

# RISK PERCEPTION

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“People are disturbed, not by things,  
but by their view of them.”

Epictetus

# Report Documentation Page

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# RISK PERCEPTION

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The patterns of psychological factors by which we subconsciously ‘decide’ what to be afraid of and how afraid to be.



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# RISK PERCEPTION

## Some General Rules

- ◆ Perception factors are like seesaws. They can either make the fear go up, or down.



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# RISK PERCEPTION

## Some General Rules

- ◆ Perception factors are like seesaws. They can either make the fear go up, or down.
- ◆ Their effect changes over time.
- ◆ For any given risk, several factors are usually involved.



# RISK PERCEPTION

## Some General Rules

- ◆ Higher risk is BAD news to REGULAR people,  
but GOOD news to NEWS people.



# 1. TRUST

- ◆ The more we trust, the less afraid we will be.
- ◆ The less we trust, the more afraid we will be.



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## 2. RISK v. BENEFIT



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### 3. CONTROL v. LACK OF CONTROL

*(Physical control, not choice)*



## 4. IMPOSED v. VOLUNTARY

*(Choice)*



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## 5. NATURAL v. HUMAN- MADE



## 6. DREAD



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# 7. CATASTROPHIC or CHRONIC



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# 8. UNCERTAINTY

*(When we don't have all the answers.)*



# 9. ME OR THEM

*(Personal vs. Statistical.)*



# 10. FAMILIAR v. NEW



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# 11. CHILDREN



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## 12. AWARENESS

# Risk Communication is....



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Helping people understand the facts,  
in ways that are relevant to their own  
lives, feelings, and values, so they  
can put the risk in perspective and  
make more informed choices and  
decisions.



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# Risk communication is a public health tool

- ◆ Elevated levels of stress are dangerous



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# Risk communication is a public health tool

- ◆ Elevated levels of stress are dangerous
- ◆ *MIS*perception of risk leads to dangerous choices by individuals.
- ◆ *MIS*perception of risk leads to social demands for protection that are often inefficient