

# 危機溝通 Crisis Communication

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## Toyota Floor-Mat Crisis, 2009



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## Risk Communication Paradigms

- Watch out!!  
(precaution advocacy)
- Calm down!!  
(outrage and fear management)
- We'll get through this together.  
(crisis communication)

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## Definition of Risk Communication

"The interactive process of exchanging information and opinion among individuals, groups, and institutions involving multiple messages about the nature of risk..."

-- *The National Research Council*

\*(Note the emphasis on multi-directional communication!)

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## What "Risk Communication" is NOT

- Educating the public
- One-way communication
- Talking to people who have no pre-existing views
- Information you give out after you have made all your plans.

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## Who Outbreak Communication Guidelines

- Trust
- Announcing early
- Transparency
- The public
- Planning



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## Principles of Crisis Communication

**Be First**  
**Be Right**  
**Be Credible**

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## Emergency Risk Communication: Success Factors

- **Be Empathetic:** embody sincere caring
- **Be First:** speedy communication
  - First messages are lasting messages
  - Being first indicates preparedness and competence
- **Be Right:** accurate content
- **Be Credible:** be honest and build trust

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## Bad Communication Adds to Crisis

- Mixed messages from multiple “experts”
- Late information “overcome by events”
- Over-reassuring messages
- No reality check on recommendations
- Myths, rumors, doomsayers not countered
- Improper modeling of behavior, lack of affect, bad humor by spokesperson/leader
- Public power struggles and confusion

(Barbara Reynolds, CDC)

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## Risk: a Traditional Definition

The multiplication of

**Magnitude x Probability.**

How likely to happen?

How bad if it happens?

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System Safety and Risk Management

## Risk Matrix

| Event Frequency (YR <sup>-1</sup> ) | 10 <sup>-7</sup>   | 10 <sup>-6</sup> | 10 <sup>-5</sup> | 10 <sup>-4</sup> | 10 <sup>-3</sup> | 10 <sup>-2</sup> | 10 <sup>-1</sup> | 1 |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|---|
| Consequence Category                | EXTREMELY UNLIKELY | VERY UNLIKELY    | UNLIKELY         | POSSIBLE         | PROBABLE         | REGULAR          |                  |   |
| 5 – EXTREMELY SERIOUS               |                    |                  |                  |                  |                  |                  |                  |   |
| 4 – MAJOR                           |                    |                  |                  |                  |                  |                  |                  |   |
| 3 – SEVERE                          |                    |                  |                  |                  |                  |                  |                  |   |
| 2 – SERIOUS                         |                    |                  |                  |                  |                  |                  |                  |   |
| 1 – SIGNIFICANT                     |                    |                  |                  |                  |                  |                  |                  |   |

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## Outrage Factors

(How normal people estimate most hazards)

### “safe”

Voluntary  
Controlled by self  
Trustworthy sources  
Responsive process  
Familiar  
Not memorable  
No moral relevance  
Not dreaded  
Chronic

### “risky”

Involuntary  
Controlled by others  
Untrustworthy sources  
Unresponsive process  
Unfamiliar  
Memorable  
Moral relevance  
Dreaded  
Catastrophic

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Peter Sandman 1987, 2006

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## Perception of risks

All risks are not accepted equally

- Voluntary vs. involuntary
- Personally controlled vs. controlled by others
- Familiar vs. exotic
- Natural origin vs. manmade
- Reversible vs. permanent

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## Perception of risks

- Statistical vs. anecdotal
- Endemic vs. epidemic (catastrophic)
- Fairly distributed vs. unfairly distributed
- Generated by trusted vs. mistrusted institution
- Adults vs. children
- Understood benefit vs. questionable benefit

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## A New Definition of Risk:

**Risk**

**Hazard**

**Outrage**

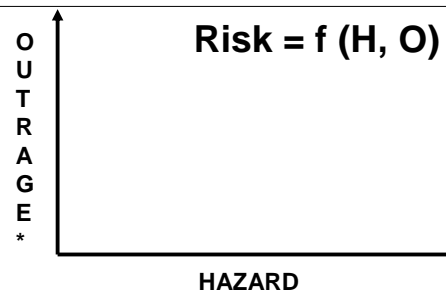
(Please note: "outrage" can also stand for fear; shame; loss of face. It has different implications and expressions between and within different cultures. The concept we call "outrage" does not always mean the direct feeling and expression of indignation. It would be useful to find the right word to describe the part of the public's perception of "risk" that does not relate to the technical hazard.)

