



# Changing the way we talk about homelessness

# Session overview

## **Reframing homelessness research and what the research told us -**

- Shared sector understanding of homelessness
- What the UK public thinks about homelessness
- Our most effective values and metaphors for reframing homelessness

## **Crisis examples of frames in practice**

## **Reflections on framing Housing First**

What's the one thing you want people to know about homelessness?

Do you feel heard?

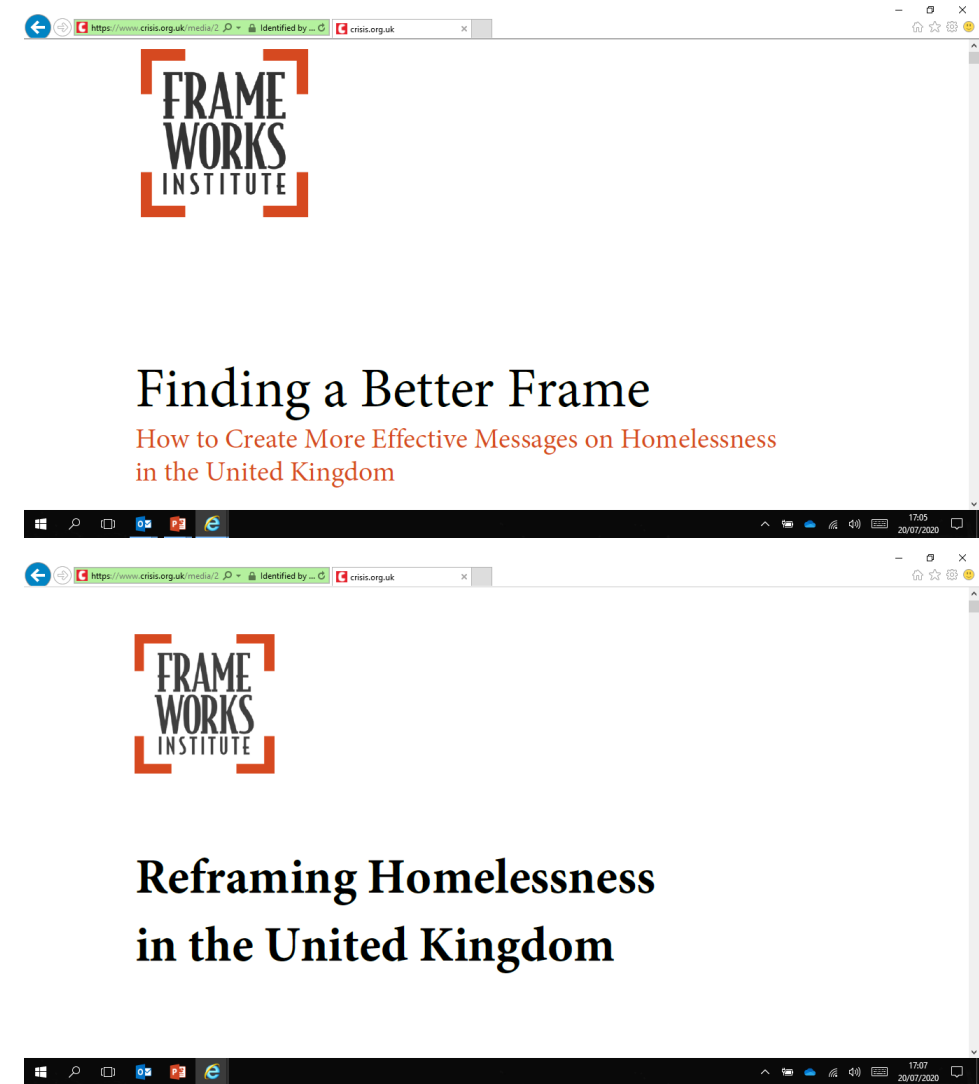
What might be getting in the way of people hearing your message?



**The FrameWorks Institute research looked at:**

#1 Sector view; sector materials; media stories; public thinking

#2 Tested frames to shift public thinking towards the sector view and to build commitment to end homelessness



10,000 members of  
UK public

## Sector story about homelessness: shared understanding

**What is homelessness:** A lack of affordable, safe, secure accommodation - the lack of a home.

**Homelessness can be:** Hidden (sofa surfing) or visible (rough sleeping), it can be short or long term.

**Some groups are more at risk than others:** Young people, Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic people, LGBT people, people with disabilities, and people leaving care or prison are all at higher risk.

