

A decorative graphic consisting of a series of circles of varying sizes and colors (yellow, orange, red) arranged in a semi-circular arc across the top of the slide.

The Preparation Frame

April 2016

Cara Pike



The network for those engaging the public in the transformation to low-carbon, resilient communities.

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BLOG

Four key trends of the evolving climate conversation

What you need to know about the changing climate conversation

The conversation about climate change is evolving in four key areas. Here's what research and practice are telling us about this shift and emerging ways to tackle barriers and leverage...

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BLOG



March 7, 2016

[Building Climate Resilience at the Water's](#)

WEBINAR RECORDING

[Communicating about Jobs after Coal](#)

OUR SERVICES

Looking for advice and tools that are tailored to your work?

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PUBLICATIONS

THE PREPARATION FRAME
A Guide to Building Understanding of Climate Impacts and Engagement in Solutions

ClimateAccess January 2015
Cara Pike, Sulfon Eaves, Meredith Herr, Amy Ilvava

Climate Communications and Behavior Change
A Guide for Practitioners

CARA PIKE
Director, The Social Capital Project of The Climate Leadership Initiative

BOB DOPPELT
Director, The Resource Innovation Group & The Climate Leadership Initiative
Institute for a Sustainable Environment, University of Oregon

MEREDITH HERR
Project Coordinator, The Social Capital Project of The Climate Leadership Initiative

American Climate Attitudes
An Analysis of Public Opinion Trends and Recommendations for Advancing Public Engagement on Global Warming

CARA PIKE
Director, The Social Capital Project of The Resource Innovation Group

MEREDITH HERR
Senior Associate, The Social Capital Project of The Resource Innovation Group

May 2011

Climate Communication and Engagement Efforts:
The Landscape of Approaches and Strategies

A REPORT TO THE SKOLL GLOBAL THREATS FUND
PRODUCED BY THE RESOURCE INNOVATION GROUP'S SOCIAL CAPITAL PROJECT
December 2013

RE : GREEN
Bringing the Ecological Roadmap to Life

CLIMATE CROSSROADS



?CLIMATE TRIVIA?

1. What factor has the most influence in how we think about global warming and our motivation to act to reduce carbon emissions?
 - a) potential to save money on energy costs
 - b) awareness that the 400 ppm threshold has been passed
 - c) what our family and friends think

?CLIMATE TRIVIA?

2. Are people with higher levels of science literacy more concerned about climate change?

?CLIMATE TRIVIA?

3. What group of Americans reports taking the most steps to save energy?

?CLIMATE TRIVIA?

4. What segment of Republicans think that candidates who deny climate change are "out of touch"?

?CLIMATE TRIVIA?

5. Who did 17% of Americans say influenced them to be more engaged in and concerned about climate change last year?



- Manufactured uncertainty reduces solutions conversation



- Need to convey risks of and prepare for extreme weather



- Growing impression that mitigation alone is insufficient

PUBLIC OPINION

MAJORITY ACCEPTANCE

55% say effects of global warming have already begun.

Up from 48% in 1998, yet down from 61% in 2008.

MAJORITY CONCERN

55% personally worry a great deal about global warming.

Majority concern since 1989, down from peak of 72% in 2000.

PUBLIC OPINION

CONFUSION ABOUT SCIENTIFIC CONSENSUS

Only **one in ten** understand that more than 90% of climate scientists agree.

LOW PRIORITY

38% say global warming is a top policy priority (ranked second to last).

PUBLIC OPINION

Waking up to Impacts

- 59% say weather is getting worse.
- 70% personally experienced extreme weather.
- 80% seeing changes in seasonal weather patterns



AMERICANS WANT TO PREPARE

- **85%** “Preparedness” is preferred approach to addressing climate change
- **82%** Should prepare before damage occurs
- **71%** Willing to take action to prepare
- **60%** Preparing for global warming will create jobs

Terminology

- **“Adaptation”**
 - sounds natural and gradual
- **“Mitigation”**
 - public is unclear of meaning
- **“Resilience”**
 - can imply maintaining status quo



Why is climate
disruption so difficult to
communicate about?

