

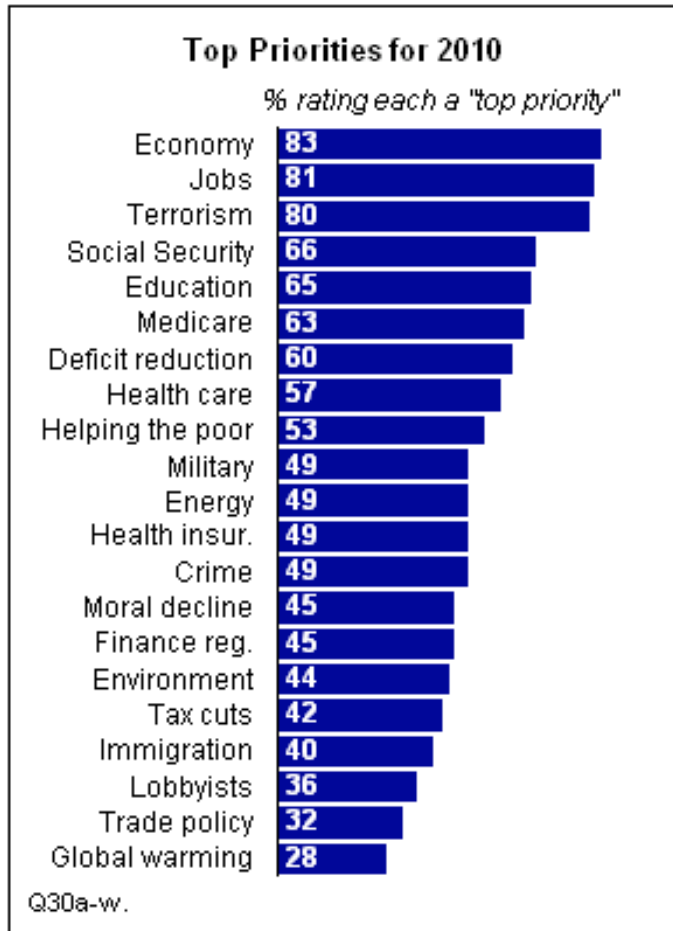
CLIMATE CHANGE COMMUNICATIONS

The Resource Innovation Group
www.theresourceinnovationgroup.org



Who is the audience and what is
the message?

Current Public Opinion About Climate Change



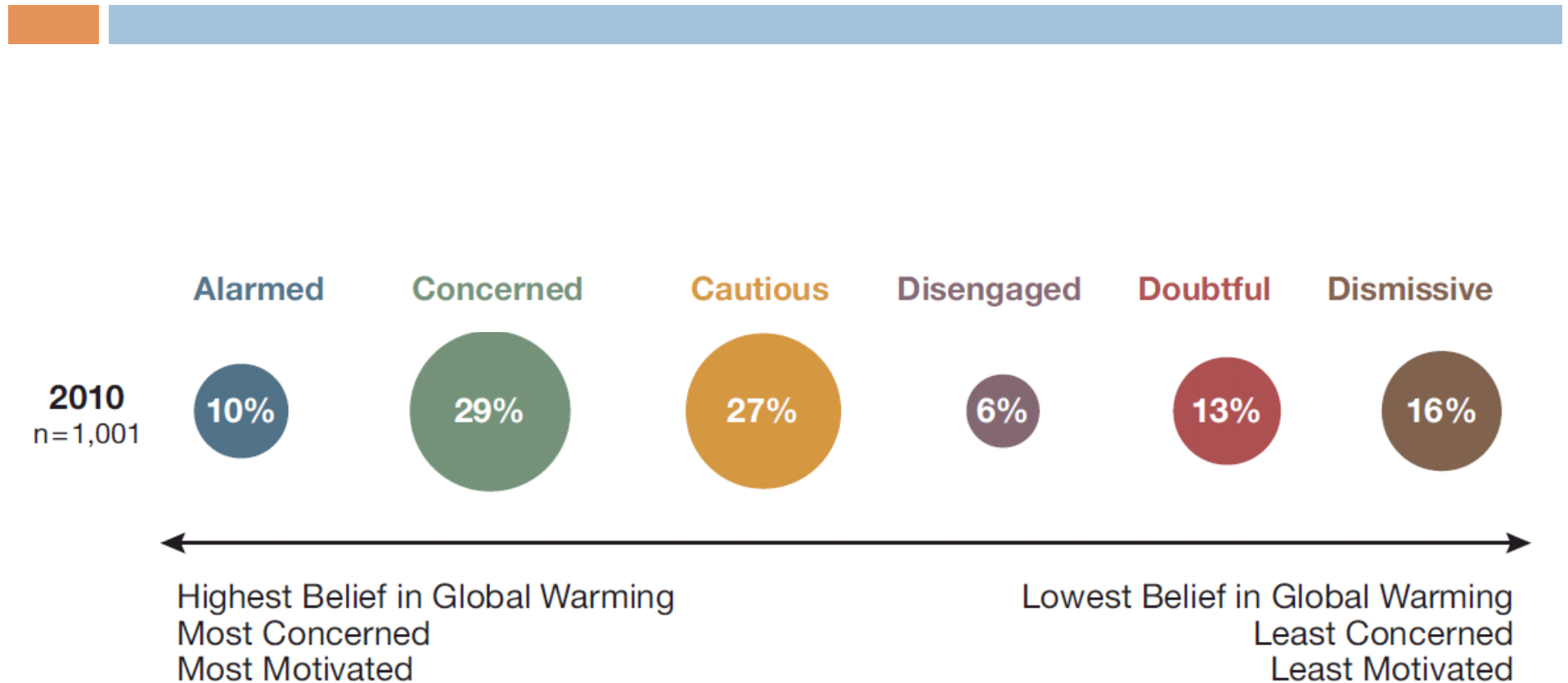
Do you think that global warming is happening?

