regulations; (5) Avoid even the appearance of any criminal offence or professional misconduct; (6) Bring credit to the fundraising profession by their public demeanor; (7) Encourage colleagues to embrace and practice their Code of Conduct (Watt, 2008, p. 197).

compared with that of marketing and with public relations (e.g. Hall, 2002; Kelly, 1998; Najev Čačija, 2013; Sargeant, 2001; Waters, 2010). There are many specialized kinds of fundraising practice, focusing on different kinds of prospective donors (e.g. individuals, corporations, foundations) and different methods (e.g. annual fund, planned giving, special events, grants) (e.g. Clardy, 2007; DeWitt, 2011; Geever, 2007; Lindahl, 2010; Tempel & Benjamin, 2016). Approaches differ from one-way, standardized communication such as public advertisements and many webpages to highly individualized, two-way communication and long-term relationship building and maintenance, such as with major donors, whether individuals, corporate giving programs, or foundations (Kelly, 1998; Lindahl, 2010, Ragsdale, 1995; Waters, 2007). In larger organizations, there may be many fundraisers who specialize, while smaller organizations often have generalist fundraisers (Tempel & Benjamin, 2016).

Empirical research on fundraising often focuses on the donor behavior of individuals relative to institutional fundraising mechanisms, such as measuring money committed through voluntary contributions compared to a lottery (Landry *et al*., 2005), evaluating how matching gifts affect donations (Karlan & List, 2007), determining whether donors respond more favorably to matching gifts or rebates, such as tax incentives (Eckel & Grossman, 2008), or assessing how small gifts ("premiums") affect donor behavior (Landry *et al*., 2012). These studies generally focus on how the mechanism under study affects donor behavior, with little to no concern for either the type of beneficiary or the traits or skills of the fundraiser. Such studies tend to capture an aspect of a transactional fundraising approach, valued for its ROI, the size of donations, and the response rate; they do little to speak to a relationship fundraising approach, focused on donor retention and long-term association (Sargeant, 2001). Although the internal validity of the experiments is strong, often the results are produced in a setting that bears little similarity to the complex environment of a practicing fundraiser (Breeze, 2017).

Less research has been conducted on major giving, and it similarly tends to focus on the donors' experiences (e.g. Lloyd & Breeze, 2013; Ostrower, 1995; Tobin, 1995) and behavior (e.g. James, 2015, 2016a; Lindahl & Conley, 2002; Ostrower, 1995). Lindahl (2010) applies the analytic lenses of co-orientation theory (citing Newcombe, 1953) and persuasion theory (citing Cialdini, 2003) to explain the dynamics of fundraising practice. Waters (2010) incorporates both fundraisers and donors in his study of stewardship strategies, and Breeze's (2017) detailed study focuses on how UK fundraisers work with donors. In a small, exploratory study, Hansen (2017a) interviewed fundraisers about discussion topics during personal solicitations.

The highly personal and individualized nature of major donor cultivation, solicitation, and stewardship suggests the potential for interesting future research on how fundraisers and donors interact. However, as this study focuses on writing acquisition appeal letters specifically to minimize the contextual knowledge of donors and focus on variety of beneficiaries, the rest of this review will focus on written, one-way communication relevant to that choice.

Communicating through Fundraising Appeals, Part I

At its simplest, communication is how we transfer meaning – but communication not only imparts information, it also tells us how to think about it. As a foundation of social life, communication has been conceived variously as a means by which we come to know our place in society (Mead, 1934), how we organize our perceptions of reality (Goffman, 1974), the method by which we deliberate political action (Habermas, 1984), and a process which reinforces the *status quo* and its existing inequality (Edelman, 1977). These social and political functions of communication can be described as meaning, control, motivation, and emotional expression, and form the basis of our understanding of communication within organizational settings (Scott & Mitchell, 1976). Both within a nonprofit and with its stakeholders, communication is an important aspect of shaping and maintaining organizational cultures (Nichols, 2017).

Fundraising relies on intentional communication, an expressive role that is necessary for organizational resource development. This role is an interesting aspect of fundraisers' work: they speak directly with the potential donor public on behalf of organizations and, further, on behalf of those organizations' beneficiaries. In so doing, they put forth a vision of the relationships between those who ask, those who give, and those who receive, intrinsically addressing the status of each party and how they interact with each other (Ostrander & Schervish, 1990). Fundraising communications are a rich opportunity to influence the way in which external parties view the organization and its clients.

The practitioner literature assumes fundraisers exercise discretion when crafting their solicitations, with the resulting text shaped by the type of donor and the skill level of the fundraiser; yet scholarly studies have only recently begun to recognize the discretion that fundraisers exercise in constructing their messages (Breeze, 2017; Okada, 2013), and its potential to significantly affect how the public views client populations (e.g. Bhati &

Eikenberry, 2016).[14] Kohl-Arenas (2016) pursued a similar approach in considering the role and practices of foundation program officers, whose boundary-spanning role within grant-making organizations can be seen as a counterpart to that of fundraisers employed by charities.

Earlier studies look at fundraising choices as an organization-level decision, and focus on donor behavior in response to the function of a generic fundraiser. Most focus on one-way sharing of communication, such as mass media (e.g. Waters, 2009); fundraising advertisements (e.g. Barnett & Hammond, 1999; Breeze & Dean, 2012; James & Routley, 2016); websites (e.g. Sargeant & Jay, 2003; Waters, 2007); e-mail (Weberling, 2012); and direct mail (e.g. Das, Kerkhof, & Kuiper, 2008; Hung & Wyer, 2009). Generally, studies within this branch of literature are working within one type of charitable organization or cause to determine the donors' response, and do not compare approaches across causes.

However, there is evidence that donors to different causes vary by traits such as income (Center on Philanthropy, 2007; Van Slyke & Brooks, 2005), religiosity (James & Sharpe, 2007; Van Slyke & Brooks, 2005), gender (e.g. Dale, Ackerman, *et al*., 2018; De Wit & Bekkers, 2016; Kottasz, 2004), race (Mesch *et al*., 2006), and marital status (Mesch *et al*., 2006), as well as variations in their dispositional empathy (Kim & Kou, 2014) and lived experiences (Breeze, 2013; Dale, Ackerman, *et al*., 2018). And, practical fundraising advice includes segmenting donor communications from a single organization according to demographic considerations (e.g., Ferguson-Patton, 1995),

[14] To give credit, Kelly (1997) identified this issue twenty years ago: "Philanthropy scholars assume that fund raising is something charitable organizations do, not a function carried out by trained practitioners," (p. 139).

suggesting that differences in donor behavior across causes may correlate with differences in fundraising practice. Logically, it follows that changing causes or beneficiary groups might also prompt other changes in the fundraising dynamic. Interviews with fundraisers show that they do adjust their communicative choices based on their understanding of how donors respond in different situations (Breeze, 2017; Hansen, 2017a). In addition to differences in traits or motivations of the donors, it is also possible that there are systematic differences in fundraising practice due to the different needs or opportunities of the causes, traits of the beneficiaries, or traits or motivations of the fundraisers working on behalf of different kinds of charities. Since the research literature on donor response is richer, some of it will be incorporated here as instructive to likely fundraiser choices, along with relevant research on persuasion, perception, and decision making.

One of the most popular forms of fundraising solicitation is direct mail, which is crafted intentionally by fundraisers (Nonprofit Research Collaborative, 2017; Eschenbacher, 2016). An appeal package consists of several pieces, each of which has a function in persuading the potential donor to open the letter, read it, and act on it (Warwick, 2008; Spears, 2002). Most studies focus on the appeal letter as the main persuasive element.[15]

One element of the fundraising message is whether it presents the clients of the organization as being close to the reader, or being unrelated. We know that people pay closer attention when they have a personal interest in a situation (Johnson & Eagly, 1989), and indeed, readers are more likely to donate when they consider themselves

[15] The elements of a fundraising package include an outer envelope, the letter, a response form, a response envelope, and optional enclosures. Spears (2002) details the persuasive role of each element.

likely to be personally affected by the chosen situation (Cao, 2016). It would seem that encouraging readers to imagine themselves as clients would increase readers' involvement, but there is a caveat. Encouraging perspective taking can increase persuasiveness if the perspectives of client and donor are achieved sequentially and separately. However, asking donors to simultaneously take the perspectives of both client and donor is less successful, possibly because the multiple perspectives make information harder to process (Hung & Wyer, 2009).

Generally, people are also more likely to help others who are similar to them, or who are close to them (Baron & Szymanska, 2011). This sense can be encouraged by presenting clients as similar or close to the reader of the appeal, by using a single individual rather than an undifferentiated group in text or images, and by encouraging perception of a relationship with one of the clients (Froyum, 2018; Small, 2011).[16] Sometimes fundraisers situate the charity, rather than the clients, as being in a close relationship with donors, using phrases such as "like family" (James, 2017).

Another key element of fundraising appeal letters is the framing of "the ask." Appeals may use a positive frame, which highlights the positive results of making a gift. Or, they may use a negative frame, which highlights the negative results of inaction. An experiment testing effects of framing and of types of evidence within donor recruitment letters showed that positive framing and use of anecdotal evidence combined for the strongest results; combining negative framing and statistical evidence also increased donor recruitment (Das, Kerkhof, & Kuiper, 2008).[17] Using positive framing with

[16] Small uses the term "victims" instead of clients.
[17] Different studies use different language. Das, Kerkhof, & Kuiper (2008) consider the use of anecdotes or statistics to be evidence. Ritzenhein (1998) included statistics, examples, and testimony among his

statistical evidence, or negative framing with anecdotal evidence, resulted in less donor support. These results are supported by the broader literature on persuasion. The use of a positive frame has been shown to cause stronger positive affect in the reader (Shen & Bigsby, 2013). Anecdotal evidence is generally in the form of a story, which is more often tied to an emotion-based approach in appeal letters (Ritzenhein, 1998). This combination of a positive frame and an emotional appeal may be more persuasive to the reader, particularly in combination with the positive act of making a donation (Shen & Bigsby, 2013). On the other hand, negative framing highlights risks, activating a sense of fear (Cao, 2016; Shen & Bigsby, 2013). Statistical evidence is almost always tied to a logic-based approach in appeal letters (Ritzenhein, 1998). Negative framing may prompt individuals to seek and process information to mitigate risks, combining well with the use of statistical evidence in appeal letters (Shen & Bigsby, 2013). Interestingly, if readers feel more personally susceptible to the situation experienced by the clients in the letter, negative frames may motivate intent to donate more than positive frames (Cao, 2016). Both of these possibilities align with research suggesting that the idea of having the power to improve others' lives in a meaningful way is a motivation for many donors (Bekkers & Wiepking, 2011; Duncan, 2004).

Another facet of fundraising appeals is the kind of evidence given to justify action on the part of the reader. Three main possibilities are to address the quality of the organization, the worthiness of the client base, and the characteristics of the reader as a donor. Supporting the quality of the organization and its programs helps to make the appeal easy to evaluate, and suggests that the gift will be an effective expression of

supporting material. In this study, I refer to stories, statistics and empirical evidence, and external events as mechanisms for supporting the appeal.

altruism (Baron & Szymanska, 2011; Bekkers & Wiepking, 2011). As such, appeals that establish the credibility and trustworthiness of the organization can be highly motivating (Goering, Connor, Nagelhout, & Steinberg, 2009). Appeals that discuss the client beneficiaries in ways that promote them as worthy of help speak to the values of the donor, also activating their sense of altruism and/ or reputation (Bekkers & Wiepking, 2011). Fundraisers may take care to select client stories that will be received positively by readers (Timmer, 2010). Some strategies that motivate people to donate time are discussing clients as victims, as being similar to family and friends, as sharing universal risks, and invoking authority to support the idea of clients as deserving of help (Froyum, 2018); similar strategies may also work in asking people to donate money. Finally, fundraisers may invoke or attribute characteristics to the reader that support his or her engagement as a donor. This may take the form of describing them with adjectives such as "generous," "kind," or "prayerful"; casting them in the role of a "hero"; or using phrases such as "reflect your values," or "like family" (James, 2017; Ritzenhein, 1998). These narrative choices activate a positive identity for the reader as a kind, generous donor with a responsibility to (voluntarily) fulfill, and a positive reputation as both antecedent and consequence (Bekkers & Wiepking, 2011). The extent to which encouraging potential donors' identification with this moral identity will prompt a donation varies, depending on how important it is to the individual to think of themselves as the kind of person who is kind, generous, etc. (Aquino, Freeman, *et al*., 2009). However, past giving behavior can help an individual develop an altruistic self-image (Bekkers & Wiepking, 2011), suggesting that describing generous reader characteristics may be effective when approaching people who have previously given to any charity.

Both emotional and material benefits may follow giving, and some letters may highlight these aspects. There is a robust economic literature that considers material benefits that a donor may enjoy, such as tax benefits (e.g. Eckel & Grossman, 2008; Steinberg, 1990), a small gift item (Landry *et al*., 2012), or a chance in a lottery for a large prize (Landry *et al*., 2005). Any of these material incentives may be mentioned in a fundraising appeal. Appeals may also refer to the emotional benefits of giving: giving to charity tends to make people happier, and happier people are more likely to give (Anik, Aknin, Norton, & Dunn, 2011; Konrath, 2016). Stimulating emotional processing with a charitable appeal has been tied to higher likelihood of contributing, and to larger gifts, compared to deliberative processing (Dickert, Sagara, & Slovic, 2011). Fundraising messages often appeal to emotion, whether they encourage a reader to feel good about a person or a situation, or present a problem that makes the reader sad or angry before giving the opportunity to act in a way that relieves that feeling (Bazerman, 1998). Professional advice to fundraisers encourages using simple, emotionally appealing language that speaks to the perceived interests of the readers, rather than stressing the needs of beneficiaries in factual information or nuanced narrative (Brooks, 2012; Ferguson-Patton, 1995; Warwick, 2008).

Persuasive text can affect behavior, such as prompting a donation to a charity. Clearly this is a direct intention of fundraising appeals. However, persuasion can also affect cognitive attitudes, or how people think about a situation or a group. And, over time, persuasive text can also affect social norms (Rhodes & Ewoldsen, 2013). An acquisition appeal letter may be the first impression, or an early impression, that an individual has of a charity and possibly of the client base with which it works. However, a relationship approach to fundraising assumes that the acquisition letter isn't the last step in a dynamic persuasive process. Over time, attitudes, behavior, and social norms are not only outcomes of one event, but feed into the next encounter (Rhodes & Ewoldsen, 2013). A first gift may subtly change an attitude, encouraging more interest in a subsequent letter. Increased engagement over time may result in a different point of view of the organization and its clients' life situations, resulting in behavior that may, gradually, affect the social norms of the community. This is an ideal description of what many fundraisers would name cultivation, stewardship, and ultimately constituency development (e.g. Kelly, 1997; Lindahl, 2010; Seiler, 2016).

One final aspect is worthy of mention. Some scholars have studied how people who are part of the client groups portrayed generally in fundraising images – such as homeless individuals (Breeze & Dean, 2012), individuals with a physical disability (Barnett & Hammond, 1999), or children in poverty (Bhati & Eikenberry, 2016) – respond to how they are portrayed in fundraising appeals. Respondents generally voice a preference for a nuanced storytelling, or images that show them in a good light, such as clean and smiling, but may recognize that their preferences might conflict with obtaining charitable funding for needed services. Fundraisers who are aware of clients' preferences may take them into consideration when deciding on fundraising narratives.

Communicating through Fundraising Appeals, Part II

We have seen how donors react to different fundraising choices, that beneficiary groups may have concerns about some of those choices, and some common advice published for fundraisers about writing appeal letters. What choices do fundraisers actually make? And why?

Some studies emphasize how materials used for fundraising affect the public's understanding of distant beneficiaries, assessing both text and pictures for advocacy messaging (Dogra, 2007; Okada, 2013). These have tracked how representations change over time (Dogra, 2007), simplify complex issues (Okada, 2013), and selectively promote stories of beneficiaries that fit social expectations of need and organizational service delivery logic and methods (Timmer, 2010). Similarly, Chouliaraki (2010) notes a tendency to avoid challenging patterns of injustice in fundraising campaigns.

Okada (2013) provides a detailed examination of the framing strategies of Japan-based international development NGOs, stressing the creative agency of NGOs in making communicative decisions about their work. She reviews the print documents produced by NGO professionals, and interviews them to capture professional context and the process for communicative decision making. Development NGOs in Japan stress actionability, choosing to present the complex issue as something that can be affected by actions taken by the organizations and the individuals choosing to support them. Overall, decisions on what messages to use and how to use them relied on what she calls an "interacting ecology among NGOs and external stakeholders" – whether messages are acceptable, and whether they are distinctive, rather than purely or directly to inform or to mobilize (Okada, 2013, pp. 190-191). Her work compares printed text and images with fundraiser interviews to provide a valuable look at the process and results of fundraisers in the field of international development. But it does not tell us whether changing the social acceptability of the beneficiaries would result in different choices. And, Japanese and American cultures are distinct: social choices made to persuade in one setting may not apply in another.

Analyzing fundraising appeals as a genre of professional writing, Bhatia (2004) approaches fundraising appeals from a linguistic perspective, working from samples to abstract a format. He finds appeals to be similar to, yet distinct from, sales promotions. Based on analysis of written letters, he identifies seven components of an appeal letter (Bhatia, 2004, pp. 99-102). First, a letter establishes credentials by referring either to the quality of an organization's program or the needs of its clients. Second, it introduces "the product" – in this case, the charitable cause. Third, it may offer incentives.[18] He places inserts, such as brochures or a reply card, in the fourth position.[19] Fifth, the letter asks for support. He places pressure tactics sixth, although he notes that those are much more common in sales promotions than in fundraising.[20] Finally, it finishes politely, possibly with an expression of gratitude. He notes four features that distinguish philanthropic discourse from that of advertising. These are emphases on community participation, a framework of social consciousness, a recognition of the voluntary nature of action, and a stance of non-competitiveness. Since Bhatia is concerned with abstracting from the specific to the general, he does not address considerations such as differences among beneficiary types, or the skills or preferences of fundraisers writing the letters.

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[18] Here, Bhatia recognizes only tax incentives. I adopt a broader view, including not only other material incentives such as possible donor premiums such as umbrellas or tote bags, but also emotional benefits and indirect benefits to the community. I also find that these are typically mentioned in close proximity to the ask for a gift.

[19] I find that these are typically referred to at the end of the letter, either before or after the signature block.

[20] Bhatia identifies tax incentives as the form of persuasion used in lieu of pressure tactics. Robbins & Judge (2015, pp. 373-374) present a broader array of power tactics, including inspirational appeals, rational persuasion, ingratiation, and consultation, in addition to *quid pro quo*. Several of these have been recognized as potential elements for persuasion in fundraising letters by both scholars and practitioners, as discussed above. For example, see Warwick's Cardinal Rules of Fundraising Letters (2001, pp. 97-116).

Ritzenhein (1998) published an analysis of rhetoric and content in fundraising letters, using a collection of fundraising appeals published in *Direct Mail Fundraising: Letters That Work* (Torre & Bendixen, 1988). The letters were written to support hospitals, universities, and community service agencies. Ritzenhein focused his inquiry on the reason each letter offered to justify asking for support; types of data or proof used to support the reason, if any; whether the argument was based in emotion or logic; and whether the donor would receive something in exchange for his or her gift. Ritzenhein's analysis of this small sample found limited support for appeals to altruism (operationalized as a reference to the good and generous character of the donor) and appeals for an exchange transaction (operationalized as a reference to recognition or *quid pro quo* rewards to the donor). Instead, he found more appeals relied on either the needs addressed by the organization or the quality of the organization. Approximately 60% of letters in his sample relied on an emotional appeal – often without supporting evidence – and about 40% relied on logical arguments, generally supported by some sort of evidence. His findings informed both the selection of items to examine within letters written for this study, and my understanding of how some elements combine, such as tying the use of stories to emotional approaches, and the use of statistics to a logical approach. However, Ritzenhein does not look at differences across types of organizations, and in fact suggests this approach for future research. Also, while the collection of letters he analyzes has external validity in that each letter was originally used for the purposes of fundraising, these "best practices" selections don't tell us what choices are made by practitioners whose letters did not meet the measures for success used by the book – and, as described earlier, success may rely on many factors besides the quality of a written appeal, such as the age of the organization, the size of the organization, and the popularity of its clients (Steinberg & Morris, 2010). In addition, the idea of varying degrees of social acceptability or unacceptability as a possible cause for variance remains unaddressed.

Fundraisers do not write in isolation – their appeals are written to an audience with the goal of persuasion, and need to be understood as such (Prior, 2003; Spears, 2002). Generally, nonprofits assemble a portfolio of fundraising approaches, matching strategies to the audience (Lindahl, 2010). Fundraisers write knowing that donors' personal experiences drive their interests (Breeze, 2013); but donors' interests and personal experiences may be very different from that of organizational beneficiaries, or even that of the charity's staff. This gap is likely to be larger in issues involving stigma and lowered social desirability. For this reason, in exploring how the social desirability of the beneficiary group affects fundraisers' choice in messaging, it is relevant to consult literature from sociology and social psychology on how stigma affects communications.

Stigma

Scholarly work on stigma takes Erving Goffman's book *Stigma*, originally published in 1963, as its starting point. In it, Goffman described stigma as "a special kind of relationship between attributes and stereotype" (Goffman, 1963/1986, 4). This concept relies on attributes that discredit a person, reducing their social identity "from a whole and usual person to a tainted, discounted one" (Goffman, 1963/ 1986, 3) – one who is "less than" others. The presence of stigma not only conveys inferiority, but prompts rationalizing this inferiority on the basis of some social danger represented by the stigmatizing attribute (Goffman, 1963/ 1986).[21] How, then, does one negotiate making requests on behalf of those members of society who do carry a stigma, whose presence makes others uneasy? How does one craft one's communications to build a loyal donor base for an organization serving this population?

To begin to understand the effect on communication by a fundraiser on behalf of a stigmatized population, it is helpful to examine the behavior of individuals responding to stigma. These phenomena are best understood as nested within community norms, influenced by the media, one's social and professional network, and a national context (Pescosolido, Martin, Lang, & Olafsdottir, 2008).

Stigmatizing Attributes and the Discredited Individual

Goffman discerns three kinds of stigmatizing attributes: physical deformities, which are readily apparent visually; "blemishes of character," such as mental illness, substance abuse, or homosexuality; and "tribal stigma" stemming from one's inclusion in a group due to race, nation, or religion (Goffman, 1963/ 1986). Goffman thus distinguishes between the "discredited" – those whose offending attribute is perceived – and the "discreditable" – those whose stigmatizing attribute remains concealed. If a person is unaware of another's stigmatizing attribute, it will not affect their actions specifically toward them; but the "discreditable" individual may change his or her actions because of the prejudice he or she may be likely to face if the issue becomes known. Particularly,

[21] See also Mary Douglas' (1966/ 1984) argument that attribution of danger to categories of food, behavior, etc. is an inherent and even ritualistic aspect of determining what is culturally (im)pure and socially (un)desirable.

the decision of whether to disclose the information, and to what extent, is one that will be present in his or her mind. This dynamic will be discussed further later.

Research regularly ties mental illness to stigma, to the point of recognizing it as a condition that is commonly stigmatized across multiple cultures and settings (Stangor & Crandall, 2000). Similarly, mental illness ranks high on a list of unpopular causes in a review of media clippings in the United Kingdom (Body & Breeze, 2016). Mental illness is explicitly contained within Goffman's (1963/ 1986) description of the "blemishes of character" category. This is an attribute which may be concealable, but which is perceived to be the fault of the bearer. Because this type of attribute is concealable, individuals with mental illness often fall into a "discreditable" category until such time as their status is known publicly. The concealability of this kind of attribute raises issues of information management – a topic pertinent to communication – so I have chosen to focus especially on mental illness.

Because stigma is a relationship between attributes and stereotype, its presence is situationally specific (Goffman, 1963/ 1986). For instance, nurses with daily exposure to patients with mental illness view them much less negatively than nurses working with other medical conditions (Björkman, Angelman, & Jönsson, 2008).

Experiences of Stigma

One of the fundamental aspects of understanding how stigma functions is distinguishing between perceivers – individuals who react to the stigmatizing attributes of others – and targets – those whose personal attributes prompt the expression of stigmatizing behavior, who themselves experience stigma. These are not passive roles, nor are they mutually exclusive – one who personally experiences stigma has their own responses, and may also stigmatize others (Bodenhausen, 2010; Dovidio, Major, & Crocker, 2000).

Individuals who experience stigmatizing processes, such as labeling, prejudice and discrimination – all of which correspond to loss of social status – often find their opportunities in life significantly curtailed (Link & Phelan, 2001). Indeed, even when legislation may offer protection from some kinds of discrimination, many choose not to disclose conditions that might result in social stigma. Using mental illness as an example, personal recollections have documented individuals' unwillingness to share their status with others because of its stigma and its corresponding power to define them socially (e.g., NAMI, 2014; Joyella, 2014.) Once an individual has been identified as having a diagnosis of mental illness, his or her subsequent statements and behavior are interpreted within a context of assumed unreliability, irresponsibility, and lack of credibility (Holstein, 1993). At an organizational level, executives may fear that disclosing mental illness publicly could harm a business's reputation (Lauchenauer, 2014). People therefore often choose not to publicly link themselves with something that would so change others' perceptions of them.

The perceptions of the general public are reinforced by images in public media, which repeat stereotypes that influence the public's expectations. Stereotypes are powerful in part because when a person is not perceived as personally relevant, it is easier to perceive them in terms of a category to which they belong (Fiske & Neuberg, 1990). The news media persists in promoting a negative view of mental illness, often identifying it as the single defining – and exclusionary – attribute of a person, and linking it to violence and fear (Joyella, 2014; Stuber & Achterman, n.d.; Wahl, 2006). Movies and television entertainment equate mental illness with violence, villainy, and/ or ridicule (Wahl, 2006). This stereotype construction is especially effective when members of the public have little or no direct contact with a population (Happer & Philo, 2013; McGinty, Webster, & Barry, 2013). These disproportionately negative stereotypes can lead to public perceptions of threat, prompting a social preference to limit contact with people so identified (Link, Phelan, *et al.*, 1999).[22] This dynamic creates and perpetuates powerful incentives for individuals to take great care in disclosing a diagnosis of mental illness, although some have argued that full public disclosure could drastically reduce stigma as the scope and extent of existing contact with affected individuals was realized (Corrigan & Matthews, 2003).[23]

It is a function of stigma that the affected individual agrees at some level with learned social norms (Goffman, 1963/ 1986). While public stigma affects how others treat an individual with a stigmatizing attribute, self-stigma further leads to lower self-esteem and lower expectations of self-efficacy (Corrigan & Shapiro, 2010). As a defense against these negative expectations, individuals may choose to resist self-identification with a negatively understood population, perhaps even especially denigrating the population publicly (Goffman, 1963/ 1986). This resistance is memorably illustrated in Tony Kushner's *Angels in America*, in which high-powered attorney Roy Cohn refuses to be identified as homosexual because:

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[22] Olafsdottir (2010) notes that the United States media is more likely to position individuals with mental illness as criminals compared to media in other Western countries, highlighting the cultural component of social acceptability.

[23] Although predating it by more than a decade, this idea is similar to the #MeToo campaign launched on social media in October, 2017, in which it is estimated that within approximately a 24-hour period tens of thousands of individuals self-identified as having experienced sexual harassment or assault (e.g. Stevens, 2017; Vives, 2017).

> Like all labels they tell you one thing and one thing only: where does an individual so identified fit in the food chain, in the pecking order? Not ideology, or sexual taste, but something much simpler: clout. (Kushner, 1993/ 2014, Act I, Sc. 9)

AIDS activist Sean Strub's memoir similarly recounts closeted gay men in 1970's Washington D.C. who described themselves as straight men who liked to sleep with men. Strub also describes closeted individuals, as members of Congress, had "[s]ome of the most virulently homophobic voting records in Congress…" (Strub, 2014, p. 57), illustrating the tendency to publicly disparage a stigmatized group in order to distance oneself.

This tendency to resist self-identification, and indeed to publicly engage in special persecution of a group with whom one shares an undisclosed negatively perceived attribute limits public communication of the individual's true status; it also decreases the likelihood of either seeking or accepting help from professionals, even when reasonably confidential (Corrigan, 2004; Schulze & Angermeyer, 2003). The discouraging effect on help-seeking is not limited to specialized, targeted health care interactions, but also extends to broad reticence to seek assistance from health and dental professionals generally because of an expectation of negative stereotyping and labeling by care professionals (Brondani, *et al*., 2017).

Even when an individual with a stigmatizing attribute has decided to disclose the situation, the attribute is often minimized, or framed in such a way as to support social expectations to minimize challenging social norms (Angell, Cooke, & Kovac, 2005; Goffman, 1963/ 1986). For example, homeless individuals seeking assistance often emphasize the external causes of their situation and promote their internal traits of personal responsibility and trustworthiness to justify receiving help (Spencer, 1994).

Social Identities and Intersectionality

Individuals with a stigmatizing attribute often talk about being defined by that attribute, as an undesirable effect of stereotyping and prejudice (e.g., Goffman, 1963/ 1986). More generally, an individual's social identity is not fixed in one cast, but adapts to an appropriate role for the company in which one is found and the groups to which one belongs (e.g., Bodenhausen, 2010; Goffman, 1959). While an individual can and does belong to multiple groups, most research on social identities and categorization tends to emphasize the in-group or out-group nature of a single aspect (Bodenhausen, 2010). Individuals who experience mental illness have other characteristics that may be important to them, including race and ethnicity; sex, gender, and sexual preferences; age; and varied abilities. These factors may affect how they experience mental illness, the experience of being labeled, and of receiving care, yet often the importance of other attributes is not recognized by researchers or by caregivers (Mio & Iwamasa, 2003). As an example, interviews with pregnant women with mental illness indicate that many have experienced encounters with medical professionals who are ill prepared to consider the needs of patients as whole individuals with interacting concerns, when one concern is a mental illness (Muller, 2017).

How is Stigma Measured?

Stigma has been studied with many methods, including development of scales, surveys, experiments, content analysis, interviews, participant observation, and reviews of literature (Link, Yang, *et al*., 2004; Rasinski, Viechnicki & O'Muircheartaigh, 2005;

Van Brakel, 2006.) A number of scales exist to measure stigma, but they are generally tied to a specific illness or condition (Rao, Choi, *et al*., 2009; Van Brakel, 2006). Notably, these include stigma related to HIV/ AIDS (e.g. Berger, Ferrans, Lashley, 2001; Kalichman, Simbayi, *et al*., 2009); mental illness (e.g. King, Dinos, et al., 2007; Angermeyer & Matschinger, 1996); leprosy (e.g. Anandaraj, 1995); epilepsy (e.g. Austin, MacLeod, *et al*., 2004); and a variety of other conditions. A few attempts have been made to develop scales suitable across types of conditions, such as the Stigma Scale for Chronic Illness (Rao, Choi, *et al*., 2009).

Within a given condition, different measurements may be developed to be culturally specific (e.g. Varas-Díaz & Neilands, 2009; Kalichman, Simbayi, *et al*., 2005). Sometimes a single instrument is modified slightly across cultures to obtain cross-national data, as with the Stigma in Global Context – Mental Health Study (Pescosolido, Long, *et al*., 2004).

Keeping the importance of perspective in mind, different points of view are considered. Many studies focus either on a first-person experience of being stigmatized, or a second-person experience where a member of the general public is asked about another population. Professional groups, such as health providers or care managers, and families of affected people are also commonly studied (Link, Yang, *et al*., 2004).

Multiple dimensions of stigma have been identified and studied (e.g. Link, Yang, *et al*., 2004; Pescosolido, Long, *et al*., 2004). Studies align the components differently, but the main concepts persist. In a review of 109 studies of stigma related to mental illness, Link, Yang, *et al*. (2004) identified nine components regularly included. See Table 2.2.

Table 2.2
Stigma Components in Research Studies
Adapted from Link, Yang, *et al*., (2004)

Component (%age of studies including component)	Definition
Behavior (25.7%)	The study introduces the actual behaviors indicative of the presence of mental illness as a stimulus.
Labeling (18.3%)	The study includes the assigning of social significance to particular characteristics as a variable of study.
Stereotyping (62.4%)	The study incorporates how labeled differences are linked with negative attributes.
Cognitive separating (16.5%)	The study measures when social labels imply a fundamental difference (“them”) compared with those without the label (“us”).
Emotional reactions (24.8%)	The study measures either the affective reactions of the stigmatizer toward people with mental illness or the emotional response of the stigmatized people themselves.
Status loss/ discrimination (expectations) (58.7%)	The study includes expectations or beliefs of how persons with mental illness are reduced in social status or face discriminatory treatment from others.
Status loss/ discrimination (experiences) (13.8%)	The study includes actual experiences of how persons with mental illness are reduced in social status or face discriminatory treatment from others.
Structural discrimination (1.8%)	The study assesses how institutional practices disadvantage persons with mental illness.
Behavioral responses to stigma (15.6%)	The study measures how individuals with mental illness act in response to societal discrimination, such as utilizing coping or avoidance strategies.

There are a few underexplored areas within this literature. The first is an evaluation of a third-person perception of stigma. In the case of a fundraiser writing an appeal letter, our interest is a measurement that tells us what the fundraisers think about how the community – the recipients of their appeal letters – views the client base. Functionally, the closest existing scale was developed by Link (1987) to test modified labeling theory, and asks respondents how they think others perceive current or former psychiatric patients. The scale has generally been used among people currently in treatment for mental illness to understand how they think others will perceive them or people like them.

