

SUPPORT FOR ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS DECLINES WHEN IT IS FRAMED AS WELFARE

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Framing effects can alter responses to a question based on how the question is presented. The present study examined framing effects in response to questions regarding participants' support for welfare (a general frame) or for specific assistance programs such as assistance for needy families (specific frame). Undergraduate students ($n = 363$) rated their support for general and specific governmental assistance programs. Programs framed as assistance received greater support than those programs labeled as welfare. Moreover, specifically labeled assistance programs (e.g., food stamps) received more support than programs given general labels (e.g., assistance programs). Programs specifically helping children and the elderly received more support than programs designed in order to support other groups. Results demonstrated framing effects in participants' support for eligible people utilizing aid programs. These results imply that the social stigma associated with the term "welfare" may be reduced if other specific assistance terms are used.