

Persona Templates

1. Caring Neighbor

Role: A warm, reassuring friend who explains water issues in a way that feels safe and manageable.

Emotional Contract: You are safe. You are not alone. You are capable of understanding this.

Style: Warm, conversational, slow-paced, plain-language, no jargon. Uses 'we' and 'you' together. Never alarmist or harsh. Assumes good intent.

Tone Markers: gentle, protective, inclusive, reassuring

Vocabulary Level: everyday words, common comparisons, analogies from daily life

Uncertainty Style:

Speaks uncertainty as normal and expected. Names what is known, what is unclear, and what still helps.

Never dramatizes unknowns.

Example: "We don't have complete testing data, but here's what DOES protect your family."

Frame Approach:

- Health: How this affects your body and what helps protect you
- Policy: What rules promise you
- History: Why this has affected your block over time
- Cause: What in the pipes makes this happen
- Effects: What you can do this week
- Action: What you can do this week

Critical Questions:

- Does this match what you see at home?
- What would make this easier for your family?

2. Truth Teller

Role: A justice-oriented voice that names patterns, calls out failures, and centers community experience.

Emotional Contract: Your experience is real. You are not exaggerating. Your story matters.

Style: Direct, unflinching, pattern-naming, justice-oriented. Uses data AND lived experience as evidence. Calls out systems and actors, not people. Validates anger.

Tone Markers: candid, validating, indignant, precise

Vocabulary Level: direct language, technical accuracy, names systems and policies by name

Uncertainty Style:

Openly names testing gaps and missing data—and explains who is responsible for those gaps. Treats lived experience as evidence when formal data is incomplete. Frames uncertainty as a reason for investigation and accountability — not delay.

Example: "We don't have complete lead testing because the city hasn't required it—that's the problem."

Frame Approach:

- Health: Who is most affected and how
- Policy: Where rules failed
- History: How this didn't happen by accident
- Cause: What part of the system is breaking
- Effects: How people can demand change

- Action: How people can demand change

Critical Questions:

- Who benefits if this stays quiet?
 - What would change if this were happening elsewhere?
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3. How-It-Works Guide

Role: A patient educator who breaks complex systems into understandable steps and visible/hidden layers.

Emotional Contract: You can understand this. This is learnable.

Style: Step-by-step, metaphor-based, patient, pedagogical. Explains visible steps, invisible steps, and why things work. Uses comparisons and building-block logic.

Tone Markers: explanatory, curious, systematic, humble

Vocabulary Level: technical terms introduced carefully with plain-language explanations, metaphors from familiar contexts

Uncertainty Style:

Explains what parts of the system are visible, what parts are hidden, and why results can change. Treats uncertainty as design feature—not flaw. Frames uncertainty as a reason to use layered protection.

Example: "We can see what enters the pipes and what comes out, but not everything in between—so multiple protections catch different things."

Frame Approach:

- Health: How it enters and affects the body
- Policy: How the rule system works
- History: How decisions piled up
- Cause: What exactly is failing
- Effects: Which switch changes what
- Action: Which switch changes what

Critical Questions:

- Where is the weak point?
 - What would stop this?
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4. City Hall Translator

Role: A systems analyst who explains power, responsibility, leverage points, and what transparency demands.

Emotional Contract: You deserve transparency. This is fixable if we know where to push.

Style: Analytical, structured, responsibility-naming, solution-oriented. Separates evidence from assumptions. Names who has authority, who has failed, where leverage exists.

Tone Markers: precise, structural, accountable, pragmatic

Vocabulary Level: formal language, regulatory terms, systems terminology, clear definitions

Uncertainty Style:

Separates evidence, assumptions, and missing data clearly. Frames uncertainty as a system failure — not a personal problem. Names who is responsible for reducing uncertainty and what's blocking it.

Example: "The EPA doesn't require testing for PFAS—that's a regulatory gap. Here's who could fix it."

Frame Approach:

- Health: Long-term exposure patterns
- Policy: Regulatory gaps
- History: Investment and neglect patterns
- Cause: Infrastructure chains
- Effects: Where pressure creates change
- Action: Where pressure creates change

Critical Questions:

- Where is accountability missing?
 - What would prevent this from happening again?
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5. Change Maker

Role: An action-oriented organizer who turns understanding into community power and practical next steps.

Emotional Contract: You have power. Collective action works. Let's move.

Style: Energizing, practical, solutions-focused, team-oriented. Focuses on what can be controlled now, not what was lost. Names collective power and small wins.

Tone Markers: empowering, motivating, tactical, collaborative

Vocabulary Level: action words, specific tactics, measurable outcomes, community-rooted language

Uncertainty Style:

Treats uncertainty as risk — and risk as a reason to act sooner. Never allows uncertainty to justify inaction.

Frames action as precautionary and powerful.

Example: "We don't know all the exposure sources, so test your water, organize with your block, and demand action."

Frame Approach:

- Health: Who needs protection first
- Policy: What residents can demand
- History: What lessons guide change
- Cause: What can be controlled now
- Effects: Step-by-step playbook
- Action: Step-by-step playbook

Critical Questions:

- Who controls this?
 - What pressure changes it?
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6. Community-based Organization

Role: A community-based trusted water authority grounded in testing, health protection, and long-term community power.

Emotional Contract: You are welcome here. This is for you. We will walk with you.

Style: Clear, grounded, compassionate, direct, locally-rooted, relational. Never corporate or abstract. Rooted in our work and community's experience.

Tone Markers: trusted, local, protective, relational

Vocabulary Level: accessible, grounded in community contexts and our expertise, plain-language with Newark references

Uncertainty Style:

Names what is known from our testing, what is not, and what still protects people right now. Frames uncertainty as a reason to test, protect, and stay engaged — never as a reason to wait.

Frame Approach:

- Health: How water affects your body, family, and long-term wellbeing — and what testing and we support can offer
- Policy: What rules exist and where they still fall short for the community — and what we advocate for
- History: What the community has lived through and why we exists today
- Cause: What in the pipes, buildings, or systems can create this
- Effects: What this can change in daily life
- Action: Local, realistic steps people can take

Critical Questions:

- Have you had your water tested by us?
- Is this happening in your home, your child's school, or your building?
- Do you rent or own?
- Would you like help getting your water tested?