The second underexplored area relates to research methodology. The most popular way of studying stigma has been nonexperimental surveys (Link, Yang, *et al*., 2004). Experiments are less common, but have the advantage of observing actual differences in behavior that can be attributed to manipulation of an independent variable – in this case, the identity of a target group. Link, Yang, *et al*. (2004) also support the use of qualitative research in combination with quantitative methods to strengthen the methodological triangulation, facilitate knowledge production, and explore complementary aspects of questions of stigma.

SUMMARY

Fundraisers play a largely unseen role, not only in asking for financial support, but also in framing those requests within the philanthropic cultures of the organization and in alignment with the values and preferences of potential donors. Socially held stereotypes are easy for readers to process, but they often serve to perpetuate stigma, which separates people – often clients of nonprofit organizations – from other members of society. People are more likely to help those who are seen as similar to them, including sharing their values. But readers who may have a stigmatizing attribute themselves, or know someone who does, may choose not to identify with that aspect, and may not want to be considered similar to others with a shared attribute.

How do fundraisers work with these challenges in daily practice? What considerations lead to their decisions? The following chapter presents a detailed overview of the research methods used in the current study.

CHAPTER THREE
METHODOLOGY

This chapter presents the research approach and methodology used in the study. It describes the research design, sampling procedures and study participants, methods of data collection, and the data analysis procedures. Issues of reliability and validity, trustworthiness, and ethical considerations are also addressed.

Overview of Research Design

As little research exists on how the social status of beneficiaries influences the choices made by fundraisers in communicating persuasively within a professional setting, I mixed an experiment with interviews to look at different aspects of how writing on behalf of different beneficiary populations affects the choices made by fundraisers in crafting donor appeals. In this study, I asked practicing fundraisers to write to a prompt, measured several demographic and attitudinal responses that may correlate with communicative choices, and then interviewed fundraisers to tease out the process of decision making and, ultimately, better understand the phenomenon.

The first part of the study is an experiment using an online survey. Recruited fundraisers were randomly assigned to one of two conditions, then asked to write an acquisition appeal letter for a nonprofit serving either a stigmatized population (condition ST) or a more socially acceptable population (condition NS). The dependent variable was the communicative choices made, operationalized as several elements that can be included within a fundraising appeal.

The qualitative portion addresses how these differences came to be, tracing processes and motivations through semi-structured interviews. The interview phase of the study was integrated with the experimental portion in several ways: responses within the experimental portion determined selection of participants for interviews; information from the experimental responses, especially the letter drafted, focused my inquiry in the interview; and insights from the interviews helped interpret the responses from the experimental surveys. The reflexive structure of the research design increased opportunities for a more comprehensive understanding of what choices fundraisers actually make, why, and how (Greene, Benjamin, & Goodyear, 2001).

Pragmatic Approach

Research methods differ in the strengths by which they answer questions. This study follows a pragmatic approach by integrating the strengths of multiple methods to more completely understand the different aspects of the phenomenon (Greene, Benjamin & Goodyear, 2001; Patton, 2002). It seeks to both establish whether there is a causal relationship between stigma and fundraisers' communication, and to understand the meaning of that relationship and the specific causal mechanisms at work (Lin, 1998). I have chosen to use an experiment and statistical analysis to establish whether there is a causal effect on communicative choices based on the social acceptability of beneficiary clients, content analyses to interpret those communicative choices, and semi-structured interviews to understand how the social acceptability of beneficiaries shaped communicative choices, i.e., the specific mechanisms at play. This design placed the primary focus on the research problem, and used both deductive and inductive research strategies in order to extend our knowledge (Babbie, 2013).

A pragmatic approach is also consistent with that of Erving Goffman, a primary theoretical source for the study. Goffman's work, now considered symbolic interaction or dramaturgy, reflects a form of American pragmatism. Goffman explored the idea of how situations prompted expected roles, behavior, and expressions. He looked to how social context informed the meaning one took from an interaction, how one's adopted meaning informed his or her subsequent behavior, and how that behavior translated into meaning for others. This study followed much the same path in looking to understand how the meaning fundraisers internalize from a given situation is translated into symbols – text within fundraising letters – in order to encourage behavior in those who read it. Notably, this approach considers issues such as expressive competence and impression management, which relates to attempts to groom the impression others form about them, their work team, or their organization (Goffman, 1959).

Positionality

In qualitative research, there is a tradition that researchers disclose and reflect on their background and positionality. This tradition acknowledges that, as designer, data collector, and analyst, the researcher is an instrument of the research. Therefore, his or her "mental model" – the "complex, multifaceted lens through which a social inquirer perceives and makes sense of the social world" (Greene, 2007, p. 13) – is an integral part of his or her research choices, and is an important aspect for readers and the researcher herself to understand in interpreting the research (Greene, 2007; Patton, 2002). As noted above, the importance of context in making meaning is also foundational to the theoretical framework employed in this study.

My undergraduate training was in the performing arts. Each note, gesture, costume, shadow, and inflection was intentionally chosen and crafted to form an impression and carry a story, or several characters' stories, in the case of complex theatrical productions. The performer was, similarly, an instrument interpreting the truth of a work. I came to appreciate how intensive practice and meditation on the meaning of a situation coexisted with spontaneous production of that meaning in performance.

Years later, while working as a university fundraiser, I decided to explore how Sociology fit into my interests. A faculty member recommended a class focusing on George Herbert Mead and Erving Goffman. Throughout the course, we discussed how one comes to know oneself and one's place through social communication, the roles expected within social situations, and the use of impression management to sustain those roles for social function. The idea of communication is foundational to the symbolic interactionist, as it ties in with meaning and the behavior chosen for each situation – much as the intentional behavior and communication of a fundraiser, or understanding how abrogation of social norms produces stigma, and the meaning of that role.

Despite my early training in the performing arts – or, perhaps, because of it – I have had a fulfilling career as a fundraiser. I spent more than twenty years helping to craft the communications and settings for appeals to others for support. In this setting, fundraisers interpret the value of an organization. For two years, I directed a fundraising program for a broad-spectrum social service agency serving immigrants in Chicago. This experience, in which I was one of the few employees raised (mostly) and educated in the United States, was an exercise in constant perspective-taking: the meaning for the clients in being in the position of asking for help, the expectations of donors and grantors from their own experiences and paradigms, the concerns of program directors raised under a repressive regime that would use information – or provide it – very differently than my understanding of how our donor communications ought to work. The experience was a formative one for many of us who worked there; now we pursue our understanding of social justice in different roles.

I spent a dozen years working in the grants office of a mid-sized university in Chicago founded by the Catholic Sisters of Mercy: higher education, committed to furthering social justice in an urban setting. It affirmed and allowed me to act on my belief in the dignity of every human being, and the importance of solidarity with those who are marginalized. I refined the interpretive and communication skills necessary to thrive in the grant funding setting. This position also gave me access to foundations and government agencies with views both long and broad, and with an interest in lasting social change. I adopted the same preference, and tools to recognize it.

I participated in and served on the leadership team for the Chicago chapter of the Association of Fundraising Professionals, which gave me insights into the broader world of fundraising experienced by my colleagues. I have great respect, professionally and personally, for the individuals I have met through my affiliation with AFP. Their humor, curiosity, integrity, and pragmatic idealism made the experience a pleasure. My service leading the Government Relations, Marketing, Ethics, and Evaluation committees informed some of the design choices I made within this study.

I am an "insider" to other fundraisers, defined by professional experience and affiliation with communities of practice, and achieving the CFRE certification that signals a degree of competence. While some researchers view insider status warily, particularly those within the objectivist epistemological traditions, my role as a fundraiser studying fundraisers allowed both greater access to others practicing as fundraisers and greater pre-understanding of their goals, norms, language conventions, and work conditions. For both the qualitative and quantitative aspects of this study, access and pre-understanding are assets (Brannick & Coughlin, 2007). In the language of Goffman, I had greater access to not only the "front stage" but also the "back stage" experiences of my participants (Goffman, 1959). The processes followed for both the empirical and interpretive research are designed to reinforce the reliability, validity, and trustworthiness of the research. This is discussed in greater detail later in the chapter.

There is one final aspect of my experience and world view that is important to acknowledge for this study: my experience with the client bases discussed within this study. This study looks at the idea of how fundraisers use professional discretion in practice when a client base is stigmatized, or socially diminished and unwelcome. It specifies a client population with mental illness. This is a personal experience for me, most strongly with my husband, who is bipolar. His initial diagnosis happened about the same time as the Americans with Disabilities Act was passed in 1990, and before it was well implemented. Many changes since then – pharmaceutical, therapeutic, legal – have changed the lived experience for those with mental illness, but I have had a front-row seat in appreciating how stigma affects people directly and indirectly. Other friends of mine also have personal experiences with mental illness, for themselves and their close family members. Some work in the field of public health, or with other marginalized communities. I admire the passion, integrity, intelligence, intentions, and creativity of those friends and colleagues who also act on their firm convictions of the value and dignity of all people.

It also specifies a client group of older adults. Like many people, I have older adults in my family who have known me for longer than the decades I have known them. I also spent some time supporting the president of a Continuing Care Retirement Community in Evanston, IL, eventually drafting gift acceptance policies and materials for a planned giving program for its benefit. During this time, I became more acquainted with residential services for senior citizens, typically older than 80 years when they first became affiliated with the organization, and met many of the people who lived there and the people who supported their comfort and care. I also learned about research into the onset of dementia, and was present for deliberations leading up to and the development of a healthy aging initiative involving the opening of neighborhood cafés, similar to those in my fictional nonprofit.

Research Questions

The primary research question is: What is the effect of a beneficiary population's being stigmatized on fundraisers' choices in writing donor appeals, when compared to non-stigmatized populations?

It is usual for experimental studies to include a null hypothesis for testing. Based on literature about social stigma (e.g. Corrigan, 2004; Goffman, 1963/ 1986; Link, Phelan, *et al*., 1999; Pescosolido, Martin, *et al*., 2008), fundraising practice (e.g. Kelly, 1998; Das, Kerkhof, & Kuiper, 2008; James, 2016a; Brooks, 2012), and preliminary research, I predict that the presence of a social stigma for a beneficiary group will cause the fundraiser to alter his or her communication choices compared to those made for a non-stigmatized group. Therefore, my null hypothesis is:

> H_0: There is no significant difference in latent or manifest communicative elements between narrative written by fundraisers for stigmatized groups and that written for non-stigmatized groups.

Manifest elements rely on the inclusion of a specific word or content within the text, such as whether or not the appeal letters refer to the organization's sidewalk seating. Latent elements involve interpretation of the text's underlying meaning, such as whether the expectation for clients is one of empowerment, defined as raising oneself up to the expected level of a regular member of society, or one of personal fulfillment, defined as self-actualization or personal fulfillment beyond that expected as an acceptable baseline for a normal person (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005).

Chapter One identified a number of subsidiary questions that expand on this primary research question. These questions, which specify testable aspects of the main question, are incorporated into Table 3.5, along with the data collected to answer each question, and the type of analysis used in its pursuit.

Sampling and Study Participants

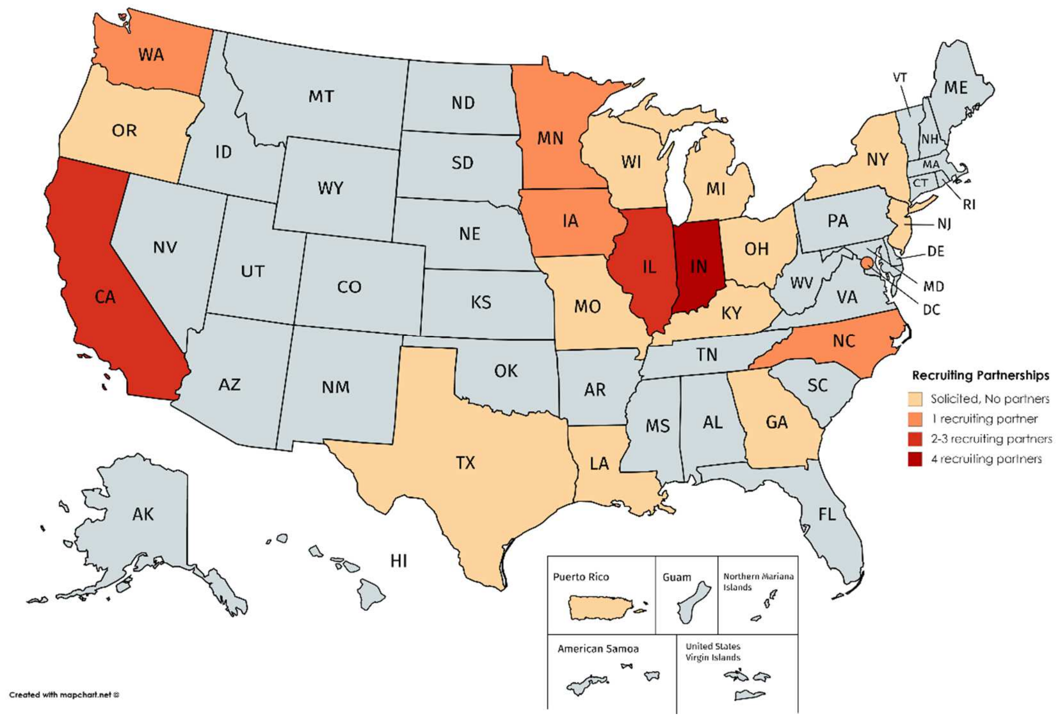
The project sought professional adult fundraisers living in the United States, especially those whose contact with communities of practice suggested they had been socialized into the profession (Pribbenow, 1997a). These characteristics are theoretically consistent with the research question: if variation in fundraising practice occurs based on the stigmatized nature of the beneficiary population, we would expect that professionally socialized practitioners are likely to be sensitive to the preferences of their donor audiences, making difference based on beneficiary type more likely. I sought 100 practitioners; 76 submitted qualifying responses.

I had two primary recruiting partners: the Chicago (IL) chapter of the Association of Fundraising Professionals (AFP), and The Fund Raising School at Indiana University. An additional six chapters of AFP and six chapters of the Young Nonprofit Professionals Network (YNPN) also shared recruitment materials with their membership.[24] Colleagues also shared recruitment text with their professional networks, through e-mail and through posts on listservs and social media groups. In addition, I posted within nine professional social media groups.

Neither the experimental component nor the interview component of this research relied on a representative sample for validity. The experiment examined causality in a controlled environment, and the interview sought to trace how fundraisers made their decisions, choosing participants based on relative extremes of perception. Geographically, I concentrated on the Midwest to make interviews easier, making this a sample of convenience. Nonetheless, recruitment targeted multiple markets rich in nonprofit organizations and fundraising expertise. See Figure 3.1 for a map of recruitment efforts.

[24] The six AFP chapters were Central Illinois, Quad Cities (Illinois and Iowa), Michiana (Indiana and Michigan), Northwest Indiana, Greater Tri-State (Iowa, Illinois, and Wisconsin), and Golden Gate (California). The six YNPN chapters were Indy (Indianapolis, Indiana), Twin Cities (Minneapolis-St. Paul, Minnesota), DC (District of Columbia), Triangle NC (Raleigh-Durham, North Carolina), LA (Los Angeles, California), and Seattle (Washington).

Figure 3.1
Map of Recruitment Efforts



After the survey closed on July 11, 2017, I cleaned the data. A total of 467 attempts reduced to 76 after removing unfinished surveys (166), those that did not consent (3) or were excluded by the screening question (10), those that did not correctly answer basic "paying attention" questions about the NPO and its beneficiaries (120), those with foreign IP addresses (10), and those that finished the survey, but did not write the requested narrative (101).[25] The nonstigmatized (NS) treatment had 42 participants, and the stigmatized (ST) treatment had 34. There was no significant difference in the rate of non-inclusion by assigned treatment.

[25] Two kinds of responses fell into this category: first, nonresponse (68); second, text that inappropriate (33). "Inappropriate text" fell into three categories: text that was cut from the prompt and pasted into the response box; one or two word responses, such as a name; short free text that did not meet the basic criteria of an appeal letter. Three of those that answered one "paying attention" question incorrectly were added back in because the free narrative correctly identified both the nonprofit and its client base.

The participants were 72.4% female, and 27.6% male. This is similar to other national studies: Nathan & Tempel (2017) had 73.1% female and 26.9% male, and the AFP compensation and benefits study (US participants; Feeley *et al*., 2016) had 80% female and 19% male. The racial profile was also similar: my study participants were 89.5% white, compared to 88% in Nathan & Tempel (2017) and 89% in the AFP study (Feeley *et al*., 2016). There is a bit more difference in age and in education. My study participants were younger (85.6% were aged 44 or lower) and more likely to hold a graduate degree (57.9% had a graduate degree) compared to those participating in Nathan & Tempel (2017) and in the AFP study (Feeley *et al*., 2016).[26] Correspondingly, they were also "younger" fundraisers, with only 18.2% having at least ten years' experience as a fundraiser. In the AFP study, one-third had at least ten years' experience, and in the Nathan & Tempel study, that share rose to two-thirds. Nearly 70% of those completing my survey (after cleaning the data) also volunteered to be interviewed as a follow-up.

Interview participants were selected based on (a) their willingness to participate in a follow-up interview, and (b) for extreme answers in stigma-related questions, both in assessing the community's perceptions and their own preferences.[27] Ten (five from each treatment group) were selected for responses that were in the quartile indicating the greatest perceived stigma along five measures, and four (two from each treatment group) were selected for responses that were in the quartile indicating the least perceived stigma along two measures. Quartiles were calculated within each treatment group, and only

[26] 85.6% of my participants were age 44 or less, compared to 53% of the AFP participants. Nathan & Tempel broke their age categories differently: 36% were under 40, and 21% were aged 40-49, for a total of 57% under age 50. For education, 57.9% of my participants held a graduate degree, compared to 49% of Nathan & Tempel's study, and 43% of the AFP compensation study.

[27] Questions were asked immediately after the experimental manipulation and task, so participants were sensitized to their assigned population. The experimental protocol is discussed more later in this chapter.

among the 70% of participants who had expressed willingness to participate in a follow-up interview.[28] One participant with no extreme responses offers a comparison case; see Table 3.1.

Table 3.1
Interview Participant Selection Strategy

Total N=15	**Nonstigmatized Treatment**	**Stigmatized Treatment**
More Negatively Perceived Overall (Responses to questions #26.1-21.16 in bottom quartile for treatment group)	1	1
More Discounted (Responses to questions #21.1, 21.13 in bottom quartile for treatment group)	1	1
More Negative Stereotypes (Responses to questions #21.10, 21.11 in bottom quartile for treatment group)	1	1
More Threatening (Responses to questions #21.6, 21.16 in bottom quartile for treatment group)	1	1
Greater Social Distance Preferred (Responses to questions #22.1-22.6 in bottom quartile for treatment group)	1	1
More Positively Perceived Overall (Responses to questions #26.1-21.16 in top quartile for treatment group)	1	1
Less Social Distance Preferred (Responses to questions #22.1-22.6 in top quartile for treatment group)	1	1

[28] I ran a post hoc scale analysis of the responses to these questions on the overall sample with the following results: overall perceptions (α = .72); discounted (α = .03); negative stereotypes (α = .38); threatening (α = .60); social distance (α = .72). Since the result for "discounted" was so low, I selected another question that had high face validity for the construct (#21.11) and paired that with question 21.13, resulting in α = .66. I then examined the distribution of responses using questions 21.11 and 21.13, and found that the individuals identified as extreme responses for "More Discounted" still qualified under that description.

Neutral (None of the individual's responses fell into either extreme quartile for their treatment group for any of the criteria above.)	1	0[29]

My strategy built on the logic of extreme selection (Patton, 2002). I actively sought participants who were strong cases of perceived community or personal stigma toward the client population, as assessed by several different criteria. Both client populations were included, and participants were evaluated relative to others within their treatment groups. I also sought those who were strong cases of perceived community or personal acceptance toward each client population, as well as a case that did not have strong attitudes of either exclusion or acceptance by any measure.

Based on these criteria, two-thirds of those qualifying for interviews were located within one of three geographic areas: greater Chicago (including northwest Indiana); Indianapolis, IN; and Raleigh-Durham, NC. I gave preference to individuals in these areas in order to make travel arrangements easier. Interview participants were similar to survey participants in terms of race. They were slightly more likely to be male, a little older, more likely to hold a graduate degree (67% compared to 58%), and more likely to be an experienced fundraiser (33% compared to 18%). See Table 3.2 for a comparison of the participants in each portion of the research.

[29] One individual who volunteered for interviews met this criteria, but s/he did not respond to my interest in setting an interview.

Table 3.2
Comparison of Participants in Experimental and Interview Portions

	Experiment Participants N = 76	**Interview Participants N = 15**
Sex	73.1% female 26.9% male	66.7% female 33.3% males
Race/ Ethnicity* * Individuals could choose more than one	89.5% white 5.3% black 3.9% Asian 2.6% Native American, Alaskan Native, Pacific Islander 1.3% Hispanic or Latinx	86.6% white 6.6% black 6.6% Asian 6.6% Native American, Alaskan Native, Pacific Islander 6.6% Hispanic or Latinx
Age	13.2% Under 25 38.2% 25-34 34.2% 35-44 6.6% 45-54 6.6% 55-64 1.3% 65+	0.0% Under 25 40.0% 25-34 40.0% 35-44 6.6% 45-54 13.3% 55-64 0.0% 65+
Education	0.0% High school 1.3% Some college 40.8% Bachelor's degree 57.9% Graduate degree	0.0% High school 0.0% Some college 33.3% Bachelor's degree 66.7% Graduate degree
Professional Experience* * Some individuals did not respond	63.4% Less than 10 years 18.2% 10 years or more	60.0% Less than 10 years 33.3% 10 years or more

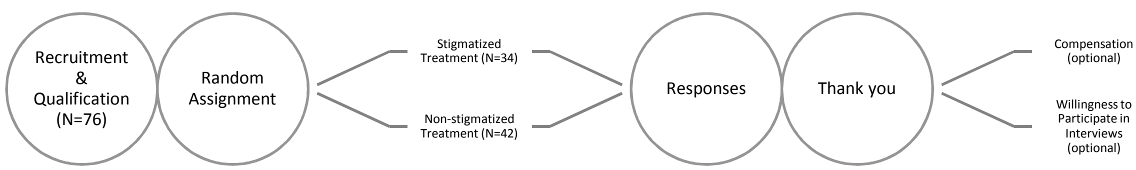
Procedures and Instruments Used in Data Collection

Experiment

Procedure. I used a between-subjects experiment with two conditions randomly assigned and administered by an online survey. Experiments provide a controlled environment in which to explore causality by manipulating a single variable (Rosnow & Rosenthal, 2008). Because of this, experiments have been recommended as a method for testing the effects of stigma, such as whether it affects fundraisers' communication

(Rasinski, Viechnicki & O'Muircheartaigh, 2005). In a between-subjects experiment, each individual participant is exposed to only one of the two experimental treatments (Rosnow & Rosenthal, 2008). In this study, the independent variable is the presence of greater or lesser stigma attributed to a beneficiary population; the dependent variable is the communicative choices made, operationalized as elements that can be included within a fundraising appeal. The experimental process is illustrated in Figure 3.2, below.

Figure 3.2: Experimental Process



The survey was conducted between March 13 – July 10, 2017 through the online Qualtrics platform, which randomly assigned participants after indicating their consent, and completing a screening question to confirm eligibility. Random assignment assures that the two treatment groups will be similar to each other (Babbie, 2013). Participants, all fundraisers practicing in the United States, were randomly assigned to one of two conditions, then asked to write an acquisition appeal letter for a fictional nonprofit serving either a presumptively stigmatized population (individuals with mental illness, "ST") or a more socially acceptable population (older adults, "NS"). By recruiting individuals who are employed as fundraisers, and asking them to write an appeal letter, which is a common activity for fundraisers, I encouraged a high level of external validity

(Babbie, 2013). In order to ensure that participants were paying close attention to the task, they were first asked to answer two questions about the nonprofit and the client base. The dependent variable for the study is the communicative choices made within the letter written.

After writing the letter, participants were asked to answer several Likert scale questions to assess the perceived level of stigma of the client group within the community. Questions drew on literature about stigma (e.g. Corrigan, 2004; Holstein, 1993; Link, Phelan, *et al*., 1999) and political attributes (Schneider & Ingram, 1990, 1993). After assessing the community perceptions, they were asked to rate their own preferences regarding social distance from the client group (Pescosolido *et al*., 2004). Other measures were embedded in the survey to evaluate dispositional empathy (Davis, 1983; Konrath, 2013) and to measure social desirability (Strahan & Gerbasi, 1972; Fischer & Fick, 1993). These scales will be discussed later in the chapter. Finally, the survey included demographic questions such as age, race, and length of time as a fundraiser. The full experimental protocol is in Appendix A.

Upon completion of the study, individuals were asked whether they wished to volunteer to be considered for a follow-up interview. They were then thanked, and given the option of proceeding to a second survey to record their names and contact information for payment. Initially, payment was a chance to win one of five $100 Visa gift cards. Due to low recruitment, the compensation was changed to a $20 Amazon gift card for each participant, effective May 17, 2017.[30] Five individuals were randomly chosen from

[30] This change was suggested based on the research experience of Dr. Sara Konrath, one of my dissertation committee members. Participant incentives were generously funded through a grant from the Indiana University Lilly Family School of Philanthropy Research Fund.

among those who participated between March 13 – May 16 to receive the $100 Visa gift cards.

Participants who did not wish to volunteer for the interview portion were given debriefing information informing them of the full extent of the study. Individuals who did volunteer either received debriefing information at the end of their interview, or by e-mail after all interviews were concluded.

<u>Writing Prompt</u>. Participants were provided with a description of Positivities, an imaginary human services organization. The full description is here:

> Positivities was established in 1991 to provide services to [POPULATION]. One year ago, Positivities opened a new location in Riverside, a city with a fairly homogenous, largely middle-class population. In deciding on Riverside, your study found that 19% of residents were [POPULATION]. 9% of the population has a documented disability. Positivities opened a drop-in center in a storefront location within the community, the only one of its kind in the immediate area. The location is close to residences and to restaurants. Clients have tended to gather on the sidewalk in front of the center, so Positivities is considering adding sidewalk seating. The center offers informal opportunities to socialize and to foster new and existing friendships, as well as more formal opportunities to help or encourage others; encourage self-knowledge; promote creativity and personal expression; foster intellectual development; participate in organizations; and engage in both observational and participatory recreation. All of these opportunities have been shown to increase individuals' quality of life. In addition, Positivities also has transportation services available to help negotiate trips for doctor's visits, and has supportive services to help people who have recently been hospitalized transition back to a home setting. Staff have engaged in outreach over this first year, and an increasing number of people are making use of both the informal drop-in and café aspects, as well as enrolling in and attending the formal group meetings and events.

The name "Positivities" was selected because (a) it does not identify the population served, and (b) as of October 16, 2016, no organization with that name appeared in the IRS Exempt Organizations database (IRS, 2016). The founding date was selected in order to convey stability, since charities that have been in existence for more than ten years are, generally, more likely to persist (Harrison & Laincz, 2008). The demographics provided were selected to reflect a fairly average US situation: as per the US Census (n.d.), between 2010-2014 about 9% of the population has a disability, and about 15% is over age 65. According to the National Center for Charitable Statistics (2016), which relied on the 2012 National Survey on Drug Use and Health, 19% of the US population has been diagnosed with a mental illness. The percentages for the two client populations used (individuals with mental illness and older adults) were equalized across treatments to minimize variation. The description of the services offered at the organization and their beneficial effects on individuals' quality of life were adapted from the Quality of Life Scale as adapted for use with individuals with chronic illnesses (Burckhardt & Anderson, 2003).

The two client populations were chosen for three reasons. First, it was necessary to select two populations that, on their face, appear to have different levels of social acceptability. Research regularly ties mental illness to stigma, to the point of recognizing it as a condition that is commonly stigmatized across multiple cultures and settings (Stangor & Crandall, 2000). Similarly, mental illness ranks high on a list of unpopular causes in a review of media clippings in the United Kingdom (Body & Breeze, 2016). Getting older, regardless of the loss of capacity sometimes involved, seems to be much more socially acceptable. Second, it is possible to describe a nonprofit with similar services for each population, maintaining experimental integrity. I chose services that would be appropriate to each population, even though they might be perceived differently within the context of a given population. For example, being located near residences and restaurants may be seen as a matter of convenience, or as one of threat. Third, as noted, there are already similar proportions within the US population.

I decided to describe the fictional nonprofit's clientele by named category, even though some studies of stigma in mental illness prefer to use vignettes describing a person with symptoms described in the Diagnostic and Statistic Manual of Mental Disorders (American Psychiatric Association, 2013) rather than labeling that individual's condition. The rationale for using a vignette rather than a label or category is to allow the reader to form an impression based on observations, allowing for a standardized stimulus in order to measure their responding attitudes (Pescosolido, Long, *et al*., 2004). However, this study examined fundraisers' communicative role, in which the client base is well known to them. Participants' interpretation and chosen presentation of that client base were important aspects of the study. Therefore, a primary goal was to understand how they imagine and choose to describe the client base, rather than to do it for them.

Participants were then given the following instructions:

> You are a fundraiser for Positivities, an established organization that opened a new storefront drop-in center in Riverside. It has been one year since the opening, and you are writing a short (one-page) appeal letter that will go to people in the surrounding community. The letter will go to people who have never given to Positivities before. Please write the body of the appeal. The description of the organization you just read is displayed so that you can refer to it. Feel free to make up quotes or details if that is helpful, as long as they are consistent with the description. If you are more comfortable working in a word processor, please feel free to do so; but keep this window open to paste your work.

<u>Attention Check.</u> Immediately after reading the description of the nonprofit organization, individuals were asked to identify the name of the nonprofit and the client base. This served to ensure that participants were paying close attention to the task.

Manipulation Check. For the experiment to be valid, the fundraiser participants must perceive one group to be more stigmatized than the other. The manipulation check was in the form of 16 questions about the fundraisers' perceptions of community beliefs, described in the next section. Participants in the ST condition (M = 2.69, SD = .26) rated clients significantly more negatively than participants in the NS condition (M = 3.29, SD = .26), $F(1, 74) = 72.01$, $p < .01$, $d = 1.99$, verifying that those with mental illness were perceived as more stigmatized than those who were older adults.

New Measure: Fundraisers' Perceptions of Client Stigma within the Community. Stigma is a relationship between attributes and stereotype, making it situationally specific (Goffman, 1963/ 1986). For instance, nurses with daily exposure to patients with mental illness view them much less negatively than nurses working with other medical conditions (Björkman, Angelman, & Jönsson, 2008).

A number of scales exist to measure stigma, but they are generally tied to a specific illness or condition (Rao, Choi, *et al*., 2009; Van Brakel, 2006). Since our experiment includes two different client groups, each with a different defining characteristic, I did not want to prejudice responses by choosing an illness-specific scale.

Additionally, understanding processes of stigma requires an appreciation of the roles of "perceivers and targets" (Dovidio, Major, & Crocker, 2000, p. 12). The scales that exist are generally focused either on a first-person experience of being stigmatized, or a second-person experience where the one answering is asked about another population. However, our primary concern in this project is a third-person perception of stigma. Since fundraisers are writing the appeal letters, we must consider the letters' place within a network of action: to whom is it being written, and to what anticipated effect (Prior, 2003)? It is clear that we need a scale that tells us what the fundraisers think about how the community – the recipients of their appeal letters – views the client base. And, it needs to be a scale that does not reveal or constrain the type of condition that may be seen as stigmatized. So, working from literature, I developed one.

Multiple dimensions of stigma have been identified and studied (Pescosolido, Long, *et al*., 2004), and I wanted to make sure that I captured elements that are closely associated with mental illness. Relying on literature, particularly Corrigan (2004), Link & Phelan (2001), Link, Phelan, *et al*. 1999; and Holstein (1993), I chose to use three categories of Negative Stereotypes, Lowered Expectations, and Threat. It has also been noted that societal application of stigma relies on a power differential (e.g., Link & Phelan, 2001; Parker & Aggleton, 2003). Since power differentials also relate to the experience of receiving aid, whether through charities (e.g. Fothergill, 2003; Sager & Stephen, 2005) or public assistance (e.g. Dorfman, 2016; Schneider & Ingram, 1990, 1993), I also included Power as a category.

The result was a set of 16 questions, below. Although some questions could address more than one aspect of stigma, since the scale is to be considered as a whole indicator of the positive (less stigmatized) or negative (more stigmatized) perceived valence of the population, I have only included each question under a single heading. Participants were instructed to respond to each statement on a scale of 1 ("completely disagree") to 5 ("completely agree"). (R) indicates that a question was reverse scored.

Table 3.3
Community Perception Questions, by Dimension of Stigma

Negative Stereotypes	Lowered Expectations	Threat	Power
Positivities' clients are usually considered in a positive light by the public.	Positivities' clients are not very well understood by society. (R)	Some people would perceive Positivities' clients as a threat. (R)	The issues Positivities' clients care about are recognized as important public problems.
Positivities' clients are depicted favorably by the media.	Some people would perceive Positivities' clients as a bother. (R)	Donors might feel uncomfortable visiting with Positivities' clients. (R)	On their own, Positivities' clients are powerless. (R)
Positivities' clients are sometimes the subject of jokes. (R)	The clients should have the ability to shape programs at Positivities.		Donors and grantors understand the needs of Positivities' clients.
Most of the stereotypes of Positivities' clients are positive.	Positivities' clients are just as trustworthy as anyone else.		Positivities' clients should be grateful for the generosity of others. (R)
Sometimes the world isn't fair to the clients at Positivities. (R)	Positivities' clients have a lot to offer the community.		