## Sector story about homelessness: shared understanding

**Systems causes:** Poverty is one of the biggest drivers of homelessness. Unaffordable rents, a lack of social housing, a lack of adequate welfare support for people at risk. Violence and trauma. Mental health and physical health. Relationships breaking down.

**Societal consequences:** Homelessness doesn't just affect an individual or the people immediately around them, it has wider negative effects on communities, services, the economy, society.

**Ending homelessness is possible/ Systems are designed:** If we make the right policy choices it is possible to stop homelessness from happening.



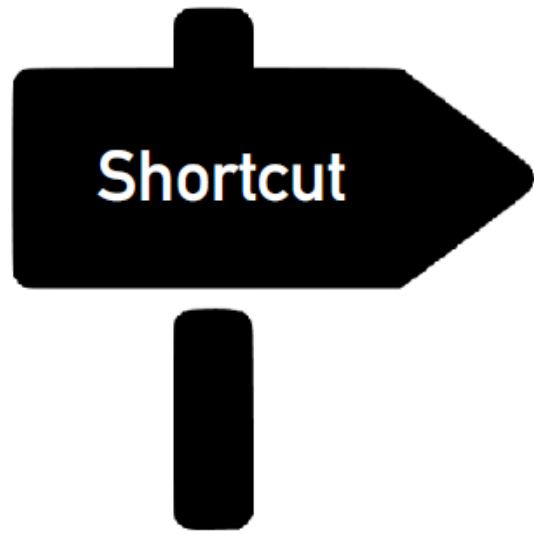
**What do people think about  
homelessness?**

# What do people think about homelessness?



**\*\*Skip to minute 8:14 for public attitudes film**





Homelessness happens because individuals make bad choices.

Homelessness affects other people: middle-aged men, young people, and abused women.

Services and support is already available - people just don't know about them, or choose not to use them.

The system is rigged and will never change. It's just how things are.

We're all at risk of homelessness if the economy changes.

# Three communications challenges.

- ▶ Narrow **definition** of homelessness.
- ▶ Individualism leaves **systems** in the background.
- ▶ **Prevention** is missing from people's thinking.
- ▶ ....leading to fatalism, with no sense of **efficacy**.

# Framing is...

Using evidence to guide the language and image choices we make when telling stories:

**What to emphasise**

**How to explain things - to build understanding, empathy, emotional connection**

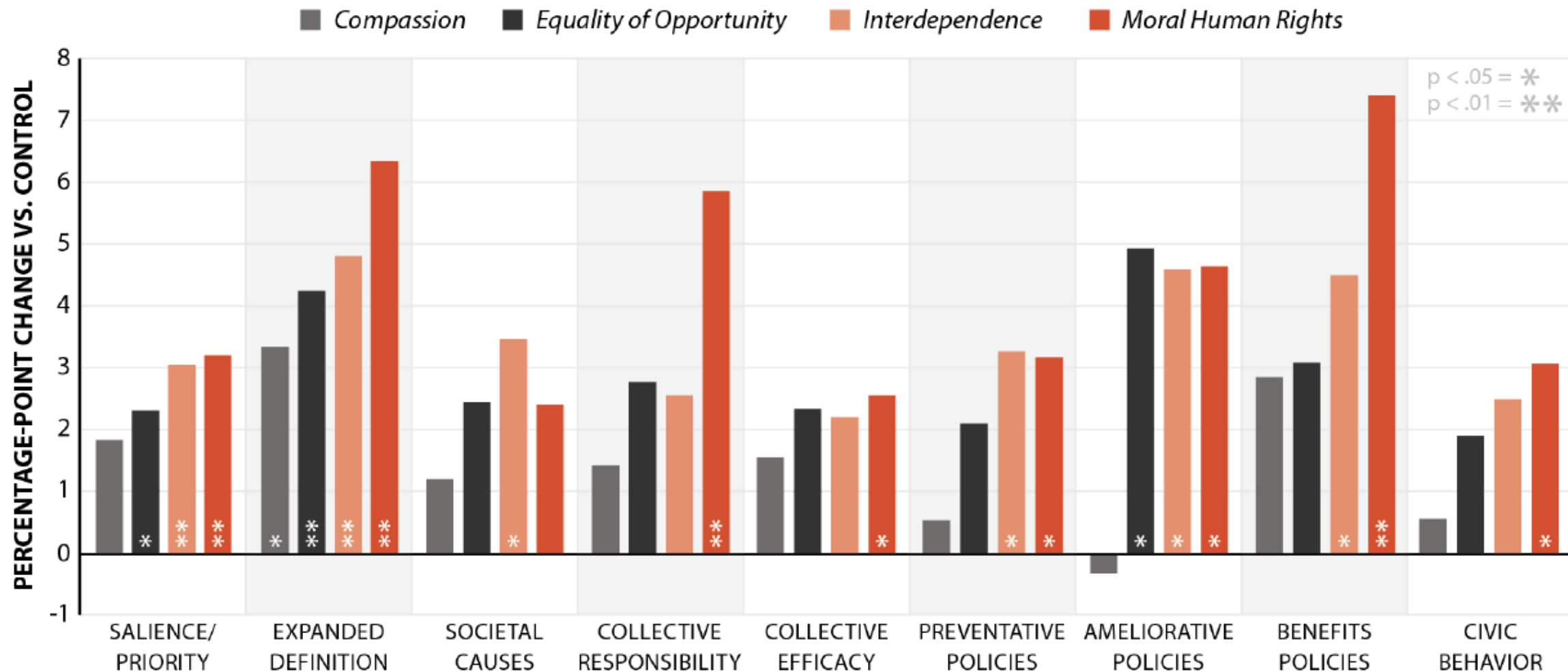
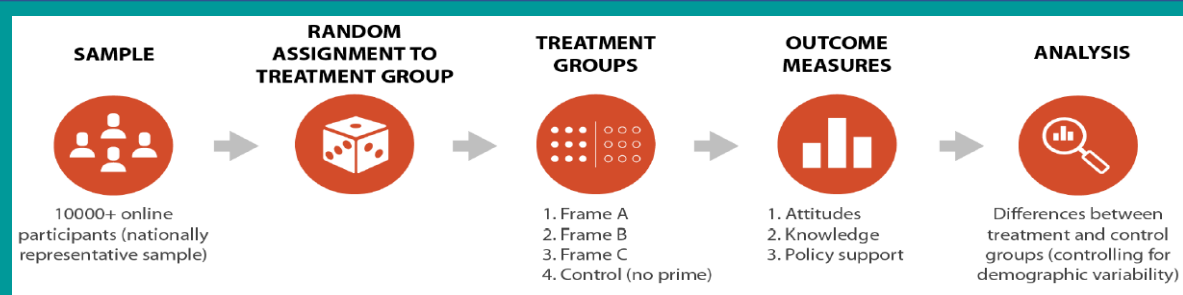
**What to leave unsaid**

...In order to equip people to think differently

Values

Metaphor

# Framing with values



## Moral human rights

In our society, we believe in treating everybody with dignity and humanity and upholding everyone's basic human rights.

All of us, as human beings, have a moral right to decent housing, yet right now, many people in our country are homeless.

Treating all people with dignity and humanity means making sure everyone can afford a safe and stable home.

Watch out:

- not a 'legal right'
- avoid 'deserves'

## Interdependence

In our society, what affects one of us affects all of us.

When some people are struggling, it hurts everyone.

Right now, many people in our country are homeless, and this affects us all.

Making sure everybody has safe, stable housing benefits us all by creating a stronger society.

# Using the moral human rights value

‘Behind these statistics are human beings, who like all of us, had talents and ambitions’

**NEWS** 01/10/2019 11:32 BST | Updated 01/10/2019 11:44 BST

## Drugs To Blame For Biggest Rise In Homeless Deaths Since Records Began

“Behind these statistics are human beings, who like all of us, had talents and ambitions,” Crisis chief says.



By Sara C Nelson

A huge increase in drug fatalities has contributed to the biggest rise in deaths of homeless people in England and Wales since records began.

Deaths of homeless people increased by 22% to 726 in 2018 – the largest rise since 2013, according to Office for National Statistics (ONS) figures.

Two in five of the deaths were related to drug poisoning – an increase of 55% on 2017 and compared to just 16% for the population as a whole.



**Diabetics: Here's How To Lower Blood Sugar (It's**

# Interdependence framing



# Example: framing poverty.



It's not right that in a classroom of thirty, on average **nine children would now be living in poverty.**

#SolveUKPoverty

**JRF** JOSEPH  
ROWNTREE  
FOUNDATION



# Framing with metaphor.

Metaphor interrupt default thinking. They:

- ▶ Provide a strong **mental image**.
- ▶ Make abstract, complex concepts **simple and concrete**.
- ▶ Explain **why** something happens (rather than positioning it as normal or natural).