| | 2010 | 2008* |
|------------|------|-------|
| Yes | 57 | 71 |
| No | 20 | 10 |
| Don't Know | 23 | 19 |

Yale Project on Climate Change: January 2010

“Six Americas”

Segmentation based on climate concerns and action



“Climate Crossroads”

Targeting Populations by Understanding their Values

- ▣ One of the largest studies on American environmental attitudes and worldviews
- ▣ Segments the public into 10 distinct groups based on how they rank more than 130 social values
- ▣ Supports development of targeted outreach and behavior change approaches that tap into the values that specific segments hold.
- ▣ Led to The Ecological Roadmap

The Message: Public Health Voice Can Shift Concern

People will support climate change policies if they:

- ▣ Believe climate change is real
- ▣ Have a strong certainty that it is real
- ▣ Believe it will harm people
- ▣ Believe humans caused it
- ▣ Believe humans can fix it

(Krosnick, Holbrook, Lowe and Visser 2006)

The Public Health Imperative




- Climate change is one of the greatest health risks facing our nation and the world. (World Health Organization, American Public Health Association)
- Climate change is impacting people now, and public health can take a leadership role. (George Mason University, Environmental Defense Fund, National Association of County and City Health Officials 2008)
- But the public still sees climate change affecting plants, penguins and polar bears – not people. (Yale and GMU 2009)