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**Risk = Hazard + Outrage**

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## Definition of Risk for Technical People

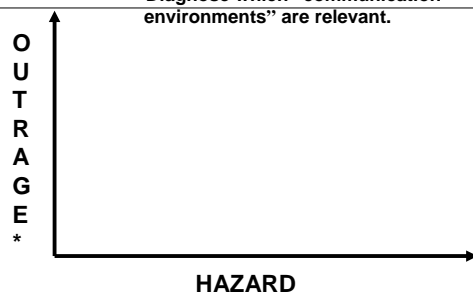


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## Four Kinds of Risk Communication

First communication planning task:  
Diagnose which "communication environments" are relevant.



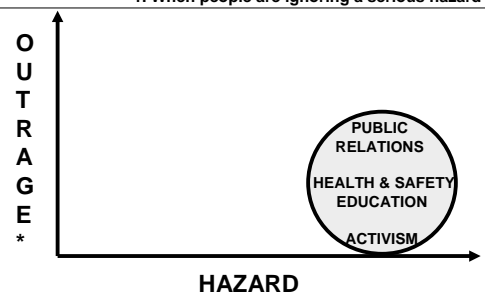
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## Four Kinds of Risk Communication

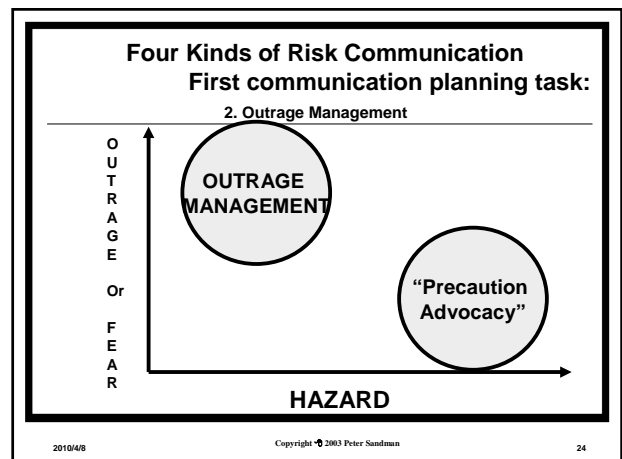
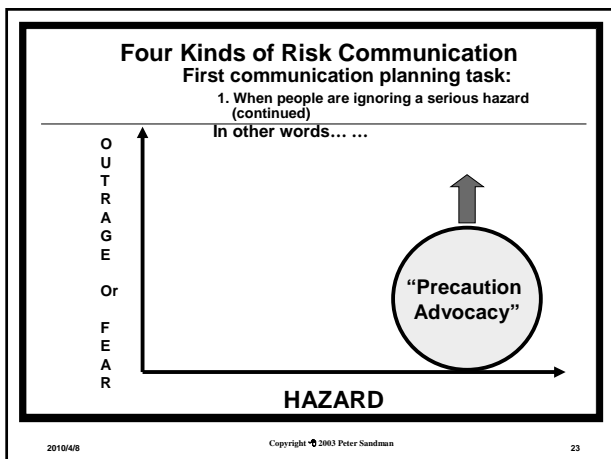
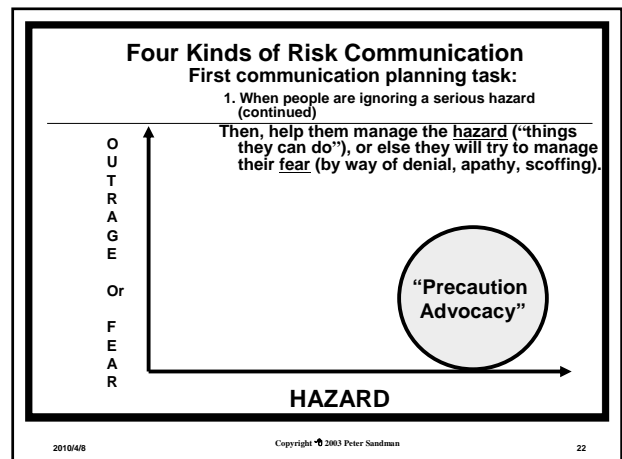
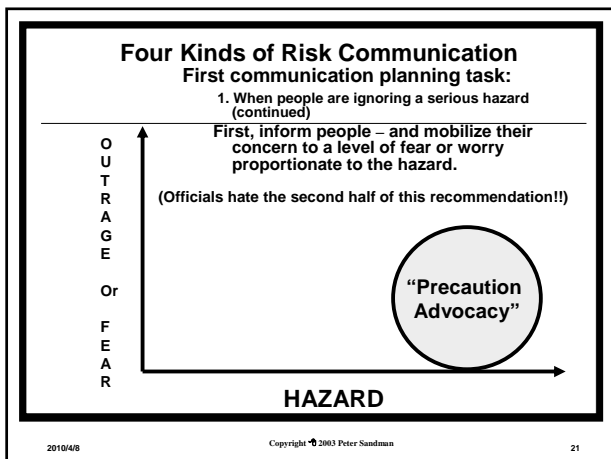
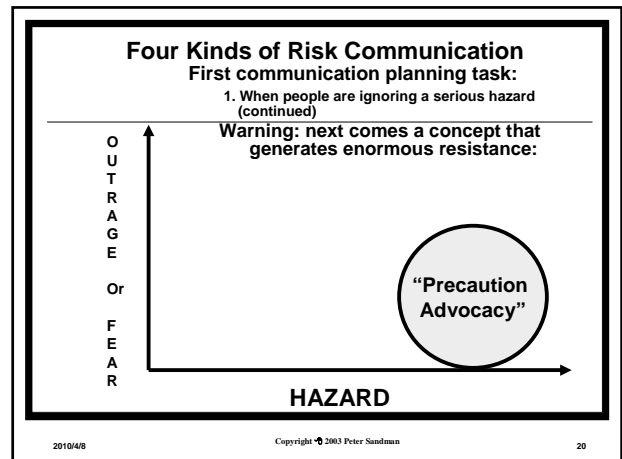
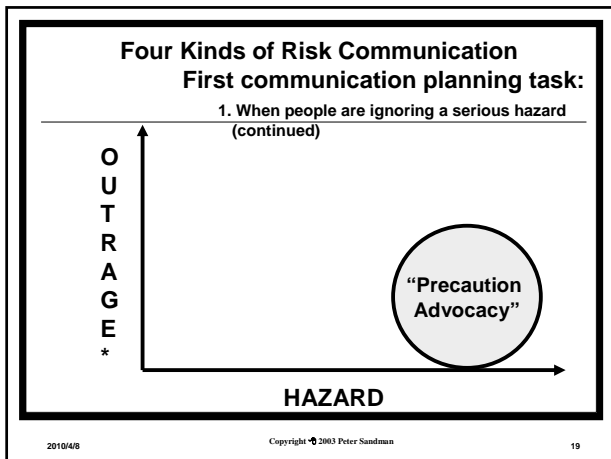
First communication planning task:  
1. When people are ignoring a serious hazard