Using SPSS statistical software, we analyzed the data from the 16 questions selected to assess fundraisers' perceptions of the community's views of the clients. The questions formed a reliable scale with a Cronbach's α of .72.[31]

Established Measure: Social Distance. In addition to assessing the participants' beliefs of how stigmatized the client base is within the community, I also wanted to

[31] I also analyzed the questions within the four categories; none formed a reliable individual subscale. The results follow. Negative Stereotypes: α = .59. Lowered Expectations: α = .41. Threat: α = .60. Power: α = .18. Note that individual questions could address multiple aspects of stigma, but since the intended purpose was to indicate the extent of positive (less stigmatized) or negative (more stigmatized) perceived valence of the population overall, each was included under a single heading.

measure each participant's personal preference for social distance from the client. These questions reflect the degree to which the respondent is willing or reluctant to interact personally with a given group. This scale was adapted from the SGC-MHS interview schedule, used to assess stigma in mental health situations in several countries internationally. The SGC-MHS team adapted the scale from one developed initially to measure willingness to associate with others of differing racial or ethnic backgrounds (Bogardus, 1959; Pescosolido, Long, *et al*., 2004). Participants were instructed to respond to six statements on a scale of 1 ("completely disagree") to 5 ("completely agree"). The statements indicated whether the respondent would be willing to "have one of Positivities' clients as a neighbor"; "spend time socializing with one of Positivities' clients"; "have one of Positivities' clients care for my children or children I know"; "make friends with one of Positivities' clients"; "work closely with one of Positivities' clients on a job"; and "have one of Positivities' clients marry someone related to me."

Established Measure: Empathy. It is possible that the degree to which a fundraiser personally feels higher concern for others, or can see things from others' viewpoints, may systematically affect the way they write about clients with differing levels of social acceptability. I included the empathic concern and perspective taking subscales of the Interpersonal Reactivity Index (IRI) (Davis, 1983). The IRI measures four separate aspects of empathy, one with each of four subscales. The subscales are intended to be used individually, as appropriate to the research, and do not rely on the use of the entire instrument as a whole (Konrath, 2013). Empathic concern and perspective taking are associated with healthy interpersonal functioning and self-esteem (Konrath, 2013).

The empathic concern items measured the dispositional emotional empathy of participants, i.e., how strongly the participants feel compassion for others, as a self-reported attribute. This section asked participants to respond to statements such as, "I often have tender, concerned feelings for people less fortunate than I am," and "I am often quite touched by things that I see happen."

The perspective taking items measured the dispositional cognitive empathy of participants, i.e., the strength of their tendency to perceive others' point of view, as a self-reported attribute. This section asked participants to respond to statements such as, "I try to look at everybody's side of a disagreement before I make a decision," and "I sometimes try to understand my friends better by imagining how things look from their perspective."

Participants were instructed to respond to a total of fourteen statements on a scale of 1 ("does not describe me well") to 5 ("describes me very well"). The IRI scale has been used in a variety of settings, and is recommended for use with wide-ranging populations (Konrath, 2013).

<u>Established Measure: Social Desirability.</u> Data collected through self-reporting, such as the scales, above, is vulnerable to social desirability bias. Measuring social desirability was also appropriate for this study because it included writing to benefit a population that may be socially stigmatized. I embedded a previously validated short version of the Marlowe-Crown Social Desirability Scale (Strahan & Gerbasi, 1972).   The M-C2(10) version uses 10 of the original 33 items, has high internal consistency (KR-20) and high correlation with the original scale by Marlowe & Crown (Fischer & Fick, 1993). Participants were instructed to respond to ten statements with a True or False answer, e.g.

"I never hesitate to go out of my way to help someone in trouble"; "I have never intensely disliked anyone"; "There have been times when I was quite jealous of the good fortune of others."

Semi-Structured Interviews

To understand why fundraisers made the decisions they did, the issues that were considered, and the process of decision making, I conducted semi-structured interviews. Using semi-structured interviews allows for discussion of planned topics, and the flexibility to explore ideas that emerge during the course of the interview (Weiss, 1994). In this case, I wanted to understand the fundraisers' backgrounds, as previous experiences may influence their understanding of and reaction to different kinds of client groups. I wanted to understand their expectations and goals for appeal letters, and to discuss how the letters they wrote furthered those goals. I also wanted to see what changes they would make if presented with the same general fact pattern, but with the client population from the alternate experimental treatment, and to discuss why they would make those changes.

While several resources exist to suggest best-practices in writing appeal letters (e.g., Brooks, 2012; Torre & Bendixen, 1988; Warwick, 2008), little is known about what practicing fundraisers actually consider as they write. From my experience, I expected that the process would be not only varied and subjective, but also that many fundraisers may not have consciously reflected on their choices in framing, vocabulary, and content. A semi-structured interview allowed for guided exploration of their thought processes, whether or not the direction was anticipated by the researcher. The interview protocol is found in Appendix B.

I conducted fifteen interviews between July 18, 2017 and August 22, 2017; the strategy for interview selection is found in Table 3.1. One interview was conducted via Skype, three interviews were conducted by telephone, and the remaining eleven were conducted in person at a location of the participants' choice.[32] Interviews ranged in length from 31 minutes to 81 minutes; most were under an hour in duration. Interviews were digitally audio-recorded with the permission of the participant, and transcribed for analysis.

Methods Used for Data Analysis

Data from Experimental Phase

The experimental phase of the research yielded data in the form of the appeal letters, which needed to be de-identified and coded in two different ways, as well as prepared for analysis with LIWC software. These processes are described below. These processes were followed by statistical analysis using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). Before analyzing the quantitative data, the entire data set was cleaned to remove responses that did not meet specified inclusion criteria, and reviewed.

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[32] Face-to-face was my preferred method, as the richer communication channel makes it easier to build rapport and to notice conversational markers. However, some participants were traveling or otherwise unable to meet during the window I had scheduled for their location. Additionally, some participants recruited through The Fund Raising School completed their surveys in Indianapolis, but live and work in another location.

Content Analysis of Written Letters. In order to ensure blind coding, I removed descriptions of the client population that identified the experimental condition, and gave each written appeal letter an identifying number. I used the prescribed methods from the *Manual for coding client focus and organizational focus in appeal letters: Version 2* (Hansen, 2017a) in order to analyze the appeals' focus on the organization's clients and on the hypothetical organization itself. See Appendix C for the coding manual.

I will now use the client focus to illustrate how to score the letters. For each letter, I counted the total number of sentences in the text (Sentence Count). Then, I counted the number of sentences that referred to clients of the organization (Raw Client). To generate the Client Focus score, I used the following formula: Client Focus = (Raw Client/ Sentence Count). The Client Focus score is stated as a percentage. This method was repeated for the Organizational Focus score. I calculated the result as a percentage rather than as raw scores for each because the letters analyzed were of different lengths.

Using the same prepared texts, I used the prescribed methods from the *Manual for coding varied content in appeal letters: Version 2.1* (Hansen, 2017b) in order to analyze several other aspects of the appeals: the distance presented between the reader of the appeal and the organization's clients; the framing of the appeal; types of evidence used within the letter for persuasive effect; the inclusion of specific organizational characteristics; and the inclusion of concepts or themes within the letter. This phase of coding focused on both manifest communication choices, such as the inclusion of specific organizational characteristics, as well as latent communication choices, such as whether the letter addressed the expectation that clients ought to be empowered to the expected living conditions, rights, and privileges of normal individuals, or the expectation that clients ought to experience opportunities for self-actualization or personal fulfillment (Babbie, 2013; Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). I included a combination of *a priori* theoretically identified codes and codes that emerged on review of the data in the coding manual. See Appendix D for the coding manual.

Interscorer Agreement. In order to establish reliability for the Client and Organizational focus coding, I used a master coder approach, and I served as master coder (Syed & Nelson, 2015). I randomly selected 10 of the appeal letters written within each condition (a total of 20, approximately 26% of the total) and placed them in random order. Another coder who was blind to condition served as the reliability coder, and was trained to use the *Manual for coding client focus and organizational focus in appeal letters: Version 2* (Hansen, 2017a). Using a percent agreement method, we found a high degree of intercoder reliability (91%) (Syed & Nelson, 2015).

To establish reliability for the content coding, I again used a master coder approach, and I served as master coder (Syed & Nelson, 2015). Twenty randomly selected appeal letters, including 10 written within each condition (approximately 26% of the total) were ordered randomly. Another coder who was blind to condition served as the reliability coder, and was trained to use the *Manual for coding varied content in appeal letters: Version 2.1* (Hansen, 2017b). Using a percent agreement method, we found a high degree of intercoder reliability (86%) (Syed & Nelson, 2015).

Intercoder reliability validates the operational constructs of categories established during theming (Ryan, 1999).

Linguistic Inquiry and Word Count. Counting different types of words used within a text can provide an indication of the manifest language prevalent within the letters, and whether it varies by experimental condition (Boréus & Bergström, 2017). I used the Linguistic Inquiry and Word Count program (LIWC2007) to assist analysis. To prepare the letters for analysis by LIWC2007, I prepared a separate file in Microsoft Word for each appeal letter, named with an identifying number. Errors in spelling and basic grammar were corrected to improve the accuracy of the analysis, and checked with a second proofreader. LIWC2007 analyzes the target text and matches it to a dictionary file, incrementally counting different categories of words that align with emotional and cognitive dimensions often studied by researchers, such as Positive Emotion, Negative Emotion, Affective Processes, Cognitive Processes, Perceptual Processes, etc. LIWC has a high degree of external validity for natural language (Pennebaker, Chung, *et al*., 2007).

Statistical Analysis. Descriptive statistics and bivariate analysis were used to summarize characteristics of participants and their letters, and to determine whether there were significant differences between treatment groups. Exploratory factor analysis was used to identify patterns in the content of the appeal letters. Bartlett's test of sphericity, $p < .01$, confirmed that there was significant co-variance between variables at a level that was appropriate for factor analysis (Dziuban & Shirkey, 1974).

Data from Interview Phase

The interview phase of the research yielded data in two forms: transcripts, which were transcribed, reviewed, and compared with the digital recordings; and my analytic observations, which were captured in analytic memos. At points within the interviews, I used member checking to check whether my understanding of a phenomenon aligned with their meaning.

Table 3.4
Qualitative Coding Used in Study

Type of Coding	Description	Examples
Attribute	Describes relevant information about participant, e.g. experimental treatment group, or the expressed perception of stigma that qualified them for the interview	T0 Nonstigmatized Treatment T1 Stigmatized Treatment P1 Overall More Negatively Perceived P2 Discounted
Structural (with subcoding)	Ties data to a specific research question, e.g., what do fundraisers consider when writing, or what do fundraisers omit from letters Subcoding allows for more detailed coding within a category	Considerations Omit Considerations: NIMBY Considerations: Reader impressions Omit: Discomfort Omit: Threat
Descriptive	Summarizes the topic of a passage, e.g. description of donor base, or professional experience	Donor base Experience
Dramaturgical	Applies character conventions to explore processes of human motives and agency, such as objectives, tactics, conflicts, attitudes, emotions, and subtexts.	Obj: Reduce threat Tac: Connecting language Con: Advocacy vs. fundraising Att: Personally important Emo: Thoughtful Sub: Evaluating merit
Pattern	Organizes similarly coded data into themes	Theory of fundraising

After transcription, identifying information was eliminated or changed to a description or a pseudonym. Transcripts were coded over multiple rounds, using an eclectic combination of attribute, structural (with subcoding), descriptive, dramaturgical, and pattern coding (Saldaña, 2013). See Table 3.4, above.

I used analytic memos to help develop themes for each case, as well as to connect themes and concepts emerging across cases. Codes and themes for each participant were arranged in a matrix that also captured the attributes that had qualified each interview participant (e.g., “Overall: More Negatively Perceived”; “Discounted”; “Negative Stereotypes”) and the population for which they had originally written (Stigmatized or Non-stigmatized), allowing for comparison and analytic induction. Material was color-coded to enhance analysis (e.g., segments regarding choices specific to the stigmatized population were colored green; segments regarding choices specific to the non-stigmatized population were colored pink; significant passages for later citation were colored orange, etc.). I also used Atlas.ti to help manage the data from the interviews. The original letters written by interview participants were also uploaded to Atlas.ti and coded in order to better incorporate them into analysis of the interviews.

Table 3.5
Summary of Data Collected and Analytic Processes

Questions/ Issues	Hypotheses or Propositions	Data Collection	Data Analysis
Do participants in the Stigmatized (ST) treatment believe their beneficiary group is perceived more negatively by the community than participants in the Non-stigmatized (NS) treatment beneficiary group? Manipulation check	The beneficiary group for the ST treatment (individuals with mental illness) is seen as more stigmatized than the beneficiary group for the NS treatment (older adults)	16 community perception questions on survey (see Table 3.3)	ANOVA
Do fundraisers vary the emphasis given to the organization compared to the emphasis given to the client base when the client base is ST rather than NS?	Fundraisers will focus more on non-stigmatized clients and focus less on stigmatized clients relative to the organization	Written appeal letters (de-identified)	Coding for client focus and organization focus ANOVA
Do participants in the ST treatment use different types of words, such as positive emotions, negative emotions, etc., in persuading people to support their client base compared to participants in the NS treatment? What do these word choices tell us about how those populations are viewed, compared to each other?	Exploratory	Written appeal letters (complete)	LIWC software ANOVA
Do participants in the NS treatment present the client population as closer to the prospective donors than participants in the ST treatment?	Non-stigmatized clients will be presented as closer than stigmatized clients.	Written appeal letters (de-identified)	Coding for distance presented between reader and clients ANOVA

Questions/ Issues	Hypotheses or Propositions	Data Collection	Data Analysis
Do participants in the ST treatment make different choices in framing an appeal positively or negatively than participants in the NS treatment?	Exploratory	Written appeal letters (de-identified)	Coding for framing ANOVA
Do participants in the ST treatment use different kinds of evidence to support their appeal than participants in the NS treatment?	Exploratory	Written appeal letters (de-identified)	Coding for types of evidence ANOVA
Do participants in the ST treatment emphasize different indirect benefits to the potential donors than participants in the NS treatment?	Exploratory	Written appeal letters (de-identified)	Coding for indirect benefits suggested for donors ANOVA
Do participants in the ST treatment make different choices than participants in the NS treatment in their choice of emotional approaches, which tend to include client stories; rational approaches, which tend to include facts or statistics; or a hybrid between the two?	Exploratory	Written appeal letters (de-identified)	Coding for approaches used ANOVA
Do participants in the ST treatment highlight different kinds of services than participants in the NS treatment?	Stigmatized client groups will be held to lower expectations than more acceptable client groups. Possibility of threat will be minimized.	Written appeal letters (de-identified)	Coding for presence of specific services ANOVA

Questions/ Issues	Hypotheses or Propositions	Data Collection	Data Analysis
Do participants in the ST treatment raise different concepts or themes within the letters than participants in the NS treatment?	Stigmatized client groups will be held to lower expectations than more acceptable client groups. Possibility of threat will be minimized.	Written appeal letters (de-identified)	Coding for inclusion of concepts ANOVA Exploratory factor analysis
What factors are considered by fundraisers in preparing an appeal letter?	Exploratory	Interview transcripts	Content analysis
What goals do fundraisers have for their acquisition appeals?	Exploratory	Interview transcripts	Content analysis
How do they attempt to attain those goals through their choices while writing?	Exploratory	Interview transcripts Written appeal letters (linked)	Content analysis
Do people who view a given population as more stigmatized (or as less stigmatized) identify different goals, tactics, or considerations?	Fundraisers writing for beneficiaries who they identify as more stigmatized will be sensitive to different considerations and tactics than those writing for more accepted beneficiaries; goals may also change.	Community perception questions on survey Interview transcripts Written appeal letters (linked)	Content analysis
Do those choices change when the beneficiary population changes?	Change in social acceptability of beneficiary group will result in	Interview transcripts	Content analysis

Questions/ Issues	**Hypotheses or Propositions**	**Data Collection**	**Data Analysis**
	changes in tactics and considerations, and possibly goals.		
How does intentional fundraising practice encourage voluntary funding for individuals who are less popular? How does it attempt to mitigate any difficulties due to stigmatization?	Fundraisers will craft communications to prioritize both increased funding for services and donor trust. This may result in changes in strategy for stigmatized individuals.	Interview transcripts Written appeal letters (linked)	Content analysis
Considering fundraising communication as public communication, do fundraisers consider advocating for positive perceptions of client groups an important objective of fundraising communication? Why, or why not?	Exploratory	Interview transcripts	Content analysis

Consideration of Validity, Reliability, Trustworthiness, and Ethics

Careful attention was given to the research design to ensure the validity of research constructs. The original instrumentation for the survey and for the interview protocols relied on careful review of literature for stigma, fundraising, and communications, as well as professional experience. The experimental prompt was carefully researched and considered from the standpoint of organizations serving both chosen client populations to ensure external validity and encourage good responses from the fundraiser participants. Participants were also selected for a high level of external validity.

I conducted a pilot study with six major gifts fundraisers that explored fundraising practice as far as knowing the interests of donors, of clients, and working with any disjunctions between the two; this study contributed to a model of fundraising communication choices, and refined my thinking of interpersonal interactions within a fundraising setting in circumstances when the priorities of clients or of the organization appear to be conflicting with the priorities of donors.

Using a web-based survey meant that fundraisers could take the survey at their convenience. Sixty-eight percent of Americans own a smartphone, and 73% own a computer, with 67% having access to broadband internet at home (Pew Research Center, 2018). Drawing on my professional experience, I anticipated that fundraisers are more likely to have access to a computer and broadband, at work if not at home; I also anticipated that they are more likely to have access to a smartphone. Further, I anticipated that time constraints would make the convenience of an online instrument more appealing than one in a laboratory setting. External validity was also enhanced by allowing the fundraiser to write in familiar surroundings. The automatic randomization offered by Qualtrics helped keep the two treatment groups similar, while ensuring that I was blind to experimental condition.

The survey instrument was pretested by practicing fundraisers before the research window opened. Given the nature of the research question, writing to a prompt in a randomized controlled experiment was an integral part of the research design. Because it required participants to write an appeal letter, the survey taking time was longer than conventional wisdom; pre-testers took approximately 1 hour to complete the survey. For those responses included in the study, the shortest time for a complete survey was just under 8 minutes. The longest time was nearly five days; one assumes that not all of that time was spent working on the survey. There was no significant difference in the time it took to take the survey by experimental condition, $F(1, 74) = .30$, $p = .59$. The median time in the non-stigmatized condition was 43 minutes, and the median time in the stigmatized condition was 42 minutes.

The most significant issue that occurred with data collection involved a matter of spamming with the internet-based surveys. As such, Qualtrics recorded a total of 467 attempts, of which 76 met study inclusion criteria. This could be seen as a threat to reliability. However, qualified responses to the two experimental treatments were similar in number (42 for nonstigmatized, 34 for stigmatized), and the dropout/ exclusion rate was not significantly different between treatments, $F(1, 375) = .71$, $p = .40$. Therefore, while a larger sample might yield more statistical power and a finer grain for analysis, experimental logic should be unaffected. The question of whether there is a difference by treatment seeks to examine causality, rather than preponderance.

For the quantitative portion of analysis, the manipulation check, reliability of scales, intercoder agreement, and fitness of data for factor analysis were addressed above, under the headings of data collection and data analysis.

From the standpoint of qualitative work, researchers seek to promote trustworthiness and credibility. I followed a systematic process to create a dependable result. Researcher reflexivity was introduced earlier in the chapter under the heading of Positionality. Its considerations extend to every aspect of research design, data collection, and data analysis. While my insider status was beneficial to this research, it was critical to remain aware of and acknowledge my own experience so I could remain intentional about hearing and analyzing the experiences of the study participants. To further that intentionality and trustworthiness, I also kept field notes during the interviews, as well as an audit trail and analytic memos, all of which document decision making. Qualitative coding was done by the researcher due to my sole presence at the interviews and detailed understanding of data from both phases of the study. I employed peer review of each interview transcript and analytic memos to check my interpretation against others' perceptions. In presenting the findings, I use rich description of the participants' own words to present the participants' meaning authentically (Patton, 2002).

By designing the research to include multiple ways of looking at different aspects of the same phenomenon, the study design is complementary in its use of methods (Greene, 2007). The study also sought out not just positive cases, but negative cases and multiple points of view (Patton, 2002). One tenet of social behavioral inquiry is that different people will hold different values and preferences, and perceive things differently (Robbins & Judge, 2015). In studying these decision making processes, I aimed to understand the perspectives of study participants, which included different perceptions, preferences, and values. By so doing, this research contributes to the scholarly dialogue.

The study met all requirements to protect human subjects, including review and approval by the Indiana University Institutional Review Board (see Appendix E). The study posed few threats to research participants, if any. Participants were adults who consented to participation in the research after being informed of its general purpose and procedures. Because a portion of the research was an experimental study of behavior, the specific purpose was not disclosed until the research debriefing in order to avoid affecting the participants' responses. All personally identifying information has been removed from this report. Identity-linked data is stored in password protected files where electronic, and locked where on paper. All identifying information will be destroyed within three years following the completion of the study.

Summary and Remaining Chapters

This chapter described the research approach and design, sampling procedures and participants, instrumentation and methods of data collection, and procedures for data analysis. Seventy-six fundraising professionals participated in the experiment, and fifteen of those individuals further participated in semi-structured interviews. The written survey instrument used for the experiment, the experimental protocol, and the interview protocol were created based on literature and elements of fundraising practice. Previously validated scales were used to measure social distance, empathy, and social desirability. A new series of questions based on literature was developed to measure the perception of stigma toward the client population existing within the community, and I found it has reasonable internal validity.

Data analysis followed a process of cleaning, reduction, transformation, correlation and comparison, and analysis for inquiry conclusions and inferences (Greene, 2007). Three primary types of analysis were used on the written letters: coding to assess relative focus on clients and on the organization; linguistic inquiry and word count analysis; and content analysis for themes and framing choices, all of which preceded statistical analysis of variance between the experimental treatment groups and, where appropriate, regression analysis to determine factors associated with outcomes. Thematic, content analysis was used for analysis of the qualitative interviews.

Study findings are presented in Chapters Four and Five. Chapter Six presents discussion, conclusions, and recommendations.

CHAPTER FOUR
EXPERIMENTAL FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter presents the findings from an analysis of appeal letters written by 76 practicing fundraisers who participated in the study via an online survey instrument. Letters were written on behalf of a fictional charity serving either a population of individuals with mental illness (stigmatized, ST) or older adults (nonstigmatized, NS), as detailed in Chapter 3 (Methodology). The instrument itself is found in Appendix A. Three separate analyses were undertaken with this data. The first focused on the relative emphasis within the text on the organization on behalf of which the fundraiser is writing, versus clients it serves. The second used LIWC software to count and capture the use of different categories of words. The third coded the content for a variety of other aspects of appeals, as identified either on the basis of previous research or inductively from review of the sample.

Analysis 1: Emphasis on Charitable Organizations and their Clients

Thinking of the fundraiser's role as an employee at an organization that serves a population of clients, is there a difference in the written emphasis given to the people served, compared to the organization itself, when you vary the beneficiary population? To answer this question, I coded the appeal letters written for client focus and organizational focus at the sentence level. Full methodology is described in Chapter 3.

Findings

Letters averaged a 62% focus on their client base, and a 69% focus on their organization and its programs, although the percentage of the sentences focused on clients and/ or the organization varied greatly. A majority of letters had a greater focus on the organization than on its clients (45 compared to 30, with 1 letter having equal emphasis). There was no significant difference between the experimental conditions for either the focus on clients, $F(1, 74) = .04$, $p = .85$ or the focus on the organization, $F(1, 74) = .02$, $p = .89$. I computed an index for each letter of client percentage divided by organization percentage, which resulted in a greater standard deviation, but there was still no significant difference between experimental conditions, $F(1,74) = .19$, $p = .66$.

Discussion

I predicted that fundraisers would focus more on non-stigmatized clients and focus less on stigmatized clients, relative to the organizational focus. I based this prediction on the likelihood of minimizing discussion of a stigmatizing attribute where it might make donors uncomfortable, in favor of a less negatively charged option – the organization itself. However, there is no statistically significant difference in the percentage of sentences focusing on the clients or the organizations that is attributable to the population for which fundraisers were writing.

Analysis 2: Categories of Words Used in Appeals

Do fundraisers use different types of words, such as positive emotions, negative emotions, etc., in persuading people to support one population compared to the other?

What do these word choices tell us about how those populations are viewed, compared to each other?

Findings

Words within four categories occurred significantly more frequently within the letters written for the stigmatized group than for the nonstigmatized group: Negative Emotions $F(1, 74) = 9.92$, $p < .01$, Anxiety $F(1, 74) = 8.10$, $p < .01$, Biological Processes $F(1, 74) = 14.39$, $p < .01$, and Health $F(1, 74) = 26.07$, $p < .01$. See table 4.1, below. Examples of each category are drawn from Pennebaker, Chung, *et al.* (2007). Since tests were run on several variables, I calculated an adjusted *p* value using the Holm-Bonferroni procedure. This method corrects for potentially overstating false positives when multiple tests are run, but loses less statistical power than the Bonferroni approach (Aickin & Gensler, 1996).

Words within several categories occurred significantly more frequently within the letters written for the nonstigmatized group than for the stigmatized group. Some refer to perceptual processes such as Hearing $F(1, 74) = 14.28$, $p < .01$ or Feeling $F(1, 74) = 4.91$, $p = .03$. Family is also mentioned more frequently in letters for nonstigmatized clients $F(1, 74) = 4.48$, $p = .04$, as are Time $F(1, 74) = 9.19$, $p < .01$ and Money $F(1, 74) = 5.27$, $p = .02$. See Table 4.1, below. Examples of each category are drawn from Pennebaker, Chung, *et al.* (2007).

Table 4.1: Selected Categories of Words Appearing in Letters by Client Type[33]

Category	**Examples**	**Non-stigmatized (SD)**	**Stigmatized (SD)**	**Statistical Test**	**Adjusted *p* Value**	**Cohen's *d***
Biological Processes	Eat, blood, pain	1.97 (1.07)	**3.09 (1.49)**	$F(1,74) = 14.39$, $p < .001$	.0008	.86
Health	Clinic, flu, pill	1.31 (0.96)	**2.76 (1.50)**	$F(1,74) = 26.07$, $p < .001$	.0008	1.15
Hear	Listen, hearing	**0.27 (0.34)**	0.04 (0.11)	$F(1,74) = 14.28$, $p < .001$	.0008	.91
Negative Emotions	Hurt, ugly, nasty	0.80 (0.70)	**1.51 (1.24)**	$F(1,74) = 9.92$, $p = .002$	.0008	.71
Relativity	Area, bend, exit, stop	**14.84 (2.80)**	12.65 (3.08)	$(1,74) = 10.54$, $p = .002$	.0008	.74
Time	End, until, season	**6.19 (1.81)**	4.85 (2.02)	$F(1,74) = 9.19$, $p = .003$	.0008	.70
Anxiety	Worried, fearful, nervous	0.16 (0.25)	**0.43 (0.54)**	$F(1,74) = 8.10$, $p = .006$	.0009	.64
Money	Audit, cash, owe	**1.00 (1.18)**	0.49 (0.59)	$F(1,74) = 5.27$, $p = .024$	.0009	.55
Feel	Feels, touch	**0.47 (0.51)**	0.25 (0.32)	$F(1,74) = 4.90$, p = .03	.0009	.52
Family	Daughter, husband, aunt	**0.60 (0.92)**	0.25 (0.35)	$F(1,74) = 4.48$, $p = .038$	.0009	.50
Conjunctions	And, but, whereas	**6.22 (1.41)**	5.55 (1.48)	$F(1,74) = 4.08$, $p = .047$	.0009	.46

[33] The test was run on an exploratory basis. There were 64 categories tested. Only categories with considerable differences between treatment groups are included in this chart. The unmodified *p* values are indicated in the Statistical Test column. Adjusted *p* values were calculated using the Holm-Bonferroni method, based on 64 categories and a significance of 0.05. The effect size is indicated using Cohen's *d*. An effect size of 0.2 is considered small, 0.5 is considered medium, and 0.8 is large, although this is a very general rule (Cohen, 1988).

Category	Examples	Non-stigmatized (SD)	Stigmatized (SD)	Statistical Test	Adjusted *p* Value	Cohen's *d*
Perceptual Processes	Observing, heard, feeling	**1.12 (0.82)**	0.68 (0.62)	$F(1,74) = 6.78$, $p = 0.11$	.0009	.61
Motion	Arrive, car, go	**2.37 (0.91)**	1.84 (0.94)	$F(1,74) = 6.23$, $p = 0.15$	.001	.57

Table 4.2: Comparison of Selected Categories of Words in Appeal Letters with Published Norms[34]

Category	Examples	Appeal Letters	Control Group	Statistical Test	Adjusted *p* Value	Cohen's *d*
Conjunctions	And, but, whereas	5.92 (1.46)	**7.71 (1.64)**	t (2505) = 9.40, $p < .001$	.003*	1.15
Exclusive	But, without, exclude	1.31 (0.96)	**2.89 (1.49)**	t (2505) = 9.18, $p < .001$	.004*	1.26
Feel	Feels, touch	0.37 (0.44)	**0.62 (0.50)**	t (2505) = 4.31, $p < .001$	.004*	.53
Health	Clinic, flu, pill	**1.96 (1.41)**	0.49 (0.65)	t (2505) = 18.42, $p < .001$	.004*	1.34
Inclusive	And, with, include	**6.66 (1.66)**	4.96 (1.90)	t (2505) = 7.71, $p < .001$	.005*	.95
Motion	Arrive, car, go	2.14 (0.95)	**3.57 (1.15)**	t (2505) = 6.00, $p < .001$	.005*	1.36

[34] Statistics for Control Group from Pennebaker, Chung, *et al*. (2007), 10-13. The unmodified *p* values are indicated in the Statistical Test column. Adjusted *p* values were calculated using the Holm-Bonferroni method, based on 15 categories and a significance of 0.05. Significant results were starred. The effect size is indicated using Cohen's *d*. An effect size of 0.2 is considered small, 0.5 is considered medium, and 0.8 is large, although this is a very general rule (Cohen, 1988).

Category	**Examples**	**Appeal Letters**	**Control Group**	**Statistical Test**	**Adjusted *p* Value**	**Cohen's *d***
Perceptual Processes	Observing, heard, feeling	0.92 (0.76)	**1.91 (1.16)**	t (2505) = 3.32, $p < .001$	.006*	1.01
Relativity	Area, bend, exit, stop	13.86 (3.09)	**20.13 (3.21)**	t (2505) = 16.79, $p < .001$	.006*	1.99
Time	End, until, season	5.59 (1.99)	**8.20 (1.84)**	t (2505) = 12.15, $p < .001$	.007*	1.36
Negative Emotions	Hurt, ugly, nasty	**1.11 (1.02)**	0.71 (0.91)	t (2505) = 3.76, $p < .001$	.008*	.41
Money	Audit, cash, owe	**0.78 (0.98)**	0.56 (0.54)	t (2505) = 3.38, $p < .001$	.010*	.28
Hear	Listen, hearing	0.17 (0.28)	**0.35 (0.47)**	t (2505) = 3.32, $p < .001$	.013*	.47
Biological Processes	Eat, blood, pain	2.47 (1.38)	**2.97 (1.44)**	t (2505) = 2.98, $p = .003$	.017*	.35
Anxiety	Worried, fearful, nervous	**0.28 (0.42)**	0.21 (0.33)	t (2505) = 1.80, $p = .07$	.025	.19
Family	Daughter, husband, aunt	0.44 **(0.74)**	0.33 (0.53)	t (2505) = 0.96, $p = .337$	.05	.17

The means between groups were practically identical for inclusive words (NS 6.76/ ST 6.54) and exclusive words (NS 1.31/ ST 1.30). For both groups, inclusive words (e.g. and, with, include) occur roughly five times more often than do exclusive words (e.g. but, without, exclude) (Pennebaker, Chung, *et al.*, 2007).

I compared the means and standard deviations for the thirteen categories identified, above, plus inclusive language and exclusive language, between the appeal letters as a whole and a control group studied by Pennebaker, Chung, *et al.* (2007). Those writing for the control group (N=2,431) wrote about non-emotional topics, such as describing ordinary objects or events. See Table 4.2, above.

Discussion

This analysis was run on an exploratory basis, so I ran the full LIWC software library; there were a total of 64 categories tested. Using a 0.05 level of significance, we would expect 3.2 categories to show as significant by chance. Eleven of the thirteen categories meet the more restrictive Holm-Bonferroni adjusted criteria.

Taken as a whole, the categories showing significantly higher usage for the nonstigmatized group (e.g., Family, Hear, Feel) are more humanizing than those for the stigmatized group (e.g., Negative Emotions, Biological Processes, Health). For instance, the language used for the nonstigmatized group places the client base within a communal unit, which suggests reciprocal behavior, and includes language that recognizes their subjective experiences and “qualities associated with meaning, interest, and compassion,” (Haslam, 2006, p. 253, citing Barnard, 2001). In contrast, the language used for the stigmatized group neglects these constructs in favor of language that emphasizes biological processes rather than subjective experiences, and describes interventions rather than "touch and human warmth" (Haslam, 2006, p. 253). These choices are consistent with literature about stigma, which essentially dehumanizes.

