



How to Motivate Public Preparedness: Communicating “Actionable” Risk

Presented by:

The California-Nevada
Public Health Training Center

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Purpose and Learning Objectives

- Purpose:
 - How public information reaches, teaches, & motivates public disaster preparedness
- After this tutorial, learners will be able to:
 1. State three “key pathways” to motivate public preparedness
 2. Understand how to apply 10 recommended steps for public information preparedness campaigns
 3. Identify examples of common information factors that do not motivate preparedness

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What is Preparedness Information?

- Includes Different Things, e.g.,
 - Brochures, internet sites, television & radio spots
 - School, workplace, neighborhood activities
 - School coloring books, grocery bag messages
 - Museum displays, refrigerator magnets
- Delivered In Different Ways:
 - One-shot information events; ongoing campaigns
 - Different information from different organizations
 - Coordinated campaigns across organizations

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What is Public Preparedness?

- Public Preparedness:
 - Means different things to different people
- A Clear Definition Is Important:
 - Frames the public actions want to influence
- Public Preparedness Is More Than:
 - 72 hours of water, flashlight & batteries, canned food, & duct tape

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Three Key Factors Motivate Public Preparedness

- **Information OBSERVED/HEARD:**
 - Cues: Actions others have already taken
- **Information CONTENT:**
 - About what actions to take
 - Explains how actions cut losses
 - That's consistent across messages
- **Information DELIVERY:**
 - From multiple sources
 - Over multiple communication channels

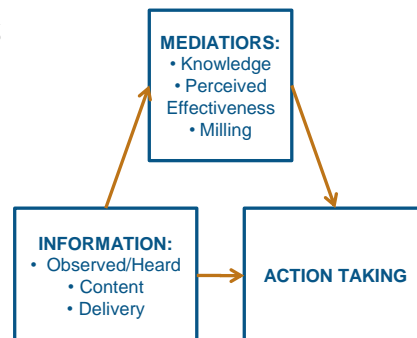
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These Factors Motivate Action in Two Ways

- **Directly:** Information motivates action

- **Indirectly:** Information increases other factors that also motivate action:

- **Knowledge:** What's known about actions
- **Perceived Effectiveness:** How actions cut losses
- **Milling:** Talking, seeking more information



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Things That Don't Matter in Motivating Preparedness

- Perceived Risk (indirect & weak):
 - Increased probabilities don't increase public preparedness action-taking
 - Fear doesn't sell preparedness either
- Demographics (little predictive value):
 - Tiny effect on "motivating preparedness"
 - Can still impact action-taking by influencing:
 - Affordability & information pathway effectiveness

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A Shift In Practice

- Traditionally:
 - We've communicated "risk" to the public
 - And hoped that people "infer action"
- The Strongest Evidence Suggests:
 - Communicate "actions" to the public
 - Let people "infer risk"

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How to Motivate Preparedness

- Information is the KEY motivator for public preparedness:
 - Works everywhere for everyone (in US)
 - Majority & minority groups
 - Across the country & in different cities
- Ten Steps For Practice....

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#1: Use Evidence-Based Approaches

- All Public Education & Information Campaigns Are Not Equal:
 - More could be accomplished if we redesign & distribute public preparedness information that is....
 - “Based on research evidence, not intuition”

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#2: Stop Doing Things That Don't Work

- Don't Try to “Motivate” the Public with Higher Probabilities or Fear:
 - People need to be aware of hazards
 - Increased probabilities may be useful for other audiences but....
 - “Increasing perceived risk doesn't motivate or predict PUBLIC preparedness action-taking”

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#3: Use Multiple Information Sources

- Provide Information from as Many Different Sources as Possible:
 - “Regardless of who you are, you alone can’t provide very effective public information”
 - You need partners to maximize effectiveness
- This May Require:
 - Coordinating what current information providers are already doing

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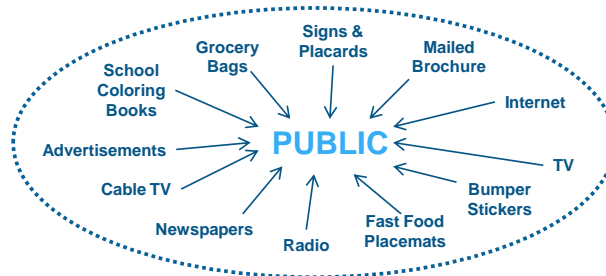
#4: Standardize the Message

- It’s About the Public, Not You:
 - “Brand the message, not the messenger”
- Convince Groups (including your own) To Stop Providing Unique Messages:
 - Work with other information providers so everyone tells the public the same thing
 - “Standardized messages work best”

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#5: Use Multiple Information Channels

- Distribute Information Over As Many Channels as Possible:
 - “People do more when they get the same information different ways”



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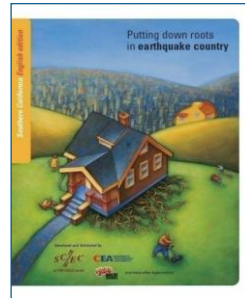
#6: Communicate Over the “Long Haul”

- It's Better to Communicate:
 - Over time (not for a day or week)
 - Coordinate distributed information across partners to form an “information stream”
 - “People do more after receiving the same message many times”
- And It's Best If Communication Is:
 - “Sustained, ongoing & doesn't end”

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#7: Focus the Information Provided on Actions

- The Most Effective Thing to Say to Motivate People to Prepare is:
 - “What they should do to prepare”
 - Here’s an example...



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#8: Explain Consequence Reduction

- Tell Them How Preparedness Actions Reduce Losses:
 - “People are more likely to prepare if information explains how recommended actions cut losses if something happens”

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#9: Give People Cues ("The Big Ticket Item")

- Get Public Preparedness Out of the Closet and Into the Streets:
 - Target people who have already prepared to share what they've done with others
 - Social media could help with this
 - "People are most likely to prepare if they see what others have done AND if people they know tell them about it"
 - Make preparedness visible in communities

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#10: Conduct Consequence-Based Evaluation

- Measure Your Starting Place:
 - Get a "baseline" of public preparedness
- Measure Changes:
 - In public preparedness over time
- Evaluate Effectiveness & Fine Tune Your Program If Needed:
 - Which information components work/don't work
 - Revise provided information based on findings

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Summary

- Three key pathways:
 1. Encourage people to share their story
 2. Present “actionable” information
 3. Distribute consistent information repetitively
- Remember to:
 - Encourage people to look for more
 - Stop the spread of myths

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