BARRIERS

1. Not me, not here,
not now



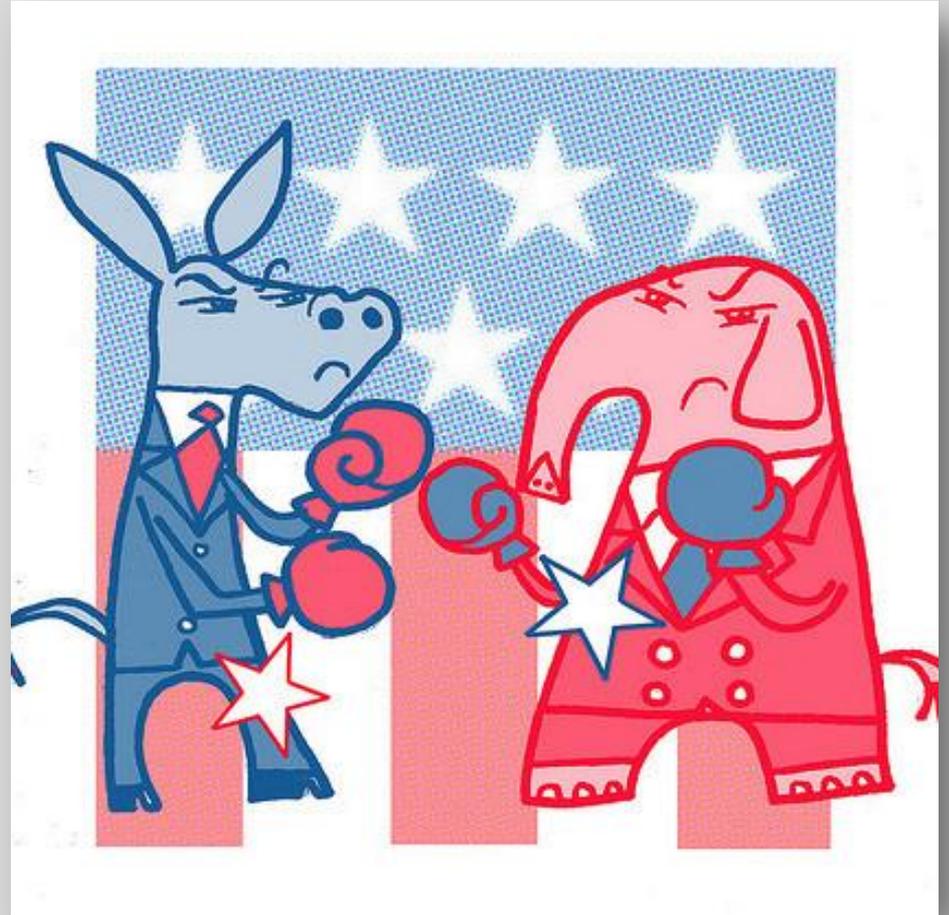
BARRIERS

2. Environmental framing



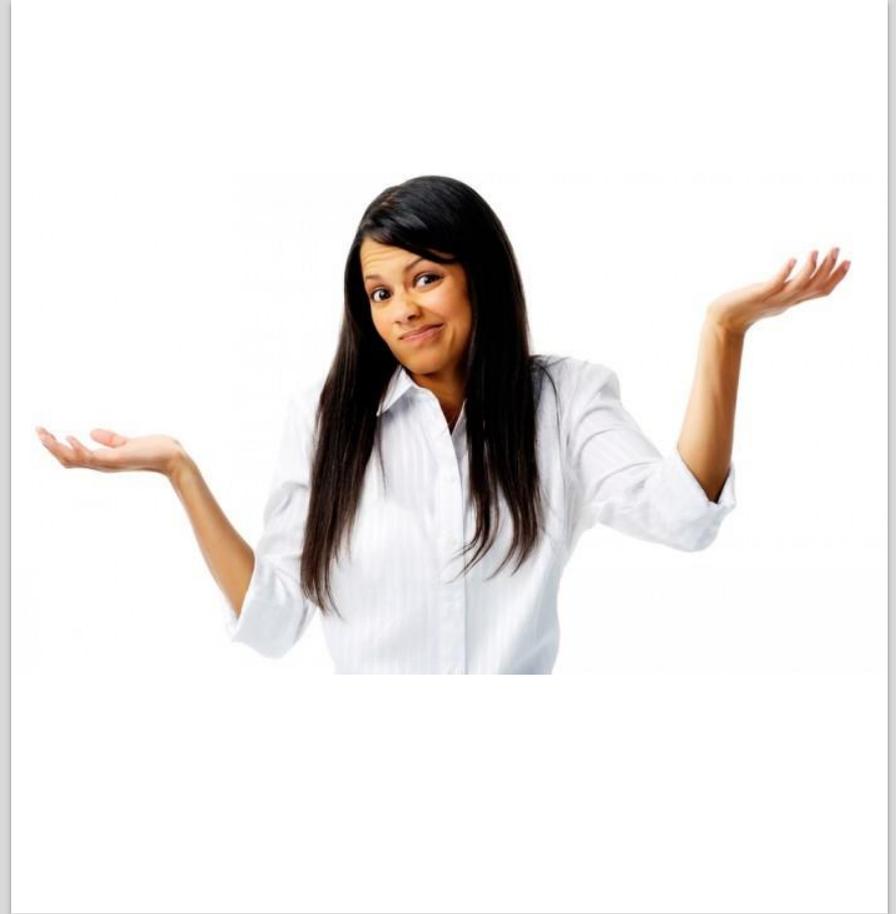
BARRIERS

3. Issue Polarization



BARRIERS

4. Climate efficacy gap



BARRIERS

5. Solutions distant, not yet viable



How Do People Process Climate Risk?