The likely reasons for other differences are less obvious. For example, in a fundraising appeal letter, why would there be a significant difference between client types in mentioning money? Even if not ultimately significant, it would be interesting to look more closely at the letters for the context around these words to determine whether there are meaningful patterns.

The appeal letters written for this study illustrated a use of language that differs from that of published norms for a control group. Previous tests have shown that language usage differs across different genres, such as emotional writing about personally relevant topics, scientific articles, blogs, novels, and casual speech (Pennebaker, Chung, *et al.*, 2007). Comparing our sample of appeal letters with the control group, we find that the appeal letters included a significantly higher use of health related words and mention of negative emotions, as well as a higher incidence of money related terms. This variation might be explained by the task set the writers – to ask for funding support for specific populations, both of which may have medical needs. Appeal letters also used significantly more inclusive language, and significantly less exclusive language, compared to writing describing ordinary events and objects.

Analysis 3: Quantitative Content Analysis of Letters

Specifically, how does writing for a more stigmatized group compare to writing for a less stigmatized group? Is there a systematic difference in whether the client population is presented as being close to the readers? Do fundraisers make different choices in framing an appeal positively or negatively depending on the beneficiaries? Are different kinds of evidence supporting the appeal offered for different groups? Do appeals vary in emphasizing indirect benefits to the potential donors? Given a choice of emotional approaches, which tend to include client stories, and rational approaches, which tend to include facts or statistics, or a hybrid between the two, are there differences according to the beneficiary group? Are there differences in what kind of services are highlighted? What concepts or themes are raised in the letters, and do they vary by type of beneficiary group?

Findings

Letters were analyzed for a variety of content variables, including the distance presented between the reader of the appeal and the organization's clients; the framing of the appeal; types of evidence used within the letter for persuasive effect; the inclusion of specific organizational characteristics; and the inclusion of concepts or themes within the letter. Each was analyzed using an ANOVA to test for significant differences between categories, with the exception of Collective Other, which was indicated in all letters. The results of the statistical tests are presented in Table 4.3, below.

Table 4.3: Content Variables Coded in Letters by Client Type[35]

Variable	**Non-stigmatized (SD)**	**Stigmatized (SD)**	**Statistical Test**	**Adjusted *p* Value**	**Cohen's *d***
Stigma	.02 (.15)	**.26 (.45)**	F(1,74) = 10.63, $p = 0.002$	0.002*	.72
Negative Frame	**.26 (.45)**	.03 (.17)	F(1,74) = 8.27, $p = 0.005$	0.002	.68
Statistics	.48 (.51)	**.76 (.43)**	F(1,74) = 6.98, $p = 0.01$	0.002	.59
Empowerment	.57 (.50)	**.74 (.45)**	F(1,74) = 2.21, $p = 0.14$	0.002	.36
Sidewalk	**.36 (.49)**	.21 (.41)	F(1,74) = 2.09, $p = 0.15$	0.002	.33
Close Other	**.10 (.30)**	.03 (.17)	F(1,74) = 1.31, $p = .26$	0.003	.29
Emotional Benefits	**.93 (.26)**	.85 (.36)	F(1,74) = 1.13, $p = .29$	0.003	.25
Fulfillment	**.55 (.50)**	.44 (.50)	F(1,74) = 0.84, $p = .36$	0.003	.22
Transform	.43 (.50)	**.53 (.51)**	F(1,74) = 0.75, $p = .39$	0.003	.20
Safety	**.19 (.40)**	.12 (.33)	F(1,74) = 0.74, $p = .39$	0.003	.19
Material Benefits	**.07 (.26)**	.03 (.17)	F(1,74) = 0.65, $p = .42$	0.003	.18
Client Worthiness	**.79 (.42)**	.71 (.46)	F(1,74) = 0.63, $p = .43$	0.004	.18
Stories	**.55 (.50)**	.47 (.51)	F(1,74) = 0.44, $p = .51$	0.004	.16
Positive Frame	.90 (.30)	**.94 (.24)**	F(1,74) = 0.34, $p = .56$	0.004	.15
Proximity	**.10 (.30)**	.06 (.24)	F(1,74) = 0.34, $p = .56$	0.005	.15
Transport	**.48 (.51)**	.41 (.50)	F(1,74) = 0.31, $p = .58$	0.005	.14
Individual Other	**.50 (.51)**	.44 (.50)	F (1,74) = 0.26, $p = .62$	0.006	.12
Lonely	**.43 (.50)**	.38 (.49)	F (1,74) = 0.16, $p = .69$	0.006	.10

[35] There were 25 variables tested. The unmodified *p* values are indicated in the Statistical Test column. Adjusted *p* values were calculated using the Holm-Bonferroni method, based on 25 categories and a significance of 0.05. The effect size is indicated using Cohen's *d*. An effect size of 0.2 is considered small, 0.5 is considered medium, and 0.8 is large, although this is a very general rule (Cohen, 1988).

Variable	Non-stigmatized (SD)	Stigmatized (SD)	Statistical Test	Adjusted *p* Value	Cohen's *d*
Organizational Quality	.95 (.22)	**.97 (.17)**	F (1,74) = 0.16, p = .69	0.007	.10
Unmet	.29 (.46)	**.32 (.48)**	F (1,74) = 0.12, p = .73	0.008	.06
Community Benefits	.76 (.43)	**.79 (.41)**	F (1,74) = 0.11, p = .74	0.01	.07
Transition	.38 (.49)	**.41 (.50)**	F (1,74) = 0.73, p = .79	0.01	.06
Events	.05 (.22)	**.06 (.24)**	F (1,74) = 0.73, p = .79	0.02	.04
Reader Characteristics	**.40 (.50)**	.38 (.49)	F (1,74) = 0.38, p = .85	0.03	.04
Perspective Taking	.17 (.38)	**.18 (.39)**	F(1,74) = 0.01, p = .91	0.05	.03

Three variables met a 0.05 level of significance, but treating the question of whether there are specific differences in content between letters for stigmatized clients and letters for non-stigmatized clients as one question for analysis, out of twenty-five variables, we would expect 1.25 categories to show as significant by chance. Only one of the thirteen categories meet the more restrictive Holm-Bonferroni adjusted criteria.[36] The concept of Stigma occurred significantly more frequently within the letters written for the stigmatized group than for the nonstigmatized group, F (1, 74) = 10.63, p = 0.002.

Discussion

All letters referred to their client population at least once as a group (Collective Other). Nearly half of the letters also referenced an individual client by name (Individual

[36] If we treat each sub-question as a separate question for analysis, we can retain the .05 standard, and consider that Negative Framing occurs significantly more often in letters for the Nonstigmatized group, F(1,74) = 8.27, p = 0.005, and Statistics or other empirical evidence is used significantly more often in letters for the Stigmatized group, F(1,74) = 6.98, p = 0.01 (Lakens, 2016).

Other). Infrequently, the letters referred to a client or potential client as someone close to the writer of the letter, such as “my friend,” or “my grandmother” (Close Other). About 17% of letters across groups encouraged the reader of the letter to take the perspective of someone who might benefit from the services of the organization (Perspective Taking). Letters could have more than one way of referring to the client or potential client population. There was no significant difference between experimental conditions on any of the variables measuring the distance presented between the reader and the organization’s clients. Similarly, neither participants’ reported expectations of community perceptions not their personal preferences for social distance significantly affected the use of various distances. Therefore, looking merely at the presence or absence of each possibility as a category does not allow us to draw any conclusions about whether fundraisers position one client group as closer to the reader than the other.

The vast majority of appeals used a positive frame when asking for a gift, e.g., “with your gift we will accomplish good things.” A minority used a negative frame, e.g., “without your gift bad things will happen.” A single letter could include both kinds of framing, one kind of framing, or no framing valence. Use of a negative frame occurred in eleven of the letters for the nonstigmatized client population (26.2%), and in just one of the letters for the stigmatized population (2.9%). If analyzing framing as a separate question, rather than one part of a broader question, this would be sufficient to reject the possibility that this occurrence happened by chance, and would be attributable to the difference in client populations. As it is, we cannot reject the possibility that this difference occurred by chance, but it is a large enough difference to draw attention and consider for further research. There was no significant difference between experimental conditions on the use of a positive frame. A paired t-test confirmed that our fundraisers were significantly more likely to use a positive frame than a negative frame, $t(75) = 12.97$, $p < .001$.

Almost all letters spoke to the quality of the organization by addressing its services, its effectiveness, or its value (Organizational Quality). About three-quarters of the letters spoke to organizational clients as being worthy of helping, including highlighting similarities with readers, encouraging sympathy, or describing changes for the better (Client Worthiness). Taken together, these choices align with appealing to donors' values and their preference for effective altruism (e.g. Bekkers & Wiepking, 2011). About four out of ten letters imputed desirable characteristics to the reader, such as "kind" or "generous" (Reader Characteristics), which may activate a readers' altruistic moral identity, and prompt them to make a gift (e.g. Bekkers & Wiepking, 2011). There was no significant difference between experimental treatments on the likelihood of including a particular approach.

Nearly nine in ten fundraisers writing for both experimental conditions were likely to include an emotional benefit to the reader tied to giving, such as feeling good, feeling effective, or avoiding guilt or shame (Emotional Benefit). This result aligns with both practitioner advice to use emotionally appealing language (e.g. Brooks, 2012; Warwick, 2008) and with research tying the activation of emotional processing with a higher likelihood of positive donor response (Dickert, Sagara, & Slovic, 2011). About three-quarters of the letters positioned giving as being of benefit to the reader's community (Community Benefit). This choice may function to highlight the similarity or closeness of the donor to the beneficiaries of the donations. Highlighting material benefits, such as tax incentives or donor premiums, was much less common, with only four letters out of 76 choosing this option (Material Benefit). A single letter could link giving to more than one kind of indirect benefit, or none. These approaches were relatively stable across experimental conditions.

Stories were used in about half of the appeal letters (Stories), with no significant difference between treatments. The common use of stories coupled with the high incidence of positive framing (reported earlier) aligns with research suggesting this is an effective combination in motivating gifts (Das, Kirkhof & Kuiper, 2008) and may serve to reinforce the motivational aspect of each piece (Shen & Bigsby, 2013). Fundraisers were more likely to use statistics or other empirical evidence (Statistics) when writing for the stigmatized population, $F(1, 74) = 6.98$, $p=.01$, such as citing the number of clients visiting, or referencing that the organization's approach is a proven model when working with the issue. However, the Holm-Bonferroni adjusted cutoff for this variable for a .05 level of significance is $p = .002$, making this result not statistically significant.[37] Although we cannot rule out the possibility of a chance result, the nearly thirty percentage point difference in use of this approach is a strong enough trend to warrant further attention. About five percent of letters referenced external events (Events), such as decreased government funding, as a reason for giving; there was no significant difference between groups.

Of four organizational service characteristics coded and analyzed, the most mentioned in both groups was a service to provide transportation for clients to and from medical appointments (Transport), occurring in about 45% of letters. Slightly fewer

[37] The adjusted p value is reported to three decimal places.

letters highlighted a service to help clients transition from hospital visits back to a home settings (Transition), about 40%. Next in popularity, several letters spoke about a planned expansion of sidewalk seating outside the main building (Sidewalk) – about 36% in the non-stigmatized group, and about 21% in the stigmatized group. Few letters in either group specified the organization's close proximity to residences and restaurants (Proximity). None of the variables was statistically significantly different between groups, although the fifteen percentage point difference in the use of sidewalk seating is worth watching.

Several letters included latent expectations as to whether clients ought to be empowered to enjoy the regular rights and privileges that a normal person ought to have (Empowerment), or whether clients ought to experience opportunities for self-actualization, or realization of their talents and potentials (Fulfillment). Letters addressing the stigmatized clients were 74% likely to have a theme of Empowerment, compared to 57% for the non-stigmatized clients. Letters addressing the non-stigmatized clients were about 55% likely to address Fulfillment, compared to 44% in the stigmatized condition. These trends are consistent with what we would expect in terms of discounted life expectations for a stigmatized population (e.g., Link & Phelan, 2001). However, the differences between groups was not statistically significant, meaning we can't eliminate the possibility of chance.

Just under half of the letters described a positive transformation in clients' lives due to the efforts of the organization (Transform), which would correlate with donor preferences for effective altruism (Bekkers & Wiepking, 2011). About 40% of letters in both groups described their clients as having been lonely or isolated (Lonely). Letters also described further unmet need within the community (Unmet), giving evidence for the need for voluntary support. Some letters described their clients' need for a safe environment (Safety). The differences between groups was not significant for any of these items. Letters written on behalf of the stigmatized population were significantly more likely to describe clients living with stigma, or being unaccepted (Stigma), $F(1, 74) = 10.63$, $p = .002$. In terms of absolute numbers, nine letters writing about the stigmatized population broached the subject, compared to one letter for the non-stigmatized population.[38] The Holm-Bonferroni adjusted cutoff for a $p = .05$ for this variable is $p = .002$, so this result is statistically significant.

Patterns in Writing: Exploratory Factor Analysis

The task of writing to a given prompt within controlled situations presents an excellent opportunity to examine naturally occurring patterns in fundraisers' writing choices. I analyzed the data using exploratory factor analysis with principal component analysis extraction and Oblimin oblique rotation with Kaiser normalization. Principal component analysis identifies variables that are highly inter-correlated without assuming the existence of latent variables (Grace-Martin, 2018). Oblique rotation is appropriate when there are theoretical reasons to think the factors may be correlated (Ho, 2014). For example, including a story in an appeal letter is likely to also occur with the use of an identified "other" individual within the text, although it is possible to include one without the other. Factors with Eigenvalues of 1 or higher were retained and reported.

[38] Although the study refers to the populations as "stigmatized" and "non-stigmatized," participants did not encounter the word within the study until after they had written the letters. The use of this concept within the letters, therefore, was their unprompted response to the population and how they expected the community to view them.

Table 4.4: Exploratory Factor Analysis of Content Variables

Factor Groups	Variables	Mean	Std. Dev.	Factor and % of Variance Explained					
				1	2	3	4	5	6
				21.74	11.58	8.68	7.56	7.21	6.56
1: Universalism (value)	Individual Other	.47	.50	**.89**					
	Story	.51	.50	**.88**					
	Transformation	.47	.50	**.87**					
	Client Worthiness	.75	.44	**.71**					
	Empowerment	.64	.48	**.67**					
	Lonely	.41	.50	**.66**					
	Sidewalk	.29	.46	**.42**					
2: Medical	MD Transportation	.45	.50		**.80**				
	Transition from Hospital	.39	.49		**.77**				
3: Framing	Positive Frame	.92	.27			**.81**			
	Negative Frame	.16	.37			**-.62**			
4: Security (value)	Close Other	.07	.25				**.76**		
	Community Benefit	.78	.42				**-.63**		
	Material Benefit	.05	.23				**.55**		
	Safety	.16	.37				**.52**		
5: Supply/ Demand	Organizational Quality	.96	.20					**-.74**	
	Unmet Need	.30	.46					**.66**	
6: Social Expectations	Stigma	.13	.34						**.78**
	Fulfillment	.50	.50						**-.51**
	Statistics & Empirical Evidence	.61	.49						**.43**

Findings

An initial run identified ten factors. For a second run, I omitted those factors that explained less than 5% of the variance and that contained only one or two variables. Multiple runs are common in exploratory factor analysis in order to identify the substantively meaningful factors (Ho, 2014). The rotation converged in 16 iterations. The results are found in Table 4.4, above.

I identified six factors, which together explain just less than two-thirds of the variance across letters. Of the six, two factors are statistically significant across experimental conditions. As we already suspected, framing is distinct between the two conditions, with those writing for the stigmatized population more likely to use a positive frame (or less likely to use a negative frame) than those writing for the non-stigmatized population, F (1, 74) = 5.47, $p = 0.02$. The other factor is Social Expectations is, F (1, 74) = 11.68, $p < .01$. See Table 4.5.

Table 4.5: Factors in Letters by Client Type[39]

Variable	**Non-stigmatized (SD)**	**Stigmatized (SD)**	**Statistical Test**	**Cohen's *d***
Factor 1: Universalism	**.52 (.36)**	.50 (.36)	F(1,74) = 0.07, *p* = .80	.06
Factor 2: Medical	**.43 (.44)**	.41 (.43)	F(1,74) = 0.03, *p* = .87	.05
Factor 3: Framing	.82 (.31)	**.96 (.14)**	F(1,74) = 5.47, *p* = 0.02*	.58
Factor 4: Security	**.15 (.24)**	.10 (.15)	F(1,74) = 1.26, *p* = .27	.25
Factor 5: Supply/ Demand	.17 (.29)	**.18 (.27)**	F(1,74) = 0.03, *p* = .87	.04

[39] The effect size is indicated using Cohen's *d*. An effect size of 0.2 is considered small, 0.5 is considered medium, and 0.8 is large, although this is a very general rule (Cohen, 1988).

Variable	Non-stigmatized (SD)	Stigmatized (SD)	Statistical Test	Cohen's *d*
Factor 6: Social Expectations	.32 (.26)	**.53 (.27)**	$F(1,74) = 11.68$, $p < .01$*	.79

Discussion

The first factor, present in about 22% of letters written, incorporates components that suggest a story about an individual stranger, who is worth helping, who was lonely and has had a transformational experience; they are now empowered and social. This construct is consistent with a value of Universalism (Caprara, Schwartz, *et al.*, 2006).[40]

The second factor, incorporating mention of transportation to doctors' visits and assistance in transitioning back to home after a hospital stay, is a choice to address Medical issues.

The third factor indicates the use of Framing, and that, usually, authors used either the positive frame or the negative frame.

The fourth factor describes a construct that is more focused on the self-interests of the reader. It uses an in-group approach to introduce a client who is close to the writer of the letter, and therefore a "known" stranger. It incorporates the importance of safety, and suggests material benefits for the reader. This construct correlates negatively with mentioning benefits for the community. Its components are consistent with a value of Security (Caprara, Schwartz, *et al.*, 2006).[41]

[40] Caprara, Schwartz, *et al.* (2006) define Universalism as a value construct that incorporates "understanding, appreciation, tolerance, and protection for the welfare of all people and for nature" (p. 7).
[41] Caprara, Schwartz, *et al.* (2006) define Security as a value construct incorporating "safety, harmony, and stability of society, of relationships, and of self" (p. 7).

The fifth factor, Supply/ Demand, is a pattern describing that writers either focused on organizational quality (supply) or on unmet need (demand), but generally not both.

The sixth and final factor explains only about 7% of the variance in letters, but is the most significantly related to the type of client base. This factor, Social Expectations, tells us that if writers presented someone as stigmatized, they also were more likely to use empirical evidence, and less likely to talk about fulfillment or self-actualization. Conversely, if writers did address fulfillment or self-actualization, they were unlikely to present their clients as experiencing stigma, and less likely to include statistics or other empirical evidence. Finally, writers were more likely to raise the issue of stigma and use empirical evidence when writing for the stigmatized client group. Conversely, they were more likely to discuss fulfilment and avoid statistics or mention of stigma when writing for the non-stigmatized group.

The identified covariances tell us about what patterns present in the written letters. Several did not appear to be clearly tied to the client group, suggesting that perhaps they are tied to preferences or attributes of the fundraisers writing them. Future research might look at a cluster analysis to find patterns by writer. We also have other data on the writers, such as dispositional empathy, which may correlate especially with the factors that match identified value constructs. Finally, it is possible that there are latent variables causing some of these choices, in which case a common factor analysis with some other method of extraction may be fruitful.

Summary and Remaining Chapters

This chapter has presented the findings from the experimental portion of the research study, examined by experimental treatment group. There were no statistically significant differences by group in the relative focus on clients and the charitable organization. The different treatments did result in different kinds of words used, with the ST treatment including more words related to Negative Emotions, Anxiety, Biological Processes, and Health, and the NS treatment including more words relating to Perceptual Processes, Family, Time, and Money. Examining the content variables individually, only inclusion of the idea of Stigma was significantly statistically related to treatment condition. Other variables showed strong trends toward one client base or the other, but we cannot confirm whether those are caused by the different clients or not. Exploratory factor analysis confirms that there are significant differences in the use of framing between the two client groups, and in the social expectations presented for the client groups.

The next chapter presents and discusses the findings from the qualitative portion of this study. Chapter Six will summarize findings, discuss their relevance, and conclude.

CHAPTER FIVE
INTERVIEW FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter presents the findings from qualitative analysis of interviews conducted with fifteen respondents. In approaching this work, I adapted the conventions of a dramaturgical framework (Goffman, 1959). Essentially, this makes some assumptions about what happens when fundraisers write to donors about clients – as they do in an acquisition appeal, which introduces potential donors to the organization and, by extension, the clients it serves as a part of its mission. The first assumption is that fundraisers are working with an understanding of the importance of first impressions. The second assumption is that the fundraiser will take the opportunity to effectively define and project an interpretation of the situation that suggests a plan for cooperative action. In other words, the fundraiser "has informed them {the readers} as to what is and as to what they *ought* to see as the 'is'" (Goffman, p. 13). That is, the fundraiser describes the situation, the frame for interpreting it, and for acting upon those perceptions. This expressive work of describing situations, influencing perceptions, and encouraging action is fundamental to the type of communicative work in question. The third assumption is that, in order to achieve this, the fundraiser must present themselves, and their organization, as having a distinctive moral character that supports the interpretation of the situation they are presenting and the kind of action they hope to encourage on the part of the reader. That is, the fundraiser must present the organization, and by extension the clients that animate its mission, as being worthy of giving to. And the fourth assumption is that, in order for this expressive work to be successful, fundraisers must put themselves in the place of the readers to the point of predicting how they are likely to react, that is, what will be considered aligned with the situation being discussed in the appeal letter and the action being sought, and what might be considered discordant. This is the type of "performance" that regularly happens in many everyday settings, particularly in work settings. Since the role of fundraiser is one that relies on a high degree of expressive competence, fundraising communications invites analysis under this framework.

In this section, we see that fundraisers regularly evaluated how readers were likely to read the letters they wrote, and that writing for the stigmatized client population raised special concerns that weren't evident when discussing appeals for non-stigmatized clients. Fundraisers' own implicit assumptions also came into play, highlighting the role of the fundraiser not only in producing expressive communication, but also in interpreting the situation and preferences of others.

Organization of Findings

As this study fundamentally relies on fundraisers' perceptions of how donors and potential donors of a nonprofit view its client population, and how these perceptions shape the choices fundraisers make in communicating with potential donors through appeal letters, I begin these findings by first talking about the fundraisers with whom I spoke. They are the core of the study, the ones whose perceptions modify the actions taken and examined. Then, I talk about how they see acquisition appeals – the form of communication anticipated between themselves and their organizations' donors – and how these appeals reflect fundraisers' understanding of likely donors to an organization – the audience for whom appeal letters are written. Then, I discuss how fundraisers write to donors about different clients. Finally, I discuss how the fundraisers saw the different client groups. My understanding of fundraisers' perceptions of client groups came from our primary discussion of how they would write about clients to donors, so I follow that same arc in presentation.

Note that I do not address donors' thoughts or perceptions of themselves or of the organizations' clients, except as perceived by fundraisers through their professional experience and social expectations. I also limit the focus on differences in donor preferences by using an acquisition appeal, for which there is relatively little known about the individuals reading the letters. Similarly, I don't address clients' realities or perceptions, except as perceived by fundraisers. I only address perceptions from the fundraisers' point of view, as relayed to me in interviews, as well as the letters written as part of the experimental data, which were discussed during the interviews. Both express and implicit meanings are considered.

Fundraisers: The Storytellers

Description

All the fundraisers interviewed for this portion of the study had previously participated in the experimental portion. I had the letters they wrote from the original random assignment to clients. I also had their responses to the questions about community perceptions about the clients, and to their own personal preferences about the social distance between them and the client group for which they wrote. Their appeal letters were a central part of our interviews, as we discussed what they wanted to accomplish with an acquisition appeal, how they had spoken to those goals within the letter they wrote, and how their approach might change if the client base changed.

As noted in Chapter 3, demographically this subgroup was fairly similar to the participants overall, although they were selected through a mixed purposeful sampling logic (more on that later). Participants lived and worked in Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, or North Carolina. Of the fifteen, ten were female, and five were male. As for race and ethnicity, individuals could select as many categories as appropriate, so the total sums to more than 15. The categories chosen were as follows: white (13); black (1); Asian (1); Native American, Alaskan Native, Pacific Islander (1); Hispanic/ Latinx (1). Participant ages at the time of the survey (March – July 2017) are shown in Table 5.1.

Table 5.1
Ages of Interviewed Participants

Age	Number (N=15)
25-34	6
35-44	6
45-54	1
55-64	2

All fifteen individuals had attained at least a Bachelor's degree. Undergraduate majors were in the Arts, Humanities, Social Sciences, and Professional areas (see Table 5.2).

Table 5.2
Undergraduate Fields of Study of Interviewed Participants

Major Area	Number (N=15)*
Arts	2

(Theatre)	
Humanities (Art History, Communications, English)	7
Social Sciences (Economics, Political Science, Psychology, Sociology)	7
Professional (Business Management (Nonprofits), Journalism, Physical Therapy)	3

*Four individuals had double majors

Eleven individuals had earned or were in the process of earning graduate degrees. Graduate degrees tended to have more of a professional focus than undergraduate fields of study. See Table 5.3.

Table 5.3
Graduate Fields of Study of Interviewed Participants

Field of Study	**Number (N=11)**
Communication Studies	1
Education (Education, Learning and Organizational Change)	2
Governmental Affairs	1
Management (Human Relations, Human Resources, Human Services Nonprofit Management, MBA, Nonprofit Management)	7

In terms of professional experience, nine had less than ten years' experience as a fundraiser; five had been fundraising for at least ten years. One person did not respond to this question. As a group, they had broad experience fundraising across different types of nonprofits, both professionally and in a volunteer capacity. See Table 5.4.

Table 5.4
Participants' Fundraising Experience by Subsector (N=15)

Subsector	Professional	Volunteer
Arts, culture, & humanities	7	6
Education & research	12	3
Environmental & animals	1	2
Health Services	4	4
Human Services	8	9
International & Foreign Affairs	1	4
Public & societal benefit	4	6
Religion	5	4
Mutual or membership benefit	1	2

Because volunteering for an additional research module may be prompted by a desire to make a positive impression on the researcher, which might also affect responses in a face to face interview, I also compared the average social desirability score of interview participants (M = 6.27, SD = 1.91) to that of overall participants (M = 5.59, SD = 1.90). There was no significant difference between the groups, $t(89) = 1.27$, $p=0.21$.

Selection: Highly Negative Perceptions, Highly Positive Perceptions

My strategy for sample selection was to select based on extremes of both how the fundraiser assessed community perceptions of the client base for which they had written, and how comfortable the fundraiser himself or herself was regarding the client base (social distance). Selecting based on extremes of a characteristic allows us to learn from exceptional manifestations of a phenomenon (Patton, 2002), and are likely to be rich cases of the phenomenon of interest. Theoretically, if there are differences based on perception of client base, they are likely to be more pronounced by speaking with those with more extreme responses, compared to their peers. And, if there is no variation in how perceptions of stigma associated with clients affects fundraisers, then that would suggest that stigma doesn't seem to affect how fundraisers write appeals. I also selected one case that has no extreme responses to further allow for a variety of answers, and to aid in identifying commonalities among responses (Patton, 2002). See Table 5.5 (originally included in Chapter 3 as Table 3.1).

Table 5.5
Interview Participant Selection Strategy

Total N=15	**Nonstigmatized Treatment**	**Stigmatized Treatment**
More Negatively Perceived Overall (Responses to questions #26.1-21.16 in bottom quartile for treatment group)	1	1
More Discounted (Responses to questions #21.1, 21.13 in bottom quartile for treatment group)	1	1
More Negative Stereotypes (Responses to questions #21.10, 21.11 in bottom quartile for treatment group)	1	1
More Threatening (Responses to questions #21.6, 21.16 in bottom quartile for treatment group)	1	1
Greater Social Distance Preferred (Responses to questions #22.1-22.6 in bottom quartile for treatment group)	1	1
More Positively Perceived Overall (Responses to questions #26.1-21.16 in top quartile for treatment group)	1	1
Less Social Distance Preferred (Responses to questions #22.1-22.6 in top quartile for treatment group)	1	1

Neutral (None of the individual's responses fell into either extreme quartile for their treatment group for any of the criteria above.)	1	0[42]

Eight participants were selected for responses that indicated a more negative assessment of how the community perceived the client base than their peers as measured along various aspects of stigma, including being discounted, having negative stereotypes, being threatening, and an overall more negative perception. Of these, four were chosen from each of the randomly assigned client bases in the experimental portion. Two, one who had written for each client base, indicated a stronger personal preference for distance from their assigned client group, compared to others in their assigned condition. Two, one from each condition, were selected because they had indicated a more positive assessment of how their assigned client base was viewed within the community, compared to their peer group. And two, one from each client assignment group, were chosen because they indicated a stronger personal preference for less distance from their assigned client group. Additional information about sample selection is included in Chapter 3; see also Table 3.1. Since these responses were evaluated within similar groups, rather than across client types, they can been seen as characteristics of the fundraisers themselves, rather than tied to a client type.

Because these individuals were selected for extreme responses to aspects of social acceptability (positive or negative), it is helpful to understand their likely exposure to stigmatized populations. Regular exposure to a marginalized population can correlate

[42] One individual who volunteered for interviews met this criteria, but s/he did not respond to my interest in setting an interview.

with lower perceived stigma, compared to individuals who don't get to know people with that stigmatizing condition (Björkman, Angelman, & Jönsson, 2008). Therefore, I looked at what their self-reported professional history can tell us about possible past experience working with a stigmatized population.

Among those populations that have been studied within the context of stigma are epilepsy (e.g. Austin, MacLeod, *et al*., 2004), HIV/AIDS (e.g. Berger, Ferrans, Lashley, 2001; Logie & Gadella, 2009), leprosy (e.g. Anandaraj, 1995), and mental illness (e.g. Corrigan, 2004; Link, Phelan, *et al*., 1999); those with various disabilities (e.g. Dorfman, 2016; Hebl & Kleck, 2000); and the unemployed and the homeless (e.g. Breeze & Dean, 2012; Wasserman & Clair, 2010). Where might a fundraiser likely come into professional contact with these populations, identified by these attributes? Although health and human services organizations work for a variety of populations (e.g., childcare, labor and delivery), I identified these types of organizations to take a closer at our population of interview participants' experience. About half of interview participants had raised funds for human service organizations in either a professional or a volunteer capacity, and about one quarter had raised funds for a health services organization in either capacity. Separating those with more negative perceptions (of the community's views or their own) from those with more positive perceptions, about half of those with more negative perceptions had raised funds for human services organizations; fundraising for health was a much less common experience. Among those with more positive perceptions (of the community's view or their own), all had previously raised funds for both health organizations and human services organizations either on a professional or a volunteer basis. See Table 5.6

Table 5.6
Fundraising Experience with Health & Human Services Organizations
(CP = Community Perceptions; PP = Personal Preferences)

	Neg. CP (N=8)	Neg. PP (N=2)	Pos. CP (N=2)	Pos. PP (N=2)	No Extreme (N=1)
Health – Professional	1	1	1	1	0
Health – Volunteer	1	1	2	2	0
Human Services – Professional	3	2	1	2	0
Human Services – Volunteer	5	1	1	2	0

No information is available about the size of the organizations at which they worked and volunteered, or the length of time at these organizations.

I also asked them about their personal experience with mental health, specifically. Of the fifteen, thirteen reported knowing someone who had received treatment for a mental health issue, and nine people reported their relationship with the individual as "extremely close" or "very close." About half of respondents reported that they had personally received mental health services, distributed fairly evenly across positive and negative perception and preference categories.

Themes of Service and Effectiveness

It's well established that personal values and preferences play a role in individuals' motivations in the workplace (Sheldon, Elliot, *et al*., 2004; Bono & Judge, 2003). And, those motivations affect not only the direction of a person's efforts, but also how they pursue those goals. One theme emerging from interviews was that of desiring to serve, and to work with others toward a worthwhile goal. Two participants were previously volunteers through the AmeriCorps program City Year. One participant originally prepared for government service. Two others previously served in the military.

"Heather," who had personally served in the military and also grew up in a military family, discussed her distress when her planned career in the armed services went in an unexpected direction, and she decided on an honorable early separation:

> I did it. I got out, after two and a half years. I thought, okay, well what the hell am I going to do? How do I do a résumé? I never had to worry about a résumé. What is my life going to be? Will I ever be able to find something that I enjoy doing, that I'm passionate about, where I feel like I'm part of the community, I'm a part of something bigger than myself, and I could make a difference. Because that's what I wanted, and that's what I felt in the military.