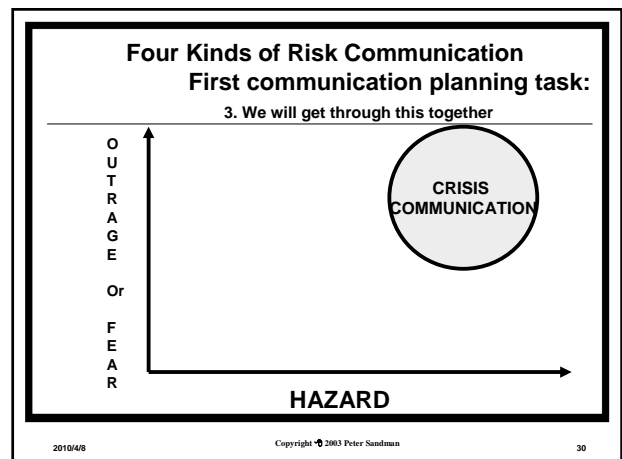
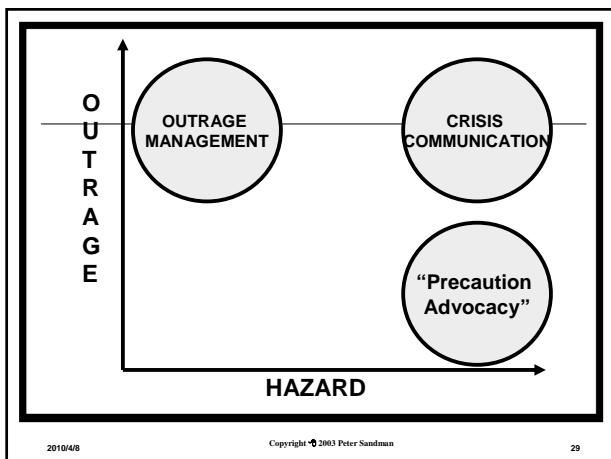
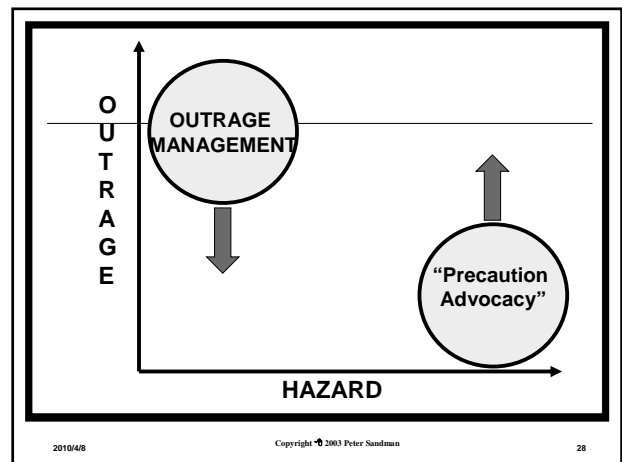
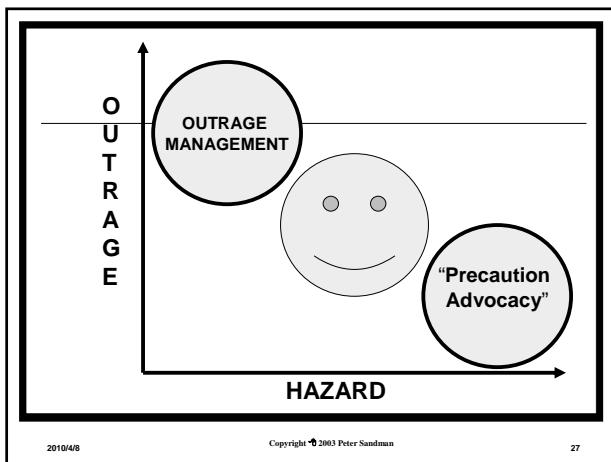
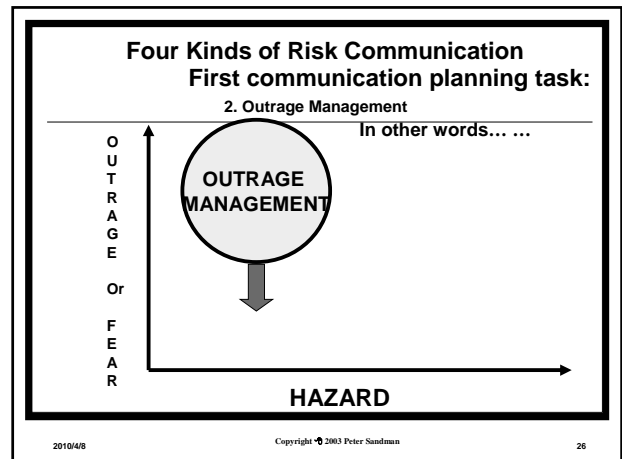
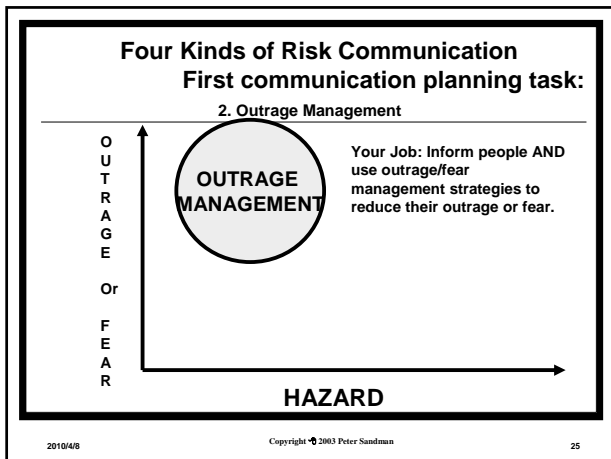


