
TUTORIAL: COMMUNICATING ABOUT CLIMATE CHANGE

In the Guide, review Step 3, Task 1: Prepare for the Vulnerability Workshop and also Step 3, Task 2 Facilitate the workshop, especially Part A in the Workshop Agenda section

Summary points

- ▶ Purpose is to provide tips that can help keep your workshop on-track
- ▶ Find common ground with your participants before diving into the science
 - Suggested focus is shared values: The values inherent in your community that people want to protect. What makes the place where you live somewhere special
 - Find the right spokesperson who is respected in your community to lead this part of the discussion. Examples: faith leader, local business owner, doctor, or meteorologist. Professors or politicians may or may not be a good spokesperson for this part of the agenda, depends on your community
 - Have them share a personal story about how climate change has affected them or the people they serve, and what concerns they have for the future.
 - Make sure your spokesperson connects the dots between their values and the specific local effects of climate change. Examples: water supply/quality, air quality/health, impact on local economy, etc.
- ▶ Next, shift the conversation to how people normally address risks to the community
 - This is a key step for setting the stage before you bring on your expert to cover the expected climate projections for your community. The speaker may be the person who lead the values discussion or someone else you think is appropriate and it could even be the expert who will address climate change, if she/he is adept at connecting with an audience on this type of topic.
 - When we decide whether and how to address a risk, we weigh the likelihood of the risk against the severity of the consequence.
 - Earthquake example of high severity, low likelihood – most communities do prepare
 - As for human-caused climate change, scientists agree that the likelihood is very high

- Even if there is disagreement in your community about this likelihood, perhaps it will be easier to get agreement on the severity of the impacts AND if strategies to address the impact of climate change have other benefits beyond providing resilience to of climate change, such as a more reliable water supply, it will be easier for your community to embrace these strategies
 - The speaker's goal is to help folks in the room agree to develop resilience strategies without having to agree on the likelihood associated with climate change
- ▶ Climate change discussions can be upsetting when people realize what's at stake
 - While reviewing the projected impacts on the community, offer a positive vision on how your community can be resilient in the face of projected climate change impacts;
 - Give examples of the innovations and positive changes that can be made
 - Talk about how the community may look in 50-100 years with the benefits of this resilience
 - Keep the focus on how the community can work together to develop strategies
- ▶ Resources
 - <https://www.climaterealityproject.org/blog/communicating-climate-change-focus-framing-not-just-facts> The Climate Reality Project provides guidance and information on communication, including this video with Katherine Hayhoe.
 - <https://climateaccess.org> Climate Access has helpful blog posts and webinars on communicating about climate change.
 - <http://climatecommunication.yale.edu> the Yale Program on Climate Change Communication has tips and studies that can help you succeed