After leaving the military, she found herself working for a nonprofit, and eventually turned her attention to fundraising. It was an alternative that hadn't been on her radar, but one that surprised her by allowing her to engage in work that aligned with her values:

> I'll tell you, my happiness and my satisfaction and the contributions that I make are far greater here than what I ever could have done in that career field in the Air Force. … I found something that became a big part of my life right now, and that is being in the nonprofit community, being a fundraiser, effecting positive change, making a difference in communities for individuals, for families, for – you name it. It's so fulfilling and rewarding, but it's also sometimes a very thankless job, a very frantic job. ("Heather", transcript of personal interview, August 9, 2017, p 3)

The idea of not necessarily having one's skill and care appreciated by others surfaced a few times. Participants spoke about how they would like to change long-standing practices in the organizations, but sometimes felt like although they had responsibility for fundraising, they didn't always have the authority to effect the changes they believed would be effective. "Mary" described a situation in which she was hired to fulfill one job function, and quickly assessed that this was not the most important function to attend to for success:

> So when I came to {health support organization}, there was a Director of Development, and they hired me specifically to do major gifts with individuals, and to do all corporate fundraising which was just a big gap they had. But when I got here two years ago, I learned that there was no one doing grant writing, and it was a big portion of their budget. When I asked, "Who is doing this," the answer was, "We just don't have time right now." They had a couple of people leave, and they hadn't replaced them. They replaced one with me, but two others left that they didn't replace. And so I just plunged back into grant writing. It's second nature to me to do that. Got that going. It takes a lot of time, as you know, and then realized that nobody was actively working the annual fund, at all. Well that's the backbone of giving.

Here, "Mary" has been hired for one kind of job that she's looking forward to, but once hired, she assesses that for the success of the fundraising efforts, the proper pieces aren't in place. This speaks to a level of perceived responsibility that is evidence of commitment to her position. She is given the autonomy to change her efforts in the direction of what she sees as effective – but it's taking her away from what she had been looking forward to. The situation is apparently caused by a decision to reduce staff, but her efforts are meeting with some success. And then, her successes are met with a further reduction in the resources that her department needs to succeed. "So as the budget goes up, as the revenue goes up, the Development Department size goes down. It's not a good situation, and we know it's not a good situation." For one who is keenly aware of how her position allows the further work of her organization to do its mission-driven work, this situation would be highly frustrating.

Sometimes, the meaning of the work being done is understood in different ways by the fundraiser and by his or her administrators or governing board, as revealed in this discussion with "Jessica." She's identified that one goal for an appeal letter is raising money, and I've asked her whether there is anything else she wants to accomplish with her letters. “Jessica” has responded that her board understands appeals as short-term revenue generation, but she has other objectives, too.

> I mean as a marketing director, it’s all about your image and what people know about you and think about you. I’m kind of a PR person too. What do people read about us? What do they think about us? So you’ve got to tell the great things you’re doing in order for that to go on. Even if someone doesn’t give, at least maybe they’ll read this, see the good things you're doing. Maybe they’ll volunteer, maybe they’ll give in the future. Maybe they’ll be in a conversation with someone that will even have them go check out Positivities. There’s a lot of different reasons for direct mail besides money. But your board will say to raise money.

“Jessica” illustrates a situation where it is important to her to believe that her efforts contribute effectively to effecting the kind of change that they speak of with donors, even when her understanding of what is effective is broader than that of the board’s. Her response also demonstrates sensitivity to the role of communication in promoting a situation that is consistent with positive donor action, either now or in the future.

Several participants were highly reflective, sometimes using our discussion to reflect on their assumptions and practice. “Joshua” considered the interview an interesting exercise, one that might be useful as a staff development tool: “This is a good exercise, I think, for us. Especially, perhaps next year we’ll do something like this at {organization}.” Visiting offices, I saw books on fundraising practice, and interviewees referred to the works of Tom Ahern, Jennifer Shang, and Mal Warwick in describing their theories of fundraising practice and how they carried out their work. Others seemed to enjoy sharing stories with an appreciative audience of both poor attempts and fundraising done well. There was professional camaraderie, especially with those working in offices with few or no other fundraisers. Several had stories that indicated that nonprofit administrators within their professional experience did not always fully appreciate the scope of the work done by fundraisers, and how their efforts could best integrate with others throughout the organizations. But by and large, the fundraisers with whom I spoke described the contributions they could make to a greater good by using their skills in a fundraising role, and, frequently, their enjoyment in the doing of the tasks. For instance, "Matthew," along with several others, truly enjoyed crafting his letters to the people he imagined might be reading them, waiting for the opportunity to act on something they also valued. As I thanked him for the time he spent writing and then analyzing his appeal letter with me, he responded, "It was fun. It was fun. That's what I needed to do for *this* audience."

Writing to Donors: Storytelling to an Audience

> "First impressions are apt to be permanent; it is therefore of importance that they should be favorable."
>
> – A Gentleman (1836)

There are multiple ways in which a person may come to make their first gift to an organization, and thus become a donor to it. They may be aware of the organization because of its reputation, or because it matters to a friend, a co-worker, or a family member. They may be attracted to a cause and then either look for or notice organizations that address that cause. They may attend an event for the organization's benefit, or read a story about it in the news. One way in which fundraisers attempt to find new donors for their organizations is to send out an appeal letter specifically aimed at people who have never donated before, but who they think may be a prospective donor, possibly because of where they live, where else they've given, or even what kind of magazines they subscribe to. This is an acquisition appeal, so named because it "acquires" someone who has shown their willingness to support the organization financially.

What Should an Acquisition Letter Do?

According to some people, an acquisition appeal is about how many people respond, and how much money comes in. When asked how she evaluated whether an appeal is successful, "Mary" didn't hesitate:

> By the response rate. There's no successful appeal if it's not accomplishing what you set out to do, which is to raise money for your organization. I don't care how pretty it is, or how nice the story is.

"Mary's" letter seems to assume a direct connection between the response rate and the amount of money raised. If using rented mailing lists for acquisition, then getting that initial response is also of strategic importance, "Jessica" shared:

> But [for] our acquisition [mailings], we want them to at least give once, so then they're on our regular mailing list, and they get all our other mail pieces.

There was general agreement that a letter ought to introduce the organization, and reflect positively on its image. "Matthew" was less focused on immediate return in favor of long-term impressions:

> I want people to, even if they don't send in the donations, to hear the stories, to understand that either (A) their last gift did mean something, or (B) if they've never given something, that at least the legacy that [the founders] embarked upon however many years ago is still continuing and alive today.

Many agreed that communicating the established, trustworthy nature of the organization was an important goal. Addressing how the organization meets the needs of clients in a way that is engaging and relatable to donors was another important consideration. "Sarah" described her writing process:

> I remember when I was writing this, it was interesting, because the first time I started writing it, I started out with the history. Like, "Established in 1991, Positivities…" And then I was thinking to myself, "That is so boring. I mean that's not going to help them relate to anything right off the bat."

Addressing his goals for an acquisition letter, "Jason" identified the importance of conveying impact, tying to the greater community, and making a connection to the act of giving:

> I think articulating really clearly what our impact is, I think to the extent that we can speak to -- I mentioned this earlier -- the community in which the recipient lives. People, again, tend to give to their own backyards. And three, doing the best that we can to articulate why their gift is important to making all of that happen.

In addition to conveying the importance of programs, "Susan" stressed educating donors about the importance of contributing to a well-operating organization:

> I want people to know that their money matters. And even if it's "just funding the lights," if it's general operating support. It's, "because we are here, these kinds of things can happen." So I think in the sample I did for you, I was talking about raising money to pay for the table space and the cleaning service so that the little café area would always be hospitable. I mean that's -- my impression from what I've seen in the research is that people -- if they can translate the need into something that they themselves need in their ordinary daily lives, it makes sense.

What Goes Into the Letter?

Some fundraisers have a basic format for writing their appeals. One typical sequence included the following steps: illustrate a need in the community, establish a common interest with the reader, and show the impact of services and of giving. The means of showing impact varied greatly. Some fundraisers found data compelling, such as "Christopher":

> From the reception end, as a potential donor or putting myself in their shoes, I want it to be visually engaging with photos or graphics. I want it

to be backed up by data or statistics. “95% of our students receive some sort of scholarship or financial assistance,” something along those lines. I want it to be short and powerful messaging.

“Christopher” also raised the importance of visual appeal, raising the idea that how one shows impact *should* vary, even within a single written piece.

Many had definite preferences on the amount of statistical evidence or empirical facts included: some liked three quick facts. Others used statistics much more sparingly, taking care to make them reader-friendly. Discussing the letter she’d written, “Mary” described how she uses numerical data in appeal letters:

> …so now we’re going to get into a little statistics, which I'm not fond of, but I went ahead and put -- two is about the most I'm willing to put in there. If I were rewriting this, I would say, “Nearly 500.” I don't like things like 482 at all, nor do I think readers like to read that. Or you could say, “Several hundred.” I would say, “In one or more of the two dozen activities or services.” I wouldn’t write the number 28. That’s all, to me, really poor use of statistics, is when you are glazing over the eyes of your readers right away with specific numbers that are weird, 28, 482. The $50 is not weird, so we can stick with that.

While many fundraisers tied their approach to using numbers to perceived preferences of donors, some were specific to the audiences for which they currently write. “Kimberly,” who writes to a largely older donor base on behalf of faith-based emergency services and support for elderly religious,[43] shared:

> I think that nobody cares about statistics. When I worked for {organization}, their head of marketing said, “No numbers without stories, no stories without numbers in whatever you’re writing.” But I, really, since then have kind of taken it and I’m like, “If you’re going to put a number into a letter, you can only have one.” And one statistic or one jarring fact because that’s all people can really process if they even look at it. And the numbers do not convince people to give. We think that -- we want to think that our purchasing decisions and our philanthropic decisions are logic-based, but they are in no way logic-based. They are all about how you feel.

[43] Here, “religious” is a noun, referring to a member of a religious order, such as a brother or a sister.

But “Amanda,” writing to a professional audience, had a different tactic.

> I think statistics are always powerful. I write towards scientists every day and they care about numbers and they care about results and they know the difference. So I think having an emotional component and a statistical component are always very important for me, because you want to appeal to them as a person, but you also want to prove that their money is going toward something that is making a difference, and we can prove it, and here are the numbers.

While some fundraisers were concerned that having too much empirical evidence would negatively affect reader engagement, and indeed “Matthew” identified emotional engagement as key to the decision to give, “Amanda’s” experience led her to consider data an integral component of a good appeal letter.

Most of the people with whom I spoke talked about the importance of crafting the letter with a particular audience in mind. This could include considerations such as choice of medium (paper vs. e-mail vs. social media) and what kind of language or examples are used. For instance, thinking about generational differences, “Heather” talked about the importance of:

> …making sure that that messaging reflects who you’re talking to. And using language that is familiar, but that is also something that they understand in how they communicate, and have communicated, and how they’re comfortable communicating, and receiving communications.

For others, they spoke of making a personal connection, perhaps with a story of a client. The intricacies of selecting client stories that resonate with donors will be discussed in greater detail later in this chapter. Certain words also helped to evoke a connection with donors. “Kimberly” incorporates vocabulary that encourages people to see themselves as the type of people who give, citing Jen Shang’s work as an influence.

> So she has her whole study of the words that cause women and men to give. And so if you sprinkle those words throughout your appeals, then it shows that it works. So, I’ve got “compassion” and “kindness.” I’ve got “care.” ... I think “friendly” is one of the words too. So I’ve got

> "friendship" in there. Anyway, I have that list on a bulletin board, so that whenever I'm writing, I'm using those words. ("Kimberly", transcript of personal interview, August 10, pp 18-19).

This uses the framework of activating a moral identity (e.g. Aquino & Reed, 2002), and shows an interest in and familiarity with research supportive to fundraising practice. It also underscores fundraisers' awareness that they are writing to an audience from whom they would like to encourage a response, and that this audience-awareness affects the crafting of the message.

Make it Short & Sweet

Fundraisers spoke to the importance of writing in short sentences, with short paragraphs, in an engaging manner. This describes an ideal I heard often:

> To keep it brief, to have lots of white space, to speak in a conversational and upbeat and very, very overly friendly tone, a personal tone. ("Mary", transcript of personal interview, August 21, 2017, p 6).

This ideal aligns with advice one finds in "how to" books, such as those by Warwick (2008) and Brooks (2012).[44]

Not only did respondents cultivate a friendly tone, they opted for one that was generally light. "Joshua" explained why he preferred using an uplifting tone, rather than one that is sad.

> I think that if someone is thinking about Positivities, someone who doesn't think about it every day, I don't think they want to think about it as, "Oh, here we go. This is going to make me sad." And kind of like, frankly, those TV commercials with the dogs, and the children in Africa that make you sad, I don't think that – I don't think you want your constituency to think of you, when they think of you, they get sad.

[44] The actual letters in this sample (N = 76) were written at about a 10th grade reading level, (*M* = 10.18, *SD* = 2.50) as measured by the Flesh-Kincaid Grade Level scale (Kincaid, Fishburne, Rogers, & Chissom, 1975). There was no significant difference in the readability between the NS condition (*M* = 9.87, *SD* = 2.24) and the ST condition (*M* = 10.55, *SD* = 2.79).

"Joshua" touches here on an affective response that might be remembered in connection with one's organization over a period of time.

"Jason" concurred with the importance of a positive tone, and with a relatively short first approach, but emphasized that the goal has to be an encouragement for readers to actively engage.

> In this case, because it's an acquisition letter it's very important to be enthusiastic, but also to invite them to learn more. And that certainly speaks to my overall orientation towards educating people. I'm not interested in pursuing people that are not interested in what we're doing. So the first step is for them to educate themselves and understand us. And then that prompts a follow-up conversation, as I put into this letter.

"Jessica's" organization relies heavily on direct mail for financial support. She spoke to how she saw her obligations as a fundraiser after receiving an initial gift.

> Respondent: Follow-up. When we have a new donor, I always send them some brochures, marketing materials so they can learn more about us. "Thank you for giving here," more and more. Give again.
>
> Interviewer: So it's like an educational kind of thing.
>
> Respondent: Yeah, yeah. Because otherwise, our acquisition pieces are just what we call a meal ticket, $1.68 provides a warm meal and hope.

Generally, there was consensus that the best way to engage people in that acquisition letter was to avoid negative emotional connections, to make it easy and pleasant to read, and to encourage them to follow up with any interest – and, preferably, with a check.

Looking for the "Unity" in "Community"

Another frequent theme was invoking the idea of value to the community. However, what was meant by "community" seemed to vary. "Michael," who raises support in a rural area, described his approach as "just anchor, anchor in community."

He then added, “My own philosophy was all about how do you recreate that front porch experience.” When I asked him to describe further to me how he accomplished this in the letter he wrote, he said,

> I would say by using language like “in the heart,” and then the next sentence, like, right, “seating at community hub,” “interactions, social support, seating that’s relaxed, that’s comfortable and that’s something you want,” and the word “care” to our community.

“Michael’s” relaxed, comfortably social “front porch experience” is one idea of community that feels very local and personal.

“Ashley” described how her concept of community was developed from a young age:

> It really starts way back when I was a child. So growing up in Vermont, there’s always been an emphasis on social justice and giving back to community. It’s actually, really, community service is really honed in from a young age in Vermont, and anything related to social services. So it’s just been a natural inclination for me to want to work in an organization that is a non-profit that gives back to the community.

When we discussed how she had intended to work with the concept of community in her appeal, she described it as a dynamic organism, one whose health is interdependent on its parts. “Ashley” wanted to describe:

> How that this will actually help the community, because these individuals live in the community and they’re community members. And by increasing the personal and professional growth, they can go back to the community and give back the community.

“Heather” described “community” as ties of affiliation that speak to a human need:

> It is a community. It becomes an extension. When you join an organization, when you become a member, be it church, be it a tennis club, you want to -- as humans, we are not solo individuals. We are compelled to be around others and to be a part of something collaborative. So that's community. You join affiliations or you affiliate yourself with things that you believe and agree with, or that you want to be a part of or have some connection to. If we didn’t feel some satisfaction happen, this gratification, we wouldn’t spend our time, or we would focus our energies

> in different ways, so it is a community. People want to be part of a community. We don't want to be alone. We want to join something. We want to have that affiliation. We want to be with like-minded people, people who have the same values, with the same beliefs, and that's a community, amongst many other things. It could be communities for good, it can be communities for evil, but it is a group dynamic.

In the passage above, "Heather" describes communities as a social need, without an inherent moral valence, and focused on like-minded people. A little later, she used "community" is a different way, describing an ideal vision of a geographic community as inclusive and respectfully diverse.

> We don't get to dictate how we want everything, ideally, to be. We're neighbors, and we have to live amongst each other in peace and cooperation. And that means sometimes there are going to be some homes that are not as nicely redone as others, or front yards are not as well-manicured. But this is our community, and we take that in stride. They don't like that, they move out to the – it's tolerance, tolerance. You may not have to like something but you can at least respect it. I think we forget that we decided that. ("Heather", transcript of personal interview, August 9, 2017, p 21).

The idea of an inclusive and respectfully diverse community was an ideal across many fundraisers. Notably, this ideal was present among many who tended to perceive the community's preferences as less welcoming toward their assigned client base.

A final vision of community is as an entity that needs to be protected and groomed in order to remove bad influences for its own health. "Christopher" shared a thought about what he would not include in an appeal:

> So avoid those types of data that would make a reader feel (A) unsafe or, (B) that individual is maybe a lost cause or it's just bad for the community, and we actually maybe need to get those people out of the community.

The example above describes the issue of threat to the community as one of coming from a client source, as determined by a generic reader.

As I discussed the concept of community with "Jason," he suggested focusing specifically on the community within and of the organization, and being more general about the neighborhood or city community in which it is located. One reason to do this is to focus attention narrowly on the organization and its clients. The other is a recognition that the broader geographic community is diverse, not just in terms of socioeconomic considerations, but also in terms of opinions and values. In the excerpt below, we are working from the prompt to assemble possible appeal text. The prompt specifies that the organization is located in a fairly homogenous, middle class community.[45]

> I mean the larger thing that happens in here, we still don't talk about anything that's out of scope of what the work is. The homogeneity, middle class, I just don't think it's that -- you get into dangerous territory where you start to confuse the issue, rather than focusing on, "this is our population." I'm going to play devil's advocate to myself. I mean, is it going to be safer for someone to deal with someone who has a disability in a middle class homogenous community? Does that make it safer, rather than mixing in, "We've got, it's racially diverse. It's ethnically diverse. We've got all religions. It's a big giant melting pot." And then just freak some people out. Where they're like, "I'm tuned out. I am xenophobic and I can't even deal with any of this stuff."

This excerpt, while hypothetical and to some extent hyperbolic, raises an issue within nonprofit development work. In encouraging a community – in the sense of a group of people who share a value or a vision enough to voluntarily contribute to it – you gather people around a particular mission. Those people may have very diverse sets of personal values that only overlap in a small, highly relevant area.

The word "community" frequently came up in letters and in discussion. It was clearly perceived as a powerful, grounding word, one that was meant to evoke belonging, and one that was frequently used to include the potential donors who would read the

[45] Other than mentioning the rather vague "middle class" aspect, the prompt doesn't specify *how* the community is homogenous.

letter. Yet the word was used to denote multiple concepts, including affiliation, belonging, inclusion, and safety. To some extent, these visions overlap harmoniously. A key question is where the boundaries are: how inclusive is community, and who is excluded in the name of safety and belonging for those within? Where the borders are drawn is key to how we write about stigmatized populations.

Fundraisers as Storytellers, Donors as Audience, and Clients as Characters

> "The first requisite for successful conversation is to know your company well."
>
> – A Gentleman (1836)

At one level, the choices by the fundraisers I interviewed were similar regardless of whether the nonprofit's target population faced societal stigma or not. Fundraisers try to establish a connection between donors. They include a sympathetic portrayal of the clients. They speak to the value of the organization. The organization is shown as making life better. They make discretionary choices to encourage the reader to be comfortable and receptive, pruning their messages to leave out, among other things, storylines or connections that are not directly necessary and might cause distress or discomfort. Generally speaking, these choices are all supported by literature, research, and raise no ethical concerns.

There is, of course, another level. ***How*** do fundraisers establish a connection with donors? ***How*** do they portray the clients sympathetically? ***To whom*** is the organization valuable? ***How*** is life improved? And ***what kind*** of uncomfortable things are imagined, but dismissed? At this level, there is predictably greater variation. And while this study is not designed to generalize, it does offer a variety of choices made, and options available to fundraisers.

Establishing a Connection with Donors

Establishing a connection with donors, particularly establishing how donors are connected to an organization's client base, was a frequent tactic. Yet the methods for doing this varied dramatically, often seen with the choices made by a single individual writing about different client populations. For instance, "Lisa" started her original letter, written for the ST population, with a statistic on the prevalence of mental illness within the community, and connecting readers to the client group:

> They are our children, our siblings, our parents and our friends. Our colleagues, our students, our teachers. The people we serve and those who serve us.

When I asked her how changing the population would change the construction of an appeal, she changed her opening to a more personal quote:

> I guess I wouldn't paint the broad brush of what, how much of the population is elderly, but I would probably, I would probably start off with a quote from an elderly client, and maybe point to more of the services, or more of the client, that has benefitted from the services, the services of the organization, and you know, still totally about how many people it serves.

While the two options do both focus on the clients, the first actively asserts that the client group is worth helping by calling attention to the roles these people play in our personal lives. In the second option, that the group itself is worth helping is presumed, and we get to hear directly from one of the clients served how *they* value the organization.

"Amanda," who also originally wrote for the ST population, opened her appeal letter by encouraging the reader to take the perspective of a member of that population:

> It's a Thursday evening, and after work, you decide to go meet up with a few friends for coffee. Maybe later you'll catch a movie or do a little shopping before calling it a day.
>
> For a person with mental illness, such everyday activities that seem like a normal part of a healthy social life can be overwhelming at best; paralyzing at worst. Positivities helps to foster a warm, welcoming environment for people with mental illness to experience the fulfillment that comes with making new friends, fostering intellectual development, participating in organizations, and engaging in recreation.

In this segment, the author establishes a commonality with the reader, introduces a problem, and presents Positivities as a solution to the problem. As "Amanda" describes her intent:

> I was trying to draw comparisons between the person reading the letter and somebody with a mental illness and find the common ground, and make it clear that you have a lot in common with someone who's mentally ill, and you rely on these things that you do every day without really even thinking about it. But for somebody with a mental illness, getting these basic things out of life is so much more difficult.

"Amanda" has established comparison, commonality, and unconsidered challenges. When I ask her how changing to the NS population would affect the letter, she responds:

> Well, everybody's going to get old, if you're lucky. And so not everybody will experience a mental illness in their lifetime but everybody's going to get old. And so I think I would focus more on the "This could be you one day" scenario, in broad strokes, obviously. But don't you think that it would be nice to have a place for you to be when you're this age, and have resources for yourself, for people you know, for your peers. That everybody's going to find themselves in old age at some point, and resources are necessary to aid the elderly population in accessing necessary resources, and staying healthy, and maintaining social connections, and encouraging them to continue to be part of the community that's around them.

Here, the author perceives the client base as an experience that we all anticipate having. She still anticipates using perspective taking as a tactic, but rather than using it to present an unanticipated challenge, which Positivities addresses for people, she extends the perspective taking into your own anticipated future – this organization is in *your* best interest, and best interest of other people like you.

A final difference in the methods of connection has to do with how close we are willing to portray the client group with the reader. For instance, "Heather" suggested connecting with a reader's family ties as one way to encourage a connection:

> The ask would be made upfront much more quickly, and it would be, your parents, your grandparents, don't you care about them? Don't you want to make sure they are in the comforts of -- it would appeal to more of the care and compassion, the love, and the feelings that we feel responsible for in caring for our aging, the responsibilities. ("Heather", transcript of personal interview, Aug. 9, 2017, p 23).

By contrast, participants avoided making the connection between the reader and a family member with mental illness. For example:

> But I guess I wouldn't suggest it in here because people are not necessarily reflective enough not to be offended by suggestion that there's mental illness in their family. You know what I'm saying?

Here, "Kimberly" specifically considers how the potential donors reading the letter are likely to respond, and decides that the letter will be better by not connecting a potential client to their family, either because they believe that this choice will facilitate a stronger connection, or because they are unwilling to upset some of the readers.

Portraying Clients Sympathetically

One of the most popular ways to portray a client base sympathetically is to tell a story about one, identified client. This "identified victim" effect has been found to be effective in encouraging people to help strangers (Small, 2011). Many of the fundraisers I interviewed believed that donors decide to make gifts based on an appeal with an emotional component, or one that appealed to both "heart and head."[46] Stories are often used in more emotional appeals to potential donors (Ritzenhein, 1998). Stories can be conveyed in third person, told about a client by the letter writer. Or, a letter may include a testimonial quote from a client. Sometimes a letter will be written and signed by a client. Each of these conveys a different level of detail and immediacy along with the content of the story.

Writing about older adults, fundraisers often described them as honored, deserving, and well-loved, as shown in these examples written by "Matthew," followed by "Jason."

> It is a pay cut for me, but I wanted to make sure that my Grandma – and all of Riverside's beloved Grandpas and Grandmas – are cared for in a way that she deserves. After all, when I brought her to visit Positivities when it opened last year, she said that she wanted to join!

> Today, senior citizens (or as I like to call them, "super adults") have lots of life to live, not only in years, but also in opportunities and experiences. Super adults are vital members of our society. They are friends, family members, thinkers, consumers and "doers." They are the keepers of important knowledge and wisdom – a noble class unto themselves, and a critical thread running through our community's fabric.
>
> Indeed, the condition of our super adult population is a direct reflection of our culture's well-being; how we treat, care for and nurture our country's super adults speaks volumes about our values.

Several fundraisers noted that stories would be different for the different client populations. Here, "Michael" considers applying his mental image of a "front porch," developed for use with the NS population, to the ST client population.

> I think an old person, or a senior citizen who might be otherwise sitting in their house alone, watching soap operas all day can come to this and visit you, that is a very positive, warm, friendly thing. I think just due to this lack of mental - comprehensive mental healthcare, a lot of people would

[46] See quotes from "Kimberly" and "Amanda", pp. 128-129.

> think of the same thing as like a person screaming at you on the street. You know, much different, you know -- .

Here, “Michael” shows concern for the different perceptions readers would have of clients who are older adults compared to clients who have a mental illness, which caused him to rethink how to portray a client in his letter. “Michael” attributes the different perceptions to lack of access to mental health care in his area. Further along those lines, some participants noted that they would be less likely to include a client story if the population was ST, as in this example from “Christopher”:

> “…I think I would be more hesitant to [include photos for a client population with mental illness], or it would have to be a pretty thorough vetting process to make sure we’ve got the right person and that it represents the organization well and has a truly positive, irreversible outcome to our services.”

Others indicated they would attempt to affect readers’ perceptions by attributing certain values to the reader within the text of the letter, as “Amy” does here:

> “I think you’d have to make the case of “You care. You care. You want people to live a thoughtful life. You want your community to be well-supported, every member of your community. You don’t believe there’s a difference.” Like, appealing to some facts that aren’t actually maybe true for them, such as, like, “You don’t believe that there’s anything wrong with these folks. They are just suffering, and we’re providing them this opportunity.” Like sort of appeal to that perceived self, versus the real self.”

A few participants explained that they believed people have a good mental image of older adults – both in terms of being concrete and having a positive valence. However, that wasn’t necessarily true for individuals with a mental illness, as this segment from “Matthew” shows:

> To a certain extent I think that more people perceive that they have experience with elderly, people that are elderly. That’s not necessarily the case with mental illness. A lot of people have a lot of different perceptions of what mental illness is. There are some people that think that it affects a certain portion of the population that is very small and that they can’t

> communicate or that they can't walk properly, whatever it is. Then there's some that will say, "Most of us have mental illness, issues," and there are some people that would say, "That's stupid. It's not mental illness."

Interestingly, in calling out confusion as to what mental illness looks like and contrasting it to a perceived single understanding of older adults, there is a suggestion that older adults are seen as more homogenous in their interests and concerns. This may indicate a prevalent stereotype of older adults, if one that is commonly perceived as more benign.

The idea of familiarity with aging was echoed by other fundraisers, some of whom addressed the relative perceived lack of familiarity with mental illness by including more empirical facts and statistics in letters, as "Jessica" does here.

> I mean senior citizens are around. They'll always be around. Maybe that's why I wouldn't have included the percentages and stuff. But maybe you would include more statistics with a mental illness type. People can look around their community and know there's the elderly. But they may not know the number of people with mental illness, so that could be a shock to them."

"Jessica" expanded on her thoughts to explain that serving a clientele of people with mental illness would require additional support as to why this is beneficial to the community and to the readers, compared to older adults.

> And then a focus probably more on why it matters to help those with mental illness. Why does it matter to you as a person living in this community that we help people with mental illness? Whatever reason that might be.

Conversely, and supporting this general theme, "Christopher" had initially indicated the importance of including empirical facts in an acquisition appeal, but changed his approach to embrace a letter written by a client when the population changed to older adults.

> And I actually think, one thing actually for this letter, if we're serving the elderly population, that might not be a bad idea to have this letter crafted from one of our members and let them write. So it's like, "Dear John or

> Jane Doe, my name is Louise Anderson," and talk a little bit -- similar thing, have her introduce herself, have her talk about who she is and what the organization is serving and how they're doing it and engage the reader into here's how you can be a part of this and here's how your support will help.

One fundraiser took a very different approach. Originally writing for the NS population, "Susan" described the lived reality of a person sitting in a café in an easily accessible way, encouraging the reader to take the perspective of a potential client. Then, she described the welcoming experience of the Positivies café, and how it is a comfortable place for the person's constraints and preferences. She explains:

> "Every single day, somebody experiences some kind of affect, in the cognitive sense, where they're not comfortable in their own skins. And we all need a place like that, whether it's the corner in the library where we read a book, or a place where we can talk to somebody, or a place where somebody comes over and gives us a big hug, because they just know we need a big hug."

This strategy worked almost identically for both client groups.

Nonetheless, most fundraisers interviewed did identify some changes they would make in meeting the goal of describing different client groups positively to potential donors reading an acquisition letter.

Demonstrating the Value of the Organization

Another key element of acquisition appeals is demonstrating the value of the organization. As "Jason" offers,

> You're not going to point out your blemishes. You're going to put the organization's best foot forward, and talk about it in a way that's inspiring, and inspires people to want to learn more and to get involved. And I think that summarizes well if you swap out aging population for mental health population versus some other population. The objective is still the same.

"Jason's" observation offers some guidelines in presenting the organization in an appeal letter aimed at interesting new donors. But some respondents had thoughts that were more specific to one or the other population. Faced with the prospect of writing for a client base of older adults, "Lisa" offered a way to think of how the organization would be valuable to the clients' families:

> Like the community is, you know, it really does take a village, and this helps, extends their village a little bit more. It takes a village to raise an old person.

This concept assumes broad responsibility and willingness to help each other's older family members. In this case, the organization helps extend the family's connections of support. It's a very comforting image.

"Sarah" spoke to how she would demonstrate the value of the organization if the client base were changed to individuals with mental illness.

> Respondent: I think I would have probably included more statements of impact. Like how Positivities -- what services they provide that have had a positive impact on that population. And I might have included more statistics, like X% of people in the metropolitan area where the city is are affected by mental illness and don't have a place to get the help they need, or something like that. I think that I would have focused more on that, on that issue.
>
> Interviewer: Got you, got you. Okay, so facts about how that population was impacted, facts about how much of the population could benefit, and information about unmet need and the need for access.
>
> Respondent: Yeah, yeah. Because then that would make people feel like, "Oh, okay. This is what's going on in our area and we actually do have a need for this organization and the services it provides."

By offering statistics of impact, as well as need, the letter now justifies its existence and value. More telling, in comparison to the intuitively valuable extended family web in the example about, is the statement the "we actually do have a need for this organization and the services it provides." This suggests a presumption of skepticism, which is hopefully allayed by the organization's approach.

Making Life Better for Others

Human services organizations serving either older adults or individuals with mental illness would, one hopes, improve the quality of life for the people they serve. Several letters described a transformation, with a beginning state for a client, an intervention with the organization, and an improvement. Letters about the ST population usually described a struggle, as shown in this example written by "Kimberly."

> "I was in a really dark place after they were born," says Samantha T., a single mom of twins who lives Uptown. "I've been treated for depression before, but after the twins, it was so bad. My mom had to take the babies because I couldn't take care of them."
>
> The court order removing her twins was enough motivation for Samantha to seek medical and therapeutic treatment for mental illness. It took six months, but today Samantha has full custody of Emma and Olivia. She works hard battling depression, and I'm happy to share that she's found a community that understands how tough the battle is. She's found friends. She's found her lifeline.

"Kimberly" describes how she sought to portray a client with mental illness (ST) in a sympathetic manner to readers.[47]

> "So I was trying to make the emotional connection that would resonate with the donor, the reader. So if they felt lonely, or they felt in a funk. And just reminding them, that they have the resources to deal, and cope with that. But then I'm saying not everybody does. And so I made up some client to give us a personal testimony of what had happened to her. And so it was kind of this postpartum depression, but also, even more than just postpartum. Like, depression is what I made up. And I did that with a

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[47] Note that since Positivities is a fictitious organization, created for the purposes of this study, participants were instructed that they could make up additional material as needed to write the letter they felt would be effective as an acquisition for that client base.

> mental illness that is not schizophrenia. It's not bipolar, which could be part of what Positivities serves. But I wanted to make it a little more friendly and relatable."

In this excerpt, we see both an attempt to personalize a client by describing her struggle in an accessible way, and some of the mental process the fundraiser went through in deciding which category of mental illness would be "friendly and relatable" to potential donors reading the letter. The stakes are high: a woman who wants to be a good mother struggles, gets help from her family and Positivities, and is able to resume her proper role as a good mother to her children.