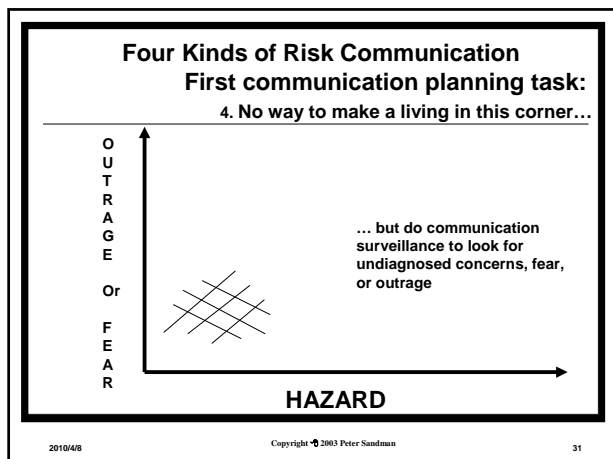
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### Who Outbreak Communication Guidelines

- Trust
- Announcing early
- Transparency
- The public
- Planning



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### How bad is it? How sure are you?

- Don't over-reassure!
  - Some bad examples... ...
    - USA EPA director Whitman, Sept 18, 2001
    - New York Blackout, 2003

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### Bad example: Premature overconfident over-reassurance

- "We are very encouraged that the results from our monitoring of air quality and drinking water conditions in both New York and near the Pentagon show that the public in these areas is not being exposed to excessive levels of asbestos or other harmful substances... I am glad to reassure the people of New York and Washington, D.C. that their air is safe to breath and their water is safe to drink"



---USA EPA director Whitman, Sept 18, 2001

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### Judge Blasts Ex-EPA Chief For 'Conscience-Shocking' Actions After 9/11

- "for reassuring Manhattan residents soon after the 2001 terrorist attacks that the environment was safe to return to homes and offices while toxic dust was polluting the neighborhood."

--- NBC News, February 2006

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### Bad example: Premature overconfident over-reassurance

- "The EPA's Office of the Inspector General eventually criticized the agency's response, saying it did not have available data and information to support the Sept. 18, 2001, statement that the air was safe to breathe.
- "The EPA's internal watchdog found the agency, at the urging of White House officials, gave misleading assurances there was no health risk from the dust in the air after the towers' collapse."

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## 9/11 Blackout New York Blackout, 2003

“Living close to the World Trade Center site and still having the 9/11 jitters I thought the worst...”

“The first radio reports reassured everyone that it was not an act of terrorism.”

— Leah Singer, blogger

“People are a little scared and seem on edge. I don't hear the word terrorism, but the air is thick with the thought.”

— Jason Kottke, blogger

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## Bad example: Mayor Bloomberg, early in the NY blackout of 2003



“I can tell you 100 percent sure that there is no evidence as of this moment whatsoever of any terrorism.”

NY Mayor Michael Bloomberg talking to CNN anchor Kyra Phillips, 7:41 p.m., August 14, 2003



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## Bloomberg word words Quiz:

- What words “protect” him if he turns out wrong?

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## Bloomberg as of this moment Answer:

“...as of this moment...”



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## CNN error! What words did CNN run as a caption, while the Mayor spoke?



“????????”

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## 100% word! For about ten minutes, CNN ran the words:



“100% sure”

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## How bad is it? How sure are you?

- Don't over-reassure!
- Put reassuring information in subordinate clauses.
  - Some good examples... ..
    - Singapore "subordinates" the good news
    - Malaysia "subordinates" the good news
    - USA CDC director "subordinates" the good news

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## Singapore "subordinates" the good news

- When WHO said that the SARS situation seemed to be improving in Singapore, the Minister of Health spokeswoman, Eunice Teo, passed on this encouraging information as follows:
  - "The WHO said the peak is over in Singapore, but our minister has said it is too early to tell."

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## Malaysia "subordinates" the good news

- Veterinary Services DG Datuk Dr. Hawari Hussein: Malaysia was eligible to be declared "bird flu free," after no new cases were detected for 21 days. But he added:
  - health authorities were doing extra tests "to be absolutely sure... The threat is still there, from neighbouring countries. The tests are part of our own initiative to be sure."

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## USA CDC Director Julie Gerberding "subordinates" the good news

- When asked if there was community transmission of SARS, Dr. Gerberding said:
  - "Even though there is no sign of community spread, we are continuing intense surveillance and we're not out of the woods yet."

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## USA CDC Director Julie Gerberding "subordinates" the good news

- When asked if SARS could possibly be due to terrorism, Dr. Gerberding said:
  - "Although this virus appears to be of entirely natural origin, we are being vigilant about all possibilities."

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## USA CDC Director Julie Gerberding "subordinates" the good news

- When asked "Is SARS From Outer Space?", Dr. Gerberding said:
  - "Even though there is no evidence that SARS comes from outer space, we're keeping an open mind."

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## How bad is it? How sure are you?

- Don't over-reassure!
- Put reassuring information in subordinate clauses.
- Err on the alarming side

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## Early on in SARS, Dick Thompson errs on the alarming side.

- "One might think we are overreacting to the cases. But when you do not know the cause, when it strikes hospital staff, and it certainly is moving at the speed of a jet, we are taking this very seriously."

– WHO's Dick Thompson

- From the risk communication Good Example file. (Don't aim for zero fear; err on the alarming side; acknowledge people's "anchoring frames.")

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## How bad is it? How sure are you?

- Don't over-reassure!
- Put reassuring information in subordinate clauses.
- Err on the alarming side
- Acknowledge uncertainty

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## Warning People about Uncertainty

- "We will learn things in the coming weeks that everyone will wish we had known when we started."
  - This became the U.S. CDC's mantra after its early communication mistakes during the anthrax poisonings.