1. Values and worldview
2. Emotions
3. Sense of place
4. Agency



Ways of downplaying or avoiding the true risk of climate impacts

1. Psychological Distancing
2. Discounting the Future
3. Displacing Risk
4. Optimism Bias
5. Personal vs. Societal Threat
6. Illusion of Control
7. Valuing Certainty





OPPORTUNITIES

What is Framing

A Frame is a “central organizing idea...for making sense of relevant events, suggesting what is at issue.”

Gamson/Modigliani

MESSAGE FRAMEWORK

1. Challenge

- What are the problems we're facing and the context they're happening in?

2. Choice

- What action must be taken and why now?

3. Opportunity

- What are the benefits of taking action?

Preparation Frame: Guiding Principles

1. Focus on local, observable impacts
2. Begin with what audiences care about
3. Build on non-partisan values
4. Tap uncertainty as a reason to prepare
5. Emphasize the cost of inaction
6. Promote practical solutions
7. Articulate what will get better if action is taken
8. Promote mitigation as a preparation strategy

FRAME THE CONVERSATION



CHALLENGE

What is the problem?

Local observable impacts, in the context of long-term trends.

What are the stakes?

Economic, community, and individual well-being.

CHOICE

Why now?

Waiting to act will make the task more difficult and costly.

OPPORTUNITY

What are the benefits?

Communicate a vision that is hopeful and realistic.

Why me?

Connect preparation efforts to audience values and concerns.

COMMUNICATING ABOUT EXTREME WEATHER

- **Know your audience** – What are your audience's vulnerabilities to extreme weather events?
- **Choose a messenger** – Seek out leaders who can make the connection between climate and communities at risk.
- **Connect the dots** - Emphasize that climate change is loading the dice for more severe weather.
- **Keep it local and personal** – Tailor your communication strategy to the specific impacts of the region.
- **Don't forget solutions** – Let people know what can be done and how they'll benefit from taking action.

FRAMING

AUDIENCE: MUNICIPAL LEADER



Explain how clean energy sources are popular and benefit the local economy.

“Investing in clean energy can reduce electricity costs and create new jobs in our city. Reclaiming control over energy resources is supported by a strong bi-partisan majority of voters.”

FRAMING

AUDIENCE: CONSERVATIVE DECISION-MAKER



Emphasize the benefits of taking steps to prepare now rather than waiting until it's more costly.

“Preparing for impacts is fiscally prudent. It's only going to get more difficult and expensive to clean up the mess if we wait until after storms occur.”

FRAMING

AUDIENCE: RURAL LANDOWNER



Explore trends rather than arguing the science.

“The trees blossomed early this year, but then were damaged by frost. There’s concern that crops won’t survive if we keep getting these unstable weather patterns. What seasonal shifts are you experiencing on your property?”

FRAMING

AUDIENCE: URBAN YOUTH



Provide a space for young people to voice their concerns and hopes.

“Unchecked fossil fuel expansion is threatening our neighborhoods, from dirty air to dangerous heat waves. What does a low-carbon community mean to you?”

FRAMING

AUDIENCE: URBAN/SUBURBAN FAMILY



Combat fatalism by showing benefits of taking local action.

“Stormwater pollution is made worse by extreme rainfall brought on by climate change. Homeowners are helping solve the problem by building rain gardens that filter rain before it enters the water supply and prevent local flooding.”

SEVEN INGREDIENTS OF AUTHENTIC HOPE

1. **Clear-eyed diagnosis:** Where are we at?
2. **Vision of a worthwhile outcome:** What is achievable?
3. **Feasible path:** How can we get from here to there?
4. **Strategy for setbacks and interim goals:** What to do when the going gets tough?
5. **Meaningful role for me:** What can I do?
6. **Call on my highest self:** Who do I most want to be?
7. **Doing it together:** What will you (others) do?



Photo: villageofhopeuganda.com

A decorative graphic consisting of a series of colored circles arranged in a semi-circle. The circles transition in color from yellow on the left to orange in the middle, and then to red on the right. The size of the circles varies, with the largest ones in the center and the smallest ones on the far right.

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Thank you!