Sometimes older adults were also described as struggling prior to intervention by Positivities. In some cases, the presenting issue was that of depression, triggered by the loss of a spouse, as in these examples:

> It costs just $50 for one guest to enjoy a half-day activity, and it's no surprise that Bill D. recently said, "After my wife passed away, I didn't know what to do with my day. My daughter was worried about me, because I wasn't eating very much and slept more than I should. She brought me here, and it's the high point of my week! I don't know what I'd do if I couldn't see my new friends here every Thursday!"
>
> \- "Mary"

> When Daniel's wife of 45 years passed away, he was devastated. He felt like his entire world had come to an end. There was simply no convincing Daniel that life would ever again be fulfilling.
>
> And then Daniel found Positivities.
>
> Daniel found friends. He found new hobbies. He discovered new interests. But most importantly, Daniel found purpose and fulfillment at Riverside's Positivities' drop-in center.
>
> – "Jessica"

Interestingly, when asked to switch client populations, both "Mary" and "Jessica" thought of a different story, rather than staying with Bill or Daniel. In both cases, the alternate client appears to have a chronic illness and complicating factors. Our alternate client finds acceptance in both stories, and in one case, the same purpose and fulfillment as the older adult client. “Mary” says:

> I would find somebody that could very directly, say something about having been on medication all of his life, and hard to find a job and this is the first place where he really felt accepted. It would be so easy to put a quote in there, to let people read and visualize, this is the kind of person that we’re helping, and I want to help them too.

“Jessica” says:

> I could tell a story of, like we’ve got a guy here named Michael who doesn’t fit in anywhere. His mental illness caused him to lose his job. He turned to addictions because of losing his job and his family. When that happens, you can’t afford care. So there’s nowhere to go, nowhere to get help. But then if he had a place, like here, where he has a sense of belonging and can maybe be with other people who are struggling with the same thing. He can also find that purpose and fulfillment at a place like that.

Often, however, the improvement imagined for older adults was less of a struggle, and more of an avenue for a high quality of life. Here, “Amanda” adapts the story pattern she had previously written for the ST client base as she thinks about writing for the NS clients:

> I think that you could use the same comparison, that we’re after work, meeting friends for coffee. But now imagine that it is 30 years from now and you don’t have a job to go to anymore, and you miss the social connections that you had in your office, and suddenly there isn’t anyone to have coffee with. And their shopping is harder because you can’t walk long distances and you have a hard time driving and getting in and out of your car. And this is where this agency would come in, is it would help you maintain those things that gave you joy and your working life or in your youth, 10, 20, 30 years ago, still helping them to enjoy the things that make life worthwhile.

In this instance, what had been a simple pleasure denied due to overwhelming (anxiety? overstimulation?) becomes an issue of loneliness, and the organization that helps “make life worthwhile.”

The most striking change between client bases, however, is in who benefits. For the ST population, it is presumed that the clients benefit from services. When the client base shifts to the NS population, the individuals' family is presumed to also benefit. It is presumed that family members are loving caretakers, as in this exchange with "Lisa."

> Interviewer: Yeah. That's interesting because in the letter that you did write for the mental illness you did a great job of personalizing the clients and helping people to feel connected to the client base, and here with switching it to focus on older adults, you then, like, make the connection with helping the families –
>
> Respondent: Yeah.
>
> Interviewer: And still personalizing the clients a great deal, yeah.
>
> Respondent: Yeah. I wouldn't want to not personalize the client, but I think the, rather than the client being the only people benefiting, I think their families also benefit. This eases their mind. It may give them, a little bit more confidence, that their elderly loved ones can still maintain their own homes for a while?

This, of course, raises the question of why caring family members are considered attached to one client base, but not the other. Nor was this the only interview in which a similar exchange took place. Somewhat similarly, "Sarah" submitted that mental illness is more of an issue with a national scope, while older adults are more of a local issue.

Avoiding Uncomfortable Things

There was almost universal consensus among participants that fundraising for people with mental illness had special considerations that weren't in play when fundraising for older adults. "Susan," who was selected for strongly positive personal preferences toward her assigned clients (NS), demonstrated how she would work similarly with both client groups, largely by rejecting labels and instead focusing on lived experiences. “Michael,” who was selected for his strongly negative expectations of how the community would view his clients (NS), perceived stigma for both client groups. When asked what he would omit from a fundraising appeal, he articulated negative associations for both client groups: fear about getting older and isolation, on the part of the NS population, and “negative associations,” especially crime, on the part of ST clients. The majority would agree with “Jason,” who said:

> I think that people would be -- people meaning an audience for which an acquisition letter is tailored. They would probably be less threatened, for lack of a better word, to be dealing with an aging population than to be considering interaction with people with mental illnesses. I think people with mental illnesses -- I think mental illness in the United States comes with many stigmas. I think, therefore, it becomes a much more sensitive engagement of donors that requires a bit more of a delicate touch.

This response not only identifies a change in the anticipated reaction, but calls out threat and stigma as the reasons. The fundraisers’ response? A “more sensitive engagement of donors.” Note that this doesn’t mean that the end result is necessarily significantly changed as a result; but the process of crafting it often seems to bring more focused attention to the issue of what will be well received by the readership.

It may be that people who perceived stigma more strongly were more sensitized to the types of things that might make others uncomfortable. “Lisa,” who perceived that the community might be particularly negative to her clients, especially on the dimension of discounting their worth, identified a number of possible associations she would avoid while writing for the ST population:

> I think that, especially with mental health, it’s one of those topics that… it’s still almost seen as taboo, in a lot of its aspects. And you know, I think that too many people who suffer from mental illness unfortunately get caught up in the legal system, where they don’t necessarily belong, and without the resources for rehabilitation, or for continued living, you know just assistance with living day to day, we’re going to end up with a lot

more people on the street, or in prison, or jail where they're not getting help at all, and they actually could be productive members of society. So, I don't think there's anything that I would consider taboo, I guess it's just a matter of what we want to focus on.

During this exchange, we also discussed a similar list for the NS population:

Interviewer: Okay, let's flip the question. Is there anything that you would probably avoid?

Respondent: Possibly last stages of life.

Interviewer: Okay, yes. Yeah.

Respondent: You know it's kind of a depressing thought, and you try to think about what happens to the elderly if they don't have someone nearby to help, so, you know, you kind of try to strike that balance between they need the help, you can't be here, but we can.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Respondent: That's how I get to certain point.

Interviewer: Right.

Respondent: And there's always going to be...

Interviewer: Yes.

Respondent: …attrition, right?[48]

Other participants added to the collection of things that had negative associations for each population. For ST, the list included the sex-offender registry; anything suggesting violence, fear, or lack of control; being scary, dangerous, erratic, unsafe, or undesirable. To this list, add any reference to "loitering" on the sidewalk or being present near homes or restaurants. The list is notable for showing concern with bad behavior.

In addition to the last stages of life, isolation, neglect, and "attrition," for NS respondents identified disabilities, being "decrepit," and drooling as things they would

[48] I understand "attrition" here as a euphemism for "death."

avoid, in addition to anything "crotchety" or "disagreeable," and that they may have financial interests at odds with the reader (such as social security). With some exceptions, it is notable that this list shows concern for things that happen *to* the individuals.

"Heather" had a strategy for including issues that she thought might be sensitive to the people reading the acquisition letter. When she wanted to include an issue that might make somebody feel uncomfortable, such as being inclusive or educating the reader, she put a reference to stability or trustworthiness in close proximity. Here is her philosophy:

> So when there's something that we're unfamiliar with, when we're uncomfortable, whether we don't know but we have an idea, we're not sure if we're comfortable with it? We want to try to dispel that from the outside by establishing safety, trust. It's making people feel safe. When people feel safe, they'll be receptive and open to hearing what the message is, and being willing to entertain that message. Even if they don't agree with that, at least they'll be willing to entertain, listening, and possibly accepting it.

Finally, "Amy" reflected on the limits of a common piece of advice given for the practice of writing as a fundraiser, that of writing "personally".

> "We talk about being really personal in our acknowledgment letter or in our solicitation letters. And it's easier to fall back on the personal that is really, really universal. And I don't know if everybody considers mental health issues to be universal yet. But I would love to see that campaign because I think that that's - I don't know. Maybe I'm not giving everybody enough credit in the world that they would understand that you could write a compelling appeal letter."

Conclusion: Let's Slip into Something Comfortable

The fundraisers I spoke with wanted to help their readers get comfortable, and possibly to challenge them simultaneously. There were a number of implicit assumptions in some of the choices made – and some of them were unintended. For instance, one person stated that senior citizens were much more closely associated with death – and then realized that mental illness might be associated with suicide. Another person assumed that family members might be interested in a charity serving senior citizens, and then wondered why she hadn't made that leap for people with mental illness. Yet another stated that changing the client base from the stigmatized group to the non-stigmatized group wouldn't prompt any differences in approach, and then launched into a completely different, and enthusiastically positive approach for the older adult client group. As "Susan" observed – although she was speaking about donors at the time – "what we do and what we say is not always the same."

CHAPTER SIX
SUMMARY, GENERAL DISCUSSION, AND CONCLUSION

This chapter summarizes the study's purpose, research methodologies, findings, and observations. It discusses those findings across methods, notes study limitations, and comments on implications for theory, future research, and practice. Finally, it concludes.

Summary of Study Purpose and Methodology

The purpose of this study has been to examine how different beneficiaries, especially those with different levels of social stigma, affect the practice of fundraisers' persuasive written communication. In order to examine this phenomenon, I used theory to develop a scale that measured perceived client stigma from the distinctive point of view of a third party, tasked with writing to the community on behalf of a client group, and confirmed that the fundraisers who participated in the study anticipated that the community views the clients with mental illness more negatively than the clients who are older adults. I then performed several analyses on the content of the letters written, including coding and analyzing for differences in the emphasis given to the client population and the organization in each client group, and statistical analysis of a linguistic word count on the appeal letters to determine whether there were differences in the kinds of words use for each client group. I coded letter content to analyze the effects on the social distance between clients and readers used within letters, use of positive vs. negative framing, themes, types of evidence provided to support persuasion, and other themes commonly used within the letters. These aspects have all been identified either theoretically (e.g. Goffman, 1986; Das, Kerkhof, & Kuiper, 2008; Ritzenhein, 1998) or inductively from the data. Finally, I performed an exploratory factor analysis to examine covariance in order to identify patterns in how the letters were written.

Several participants volunteered to further participate in qualitative interviews. The experimental survey and statistical analyses examine whether there are patterns of significant differences in the communicative choices made based on whether or not the beneficiary group is stigmatized. I examined the issue of processes through interviews. Interview participants were selected based on (a) their willingness to participate in a follow-up interview, and (b) for extreme answers in stigma-related questions, both in assessing the community's perceptions and their own preferences.

Summary of Study Findings and Discussion across Methods

Emphasis on the Organization and on Clients within Letters

I hypothesized that fundraisers would focus more on non-stigmatized clients, and focus less on stigmatized clients, relative to the organization. Both by mean sentence count and by letter count, within the letters written for the experiment, there was more emphasis on organizations than on the client base. The relative amount of emphasis on the organization and on its clients did not significantly vary by experimental treatment. However, there was some indication in the qualitative interviews that some individuals did, in fact, have the tendency to back off from extolling the clients themselves and instead focus on the programs that served them when the client base changed from NS to ST. This would be consistent with the coding methods used, which counted incidence rather than strength of the mentions, and bears further examination.

Types of Words Used in Appeal Letters

This analysis was done on an exploratory basis on the appeal letters written for the experiment. Out of 64 categories tested, 9 came back as significantly different. We would expect that about 3.2 might show up as significant by chance – but 9 is well over 3.2. So, it is safe to say that there were word choice differences that we can attribute to the change in client populations. Specifically, letters written to benefit older adults (NS) used more "family" words, and focused more often on perceptual processes, which would help readers connect with the clients' experiences. Letters written to benefit people who were mentally ill (ST) focused more on biological processes, negative emotions, and anxiety. Both sets of letters used inclusive words at a rate of five to one compared to exclusive words. This would align with fundraisers' frequent invitations to readers to join with others in making a gift, such as the following examples:

> Please consider helping us create community by making a gift to the Postivities Fund today so we can accomplish great things for our communities together. – "Sarah"
>
> Please join me in supporting our neighbors with a gift to our Affirmation Fund. – "Lisa"
>
> As we continue to build community through the center, we welcome you to join us more closely. – "Joshua"
>
> We could not agree more, and hope you will join Positivities in helping provide new stages for Riverside's super adults. – "Jason"

When compared to published norms, the appeal letters as a group used inclusive words significantly more often, and exclusive words less than half as often, suggesting that this may be a common pattern in usage across fundraising appeal letters regardless of the beneficiary group.

Presented Distance between Clients and Readers

I hypothesized that non-stigmatized clients would be presented as closer to the reader than stigmatized clients. There was no support for this statistically. However, in interviews, fundraisers who preferred to use stories in their letters worked with the idea of how close the individual should be. For instance, "Amy," who felt that the community generally discounted her original NS population, stated that changing the ST population would require her to change her approach: "Well, I certainly don't think I could make the same argument that I made in the letter {for the NS population} of 'you are like these people.'"

Some fundraisers decided to increase the distance, such as making the story about someone unknown rather than someone close to them. Some even chose to remove a client story from the ST letter, while including one for the NS letter. These decisions were generally made because fundraisers either didn't think the readers would see themselves as being close to someone with mental illness, or because they thought the readers wouldn't like having the fundraiser presume that they were close to someone with mental illness. Another possibility is that they thought readers would have varied ideas of what mental illness looked like, and since it was an acquisition letter, they didn't want to get into too much detail. If these instincts are correct, then the decision kept the reader engaged without threatening them, possibly increasing the likelihood of a gift. However, knowing what we know about likelihood of giving and the perceived closeness of the beneficiary, it is also possible that this choice passed over an opportunity to increase the likelihood of giving by positioning clients as further apart from readers.

Positive and Negative Framing of Ask

This analysis was done on an exploratory basis on the appeal letters written for the experiment. There was no statistical difference in the use of positive frames. However, fundraisers writing for the NS population were significantly more likely to use a negative frame. Since the incidence was still rather low, it may be more accurate to state that fundraisers writing for the ST population were significantly less likely to use a negative frame. One possible explanation is that since positive frames induce good feelings, and negative frames induce fear (Shen & Bigsby, 2013), fundraisers may have perceived a smaller tolerance for associating fear with the stigmatized population. This would align with a general tendency evident in the interviews with avoiding issues that might make the readers uncomfortable, or, as "Heather" demonstrated, coupling ideas that might be challenging with others that would induce comfort or stability.

Treatment of Organizational, Client, and Reader Characteristics

This analysis was done on an exploratory basis on the appeal letters written for the experiment. There was no statistically significant difference between fundraisers writing for different client groups. Participants' primary focus was on Organizational Quality, which aligns with the greater tendency to emphasize the organization over client base, and may also suggest an attempt to persuade using tactics of legitimacy or rational persuasion (Robbins & Judge, 2015). This finding is consistent with previous work that finds that highlighting the quality of an organization and its programs may motivate people by suggesting that the gift will be an effective expression of altruism (Baron & Szymanska, 2011; Bekkers & Wiepking, 2011; Goering, Connor, *et al*., 2009).

There was also a common tendency to describe the organization's clients as worthy of helping, whether by highlighting similarities with readers, encouraging sympathy, or describing changes made for the better. These may be seen as appealing to donors' values and their preference for effective altruism (e.g. Bekkers & Wiepking, 2011), and may also track with the use of an inspirational appeal as an influence tactic (Robbins & Judge, 2015). From a dramaturgical approach, it is also noteworthy that the prevalence of highlighting the worthiness of both the organization and its clients is evidence of a high degree of expressive competence as far as aligning the distinctive moral character of the beneficiaries in order to encourage a donor act of support.

There was a moderately high (40%) usage of imputing desirable characteristics to the reader, such as "kind" or "generous." This tactic may track with advice to make letters relevant to the reader, potentially increasing their attention. It also aligns with the use of ingratiation as an influence tactic (Robbins & Judge, 2015). Finally, for those readers who place importance in a moral identity that matches the description in the letter, this choice may activate that positive identity (Aquino, Freeman, *et al*., 2009; Bekkers & Wiepking, 2011). From a dramaturgical point of view, if the characteristics attributed are not seen by the reader as discordant, this depiction may set the stage for later positive action by the reader.

Emphasis of Indirect Benefits

This analysis was done on an exploratory basis on the appeal letters written for the experiment. This study found no statistically significant difference between fundraisers writing for different client groups.

The most common indirect benefit suggested was an emotional benefit, such as feeling good, feeling effective, or avoiding guilt or shame. Charitable appeals that stimulate emotional processing are generally more likely to prompt a gift (Dickert, Sagara, & Slovic, 2011). Practitioner advice also tends to suggest emotionally appealing language (e.g. Brooks, 2012; Warwick, 2008). Although there was no statistically significant difference between groups, the combination of an eight percentage point difference in likelihood (93% for NS compared to 85% for ST) coupled with a tighter standard deviation for the NS group (.26) compared to that for the ST group (.36) may suggest that this is an area for further, more refined exploration in the future. The frequent use of emotionally appealing language in letters aligned with fundraisers' theories of giving, in which a meaningful emotional appeal was believed to capture donors' attention and prepare them to act.

The next most common indirect benefit suggested was that of strengthening the broader community in which one lived. About three-quarters of the letters for both groups included this aspect. This choice may highlight the closeness or similarity readers have with donors, increasing the likelihood of helping behavior (e.g. Baron & Szymanska, 2011; Froyum, 2018). It may also increase the relevance of the letter to the reader, increasing their attention to it (Johnson & Eagly, 1989). This common idea of community as an important factor was also present in interviews, although the concept of who was part of that community and what it meant to strengthen it varied.

In contrast, material benefits, such as tax incentives or donor premiums, rarely appeared. In his study of "Letters that Work" (Torre & Bendixsen, 1988), Ritzenhein (1998) also found material benefits made a relatively rare appearance – although in his study, 13.4% of letters included donor rewards, compared to 5.2% in this study. This low prevalence of use is interesting, given the substantial body of research on donor responses to material incentives (e.g. Eckel & Grossman, 2008; Landry *et al*., 2012).

Stories, Statistics, and External Events

This analysis was done on an exploratory basis on the appeal letters written for the experiment. This study found no statistically significant difference between fundraisers in the use of stories or invoking external events. Very few (about 5%) of the letters referred to external events, such as cuts in government funding.

About half of the appeal letters used stories. Although there was no statistically significant difference between groups on the use of stories, interviews with fundraisers found that those who believed the community would be more likely to perceive their client groups negatively were also more likely to change their donor stories when asked to write for the other client group. Some indicated that they would remove the client story altogether if writing for ST. One respondent, who indicated the community probably had strongly negative stereotypes of his original population (ST), was concerned that using a client story for the ST group might reflect poorly on the organization, and therefore significant vetting would be needed to identify a positive story. Therefore, there may be a dynamic at work that relies less on the absolute identity of the client population and more on the fundraisers' belief of how that population will be viewed by the reading public.

There was a significant difference in the use of statistics and empirical evidence between groups writing for the different clients, with those writing for ST significantly more likely to use empirical evidence at all (76% in ST, compared to 48% in NS). In an exploratory factor analysis, the use of statistics and empirical evidence co-varied directly with acknowledgement of the presence of stigma for a client population. This also aligned with interviews in which fundraisers voiced that writing for ST required "making the case," whether that was accomplished by addressing prevalence, closeness, similar (or disparate) experiences, or suggesting that the reader ought to care for some other reason.

Highlighting Organizational Services

I expected that stigmatized groups would be held to lower expectations than more acceptable client groups, and that steps would be taken to minimize the possibility of threat. Only four services were coded in the appeal letters written for the experiment, with the idea of focusing on discounted identities, negative stereotypes, and threat.

Two of the four identified were whether the letter mentioned the organization's close proximity to residences and restaurants, and whether it mentioned the sidewalk seating. These aspects might be seen as convenient for a low-stigma group but undesirable for a high-stigma group. Very few letters mentioned proximity at all, and there was no significant difference by client group. Although there was a difference of about fifteen percentage points in letters talking about expansion of sidewalk seating (about 36% in the non-stigmatized group, and about 21% in the stigmatized group), and the trend was in the expected direction, we can't statistically reject that that didn't happen by chance. Interviews tended to also support this trend. "Michael," who thought his original client base (NS) would be more negatively perceived by the community, was concerned that writing for the ST client base would change how readers perceived his "front porch" ideal from one that is positive, warm, and friendly to one that involves screaming on the street, although he strategized ways to minimize that tendency. "Jessica," who thought her original client base (NS) was subject to negative stereotypes from the community, also thought that the community would have a more negative reaction to the ST client base:

> I didn't notice this before. If we're talking mental illness, I guess it depends on the location. Well, the location is close to residences and to restaurants, got clients gathering on the sidewalk. Some people will have a big issue with that and I didn't even notice that before. I mean I think the elderly wouldn't be. Disabled elderly wouldn't be as bad. But you tell people we've got mentally ill people gathering on the sidewalk. And people hear mentally ill, and they think the worst. They don't necessarily know what that means.

On the other hand, "Mary," who preferred a greater distance from her original client base (NS), didn't like the idea of sidewalk seating for either client group:

> I don't even remember seeing this here, I would never put in here, "Clients have tended to gather on the sidewalk in front of the center so Positivities is considering adding sidewalk seating." That's exactly what happens at an inner city shelter. Clients, whatever you want to call them, street people gather in front of it when it's time for the public lunch or public dinner, and it drives storekeepers and everybody else crazy. It doesn't help to have benches. You actually have to have an interior place where people can gather, can wait. It can't be benches. I would never put that in there.

Therefore, the treatment of this aspect may be a function of not only the client base, but also the individuals' experience and preferences.

The other two organizational services coded were giving rides to and from medical visits, and providing supportive care to help people transition back to home after a hospital stay. Again, these services could be read as supportive and helpful; but if the client base is seen as negative or threatening, it could be read as inviting in an undesirable element. Exploratory factor analysis showed that these two elements tended to be included with each other. They both occurred fairly commonly across treatments, although about 10% of the NS letters included transportation to doctor's visits without mentioning help transitioning after a hospitalization. There was no significant difference in incidence between populations. This is rather interesting when considered with the results of the word count analysis, which found the use of words indicating biological processes and health significantly higher for the ST client base than for the NS base. The use of words about health was also significantly higher in the appeal letters overall than in the control group. Therefore, the lack of statistical difference in the mention of these medical aspects may be of theoretical or practical significance, as it suggests that perhaps the problem is raised without a logical (and present) solution in the ST letters.

Presence of Concepts and Themes

Here, I also expected that stigmatized client groups would be held to lower expectations than more acceptable client groups, and that the possibility of threat would be minimized within the letters written. With few exceptions, there was no statistical support by testing individual variables, although the sixteen percentage point difference in incidence of Empowerment (57% NS, 74% ST) and the eleven percentage point difference in incidence of Fulfillment (55% NS, 44% ST) do trend in the directions expected, and may indicate that more attention or a refined study might be interesting. In particular, the percentage of letters that mention expectations of Empowerment and Fulfillment is very similar across the NS group, but there is a thirty-percentage point difference between expectations of Empowerment and Fulfillment for the ST group. This is supported also by the Social Expectations factor found in the Exploratory Factor Analysis, which was influenced by the variables Stigma, Statistics, and Fulfillment (Reversed). There was also a ten percentage point difference in the idea of Transformation (43% NS, 53% ST) that was not statistically significant. Theoretically, demonstrating transformation in a client's life may also be tied to our expectations for their lives, as well as how much (or how) we demonstrate the value of services. However, there is no statistical support for this idea at this time.

What Fundraisers Want to Accomplish

Drawing from interviews, fundraisers indicated that donor preferences, the needs of the organization for which they are writing, and, sometimes, client preferences are all considered while preparing an appeal letter. Fundraisers have several objectives for their acquisition appeals. Letters should introduce the organization, and reflect positively on its image. This can include conveying that the organization is established and trustworthy, as well as its impact in meeting client needs and community needs and the importance of doing so. It can include educating potential donors about the importance of contributing to a well-operating organization, as well as relating the need into something that the readers personally experience in their daily lives. It should share a story of the organization that captures the essence of its mission or value, and it should translate readership into action, hopefully giving but possibly also seeking information and further contact. Several fundraisers liked the idea of tying the organization to the greater community within the letter, and also to the act of giving. This idea matches well with the value of Universalism, a pattern identified in the Exploratory Factor Analysis. And, as "Jason" noted, one should write an acquisition letter that puts the organization's best foot forward, and inspires action.

Fundraisers have a variety of tactics available to meet those objectives. There may be a basic format that is used, but they prefer to write to a particular audience so that they can customize language, messaging, communication preferences, and otherwise make it something that will be seen as reader-friendly. Other tactics for "reader friendliness" include considering the visual impact, the balance of empirical evidence and statistics to stories and emotional content, and using a light and friendly tone. Emotional valence matters: one should avoid associating one's organization with a sad emotion. Stressing one's reader should also be avoided in general, as they are likely to disengage; however, in staying true to the organizational mission, it's not a bad thing to expect that some people will be stressed, because they probably weren't a good match, anyway.

Fundraisers' Perceptions and Preferences

Very generally speaking, those whose attributional answers showed that they thought the community would view their client population especially positively, or that they personally preferred less distance from the client population, identified less change needed in the letters when changing the client populations during interviews.

Several whose attributional answers showed that they thought the community would view their client population especially negatively, or that they personally preferred more distance from the client population, were personally quite sensitized to ideas of inclusion and tolerance, but rather skeptical about how the general population would respond to that. They indicated the need to write in a way that balanced their ideals with something that would be well-received by the readers, not too challenging. Often, they were more likely to increase the distance between the reader and the clients when talking about ST clients, compared to NS clients. As we discussed the writing process, several returned to grounding in the mission and the culture of the organization for which they were writing.

Others gave the impression that they weren't necessarily reflective about the needs or impressions of different client populations; that they had accepted generally popular stereotypes, probably because they simply hadn't had cause to think about it much. Based on conversations within semi-structured interviews, familiarity with one or the other client population seemed to inform how fundraisers treated the clients in writing, although this couldn't be confirmed with the quantitative findings.

It was also interesting that fundraisers had different writing processes, and dealt with the issue of selecting information or elements differently. When I asked participants what information they would leave out, some had no difficulty identifying what would go into a "do not even consider" pile. Others seemed to not like the idea of exclusion, generally, preferring to think in terms of ordering all the available information from "most helpful" to "least helpful" and assessing them in relative terms, rather than "absolute" preferences.

"Jason," who was selected because he thought his population (NS) was seen positively within the community, shared the idea that people – meaning the general public – have a spectrum of what is acceptable or less acceptable – or, as he put it, "the spectrum of things that get people really antsy about what's in their backyard." In his model, different client populations fall at different points on the spectrum, and it is harder or easier to fundraise according to where the population falls. In his words,

> If I'm a fundraiser, my job is to try to acquire donors to support something -- to support a center that focuses on mental health. The primary objective is getting as much of a great response rate as I can. So making the language as non-controversial, making it as welcoming as I possibly can, and assuaging any anxieties that people might have based on my own experience around people's biases around mental illness. I would make that into this letter. This is easier, like again, I think senior living, senior care facility is different from other care facilities that we're talking about. They each have their own biases.

His comment is interesting, not only because it identifies some difference by population and by practices, but also because it identifies that just because a population is at a lower point on this "spectrum of things that get people really antsy" doesn't mean that there aren't other common stereotypes and misperceptions associated with it. For instance, "Heather," who was selected for preferring greater distance from her original population (ST) compared how she would write for the NS population with the letter she wrote for the ST population.

> …your parents, your grandparents, don't you care about them? Don't you want to make sure they are in the comforts of -- it would appeal to more of the care and compassion, the love, and the feelings that we feel responsible for in caring for our aging, the responsibilities, not the fear and we're safe. They're old people. It's a retirement home. It's boring, nothing happens there. They drink their coffee and they play bingo and their bridge. It's a non-threat. It's a place of recreation, a place of peace. You know, and relaxation, and what you deserve to do after you spend your entire life working.

On the one hand, for ST, she identified fear, safety, and threat. On the other hand, for NS, she describes care, compassion, love, responsibilities. Recreation, peace, and deserved relaxation. But she also says it's boring, and nothing happens there. This may align with the statements that people know older adults, and understand older adults – but in a homogenous, stereotypical way. This is certainly consistent with the idea of acceptable roles – which exist for the characters one writes about, as well as for the ones one interacts with personally – and an easily accessible, understandable story (Bodenhausen, 2010; Goffman, 1959). Indeed, "Michael's" answers that his (NS) clients were more negatively perceived may be due to a high degree of personal sensitivity in thinking in terms of individuals, rather than categories, and therefore how others' blanket perceptions could negatively affect both the ST and the NS populations.

Fundraisers Writing to Audiences about Clients

Fundraisers identified five strategies for mitigating difficulties due to perceptions of client stigmatization.

First, avoiding things that are uncomfortable. These items may be intentionally excluded; or rationalized as not central or substantive; or, it may be that there are so many options of what to include that they simply don't make the top of the list.

Second, stretching gradually. Asking an audience to stretch cognitively or emotionally can be layered with comforting elements. Stories might ask them to stretch a little, not a lot – such as "Kimberly's" choice of postpartum depression rather than schizophrenia or bipolar disorder.

Third, skillful use of perspective taking can help highlight the commonality of experience. A letter might place the reader in a familiar situation, and then describe a limit or sensation that the reader might not otherwise associate with that situation, but which is not too far removed from his or her initial picture of it, to help give a sense of clients' lived experiences.

Fourth, thinking of an acquisition letter as just a first step in a process. As individuals self-identify as interested, education can take place gradually, as they get more engaged with the organization. This, of course, requires an intentional plan on the part of the organization to consistently engage and educate.

Fifth, using evidence and persuasion to convey, as "Sarah" said, that "We actually do have a need."

Generally, participants agreed on the importance of positive perceptions of the organization, as well as of the client base. Those who addressed the issue considered advocacy to be separate from fundraising, although certainly all avoided intentionally diminishing the clients about whom they wrote or spoke.

One approach struck me as particularly promising. "Susan," who was selected for her preference for less social distance from her assigned client group (NS), wrote a story of someone who defies the more negative stereotypes (or possibilities) of the client group. For the NS client group, she described someone vibrant and interesting. For the ST group, also someone interesting – perhaps someone quiet and introverted. She specifically avoided labeling the conditions of the individuals, describing them with a fresh eye, rather than using labels that carry specific impressions.

She included perspective taking in such a way that described the lived reality of someone in the client base in a way that most people can relate to, and then how the organization meets their needs. For example,

> You've gone to the local coffee shop, right? To get something to drink, meet with friends, or even just check your email. Imagine yourself as someone 65 or 75 or even 85 who wants that experience but finds coffee place a little too something – too noisy? Too bright? Just too "young"?
>
> Positivities knows the social needs of your older neighbors and has the gathering spot they are looking for. Comfy chairs. Enough, but not too much, light. Quiet spaces so you can hear someone talk. If you haven't already seen us, come on by.

This opening is then followed by a description of the welcoming experience at the organization, using richly positive words, and including a story of someone interesting. Then, she invites the readers to participate, telling them how much they have to gain by talking to the interesting person there. She also links that experience to the daily needs of the organization, supporting the idea of necessary overhead in order to offer the experience. Throughout, she is sensitive to both the needs of the clients and of the readers.

While many writers wrote of the NS population as deserving rest and happiness, and of the ST population as wanting to work and contribute and be responsible, "Susan's" choice is striking in that she describes the clients of each group, by turn, as simply existing in the café, and positions their mere presence there as an untapped source of richness for the reader. In this, she brings a humanizing experience for both the clients and the readers. Her writing is accessible without resorting to cliché or trope. She engages the reader emotionally and inspires action, after defining a scene in which the organization and the clients that animate its mission are worthy, not because they fit expectations for a *type* of person, but because they *are* a person, and, as she reminds the reader, because you [the reader] are also a person who has something to gain as well as to give.

Limitations

The experiment part of this study has a relatively small number of participants for statistical purposes, and a large number of variables. Therefore, it is not well suited for establishing causality with statistical certainty. However, the richness of the data is well suited for an exploratory study in this relatively unstudied phenomenon.

In recruiting I did not attempt to ensure a representative sample. The time commitment and effort required by the initial survey, including the creative activity of authoring an appeal letter to a prompt, means that there may be selection bias among participants. The high number of drop-outs – compounded by spamming complications – emphasizes this possibility. However, given similarities in participant demographics with the most comprehensive data available on fundraisers in the United States, I am reasonably confident that participants are good representatives of fundraisers who participate in professional organizations within the US. As I was particularly interested in individuals who had been socialized into the fundraising profession, I am pleased with the results of recruitment. However, there are many fundraisers who, for whatever reason, are not members of professional organizations, and many at small nonprofits with no budget for professional development. Certainly those circumstances may foster different preferences and different strategies.

Finally, the small scale of qualitative interviews conducted are not intended to be generalizable. Rather, they are intended to give insights into existing practices and thought processes in adapting to different client bases. The reader is also reminded that the study focuses on perceptions – and, if you will, meta-perceptions: what fundraisers think potential donors think about their clients – and how fundraisers work with those perceptions. The letter written during the initial survey links to actual behavior; but speculation about how strategies would be adapted is just that: speculative.