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## How bad is it? How sure are you?

- Don't over-reassure!
- Put reassuring information in subordinate clauses.
- Err on the alarming side
- Acknowledge uncertainty
- Share dilemmas

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## Minister Tony Abbott shares pandemic planning dilemmas

- "Of course, it's impossible to say if, when and how a pandemic might develop. The next pandemic might be comparatively mild like the flu outbreaks of the late 50s and 60s. But it could also be a worldwide biological version of the Indian Ocean Tsunami. There are obvious limits to how much governments can invest in preparations for hypothetical events, however serious."

–from a May 2005 speech by Australia Minister of Health Tony Abbott

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## Minister Tony Abbott shares pandemic planning dilemmas

- “It’s hard to discuss potential disasters outside people’s ordinary experience without generating the sort of lurid headlines which make some scoff and others panic...”
- “If a deadly flu pandemic ever seems imminent, no preparations will be enough. But if the current bird flu outbreaks in Asia gradually subside, the Government’s investment in a stockpile likely to be time-expired in five years will be the health equivalent of a redundant weapons system.”

■ --from a May 2005 speech by Australia Minister of Health Tony Abbott

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## How bad is it? How sure are you?

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- Share dilemmas.
- Acknowledge opinion diversity.

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## SARS in Singapore: To Close the Schools? or Not?

- In the middle of the SARS crisis, the Singapore government told the public about internal disagreements about whether to close the schools...

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- Be willing to speculate – responsibly.

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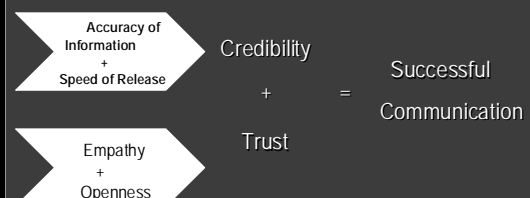
## Philippines says “Don’t Speculate”

- 13 February, 2007, Philippine Star-News:
  - Investigating the cause of death of an egret, a senior animal official said:
    - “There are many causes of death and not necessarily bird flu,” and that it would be wrong to speculate until after the bird had been examined and a report made.

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## Crisis and Emergency Communication



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- Be willing to speculate – responsibly.
- Don't overdiagnose or overplan for panic.

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## “Panic” in Boracay Fire? Not.

- A couple months ago, there was a fire at a cottage resort at Boracay, a famous vacation spot in the Philippines.
- People fled the fire.
- “Foreigners were seen helping mostly local tourists carry their baggages to safe spots.”
- "no one was reported injured or killed."

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## “Panic” in Boracay Fire? Not.

- "no one was reported injured or killed,"
- but the same reporter said the fire sent
  - "hundreds of tourists in panic."
- And said that the incident
  - "caused panic not only to the residents..., but especially to local and foreign tourists. People flee in different directions looking for a place where they will be safe."

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## Panic in Baseco Barangay Fire?

- "Residents were screaming and running in the streets in panic to save their lives and their families. The firefighters arrived at the scene, but could not immediately control the fire because of the chaotic situation."

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## Panic in Baseco Barangay Fire?

- In the next sentence, the author notes the huge amount of physical damage to buildings housing 15,100 people, observing that there were also 49 injuries but no fatalities.

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## Panic in Baseco Barangay Fire?

- Almost by definition, the self-rescue was effective.
- The residents knew their way around the alleys better than the incoming firefighters, and got everyone out with only a few injuries and no deaths.
- Undoubtedly it looked chaotic to the firefighters. What is typical is the assumption on the part of the officials that the behaviour was panic – despite the fact that it was part of an effective and successful self-organized rescue operation.

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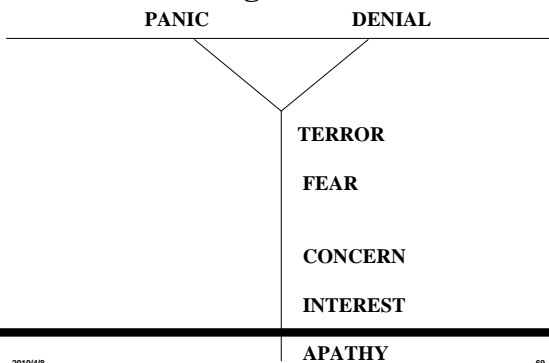
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- Be willing to speculate – responsibly.
- Don't overdiagnose or overplan for panic.
- Don't aim for zero fear.