# Constant pressure metaphor

Poverty puts constant pressure on people.

If the pressure builds up, people can be pushed into homelessness.

This pressure comes from high housing costs, low wages and inadequate government support, which can build up to a breaking point.

A sudden increase in pressure from a life event – like losing a job, a relationship breakdown or a health crisis – can quickly become unbearable and force people into homelessness.

## Framing and coronavirus: constant pressure

**Jon Sparkes, Chief Executive of Crisis, said** “As it currently stands, the future for renters in this country is **incredibly precarious** – with **mounting financial pressure and job insecurity** caused by the pandemic leaving many struggling to pay rent.

“The temporary ban on evictions has made a big difference in protecting tenants, but as this is currently set to lift at the end of August many people could still be **forced into homelessness** during this ongoing public health emergency.”

## And in personal stories...

weighed down

I felt like the walls  
were closing in

under strain

I needed help to ease  
the pressure

Couldn't take it  
anymore

Lifted a weight from my  
shoulders

# World Homelessness Day 2019



# What did you see?

The wider experience of homelessness

Systems causes – leaving care, redundancy

Pressure - rising rents

Moral human rights values

Systems solutions - ending homelessness is possible

Interdependence values

# Thoughts on framing Housing First

Treating people with dignity and humanity means making sure they have a safe and stable home

*Housing First treats people like human beings – giving people a home without conditions and the intensive support they need to recover and thrive in society, for as long as they need it.*

*Systems and services that ask people to jump through extra hoops before they can access stable housing to end their homelessness are simply inhumane.*

*We should prioritise services that are designed to include and meet the needs of everyone, helping us all to contribute in the best way they can.*

*Providing the right support with drug and alcohol dependency, and with mental health issues, can be the key to releasing the pressures that have forced someone into homelessness.*

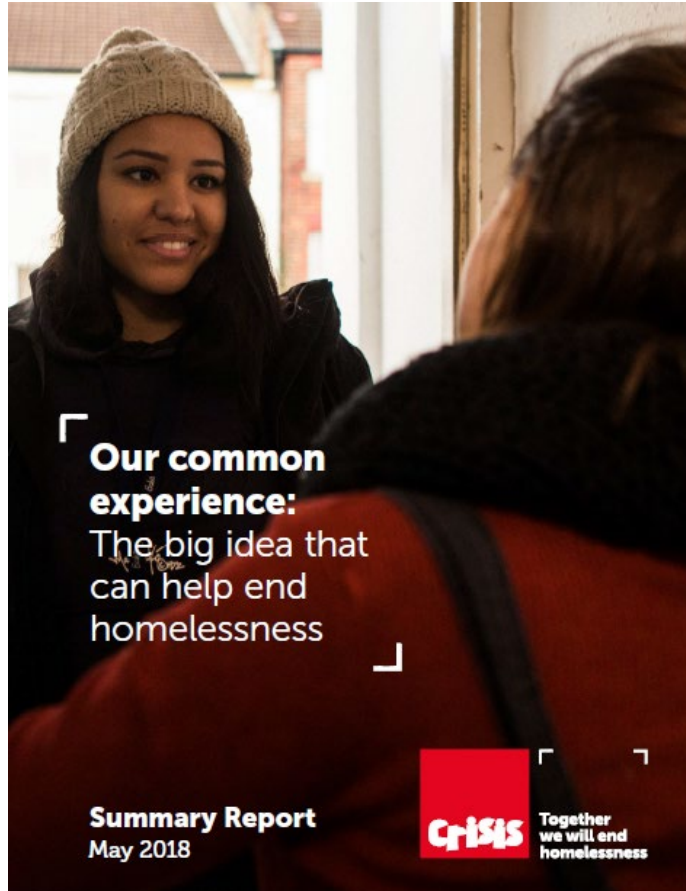
*We all need help and support from others in difficult times and we all depend on public services in different ways throughout our lives.*



**Supporting you to reframe homelessness**



# Framing resources available to everyone



**Crisis** ENDING HOMELESSNESS GET INVOLVED ABO

[Homepage](#) | [Ending homelessness](#) | [Homelessness knowledge hub](#) | [Services and interventions](#) | [Talking about homelessness](#)

[Introduction video transcript.](#)