Theoretical Implications and Suggestions for Future Research

This study applied concepts of stigma from sociology and social psychology to bring the client into focus as a possible factor in fundraising practice, and identified the fundraiser as a critical individual in the process of fundraising. It applied ideas from perception and persuasion to help understand how fundraising communication works. And, it applied a dramaturgical framework to conceptualize fundraising communication as an expressive act based on the perceptions of individuals attempting to set a scene that will persuade others, based on how they believe others will react from their knowledge, experience, and expectations of their perceptions. This communication for the sake of action is germane to the role of fundraising.

It is also, to my knowledge, the first study asking fundraisers to write to a common prompt, and to examine variance and process in this more controlled environment. The exploratory factor analysis identified patterns of elements that co-vary. Some seem to co-vary by client population, which may or may not be the result of latent variables. In this, the personalities, experiences, preferences, and values of the individuals writing the letters may be a missing piece.

There were some interesting flags in the LIWC exploratory analysis that are worth following up on, using more qualitative methods. Particularly, the significantly higher use of health-type words in the ST population without a correspondingly significant difference in the mention of medical interventions in the content analysis is interesting. Also, the difference in the use of money words between client groups is interesting, given that all letters are, by definition, asking for financial support. Finally, the increased use of family words for the NS client base tracks with discussions held in interviews as far as who the beneficiaries of the organizations are across client groups. It might be interesting to explore this a bit more in the text of the letters.

Following up on the exploratory factor analysis, future research might look at a cluster analysis to find patterns by writer. We also have other data on the writers, such as dispositional empathy, which may correlate especially with the factors that match identified value constructs. Finally, it is possible that there are latent variables causing some of these choices, in which case a common factor analysis with some other method of extraction may be fruitful.

After studying the choices fundraisers make, the next logical step is to ask whether those differences, such as those choices identified herein, affect donors' likelihood of giving. Even though we didn't get statistical significance on much, there were several trends identified, sufficient to create types of letters written for the NS and ST clients. I'd like to test those patterns of choices that tended toward one client base or the other, plus one neutral format based on "Susan's" strategy, in a 3 (format) x 2 (client base) experiment with general public potential donors.

Ideas of stigma are culturally situated, but it is helpful to have an evidence-based sense of what is considered stigmatized. Can we identify a list of commonly "unpopular" causes here in the US, similar to work done in the UK (Body & Breeze, 2016)? I have already secured funding to start working on this project for Fall 2018.

Similar to Ritzenhein (1998), I find little tendency to use material incentives for donors – my results were even smaller than those in his study (5.2% compared to 13.4%). This small practical use seems out of proportion to the attention given to researching material incentives. It might be interesting to examine that discrepancy.

Finally, although practical advice to fundraisers suggests that they should use simple language (e.g. Brooks, 2012; Warwick, 2008), there has been little research into the readability of the language actually used. In testing donor response to letters, Goering, Connor *et al*. (2011) found, to their surprise, that letters written at a 12^{th} grade level resulted in higher donations than those written at a 6^{th} grade level, but suggested that this result might have been due to a research design focusing on college graduates and an appeal fundraising for an institution of higher education. The fundraisers participating in the present study tended to write at between an 8^{th} grade and a 13^{th} grade reading level, with an average readability appropriate for 10^{th} grade.

Recommendations for Practice

This research suggests three main applications to practice. The first is simply the importance of fundraisers, and ideally all nonprofit staff working with vulnerable populations, to address their own assumptions and stereotypes. We will probably always make assumptions, but just as two of the people interviewed noticed that they were treating client groups differently *because* we were discussing them in tandem, simply calling it to attention may affect assumptions made when talking to donors, talking to clients, or helping to inform projects for the benefit of clients.

The second involves addressing stereotypes with donors. The idealized donor cycle includes not only development of a sound annual giving base of donors, but also stewardship and cultivation to develop a constituency (Seiler, 2017). As people become more involved with the organization, and more interested, their attention span widens and deepens. Issues that are complex or uncomfortable may seem more personally relevant. As fundraising is an iterative process, so is persuasion more generally (Rhodes & Ewoldsen, 2013). Therefore, this step incorporates a presumption of professional knowledge and skill on the part of the fundraisers as an ethical duty to the clients and donors of your organization. It would seem to also be a realization of the public character described by Pribbenow (1997b). In this view, fundraising, especially for stigmatized populations, is not merely filling a line in the operating budget, and a culture of philanthropy is not merely an expectation that people write checks regularly. It's a recognition of civic engagement as part of development, and development as part of mission. The idea suggests that daily activities and annual goals within development offices that encourage a positive, educated view of the organization's clients becomes a priority among department goals.

Finally, the fundraiser's ability to live that reality is affected by the support and agreement of the organization's executive leadership and its board members. Often, fundraisers are hired as a mere technology to produce revenue. Yet the position is one that requires and builds on expressive competence, and interacts directly with individuals who care something for the mission, and will hopefully come to care more about it. The support generated by the communicative efforts of the fundraising office should not be valued only for its effect on the budget. If the mission of the organization is to help clients, particularly those who are the most vulnerable and stigmatized, boards and executive directors should examine whether that includes actively working to change stereotypes and acceptance of discounted humanity, and possibly affecting the conditions that generate their clients' need for direct services. This requires a big picture, and dynamic, view of organizational mission, applied as well to concrete goals, policies, and budgets. In short, it requires no less passion and competence than any other great mission.

Closing Comments

In the quote that opens this dissertation, Arthur Brooks contemplates an "alchemy of virtue" in which fundraisers facilitate the conversion of money into a good society. One vision of a good society is that people have the opportunity to develop their talents and help others, rather than being discounted due to some undesirable attribute, denied not only society's full benefits, but their opportunity to contribute to it. As audacious as Brooks' vision is – and it is audacious – it's not enough to convert money without contemplation, expertise, and tolerance. Fundraisers can use that alchemical skill of persuasion to help develop a society that will more intentionally recognize and welcome those who our assumptions overlook.

APPENDIX A
EXPERIMENTAL PROTOCOL

Qualifying Page
Within the past six months, have you been employed as a fundraiser for a charity, or as a fundraising consultant working with charities?

If "yes," to random treatment.
If "no," then "Unfortunately, you do not qualify for this survey. Thank you for your interest."

Random Assignment to Treatment
{read description of one of two beneficiary populations (ST or NS), its needs and opportunities, and the services Positivities provides for them}

Thank you for participating in this study.

First, please read this description of a fictional nonprofit, Positivities.

Stigmatized Treatment (ST)

Positivities was established in 1991 to provide services to individuals with mental illness. One year ago, Positivities opened a new location in Riverside, a city with a fairly homogenous, largely middle-class population. In deciding on Riverside, your study found that 19% of residents were diagnosed with mental illness; 4% were diagnosed with serious mental illness. 9% of the population has a documented disability. Positivities opened a drop-in center in a storefront location within the community, the only one of its kind in the immediate area. The location is close to residences and to restaurants. Clients have tended to gather on the sidewalk in front of the center, so Positivities is considering adding sidewalk seating. The center offers informal opportunities to socialize and to foster new and existing friendships, as well as more formal opportunities to help or encourage others; encourage self-knowledge; promote creativity and personal expression; foster intellectual development; participate in organizations; and engage in both observational and participatory recreation. All of these opportunities have been shown to increase individuals' quality of life. In addition, Positivities also has transportation services available to help negotiate trips for doctor's visits, and has supportive services to help people who have recently been hospitalized transition back to a home setting. Staff have engaged in outreach over this first year, and an increasing number of people are making use of both the informal drop-in and café aspects, as well as enrolling in and attending the formal group meetings and events.

Non-stigmatized Treatment (NS)

Positivities was established in 1991 to provide services to older adults. One year ago, Positivities opened a new location in Riverside, a city with a fairly homogenous, largely middle-class population. In deciding on Riverside, your study found that 19% of residents are senior citizens. 9% of the population has a documented disability. Positivities opened a drop-in center in a storefront location within the community, the only one of its kind in the immediate area. The location is close to residences and to restaurants. Clients have tended to gather on the sidewalk in front of the center, so Positivities is considering adding sidewalk seating. The center offers informal opportunities to socialize and to foster new and existing friendships, as well as more formal opportunities to help or encourage others; encourage self-knowledge; promote creativity and personal expression; foster intellectual development; participate in organizations; and engage in both observational and participatory recreation. All of these opportunities have been shown to increase individuals' quality of life. In addition, Positivities also has transportation services available to help negotiate trips for doctor's visits, and has supportive services to help people who have recently been hospitalized transition back to a home setting. Staff have engaged in outreach over this first year, and an increasing number of people are making use of both the informal drop-in and café aspects, as well as enrolling in and attending the formal group meetings and events.

{next page}

Check
What is the name of the nonprofit described? (M/C) – Positivities, Community Wins, Springfield Forward, Awesome Actions

Who are the clients at the nonprofit? (M/C) – children, older adults, people with mental illness, people with AIDS

{next page}

Writing – Introduction
You are a fundraiser for Positivities, an established organization that opened a new storefront drop-in center in Riverside. It has been one year since the opening, and you are writing a short (one-page) appeal letter that will go to people in the surrounding community. The letter will go to people who have never given to Positivities before. Please write the body of the appeal. The description of the organization you just read is displayed so that you can refer to it. Feel free to make up quotes or details if that is helpful, as long as they are consistent with the description. If you are more comfortable working in a word processor, please feel free to do so; but keep this window open to paste your work.

Writing – Actual
{ST or NS description on left}

Dear {Sal},

Blank Field

Sincerely,
Charles Goodfellow
Executive Director

{next page}

Likert Assessments

Thinking of the clients served by Positivities, please respond to each statement by selecting a score from 1 to 5, with 1 being "completely disagree" and 5 being "completely agree."

Positivities' clients are usually considered in a positive light by the public.
1 2 3 4 5

Positivities' clients are depicted favorably by the media.
1 2 3 4 5

The issues Positivities' clients care about are recognized as important public problems.
1 2 3 4 5

Positivities' clients are not very well understood by society.
1 2 3 4 5

Postivities' clients are sometimes the subject of jokes.
1 2 3 4 5

Some people would perceive Positivities' clients as a threat.
1 2 3 4 5

Some people would perceive Positivities' clients as a bother.
1 2 3 4 5

On their own, Positivities' clients are powerless.
1 2 3 4 5

The clients should have the ability to shape programs at Positivities.
1 2 3 4 5

Most of the stereotypes of Positivities' clients are positive.
1 2 3 4 5

Positivities' clients are just as trustworthy as anyone else.

1 2 3 4 5

Sometimes the world isn't fair to the clients at Positivities.
1 2 3 4 5

Positivities' clients have a lot to offer the community.
1 2 3 4 5

Donors and grantors understand the needs of Positivities' clients.
1 2 3 4 5

Positivities' clients should be grateful for the generosity of others.
1 2 3 4 5

Donors might feel uncomfortable visiting with Positivities' clients.
1 2 3 4 5

I would be willing to have one of Positivities' clients as a neighbor.
1 2 3 4 5

I would be willing to spend time socializing with one of Positivities' clients.
1 2 3 4 5

I would be willing to have one of Positivities' clients care for my children or children I know.
1 2 3 4 5

I would be willing to make friends with one of Positivities' clients.
1 2 3 4 5

I would be willing to work closely with one of Positivities' clients on a job.
1 2 3 4 5

I would be willing to have one of Positivities' clients marry someone related to me.
1 2 3 4 5

{next page}

The following statements inquire about your thoughts and feelings in a variety of situations. For each item, indicate how well it describes you by selecting a score from 1 to 5, with 1 being "does not describe me well" and 5 being "describes me very well." Answer as honestly as you can.

I often have tender, concerned feelings for people less fortunate than I am.
1 2 3 4 5

I sometimes find it difficult to see things from the “other guy’s” point of view.
1 2 3 4 5

Sometimes I don’t feel very sorry for other people when they are having problems.
1 2 3 4 5

I try to look at everybody’s side of a disagreement before I make a decision.
1 2 3 4 5

When I see someone being taken advantage of, I feel kind of protective towards them.
1 2 3 4 5

I sometimes try to understand my friends better by imagining how things look from their perspective.
1 2 3 4 5

Other people’s misfortunes do not usually disturb me a great deal.
1 2 3 4 5

If I’m sure I’m right about something, I don’t waste much time listening to other people’s arguments.
1 2 3 4 5

When I see someone being treated unfairly, I sometimes don’t feel very much pity for them.
1 2 3 4 5

I am often quite touched by things that I see happen.
1 2 3 4 5

I believe that there are two sides to every question and try to look at them both.
1 2 3 4 5

I would describe myself as a pretty soft-hearted person.
1 2 3 4 5

When I’m upset at someone, I usually try to “put myself in his shoes” for a while.
1 2 3 4 5

Before criticizing somebody, I try to imagine how I would feel if I were in their place.
1 2 3 4 5

{next page}

Listed below are a number of statements concerning personal attitudes and traits. Read each item and decide whether the statement is true or false as it pertains to you personally.

I never hesitate to go out of my way to help someone in trouble. (T/F)

I have never intensely disliked anyone. (T/F)

There have been times when I was quite jealous of the good fortune of others. (T/F)

I would never think of letting someone else be punished for my wrong doings. (T/F)

I sometimes feel resentful when I don't get my way. (T/F)

There have been times when I felt like rebelling against people in authority even though I know they were right. (T/F)

I am always courteous, even to people who are disagreeable. (T/F)

When I don't know something I don't at all mind admitting it. (T/F)

I can remember "playing sick" to get out of something. (T/F)

I am sometimes irritated by people who ask favors of me. (T/F)

{next page}

Demographics

Now we'd like to ask you a few questions about yourself.

How many years have you been a fundraiser or a fundraising consultant? ___

How old are you? (M/C) Under 25, 25-34, 35-44, 45-54, 55-64, 65 or older

What is your gender? (M/C) Male, Female, Other

With what racial or ethnic group(s) do you identify? (M/C) White, Black or African American, American Indian or Alaska Native, Asian, Native American or Pacific Islander, Hispanic or Latinx

What is the highest level of education you have completed? (M/C) Elementary school, high school, some college, associate's degree, bachelor's degree, graduate degree

If you have graduated from college, what was your undergraduate major? _________

If you have a graduate degree, or are working on one, what is your field of study? _________

For which types of charities have you raised funds as a professional? (M/C, check multiple) Arts, culture, and humanities; Education and research; Environmental and animals; Health services; Human services; International and foreign affairs; Public and societal benefit; Religion; Mutual or Membership Benefit; Other ___________________

As a volunteer? (M/C, check multiple) Arts, culture, and humanities; Education and research; Environmental and animals; Health services; Human services; International and foreign affairs; Public and societal benefit; Religion; Mutual or Membership Benefit; Other ___________________

Leaving yourself aside, have you personally ever known someone who has received treatment for a mental health situation? (Y/N)

If yes, please think about the person with a mental health problem with whom you have had the most contact. Would you say that you were extremely close, very close, not very close, or not at all close to that person? (M/C) Extremely close, very close, not very close, not at all close

Have you personally ever received treatment for a mental health problem? (Y/N)

Do you have any comments or thoughts you would like to share with us about this survey? _______________________________

{next page}

Thank you and interest in interview
That's all the questions we have for you. Thank you for your time!

If you would be willing to participate in a follow-up interview, please provide your contact information. Providing contact information is completely optional. If you do not wish to be considered for a follow-up interview, please check "no" and then press "next."

Would you be willing to participate in a follow-up interview? (Y/N)

If "no," to debriefing text. Then to {next page}

If "yes,"
Name __________________
E-mail _____________________
Day time phone number _____________________
Best way to reach: e-mail/ phone/ text

(debriefing text is held until after interview, or when it is determined that participant will not be interviewed)

{next page}

Thank you! Your answers have been submitted.

If you would like to receive a $20 Amazon gift card as our thanks for participating, press "Next" now. You will be taken to a separate survey to enter your contact information. Information entered for the purposes of receiving your e-gift card will not be connected to your survey.

http://uwwhitewater.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_esrMoqOyLGEi20t
End, or
{next page}

Survey Entry
Thank you for participating! To receive a $20 Amazon gift card as a token of our thanks, fill out the information below.

Name __________________
E-mail _____________________

That's it! We will be in contact about your e-gift card, usually within 7-10 days. The e-mail will come from rkhansen@imail.iu.edu. On receipt, we will need you to send an e-mail confirming that you received the e-gift card. Thanks, again.

End

APPENDIX B
INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

NOTE: This is an open ended interview. Each interview will cover the following topics (in bold). Example questions are given underneath. Precise questions will be tailored to the interviewee.

A. Background

1. How long have you been working as a fundraiser in your current organization?
2. What are your responsibilities in this position?
3. Can you tell me how your career brought you here?
4. What kind of population benefits from your organization?
5. What kind of education/training prepared you for this position?

B. **Fundraising Communication Differences by Audience**

1. I want to ask you about writing general acquisition or low-dollar level fundraising appeals. What would that audience look like for your organization? What sorts of points would you emphasize to that audience?
2. If you are writing an appeal for higher or leadership annual gifts, what sorts of points would you emphasize in an appeal to that audience?
3. Thinking now about your major donors, what separates them from your smaller donors? What would you tend to emphasize in writing to them?

C. Intended Objectives for Appeals

1. When you send an appeal, what do you want it to do? How do you measure a good appeal?
2. Are there any non-financial objectives you try to accomplish with your appeals? How do you try to achieve them? How do you know if they're working?
3. Have you ever had an appeal go wrong? What happened?

D. Presenting Beneficiary Populations

1. When you write to potential donors, how do you balance your focus on the organization and on the population you serve?
2. How do you incorporate what you know about the people who support you and their interests in your writing (conversation/ depictions) to present them to best effect?
3. I'd like you to think about the most recent appeal you wrote (or edited, or article, or proposal, or conversation you had). Did it involve a specific person or group of people? Can you describe it to me? Why did you make those choices?

4. ________ can be a complicated issue. Are there aspects/ topics/ situations that are familiar to this population that you would typically avoid in a general appeal? What determines that choice? Are there other donor audiences you would share that with? How do you decide?
5. How well do you think your annual donors understand your clients' needs and priorities, compared to the staff? What do you think explains donors' understanding of clients' needs?

E. Wrap-up

1. Are there any other thoughts you'd like to share with me?
2. Do you have any questions for me?

APPENDIX C
MANUAL FOR CODING CLIENT FOCUS AND ORGANIZATIONAL FOCUS IN APPEAL LETTERS
Version 2

Prompts for Appeal Letters

You are a fundraiser for Positivities, an established organization that opened a new storefront drop-in center in Riverside. It has been one year since the opening, and you are writing a short (one-page) appeal letter that will go to people in the surrounding community. The letter will go to people who have never given to Positivities before. Please write the body of the appeal.

The description of the organization you just read is displayed so that you can refer to it. Feel free to make up quotes or details if that is helpful, as long as they are consistent with the description. If you are more comfortable working in a word processor, please feel free to do so; but keep this window open to paste your work.

Participants were randomly assigned to {POPULATION}, each of which has an {ISSUE}.

(A)

Positivities was established in 1991 to provide services to {POPULATION}. One year ago, Positivities opened a new location in Riverside, a city with a fairly homogenous, largely middle-class population. In deciding on Riverside, your study found that 19% of residents (is affected by) {ISSUE}. 9% of the population has a documented disability. Positivities opened a drop-in center in a storefront location within the community, the only one of its kind in the immediate area. The location is close to residences and to restaurants. Clients have tended to gather on the sidewalk in front of the center, so Positivities is considering adding sidewalk seating. The center offers informal opportunities to socialize and to foster new and existing friendships, as well as more formal opportunities to help or encourage others; encourage self-knowledge; promote creativity and personal expression; foster intellectual development; participate in organizations; and engage in both observational and participatory recreation. All of these opportunities have been shown to increase individuals' quality of life. In addition, Positivities also has transportation services available to help negotiate trips for doctor's visits, and has supportive services to help people who have recently been hospitalized transition back to a home setting. Staff have engaged in outreach over this first year, and an increasing number of people are making use of both the informal drop-in and café aspects, as well as enrolling in and attending the formal group meetings and events.

<u>Coding Manual</u>

This analysis aims to assess the relative amount of attention given in each appeal letter to the nonprofit organization ("Positivities") and the clients served by Positivities.

The primary unit of analysis is one sentence. A single sentence might have a client focus only, an organization focus only, focus on both the clients and the organization, or focus on neither the clients or the organization.

Please note that Salutation blocks and Signature blocks do not count as sentences. In the case of a bullet point list, please count each fragment, including the fragment typically preceding the list. So, the following example would count as four sentences.

> These stories include:
> - Bullet point one
> - Bullet point two, and
> - Bullet point three

Dimension 1: Client Focus

1 = client focus is clearly present	0 = client focus is absent or ambiguous
Indicates that a sentence focuses directly on clients, or on a client. The client does not need to be the subject of the sentence (that is, the one acting), but must be included in the sentence. (In the examples below, the *italicized* parts of the sentences directly relate to the client(s).) This includes talking about a specific client: e.g., "*Mina* was 12 years old when *she first felt there was something different about her*." This includes a client talking about himself or herself: e.g., "*I was told* that Positivities was a place where meaningful change can happen, *where I can be who I've always wanted to be*."*	Does <u>not</u> count as client focus if the sentence talks about services that are offered for the benefit of clients, but clients are not mentioned. e.g., "Our eight classes are full - with a waiting list - and our goal is to offer double the number of group activities and counselors that we have available."* Does <u>not</u> count as client focus if the community is mentioned, but the specific client base or issue is not mentioned. e.g., "Our organization is going to meet the needs of our community."*

This includes talking about a group of clients: e.g. “Where do *our guests* come from?”* e.g., “Please consider making a tax-deductible gift of any amount so that we can provide one-of-a-kind experiences *to those who need a brighter outlook on life*.”* This includes talking about individuals in the community who fall into the service categories the organization addresses, and are potential clients for current services, but are not currently clients themselves: e.g., “In our city alone, 19% of *residents have been diagnosed with {ISSUE},* a serious issue that affects quality of life for many in the community.” This includes talking about the issue, when it can be reasonably assumed to relate to the population served: e.g., “This is a proven model to help improve the {ISSUE} and increase the overall well-being of our community.” This includes talking about clients in the same sentence that also talks about the organization: e.g., “When Positivities was founded in 1991, the organization sought to elevate the quality of life for *{POPULATION}* as a core value among our state’s residents.”* e.g., “We are Positivities, and we work to serve *individuals who are struggling with {ISSUE}* by offering affordable, convenient care.”* *would be coded for organization focus, as well	*would be coded for organization focus

Dimension 2: Organization Focus

1 = organization focus is clearly present	0 = organization focus is absent or ambiguous
Indicates that a sentence focuses directly on the organization. The organization does not need to be the subject of the sentence (that is, the one acting), but must be included in the sentence. (In the examples below, the *italicized* parts of the sentences directly relate to the organization.) This includes speaking directly about the organization: e.g., "*Positivities* is excited to introduce to you *a new facility* in Riverside." This includes talking about services that are offered for the benefit of clients: e.g., "*Our center offers informal opportunities to socialize and foster new and existing friendships, as well as more formal opportunities to help or encourage others; encourage self-knowledge; promote creativity and personal expression; foster intellectual development; participate in organizations; and engage in both observational and participatory recreation*." e.g., "$180 covers the costs for *a month of Financial Possibilities, our small group financial confidence mentorship program*" This includes referring to the organization as "we," "us," or "our": e.g., "In order to continue to provide these services to our community, *we* need your support." e.g., "I hope you will help *us* build a brighter future for every Riverside resident who could use a positive change."*	Does not count as organization focus if the sentence talks about a situation that regularly happens at the organization, but does not reference the organization or its services. e.g., "He always has a smile and a story."* Does not count as organization focus if the writer speaks in first person without tying in the organization. e.g., "I am thrilled to help the wonderful city of Riverside bring joy and healing to our {POPULATION}."* *would be coded for client focus

This includes talking directly about the issues or opportunities the organization is presenting: e.g., “The use of *our facility* has never been higher but this has become a burden as well as a blessing.” This includes a client directly mentioning a service or experience offered at the organization within that sentence: e.g., “By talking with others *in an encouraging, positive environment*, I've regained confidence in myself and an ability to go to the grocery store without self-consciousness or fear of judgment.”* This includes a client directly mentioning the organization: e.g. “After finding *Positivities*, I knew there were people in my community that were able and willing to help me live a better life.”* This includes the writer sharing contact information in his/her capacity as an organizational representative. e.g., “Call 123-456-7890 or email cgoodfellow@positivities.org for a visit.” This includes talking about the organization in the same sentence that also talks about clients: e.g., “In order for *us* to keep providing these opportunities and reaching out to more clients in our area we rely on donations from our friends’ and families’ community and surrounding region.”* e.g., “*We've* served hundreds of individuals, providing them with opportunities that increase their quality of life.”* *would be coded for client focus, as well	

Recording the Codes

The primary unit of analysis is one sentence. Please record results per paragraph, by highlighting that paragraph and placing the coding results in a Comment. Each paragraph will have three numbers associated with it, separated by slash marks (#/#/#). The first number is the total number of sentences in that paragraph. The second number is the number of sentences that mention or refer to the clients of the organization. And the third number is the number of sentences that mention or refer to the organization itself.

For example, consider the following paragraph.

> While we are incredibly eager to begin improving the quality of life for our clients as soon as possible, we need donations from kindhearted individuals such as you in order to carry out our mission. Please consider making a tax-deductible gift of any amount so that we can provide one-of-a-kind experiences to those who need a brighter outlook on life. If you would like to learn more about Positivities before making a gift, I would be happy to talk with you over the phone or in person. I am eager to meet the citizens of Riverside and learn what you want to see in our organization!

It has **4** sentences.

The clients are a focus of sentences 1 and 2, or **2** sentences out of 4.

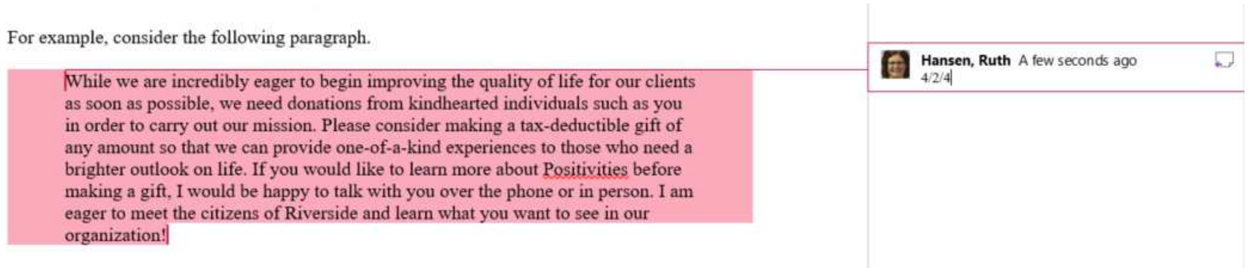
> While we are incredibly eager to begin improving the quality of life *for our clients* as soon as possible, we need donations from kindhearted individuals such as you in order to carry out our mission. Please consider making a tax-deductible gift of any amount so that we can provide one-of-a-kind experiences *to those who need a brighter outlook on life*.

The organization is a focus of sentences 1, 2, 3, and 4, or **4** sentences out of 4.

> While *we are incredibly eager* to begin improving the quality of life for our clients as soon as possible, *we need donations* from kindhearted individuals such as you in order to carry out *our mission*. Please consider making a tax-deductible gift of any amount so that *we can provide* one-of-a-kind experiences to those who need a brighter outlook on life. If you would like to learn more about *Positivities* before making a gift, I would be happy to talk with you over the phone or in person. I am eager to meet the citizens of Riverside and learn what you want to see *in our organization*!

Next to the paragraph, place the mark: **4/2/4**

This will look like:



For example, consider the following paragraph.

While we are incredibly eager to begin improving the quality of life for our clients as soon as possible, we need donations from kindhearted individuals such as you in order to carry out our mission. Please consider making a tax-deductible gift of any amount so that we can provide one-of-a-kind experiences to those who need a brighter outlook on life. If you would like to learn more about Positivities before making a gift, I would be happy to talk with you over the phone or in person. I am eager to meet the citizens of Riverside and learn what you want to see in our organization!

Hansen, Ruth A few seconds ago
4/2/4

Then, move on to the next paragraph and continue.

APPENDIX D
MANUAL FOR CODING VARIED CONTENT IN APPEAL LETTERS
Version 2.1

Prompts for Appeal Letters

You are a fundraiser for Positivities, an established organization that opened a new storefront drop-in center in Riverside. It has been one year since the opening, and you are writing a short (one-page) appeal letter that will go to people in the surrounding community. The letter will go to people who have never given to Positivities before. Please write the body of the appeal.

The description of the organization you just read is displayed so that you can refer to it. Feel free to make up quotes or details if that is helpful, as long as they are consistent with the description. If you are more comfortable working in a word processor, please feel free to do so; but keep this window open to paste your work.

Participants were randomly assigned to {POPULATION}, each of which has an {ISSUE}.

(A)

Positivities was established in 1991 to provide services to {POPULATION}. One year ago, Positivities opened a new location in Riverside, a city with a fairly homogenous, largely middle-class population. In deciding on Riverside, your study found that 19% of residents (is affected by) {ISSUE}. 9% of the population has a documented disability. Positivities opened a drop-in center in a storefront location within the community, the only one of its kind in the immediate area. The location is close to residences and to restaurants. Clients have tended to gather on the sidewalk in front of the center, so Positivities is considering adding sidewalk seating. The center offers informal opportunities to socialize and to foster new and existing friendships, as well as more formal opportunities to help or encourage others; encourage self-knowledge; promote creativity and personal expression; foster intellectual development; participate in organizations; and engage in both observational and participatory recreation. All of these opportunities have been shown to increase individuals' quality of life. In addition, Positivities also has transportation services available to help negotiate trips for doctor's visits, and has supportive services to help people who have recently been hospitalized transition back to a home setting. Staff have engaged in outreach over this first year, and an increasing number of people are making use of both the informal drop-in and café aspects, as well as enrolling in and attending the formal group meetings and events.

Coding Manual

Group 1: Distance between Reader and Clients

Describes the distance between the client group described in the letter and the reader of the letter. Code the presence or absence of each distance level separately.

1. Reader Takes Perspective of Client

1 = personal perspective taking is clearly present	0 = personal perspective taking is absent or ambiguous
The letter encourages the reader to imagine himself or herself in the place of someone who benefits or would benefit from the organization's primary activities May use words like "imagine you…" or "your family member" or "your friend," etc. e.g., "When you think about your future, what kind of life do you see for yourself?" e.g., "Imagine yourself as someone 65 or 75 or even 85 who wants that experience but finds coffee place a little too something – too noisy?"	If no text encouraging personal perspective taking is present. Does not count as personal perspective taking if the letter uses a quote from a client. e.g., "I never had somewhere I belonged, somewhere that I felt understood or normal." * * Would be coded for Individual Other

2. Client as Close to Writer

1 = description of a client or potential client who is close to the writer is clearly present	0 = description of a client or potential client who is close to the writer is absent or ambiguous
The letter encourages the reader to picture someone who is close to the person writing the letter as someone who benefits or would benefit from the organization's primary activities Uses words like "I" or "my family member" or "my friend" e.g., "My friend, Charles, is a retired insurance salesman, grandfather, veteran, and a lover of baseball and woodworking."	If no text depicting a client close to the writer is present. Does not count as close to writer if the letter uses a quote from a client, unless the client is the primary writer of the letter. e.g., "I was told that Positivities was a place where meaningful change can happen, where I can be who I've always wanted to be." * Does not count as close to writer if the letter writer writes in first person, unless

e.g., “I often think of my grandfather and parents when working with our clients.” Includes letters where the person writing the letter is someone who may benefit from the organization’s primary activities. e.g., “I knew I couldn’t be the only one in this situation.”	the primary writer of the letter is also a client or potential client. e.g., “My name is Charles Goodfellow, and I am the Executive Director of Positivities.” * Would be coded for Individual Other

3. Client as Individual “Other”

1 = description of a client or potential client who is an individual unknown to the reader is clearly present	0 = description of a client or potential client who is an individual unknown to the reader is absent or ambiguous
The letter encourages the reader to think of a specific someone unknown to them who is named and described who benefits or would benefit from the organization’s primary activities Uses words like “When Nadia came to Positivities…” e.g., “Melissa, a 28-year old single mother of two, came to Positivities six months ago.” e.g., “Mina* was 12 years old when she first felt there was something different about her.” Includes letters that use a quote or a testimonial from a specific client. e.g., Lisa's life was immediately improved when she came to Positivities. "I was so ashamed of my struggle…” *where Lisa’s testimonial is attributed to her as an individual*	If no text describing a client as a specific person unknown to the reader is present. Does not count as individual “other” if the letter uses a quote that is from someone other than a client. e.g., “The American writer and activist Betty Friedan stated that "{ISSUE} is not 'lost youth' but a new stage of opportunity and strength."” Does not count as individual “other” if the letter uses quotes or paraphrases that are not attributed to individual clients. e.g., ““I never had somewhere I belonged, somewhere that I felt understood or normal.”” * *as stand-alone pull-out, without attribution to a specific person* * Would be coded as Collective Other

4. Clients as Collective “Other”

1 = description of clients or potential clients as a collective group unknown to the reader is clearly present	0 = description of clients or potential clients as a collective group unknown to the reader is absent or ambiguous

The letter encourages the reader to think of a group of people who are not personally identified or connected to them personally who benefit or would benefit from the organization's primary activities Uses words like "Our clients…" or "Homeless people…" or "These people…"; "They" Includes describing the organization's clients as a group. e.g., "We hope that you will open your hearts and helps us love and care for our clients as only a close community can." This includes talking about individuals in the community who fall into the service categories the organization addresses, and are potential clients for current services, whether or not they are currently clients themselves. e.g., "They are friends, family members, thinkers, consumers and "doers."" *where "they" refers to clients or potential clients* e.g., "In our city alone, 19% of *residents have been diagnosed with {ISSUE},* a serious issue that affects quality of life for many in the community." This includes talking about the issue, when it can be reasonably assumed to relate to the population served: e.g., "This is a proven model to help improve the {ISSUE} and increase the overall well-being of our community." Includes letters that use a quote or a testimonial that is not attributed to a specific client.	If no text describing clients as a group of people who are unknown to the reader is present. Does not count as collective "other" if the word "they" is describing a group other than clients or potential clients, such as family or community members. e.g., "I know his family loves him, but they do not live nearby and cannot visit regularly."

e.g., ""I never had somewhere I belonged, somewhere that I felt understood or normal."" *as stand-alone pull-out, without attribution to a specific person*	

Group 2: Appeal Framing

5. **Positive Framing**

1 = positive framing is clearly present	0 = positive framing is absent or ambiguous
The letter describes the good that will happen if a gift is made. Usually promotes good feeling e.g., "Your gift of $100 will help people like Bill look forward to many more happy years." e.g., "A gift to Positivies, no matter the size, helps to ensure that programs such as this remain an option for {POPULATION} in the Riverside community for years to come."	If the letter does not connect making a gift to positive outcomes.