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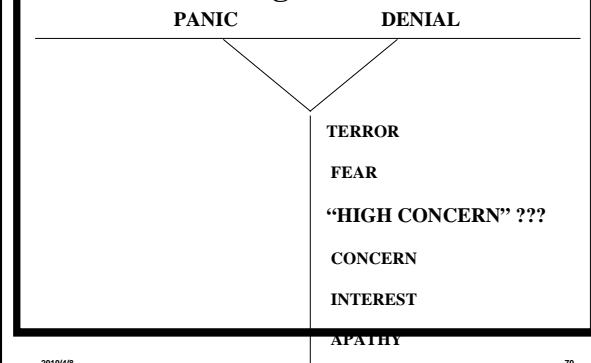
## What is the “right” level of fear?



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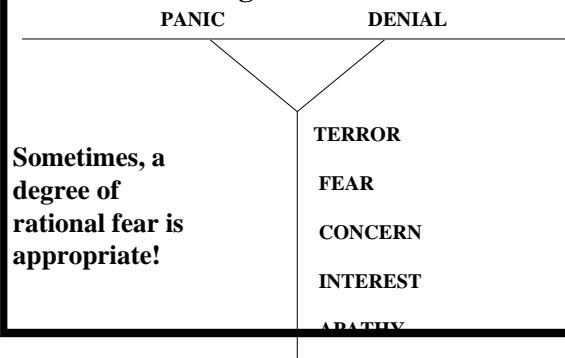
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## What is the “right” level of fear?



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## WHO/PAHO Pan Flu Communication example: draft versus final

- **Draft:**
  - “To respond to rumors and inaccuracies to minimize concern, disruption and stigmatization.”
- **Final:**
  - “It is important to proactively address reports that will create misplaced fear or unrealistic expectations.”

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- Be willing to speculate – responsibly.
- Don't overdiagnose or overplan for panic.
- Don't aim for zero fear.
- Don't forget other emotions (besides fear).

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## Emotional Responses to Crisis

1. Fear
2. Empathy/Misery
3. Anger
4. Hurt
5. Guilt
6. Resilience!

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- Don't forget other emotions (besides fear).
- Don't ridicule the public's emotions.

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- Don't forget other emotions (besides fear).
- Don't ridicule the public's emotions.
- Legitimize people's fears.

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## SARS: Singapore's Prime Minister validates fear – and courage

- “Our health-care workers put their lives at risk every day they went to work... ‘They were frightened. But they conquered their fear with courage. Courage in tending to an infected patient. Courage in taking respiratory fluid samples from the throat. Courage in cleaning the wards every night.
- “We saw this courage in our doctors, nurses and other health-care professionals; in the attendants, security officers and cleaners in our hospitals.”
  - Prime Minister Goh, at SARS Memorial Ceremony, July 23, 2003. Straits Times

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## Dr. Jeff Engel answers a reporter about whether he is stirring up too much fear.

- "We need to involve our community in all aspects of public health. Certainly a disease like SARS, so new, so frightening, should instill fear. Fear is an appropriate response < for me as a public health physician, for everyone in the community.
- We need to transfer that fear into positive energy, and keep the facts out in front of hysteria.... I think [the media's] response is appropriate. This is a new disease, it spreads person to person, it can kill, it has a high case-fatality rate. That is newsworthy!"
  - June 2003, when North Carolina had its first confirmed SARS case.

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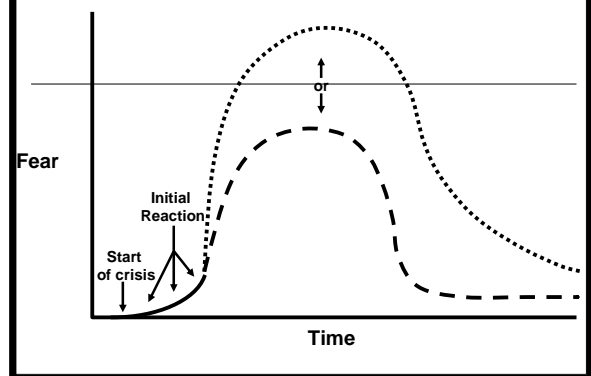
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- Don't forget other emotions (besides fear).
- Don't ridicule the public's emotions.
- Legitimize people's fears.
- Tolerate early over-reactions.

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**Tolerate Early Over-reactions:  
Use the "Teachable Moment"**

## Nigeria validates the adjustment reaction, and tells people what to expect:

- "However, we have observed that in other countries experiencing their first human H5N1 cases, there has been widespread fear of poultry and poultry products, with a concomitant drop in consumption and sales. For a short time, that may happen in Nigeria too. It is entirely understandable that the population may be overtly worried about all chickens, not just sick chickens."

■ Nigeria Avian Influenza Crisis Management Center, Bulletin 29, early 2007

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- Don't ridicule the public's emotions.
- Legitimize people's fears.
- Tolerate early over-reactions.
- Establish your own humanity.

