



Zika Crisis and Emergency Risk Communication (CERC) Discussion: Risk Attributes, Risk Perceptions and Pregnancy

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June 7, 2016

Initial Phase

- Express empathy
- Provide simple risk explanations
- Establish credibility
- Recommend actions
- Commit to stakeholders

Maintenance

- Further explain risk by population groups
- Provide more background
- Gain support for response
- Empower risk/benefit decisionmaking
- Capture feedback for analysis

What Do People Feel Inside When a Disaster Looms or Occurs?

Psychological Barriers:

1. Denial
2. Fear, anxiety, confusion, dread
3. Hopelessness or helplessness
4. Seldom panic
5. Vicarious rehearsal

Decisionmaking in a Crisis is Different

- People simplify
- Cling to current beliefs
- We remember what we see or previously experience (first messages carry more weight)
- People limit intake of new information (3-7 bits)

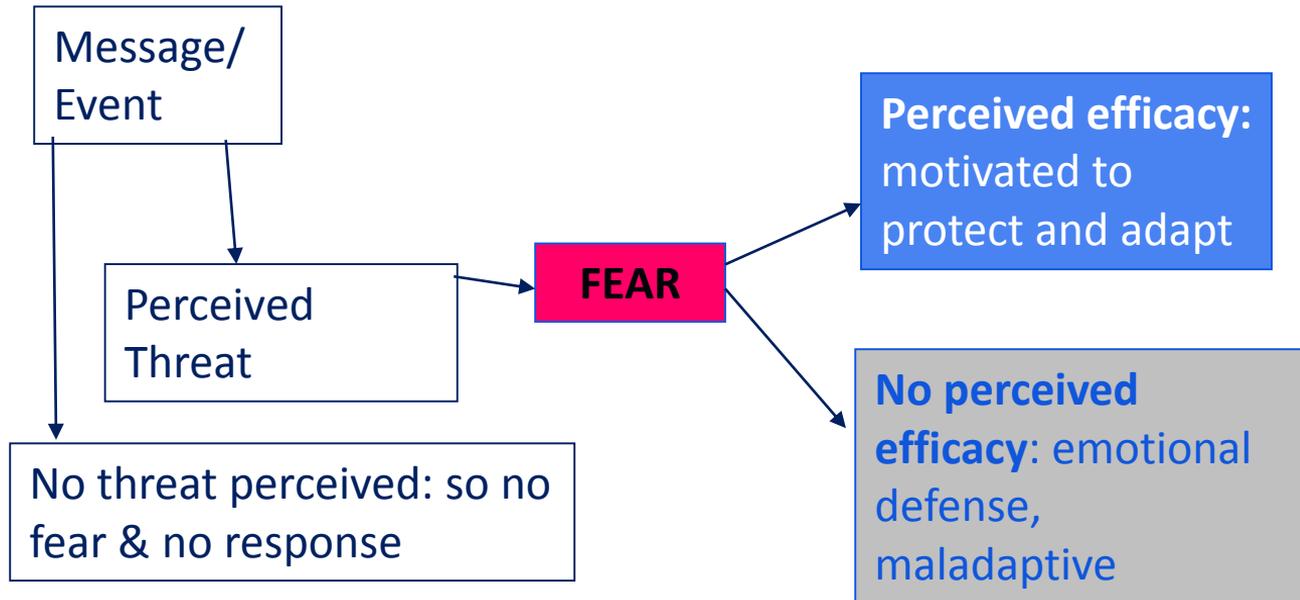
How Do We Communicate About Risk in an Emergency?

All risks are not accepted equally

- Voluntary vs. involuntary
- Controlled personally vs. controlled by others
- Familiar vs. exotic
- Natural vs. manmade
- Reversible vs. permanent
- Statistical vs. anecdotal
- Fairly vs. unfairly distributed
- Affecting adults vs. affecting children

Fear and Efficacy

- Extended Parallel Process Model (Witte, 1992)



Compassion in Communication

- People will expect demographic details of first deaths (“How do I compare?”)
- Look of official reports must be respectful (web)
- Responders may be losing members too
- People mourn financial loss too

Six Principles of CERC

- **Be First:** If the information is yours to provide by organizational authority—do so as soon as possible. If you can't—then explain how you are working to get it.
- **Be Right:** Give facts in increments. Tell people what you know when you know it, tell them what you don't know, and tell them if you will know relevant information later.
- **Be Credible:** Tell the truth. Do not withhold to avoid embarrassment or the possible “panic” that seldom happens. Uncertainty is worse than not knowing—rumors are more damaging than hard truths.

Six Principles of CERC

- **Express Empathy:** Acknowledge in words what people are feeling—it builds trust.
- **Promote Action:** Give people things to do. It calms anxiety and helps restore order.
- **Show Respect:** Treat people the way you want to be treated—the way you want your loved ones treated—always—even when hard decisions must be communicated.

Risk Communication Resources

- CDC Zika website: <http://www.cdc.gov/zika/>
- Zika communications resources: <http://www.cdc.gov/zika/comm-resources/index.html>
- CERC resources: <http://emergency.cdc.gov/cerc/index.asp>
- Emergency Risk Communication Training: Atlanta, August 10-12, 2016
- To sign up for the Emergency Partners newsletter to receive Zika and other updates from the CDC, please click [here](#)
- Contact cercrequest@cdc.gov for questions

For more information, contact CDC
1-800-CDC-INFO (232-4636)
TTY: 1-888-232-6348 www.cdc.gov

The findings and conclusions in this report are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official position of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