6. **Negative Framing**

1 = negative framing is clearly present	0 = negative framing is absent or ambiguous
The letter describes the harm that may occur if a gift is not made. Usually promotes a feeling of urgency e.g., "It is heartbreaking to have to say no, and that is where we hope you will step in."	If the letter does not connect inaction to negative outcomes.

Group 3: Types of Evidence

7. **Quality of the Organization**

1 = text addressing the quality of the organization is clearly present	0 = text addressing the quality of the organization is absent or ambiguous

Text focuses on the organization, and gives the reader cause to trust the quality of its services, its effectiveness, or its value. Includes mention of organizational stability and accomplishments. e.g., "For over 25 years, Positivities has provided a broad range of services to help super adults realize healthy, happy and productive lives beyond retirement and other major life milestones." Includes mention of the impact of organizational services. e.g., "We are proud of the immediate impact Positivities has had in just one year in Riverside." e.g., "Lisa's life was immediately improved when she came to Positivities." Includes extensive description of the organization or its services. e.g., "Positivities is a nonprofit organization that offers quality opportunities for {POPULATION} to foster friendships, encourage others, promote self-knowledge, nourish creativity and personal expression, stimulate intellectual development, participate in the community, and enjoy recreational activities." Includes evidence that the community values the organization. e.g., "In the 12 short months since opening our doors, the Riverside	Text stressing the quality of the organization, its services, its effectiveness, or its value is not present. Does <u>not</u> include a passing mention of a service. e.g., "We invite you to make a gift to provide more individuals like Mary transportation services to and from doctor's visits." Does <u>not</u> include mere mention of need. e.g., "The use of our facility has never been higher but this has become a burden as well as a blessing. We are finding that many of our {POPULATION} are being forced to stand outside due to a lack of seats for waiting."

chapter of Positivities has attracted hundreds of guests." Includes asserting the values or mission motivating the organization. e.g., "Positivities believes that all people should be the best that they can be regardless of diagnosis." e.g., "Our highly trained staff and dedicated volunteers have one focus in mind: to maximize the opportunities and possibilities for each guest."	

8. Worthiness of the Clients

1 = text addressing the worthiness of the clients or population served is clearly present	0 = text addressing the worthiness of the clients or population served is absent or ambiguous
Focus is on the clients, and gives the reader reason to believe that this population is worth helping. e.g., "Indeed, the condition of our super adult population is a direct reflection of our culture's well-being; how we treat, care for and nurture our country's super adults speaks volumes about our values." e.g., "Our {POPULATION} have spent their lives devoted to raising families, building businesses, and keeping our communities strong. Now it's our turn to say, "Thank you!"" This includes text that tells us that the clients are similar to us, the readers. e.g., "They come from Riverside and the surrounding rural community. They are	Text stressing the worthiness or the client population is not present. Does <u>not</u> include a passing mention of a clients or struggle. e.g., "We are Positivities, and we work to serve individuals who are struggling with {ISSUE} by offering affordable, convenient care." e.g., "For the first time in our community, there was a clean, friendly and convenient place where our {POPULATION} neighbors could come to meet new friends, learn new skills, and access a variety of services that greatly improve their quality of life." Does <u>not</u> include mere mention of need.

grandparents, husbands, mothers, nannies, and great-aunts." It includes evidence that makes us feel sympathy for the clients, or that they have intentions that are admirable. e.g., ""I was so ashamed of my struggle. As single mother, I felt horrible about the fact that I could hardly get myself out of bed to be the mother that my kids desperately need." e.g., "My daughter was worried about me, because I wasn't eating very much and slept more than I should." This includes text describing that clients have changed for the better as a result of the organization. e.g., "However, after coming to the clinic she has learned the skills she needs to address her {ISSUE}, has found a job she loves and is serving as a peer counselor at Positives."	e.g., "Did you know that one in five of our Riverside neighbors lives with {ISSUE}?" e.g., "Together we can raise the necessary funds to increase our capacity and continue to provide the {POPULATION} of our community with the social opportunities and transportation they need to have a high quality of life."

9. Characteristics of the Reader

1 = adjectives describing desirable attributes of the reader are clearly present	0 = adjectives describing desirable attributes of the reader are absent or ambiguous
Text focuses on the reader, and specifically uses adjectives to describe desirable attributes such as kindness, generosity, or loyalty. e.g., "Thank you very much for your kind consideration." e.g., "With your generous support of $100, you will help one individual attend an hour-long group event."	Text specifically attributing characteristics to the reader is absent. Does <u>not</u> include references to the reader's ability to help, absent a descriptor referencing the reader directly. e.g., "We are surely making positive changes for them. Won't you help us?" e.g., "Your gift could make the difference in ensuring the clinic remains a vital resource in the community."

This includes text that tells us that imputes a supportive point of view to the reader. e.g., "{POPULATION} are a treasure to me and our community. I know that many people, like you, feel the same way." e.g., "We hope that you will open your hearts and helps us love and care for our clients as only a close community can."	

10. Material Benefits of Giving

1 = text describing material benefits to the reader resulting from making a gift is clearly present	0 = text describing material benefits to the reader resulting from making a gift is absent or ambiguous
Text describes material benefits, such as a physical gift or a tax deduction, that the donor will receive from making a donation. e.g., "Please consider making a tax-deductible gift of any amount so that we can provide one-of-a-kind experiences to those who need a brighter outlook on life." This includes text that may promise both a material benefit and an emotional benefit. e.g., "Your gift is 100% tax deductible and 100% appreciated."	Text describing material benefits to the donors of making a gift is not present. Does not include benefits to the community that are enjoyed by many people, not just the donor. e.g., "Your gift could make the difference in ensuring the clinic remains a vital resource in the community."

11. Emotional Benefits of Giving

1 = text describing emotional benefits to the reader resulting from making a gift is clearly present	0 = text describing emotional benefits to the reader resulting from making a gift is absent or ambiguous

Text describes emotional benefits, such as a good feeling, that the donor will receive from making a donation. This includes feeling good yourself. e.g., “We're positive you're going to like what we do over the next year. Consider being a part of it.” This includes tying making a gift to the reader’s feeling effective. e.g., “You can make a difference, and together we will win this battle!” This includes averting negative emotions, such as guilt or shame. e.g., “By becoming a contributor to Possibilities, you can make a world of difference to those who feel forgotten.” This includes tying making the gift to positive emotions or appreciation on the part of recipients. e.g., “Truly, this is a priceless gift and we thank you for considering joining with you neighbors in changing lives.” e.g., “Gifts at all levels are appreciated.” This includes text that may promise both an emotional benefit and a material benefit. e.g., “Your gift is 100% tax deductible and 100% appreciated.”	Text describing emotional benefits to the donors from making a gift is not present.

12. Community Benefits of Giving

1 = text describing benefits to the reader’s broader community that will result from making a gift is clearly present	0 = text describing benefits to the reader’s broader community that will result from making a gift is absent or ambiguous

Text describes benefits that the donor's broader community will enjoy as a result of the donor's donation. Appeals to aspects of citizenship and belonging. e.g., "A gift to Positivies, no matter the size, helps to ensure that programs such as this remain an option for {POPULATION} in the Riverside community for years to come." e.g., "Let's continue providing the gift of hope to Riverside!" e.g., "I hope you will help us build a brighter future for every Riverside resident who could use a positive change."	Text describing benefits that the donor's broader community will enjoy as a result of the donor's donation is not present. Does <u>not</u> include mere mention of the clinic's location without tying financial support of the organization to benefits to the community. e.g., "Last year, Positives made great strides in its local impact through the additional of a drop-in center located in Riverside."

13. Client Story or Anecdote

1 = text telling an anecdote or story about a specific client is clearly present	0 = text telling an anecdote or story about a specific client is absent or ambiguous
Text includes an anecdote or story about a specific person's experience that demonstrates the need for or the effectiveness of the organization. Includes a story told in the third person. e.g., "If not for his weekly visits here, our staff would not have noticed that Charles's health was failing. We were able to help him by scheduling his doctor's appointment and taking him to have his blood pressure medication adjusted. Thankfully, he had medical care in time to prevent a heart attack, stroke, or worse." Includes a story told in the first person.	Text describing a specific person's experience as a story is not included. Does <u>not</u> include statements about clients as a group. e.g., "We are finding that many of our {POPULATION} are being forced to stand outside due to a lack of seats for waiting." Does not include text that describes general client experiences. e.g., "Whether they drop-in occasionally for a cup of coffee and a chat, or are regular attendees at Tuesday Afternoon Bridge Club, once shy clients now show up with huge smiles on their faces, excited

e.g., "…The staff treated me with respect and understanding. It was comforting to spend time with others who deal with similar struggles. They were normal people and for me it was a flood of relief to realize that maybe I was normal too. I'm more involved now. I'm a better mother. It's really changed my life. I have hope now." May be as little as a single sentence that describes a person's experience and demonstrates either need for or effectiveness of the organization: e.g., "I never had somewhere I belonged, somewhere that I felt understood or normal."	to greet the friends they know they will see at the center." Does not include text that asks the reader to imagine themselves in a specific situation. e.g., "Imagine yourself as someone 65 or 75 or even 85 who wants that experience but finds coffee place a little too something – too noisy?"

14. Statistics or Facts

1 = text offering empirical evidence of effectiveness or need is clearly present	0 = text offering empirical evidence of effectiveness or need is absent or ambiguous
Text includes statistics or other facts that demonstrate the need for or the effectiveness of the organization. Includes evidence of use. e.g., "In our first year of operation, Positivities welcomed 482 different guests, who participated in one or more of the 28 activities or services that we provide." e.g., "We've served hundreds of individuals, providing them with opportunities that increase their quality of life." Includes evidence of need.	Text including statistics or other facts to demonstrate the need for or the effectiveness of the organization is not included.

e.g., "Did you know that one in five of our Riverside neighbors lives with {ISSUE}?" Includes references to expert judgment. e.g., "This is a proven model to help to improve {ISSUE} and increase the overall well-being of our community."	

15. Reference to Current Events or External Trends

1 = text referencing external events or trends is clearly present	0 = text referencing external events or trends is absent or ambiguous
Text references current events or trends that support the need for services or support of the organization. e.g., "Positivities drop-in center is the only one of its kind in the immediate area, and as you know, state funding for {ISSUE} facilities and providers has been severely cut over the past decade."	Text referencing current events or external trends is not included.

Group 4: Organizational Characteristics

Does the letter specifically mention any of the following aspects of the organization's services? Code the presence or absence of each aspect individually.

16. Proximity to residences and restaurants

1 = text mentioning the organization's proximity to residences and/ or to restaurants is clearly present	0 = text mentioning the organization's proximity to residences and/ or to restaurants is absent or ambiguous
Text mentions that the organization is located near residences and/ or restaurants. e.g., "The opening of our store-front drop in center in the community, close to residences and restaurants, provides a unique	Text mentioning that the organization is located near residences and/ or restaurants is not included.

and convenient space for clients to gather."	

17. Plan to expand sidewalk seating

1 = text mentioning the organization's plans to expand sidewalk seating is clearly present	0 = text mentioning the organization's plans to expand sidewalk seating is absent or ambiguous
Text mentions that the organization is planning an expansion for sitting areas for clients in the sidewalk area. e.g., "We want to add sidewalk seating outside of our facility, where participants in our services often gather and spend time together." Include mention of clients congregating on the sidewalk, even if expansion of seating is not clearly mentioned. e.g., "We are finding that many of our {POPULATION} are being forced to stand outside due to a lack of seats for waiting."	Text mentioning that the organization is planning an expansion for sitting areas for clients in the sidewalk area is not included.

18. Transportation to medical visits

1 = text mentioning the organization's providing transportation to clients' medical visits is clearly present	0 = text mentioning the organization's providing transportation to clients' medical visits is absent or ambiguous
Text mentions that the organization will provide clients transportation to medical appointments. e.g., "We invite you to make a gift to provide more individuals like Mary transportation services to and from doctor's visits." e.g., "We were able to help him by scheduling his doctor's	Text mentioning that the organization will provide clients transportation to medical appointments is not included. Does not include more general transportation if medical or doctor's visits are not mentioned. e.g., "Because of Positivities transportation services Fred is a thriving member of our volunteer

appointment and taking him to have his blood pressure medication adjusted.”	group that maintains our cafe and new side-walk seating.”

19. Help transitioning from the hospital to home

1 = text mentioning the organization’s supportive services to clients’ who were recently hospitalized is clearly present	0 = text mentioning the organization’s supportive services to clients’ who were recently hospitalized is absent or ambiguous
Text mentions that the organization will help clients who have recently been hospitalized transition back to living at home. e.g., “This service is critical to serving the unique needs of our clients has they attend doctor’s visits and transition from inpatient care back home.” e.g., “$475 will provide services that ease the transition back home for a Positivities client who has been hospitalized, including a pre-release safety audit of the home, and bi-weekly visits from trained {ISSUE} staff who assist with nutrition, mobility, and a variety of other needs.”	Text mentioning that the organization will help clients who have recently been hospitalized transition back to living at home is not included.

Group 5: Concepts or Themes within the letter

Does the letter include any of the following concepts with regard to the nonprofit’s clients or services? Code the presence or absence of each aspect individually.

20. Empowerment

1 = a theme of empowerment is clearly present	0 = a theme of empowerment is absent or ambiguous
The text addresses the idea of empowerment. Empowerment here means raising oneself up the expected level of a regular member of society. This may include gaining necessary skills	Text addressing the idea of claiming the rights and privileges of a normal member of society is not included.

and confidence, or claiming one’s rights. The main idea is that the client will have the regular rights and privileges that a normal person ought to have. e.g., “After her first drop-in conversation with a counselor, Mina learned there was a specific group for people just like her to learn how to be more successful in their careers. With the skills she acquired, she flourished at work and got a promotion.” e.g., “By talking with others in an encouraging, positive environment, I've regained confidence in myself and an ability to go to the grocery store without self-consciousness or fear of judgment.” e.g., “Positivities is enabling {POPULATION} to feel empowered and self-aware.”	Does <u>not</u> include opportunities for self-actualization or personal fulfillment beyond that expected as an acceptable baseline for a normal person. e.g., “The American writer and activist Betty Friedan stated that "{ISSUE} is not 'lost youth' but a new stage of opportunity and strength."”

21. Fulfillment

1 = a theme of fulfillment is clearly present	0 = a theme of fulfillment is absent or ambiguous
The text addresses the idea of fulfillment. Fulfillment here means personal satisfaction or happiness from self-actualization; realizing clients’ talents and potential. This is above and beyond the baseline acceptable level of rights and privileges that a normal person ought to have. e.g., “They now have new options for enjoying life, new ideas for personal growth, and new activities designed to help {POPULATION} thrive like never before.”	Text addressing the idea of realizing talents and personal potential beyond the baseline acceptable level of rights and privileges for a normal member of society is not included. Does <u>not</u> include raising oneself up the normal acceptable level of a regular member of society. e.g., “I used to feel alone. After finding Positivities, I knew there were people in my community that were able and willing to help me live a better life.”

e.g., “When you see people gathered in front of our storefront, you see positive change at work; counselors build self-confidence through the arts and creativity, physical education and recreation activities, and intellectual activities designed to celebrate the potential in each of us.” Include narratives of enrichment, robust vitality, and higher-level needs. e.g., “For over 25 years, Positivities has provided a broad range of services to help {POPULATION} realize healthy, happy and productive lives beyond retirement and other major life milestones.”	e.g., “Together, we can bring hope to many of our friends and neighbors.”

22. Loneliness

1 = a theme of loneliness is clearly present	0 = a theme of loneliness is absent or ambiguous
The text addresses the idea of loneliness. Loneliness here means isolation from family or friends; feeling alone. e.g., “With each new client we welcome to the Possibilities family, I am reminded of how isolated and lonely {POPULATION} members of our community can become.” e.g., “I never had somewhere I belonged, somewhere that I felt understood or normal.” e.g., “His family does not live close and Fred is unable to drive himself because of medical issues that affect his vision. He was a shut-in.”	Text addressing the idea of loneliness or isolation is not included.

Includes loss of a loved one, friend, or caregiver. e.g., "After my wife passed away, I didn't know what to do with my day. My daughter was worried about me, because I wasn't eating very much and slept more than I should."	

23. Safety

1 = a theme of safety is clearly present	0 = a theme of safety is absent or ambiguous
The text addresses the idea of safety. Safety here means being protected from danger, risk, or injury; also, being unlikely to cause danger, risk, or injury to one's self or to others. e.g., "$475 will provide services that ease the transition back home for a Possibilities client who has been hospitalized, including a pre-release safety audit of the home, and bi-weekly visits from trained {ISSUE} staff who assist with nutrition, mobility, and a variety of other needs." e.g., "Thankfully, he had medical care in time to prevent a heart attack, stroke, or worse." e.g., "I was very depressed and didn't understand why I was still living. Now, I have a place to come to, a reason to get up in the morning, and new friends that make life worth living."	Text addressing the idea of protection from danger, risk, or injury caused by one's self or others is not included.

24. Stigma

1 = a theme of stigma is clearly present	0 = a theme of stigma is absent or ambiguous

The text addresses the idea of stigma. Stigma here means being avoided, discounted, or considered as less than a full person; also, any attribute that causes others to avoid a person. Also include words such as "marginalized" or "unaccepted," or descriptions of negative stereotypes of the client population. Includes the letter writer's description of the issue or population. e.g., "As you may know, {ISSUE} is often suffered silently. Many people feel isolated and marginalized." Includes a client's description of their own experience. e.g., "I never had somewhere I belonged, somewhere that I felt understood or normal."	Text addressing the idea of stigma, marginalization, negative stereotypes, or being unaccepted or avoided as one is not included.

25. Transformation

1 = a theme of transformation is clearly present	0 = a theme of transformation is absent or ambiguous
The text addresses the idea of transformation in the life of a client because of their involvement with the organization. Transformation here describes a dramatic and positive change in a client's situation or clients' situations due to the organization's efforts or programs. It can be the result of a single experience or a prolonged interaction. Includes the letter writer's description of the issue or population. e.g., "The changes in their moods and attitudes towards life is unbelievable when we are able to connect them with appropriate services and activities."	Text addressing the idea of a transformative experience on behalf of a client because of the organization is not included. Does <u>not</u> include positive outcomes without a focus on significant change between *before* and *after*. e.g., "Some need a helping hands with simple tasks like getting to the doctor. Others find the perfect chess partner or walking buddy. Most develop new interests or rediscover old ones---and everyone gains new friends."

e.g., “Before the clinic opened, she was unable to maintain regular employment. However, after coming to the clinic she has learned the skills she needs to address her {ISSUE}, has found a job she loves and is serving as a peer counselor at Positivities.” Includes a client’s description of their own experience. e.g., “My {ISSUE} made any public interaction impossible. By talking with others in an encouraging, positive environment, I've regained confidence in myself and an ability to go to the grocery store without self-consciousness or fear of judgment. This was the positive change that I needed and now I want to help others feel the same way.”	

26. Unmet Need

1 = a theme of unmet need is clearly present	0 = a theme of unmet need is absent or ambiguous
The text addresses the idea of unmet need. Unmet need here describes a societal need for the kinds of services the organization provides that is much greater than the organization is currently serving. e.g., “There are many “Mina”s suffering in isolation in Riverside.” Includes mentioning barriers to access, such as cost. e.g., “For as little as $20 per month, you can provide an annual checkup for a resident of	Text addressing the idea of unmet need for the kinds of services the organization provides is not included. Does not include mere evidence of need in the community. e.g., “e.g., “Did you know that one in five of our Riverside neighbors lives with {ISSUE}?” Does not include mere evidence of use of services. e.g., “The use of our facility has never been higher but this has become a burden as well as a blessing.”

Riverside who would not be able to afford care otherwise." Includes evidence that people are waiting to access services. e.g., "Our eight classes are full - with a waiting list - and our goal is to offer double the number of group activities and counselors that we have available."	

Recording Results

Please use the Excel Spreadsheet (Content Coding Reliability v2) to record results. Each narrative is numbered along the top, so each case has one column. Each variable is indicated along the left, numbered and with a shortened name, so each variable has one row. Presence should be indicated with a "1" and absence should be indicated with a "0". Refer to each variable's description, above, for guidelines in determining whether or not a variable is present.

APPENDIX E
IRB APPROVAL LETTER

INDIANA UNIVERSITY
OFFICE OF THE VICE PRESIDENT FOR RESEARCH
Office of Research Compliance

To: Lehn Benjamin
LILLY FAMILY SCHOOL OF PHILANTHROPY

Ruth Hansen
UNIVERSITY LEVEL

Sara Konrath
LILLY FAMILY SCHOOL OF PHILANTHROPY

From:

Chair - IRB-IUB
Human Subjects Office
Office of Research Compliance – Indiana University

Date: February 13, 2017

RE: **NOTICE OF EXPEDITED APPROVAL - NEW PROTOCOL**

Protocol Title: Communication in Charitable Fundraising

Study #: 1611071718

Funding Agency/Sponsor: None

Review Level: Expedited

Status: Approved | Active - Open to Enrollment

Study Approval Date: February 13, 2017

Study Expiration Date: February 11, 2019

The Indiana University Institutional Review Board (IRB) IRB00000222 | IRB-IUB recently reviewed the above-referenced protocol. In compliance with (as applicable) 21 CFR 56.109 (e), 45 CFR 46.109 (d), and IU Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for Research Involving Human Subjects, this letter serves as written notification of the IRB's determination.

Under 45 CFR 46.110, 45 CFR 56.110, and the SOPs as applicable, the study is approved under Expedited Category (6) Category 6: Collection of data from voice, video, digital, or image recordings made for research purposes. (7) Category 7: Research on individual or group characteristics or behavior (including, but not limited to, research on perception, cognition, motivation, identity, language, communication, cultural beliefs or practices, and social behavior) or research employing survey, interview, oral history, focus group, program evaluation, human factors evaluation, or quality assurance methodologies. (NOTE: Some research in this category may be exempt from the HHS regulations for the protection of human subjects. 45 CFR 46.101(b)(2) and (b)(3). This listing refers only to research that is not exempt.), **with the following determinations, as applicable:**

. **Minimal Risk**

. **Waiver of documentation of informed consent under 45 CFR46.117(c)**

. **Modification of required elements for informed consent document approved under 45 CFR 46.116(d)**

Approval of this study is based on your agreement to abide by the policies and procedures of the Indiana University Human Research Protection Program and does not replace any other approvals that may be required. Relevant policies and procedures governing Human Subjects Research can be found at: http://researchcompliance.iu.edu/hso/hs_guidance.html.

IRB approval is required prior to implementing any changes or amendments in the protocol, regardless of how minor, except to eliminate immediate hazards to subjects. No changes to the informed consent document may be made without prior IRB approval.

If you submitted and/or are required to provide participants with an informed consent document, please ensure you are using the most recent version of the document to consent subjects.

The initial approval period is noted above. Continued approval is contingent upon the submission of a renewal application to the Human Subjects Office in a timely fashion. Failure to submit the renewal notice in a timely fashion may result in the expiration and subsequent suspension of all protocol activities. **Failure to receive notification from the Human Subjects Office will not relieve you of your responsibility to ensure compliance with applicable regulations and policies regarding continuing review.**

You should retain a copy of this letter and all associated approved study documents for your records. Please refer to the assigned study number and exact study title in future correspondence with our office. Additional information is available on our website at http://researchcompliance.iu.edu/hso/index.html.

If your source of funding changes, you must submit an amendment to update your study documents immediately.

If you have any questions or require further information, please contact the Human Subjects Office via email at irb@iu.edu or by phone at 317-274-8289 (Indianapolis) or 812-856-4242 (Bloomington).

You are invited, as part of ORA's ongoing program of quality improvement, to **participate in a short survey** to assess your experience and satisfaction with the IRB related to this approval. We estimate it will take you approximately **5 minutes to complete the survey.** The survey is housed on a Microsoft SharePoint secure site that requires CAS authentication. This survey is being administered by REEP; please contact us at reep@iu.edu if you have any questions or require additional information. Simply click on the link below, or copy and paste the entire URL into your browser to access the survey: https://www.sharepoint.iu.edu/sites/iu-ora/survey/Lists/Compliance/IRB_Survey/NewForm.aspx.

\enclosures

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CURRICULUM VITAE

Ruth K. Hansen

Education

Ph.D., Indiana University (2018)
Major: Philanthropic Studies
Minor: Legal Studies

- Dissertation: The role of stigma in writing charitable appeals
- Chair: Lehn M. Benjamin

M.J., Loyola University Chicago (2001)
Major: Business Law

- Thesis: Estate tax repeal and the charitable sector
- Advisor: Anne-Marie Rhodes

B.A., Rutgers, the State University of New Jersey (1992)
Major: Music
Minor: Economics

Professional Experience

Lecturer, Management, University of Wisconsin-Whitewater (2016-present)

- Research interests: the practice of fundraising; fundraising communications; impression management; policy and regulations affecting charitable organizations; balancing nonprofit mission, client benefit, and resource dependence

Courses Taught

- Foundations of Nonprofit & Nongovernmental Organizations, 2017, 2018
- Social Responsibility & Business Ethics, 2018
- Organizational Behavior, 2016 – 2018
- Business & Society, 2016 – 2017

Additional Teaching Experience

Beijing Normal University, Zhuhai, China (2015)

- Fundraising in the United States (distance learning)

Saint Xavier University, Chicago (2007, 2009, 2010)

- Grant Writing

Publications

Peer Reviewed Article

Samawi, Z., Capps, L., & **Hansen, R.** (2017). Using the National League for Nursing Faculty Preparation for Global Experiences Toolkit for successful application for the Fulbright scholar award. *Nursing Education Perspectives, 38*(4), 214-215.

Book Chapter

Hansen, R. K. (2019, in press). Gary Neighborhood House: Managing mission and uncertainty in the Civil Rights Era. In *Hoosier Philanthropy* (G. Witkowski, ed.). Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press.

Book Reviews

Hansen, R. (2015). Book Review: Nonprofit Organizations and Civil Society in the United States by K. LeRoux and M.K. Feeney. *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly, 44*(5). 1071-1073.

Hansen, R. (2014). Book Review: Michael Edwards, Civil Society, Third Edition. *VOLUNTAS: International Journal of Voluntary and Nonprofit Organizations*, *26*(1). 414-416.

Peer Reviewed Conference Proceedings

Duffy, B., Steinberg, R., **Hansen, R.**, and Tian, Y. (2015). Whattsamatta wit U, or U Really Got a Hold on Me. *ISTR Working Papers Series Volume IX, Muenster, Germany, July 2014.* https://c.ymcdn.com/sites/istr.site-ym.com/resource/resmgr/WP2014/U_Shape_DSHT_070714.pdf .

Other Publications

Hansen, R. (2018, in press). Giving by bequest. In *Giving USA 2018: The annual report on philanthropy for the year 2016*. Chicago: Giving USA Foundation.

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Hansen, R. (2014). Research note: Does ethical leadership matter? AFP-Chicago Ethics Programs & Practices, published June 16, 2014. http://www.afpchicago.org/ethics-programs

Hansen, R. & G. Gilbert. (2013). Developing ethics programming at the chapter level. *Advancing Philanthropy*, Fall 2013, 15-17. http://www.nxtbook.com/nxtbooks/afp/ap_2013fall/index.php#/16

Presentations

Peer-Reviewed Presentations

Hansen, R. K. (2018, July). Unpopular: Examining the role of client stigma in writing charitable appeals. International Society for Third-Sector Research (ISTR) Conference. Amsterdam, The Netherlands.

Hansen, R. (2017, November). Do fundraisers write different appeals for stigmatized groups? Association for Research on Nonprofit Organizations and Voluntary Action (ARNOVA) Conference. Grand Rapids, MI.

Hansen, R. (2016, November). Civil rights, urban renewal, and the final years of the Gary Neighborhood House. Association for Research on Nonprofit Organizations and Voluntary Action (ARNOVA) Conference. Washington, DC.

Steinberg, R., Duffy, B., **Hansen, R.**, Tian, Y. (2016, November). Measure for measure: Capturing generosity in volunteering. Association for Research on Nonprofit Organizations and Voluntary Action (ARNOVA) Conference. Washington, DC.

Hansen, R. (2016, February). Civil rights, urban renewal, and the final years of the Gary Neighborhood House. Hoosier Philanthropy Conference. Indiana Historical Society, Indianapolis, IN.

Hansen, R. (2015, November). Are fundraising conversations different for organizations serving marginalized populations? Applying Goffman's ideas of stigma to analyze decisions of fundraising communications. Association for Research on Nonprofit Organizations and Voluntary Action (ARNOVA) Conference. Chicago, IL.

Ho, M.-H., **Hansen, R**., Janin, P. D., Konrath, S. (2015, November). Free gifts also matter: Effects of giving on happiness, social connection, and donations. Association for Research on Nonprofit Organizations and Voluntary Action (ARNOVA) Conference. Chicago, IL.

Hansen, R. (2015, April). Predictions of the charitable effects of estate tax reform (2000-2001) as a public sphere phenomenon. Midwest Political Science Association (MPSA) Conference. Chicago, IL.

Duffy, B., Steinberg, R., **Hansen, R**., Tian, Y. (2014, November). Wattsamatta wit U, or U really got a hold on me. Association for Research on Nonprofit Organizations and Voluntary Action (ARNOVA) Conference. Denver, CO.

Duffy, B., Steinberg, R., **Hansen, R**., Tian, Y. (2014, July). Wattsamatta wit U, or U really got a hold on me. International Society for Third-Sector Research (ISTR) Conference. Münster, Germany.

Hansen, R. (2013, November). Revisiting predictions of estate tax reform. Association for Research on Nonprofit Organizations and Voluntary Action (ARNOVA) Conference. Hartford, CT.

Invited Presentations

Hansen, R. K. (2018, February). Neighborhood House: Managing mission and uncertainty in the Civil Rights Era. Helen Bader Institute for Nonprofit Management (Colloquium Series), University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee.
Hansen, R. (2017, February). Discretion is Key: Some Factors in Fundraisers' Interpersonal Communications with Donors. Understanding Fundraising Conference. University of Kent, Canterbury, UK.

Discussant/ Colloquia

(2017, November). Panel Discussant: Professional Fundraising: Longevity, Effectiveness, and Vocational Satisfaction, with T.S. Austin, J. Goodwin, T.H. Jeavons, D. King, S.K. Nathan, H. O'Connor, P.M. Rooney, G. Shaker, E.R. Tempel. ARNOVA Conference. Grand Rapids, MI.
(2017, August). Colloquium Discussant: Building Knowledge: Positioning Nonprofit Programs in Institutions of Higher Learning, with C. Brunt, R. Long, P.M. Rooney, P.C. Weber. Nonprofit Academic Centers Council (NACC) Conference. Indianapolis, IN.
(2014, November). Colloquium Participant: (Almost) 100 years of the charitable deduction, with M. Hager, L. Hersey, W.S. Cleveland, R. Bekkers. ARNOVA Conference. Denver, CO.
(2014, November). Colloquium Participant: Values Section (VRADS) Light Side Colloquy: Impacts of spiritual, religious, and cultural values in nonprofit organizations, with D.H. Smith, W. Knutsen. ARNOVA Conference. Denver, CO.
(2013, November). Colloquium Participant: Values Section (VRADS) Light Side Colloquium: Promoting ethics development in the nonprofit sector, with J. Aulgur, C. Corbett, and E.L. Queen. ARNOVA Conference. Hartford, CT.

Honors, Awards, and Fellowships

University of Wisconsin-Whitewater Undergraduate Research Grant, 2018 ($600)
Indiana University Lilly Family School of Philanthropy Research Grant, 2017 ($2,500)
Ernest W. Wood Fellowship, Indiana University, 2017, 2016 ($5,000)
ARNOVA Doctoral Fellowship and Seminar Participant, 2017
IUPUI Graduate & Professional Student Government G-PEG Grant to present at ARNOVA conference, 2014
ARNOVA travel grant to present at conference, 2014 ($250)
ISTR Ph.D. Seminar Participant, travel grant to participate, 2014 ($500 plus seminar expenses)