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## WHO's David Heymann shows his humanity, after issuing a global alert about SARS:

- "[It] was a pretty radical decision, and I didn't sleep that night because I knew that what we were doing was going to have a lot of different repercussions."

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- Don't ridicule the public's emotions.
- Legitimize people's fears.
- Tolerate early over-reactions.
- Establish your own humanity.
- Tell people what to expect.

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## Thailand tells people what to expect, and does not over-reassure:

- “We are now about 80% ready to deal with a bird flu outbreak should it happen today.”

- Thai Deputy Prime Minister Chaturon Chaesaeng, 9 February, 2005, Bangkok Post



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## Thailand tells people what to expect, does not over-reassure, and acknowledges uncertainty:

- “The first wave of bird flu outbreak has passed ... but we don’t know when the second wave will come, and we don’t trust the situation.... So the Public Health Ministry is being as careful as possible.”

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- Don't forget other emotions (besides fear).
- Don't ridicule the public's emotions.
- Legitimize people's fears.
- Tolerate early over-reactions.
- Establish your own humanity.
- Tell people what to expect.
- Offer people things to do.

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- Tell people what to expect.
- Offer people things to do.
- Let people choose their own actions.

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## Dr. Balaji acknowledges uncertainty, and lets people choose their own actions: SARS masks

- During a television call-in show, Minister of State for Health Balaji Sadasivan was asked by a caller about whether to wear masks in public, and what kind to use.
- At this point, it seemed very likely, but not yet 100% definite, that SARS was mostly transmitted by close personal contact, through droplets and touching contaminated surfaces.

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## Dr. Balaji acknowledges uncertainty, and lets people choose their own actions: SARS masks

- Dr. Balaji told the caller that there was no evidence that wearing a mask [in public] helps, and no evidence that it doesn't help, and that is why they hadn't given a definite recommendation at that point.
- But the MOH explained how to wear masks properly, if people decided they wanted to wear them.

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## The SARS mask example showed:

- Acknowledging uncertainty.
- Legitimizing people's fears.
- Letting people choose their own actions (and helping them do it right).

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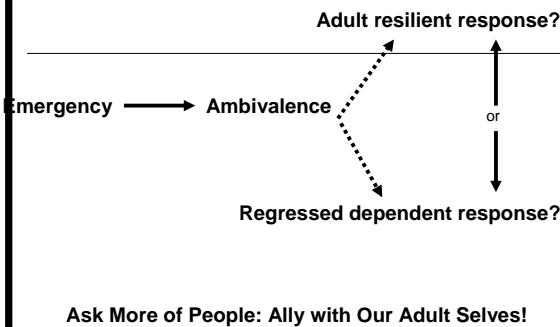
91

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- Acknowledge opinion diversity.
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- Don't aim for zero fear.
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- Ask more of people.

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Ally with adult side  
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- Be explicit about "anchoring frames."

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My child is always safest in my arms.  
God decides when to take my baby.



From Dr. Wm. Smith, Academy for Educational Development, slides on line at: <http://www.izcoalitionsta.org/content.cfm?id=514>

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## About Avian Flu... ..

- **FAO official acknowledges error re: best guess about AI spread, after over-emphasizing possible role of migratory birds:**
  - "Many of us at the outset underestimated the role of trade."
  - **FAO's Sam Jutzi, director of Animal Production and Health, February 12 2007**

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- Don't lie, and don't tell half-truths.

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## Singapore's Cholera Outbreak, 2004

- **Reported to the public immediately.**
- **Updated the public often.**
- **When they said the outbreak was over, there was no apparent skepticism.**
- **It made very little news, because it wasn't a "cover-up" or "belated announcement" story.**

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- Be explicit about changes in official opinion, prediction, or policy.
- Don't lie, and don't tell half-truths.
- Aim for total candor and transparency.
- Be careful with risk comparisons.

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## Scenario for an Exercise:

- Ten minutes in a taxi with your Minister
- The Minister has not been trained in risk communication.
- He or she is going to announce that a gastroenteritis outbreak is actually cholera.
- The facts are: The Health Department confirmed this two weeks ago, but did not tell the public until – ten minutes from now.
- Brief the Minister on the risk communication strategies to help make this announcement.

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## Announcing that it is cholera

- For several weeks, officials have been reporting increasing numbers of diarrheal illnesses.
- These are in villages near a major international resort. Most of the workers at this resort live in these villages.
- Increasing rumors suggest that the illnesses are really cholera. Today the Health Minister is going to confirm this.

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Thanks for Your Attention

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