

# Financial Distress and Public Participation

Government Finance Officers Association



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# Fiscal First Aid

Three Stages of Recovery

## BRIDGE



Get through the immediate crisis and make breathing room for sustainable reforms

## REFORM



Implement a short-term recovery plan and begin long-term therapies

## TRANSFORM



Formalize long-term financial planning and become resistant to financial distress and adaptable to change

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# Plan for Today

- Key concepts in public participation
- Experiences and lessons learned from practice



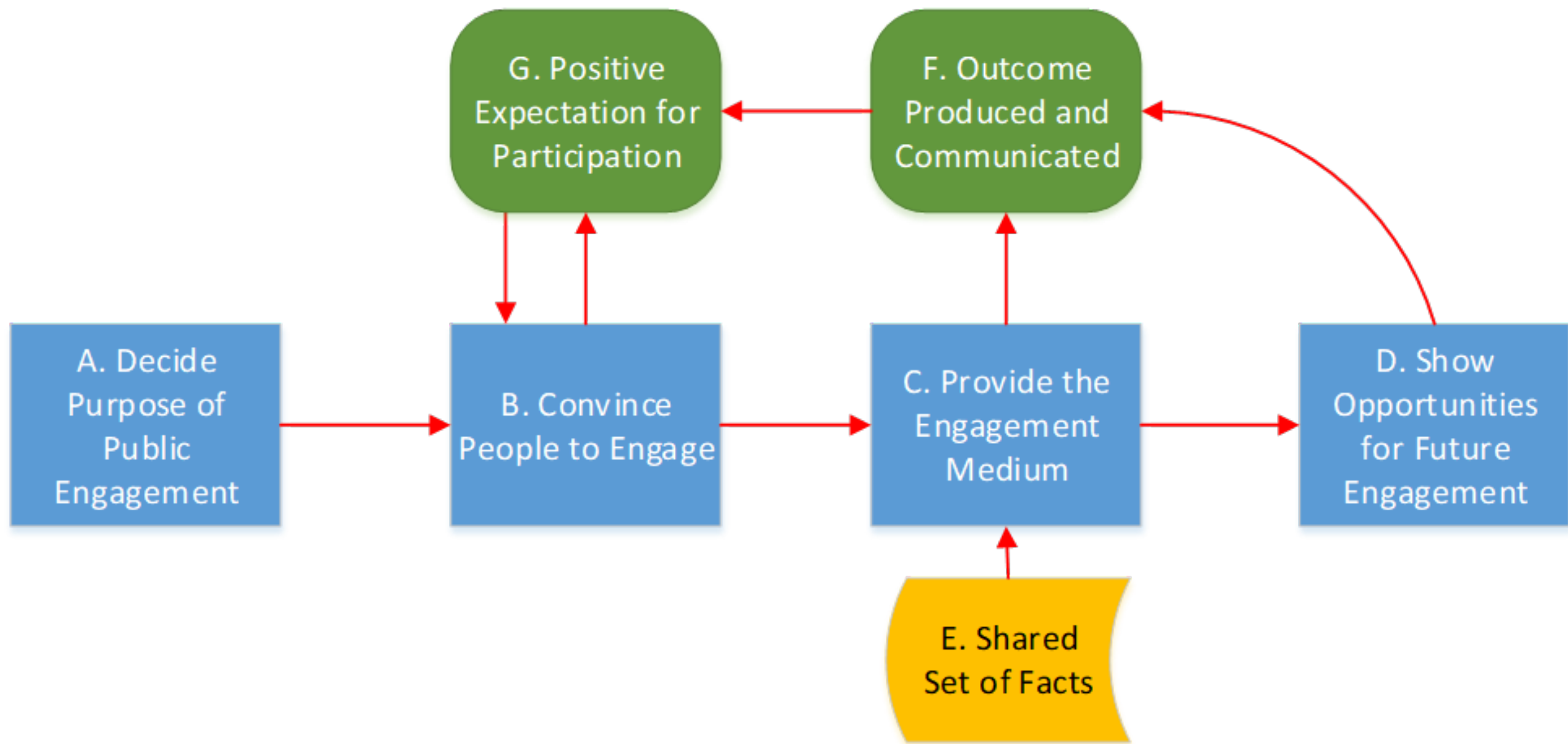
# Key Concepts in Public Engagement

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# Decide Your Purpose



**The general direction or broad priorities that the public supports**



**Select service levels**

# Convince People to Engage



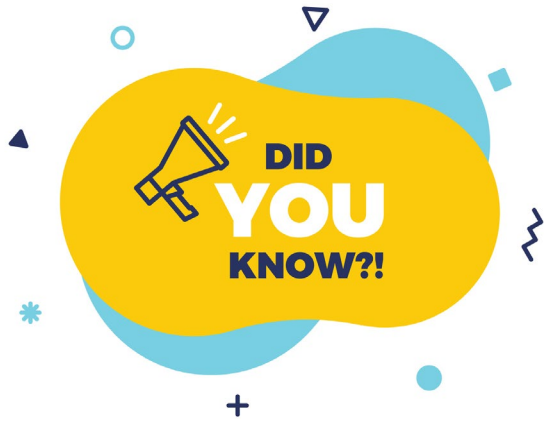
**“Don’t Bury the Lead”**

**Motivate!**



**Spread the word**

# Provide the Engagement Medium



Provide basic facts

Emphasize small groups,  
where possible





What is your Favorite Game?



# Features of Your Favorite Game

- There is a clear set of rules that everyone knows from the beginning.
- The rules apply equally to everyone. Everyone has a chance to compete under the same rules, and cheating is not tolerated.
- The game has a sensory appeal, such as bright colors, attractive designs, etc.
- Participation leads to a clear outcome.
- Multiple players work together to play the game, with some competitive element to the game.

# Standard Public Hearing

- The participants are not clear about how budget decisions are actually made or about their role in influencing them.
- Rules for speaking at the hearing may be applied unevenly. Different people may be treated differently.
- The hearing is drab, with minimal sensory appeal.
- At the end of the hearing, the participants don't know what impact, if any, their participation had.
- There is no structured interaction between participants to solve problems, either collaboratively or competitively.

# Making Democracy Fun



HOW GAME DESIGN CAN  
EMPOWER CITIZENS  
AND TRANSFORM POLITICS

JOSH LERNER

# Require Trade-Offs



# Show Opportunities for Future Engagement



- Acknowledge ideas that were not taken
- Show opportunities to get involved, hands on
- Follow up with participants