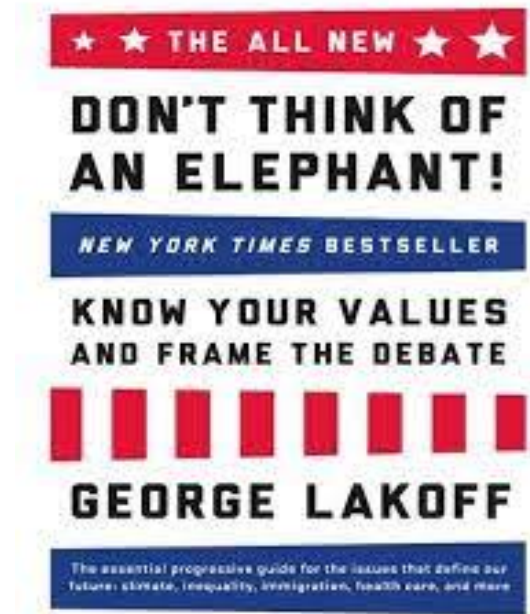
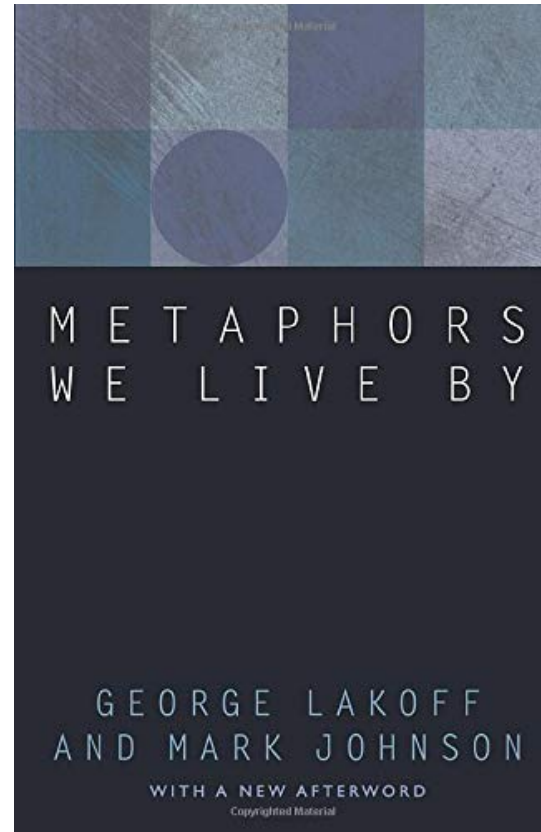
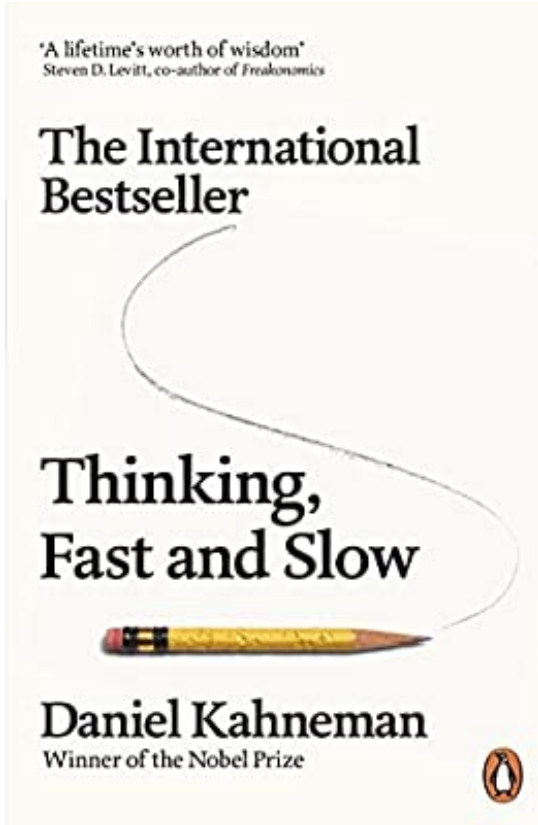
## Video 1: Introduction to framing homelessness and why we frame

Explore what framing is, what problems it can solve, and why we need to frame homelessness.

**Crisis** Framing homelessness: Introduction to framing homelessness... Watch later Share

[Introduction to framing homelessness and why we frame video transcript.](#)







# Reflections and questions



# Framing Homelessness Project

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