We Don't Need to Be Experts

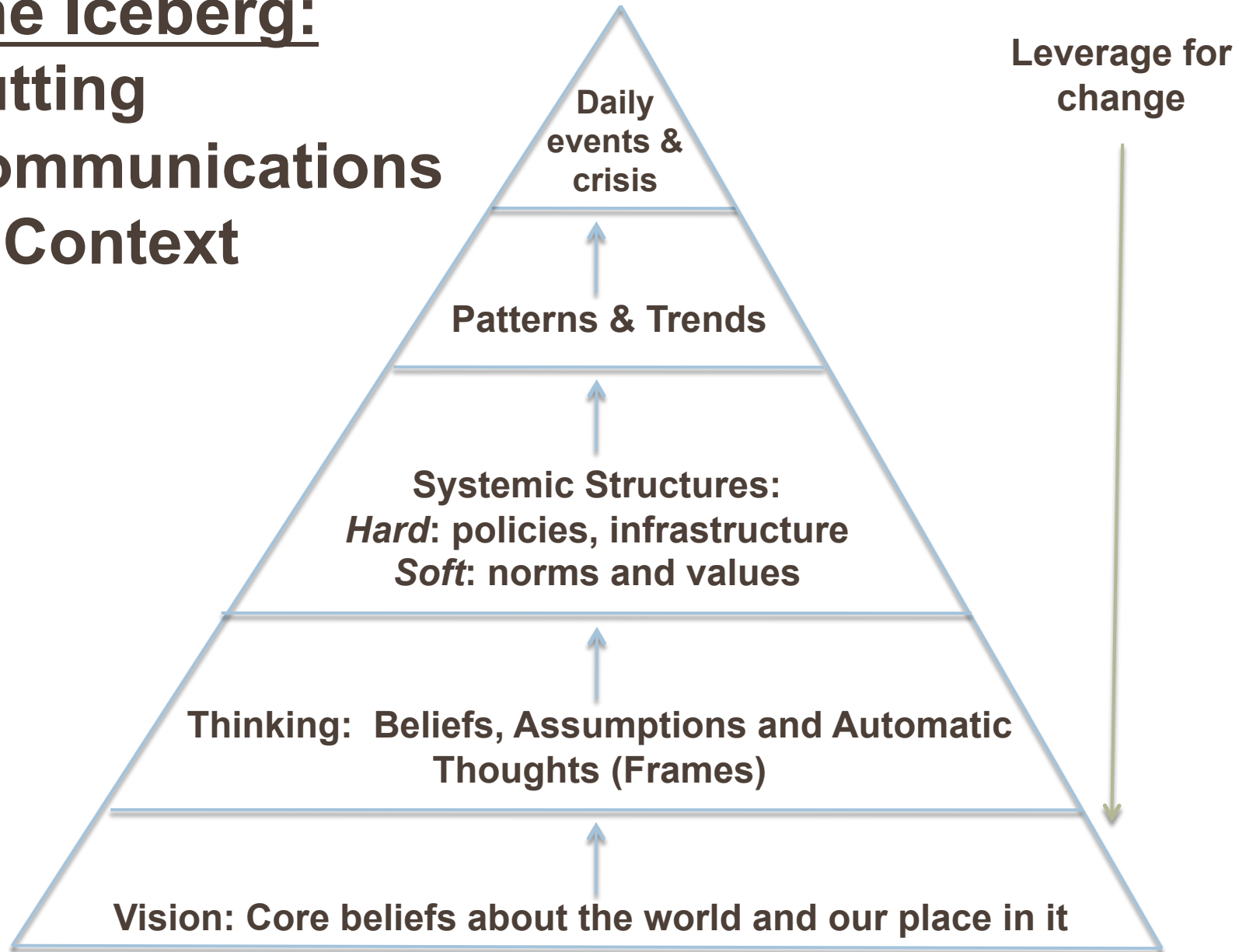


- 96% of the world's qualified scientists agree that climate change is real and human caused.
- If 96% of the world's qualified pediatricians agreed that your child was ill, would you ignore the warning?
- The only responsible option for public health officials is to take the issue seriously and take steps to protect human health from climate change.



How do we break through
barriers and communicate
effectively to motivate change?

The Iceberg: Putting Communications in Context



Tailoring Strategies to Audiences' Stages of Change

(URI's cancer prevention research)

Disinterest: The “I won't change” stage.

Deliberation: The “I might change” stage.

Design: The “I will change” stage.

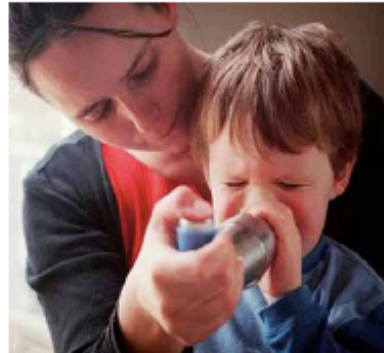
Doing: The “I am changing” stage.

Defending: The “I have changed” stage.

Three Fundamentals to Motivate Change



1. **TENSION:** Sufficient internal tension (dissonance) between a desired & current condition
2. **EFFICACY:** Confidence in capacity to reduce the tension
3. **BENEFITS:** See the benefits of new behavior as being significantly greater than the downsides of change



Conveying the Human Implications of Climate Change

A Climate Change Communication Primer for Public Health Professionals

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Matthew Nisbet, PhD
School of Communication
American University

Melinda Weathers, MA
Center for Climate Change Communication
George Mason University



George Mason University
Center for Climate Change Communication

Discussion



- Who do you communicate with?
- How does this apply to you and your communications?
- How can you build tension, efficacy, and benefits?
- Are there materials you could apply this information to?
- Who can we better collaborate with on communicating the public health imperative? Where are there win-win opportunities? (nonprofits; research institutions; private industry; local, state federal level?)