

Risk Communication as an Intervention Strategy

March 19, 2009

*Risk Communication Team
National Center for Food Protection and Defense*

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Overview

- Best Practices
- Key Points of Interventions
- Cultural Impact
- Industry Expectations

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Best Practices

Continuously Evaluate and Update Crisis Plans

PLAN AHEAD

Plan Ahead for a Prompt Response

Establish a Crisis Communication Network

Accept Uncertainty

COMMUNICATE RESPONSIBLY

Form Partnerships with the Public

Acknowledge Public Concern

Be Open and Honest

MINIMIZE HARM

Be Accessible to the Media

Communicate Compassion

Provide Suggestions for Self-Protection

Acknowledge and Account for Cultural Differences

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Intervention Points

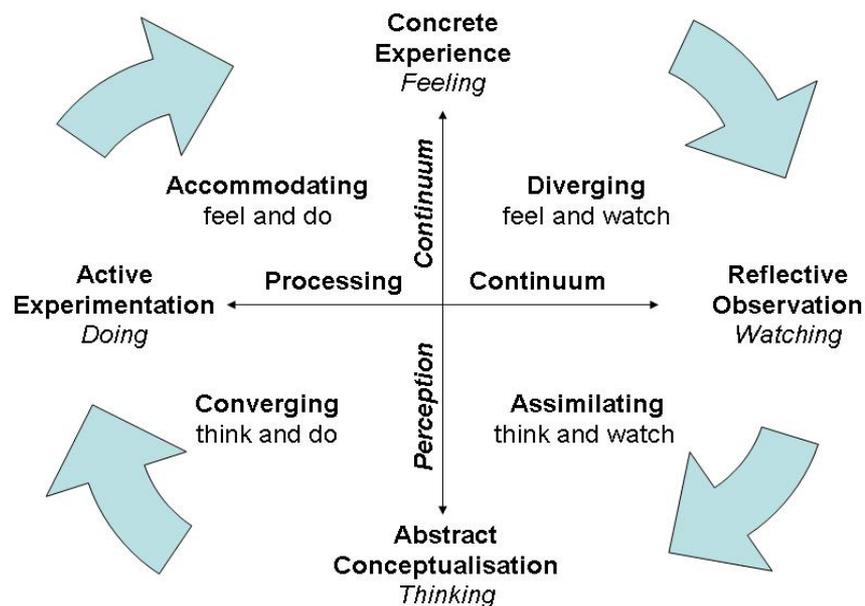
- Early Recognition
- Initial Warning
 - Specific vs. General
 - Equivocal vs. Certain
- Targeting Messages
- Ease of Reseponse

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Key Elements of Message Testing: Learning Styles

- Abstract
Conceptualization
- Active Experimentation
- Reflective Observation
- Concrete Experience



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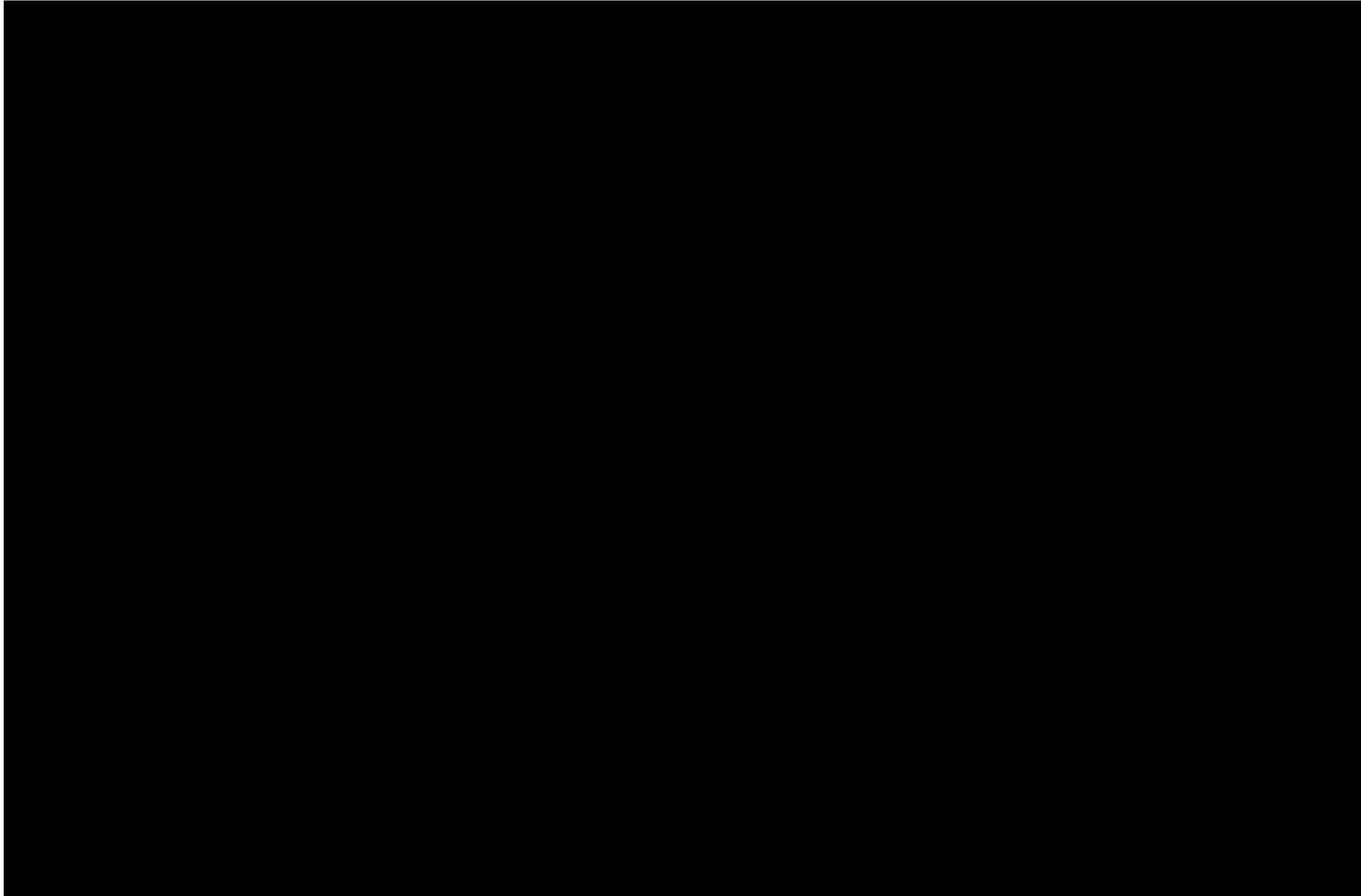
Audience Perception of Risk Messages



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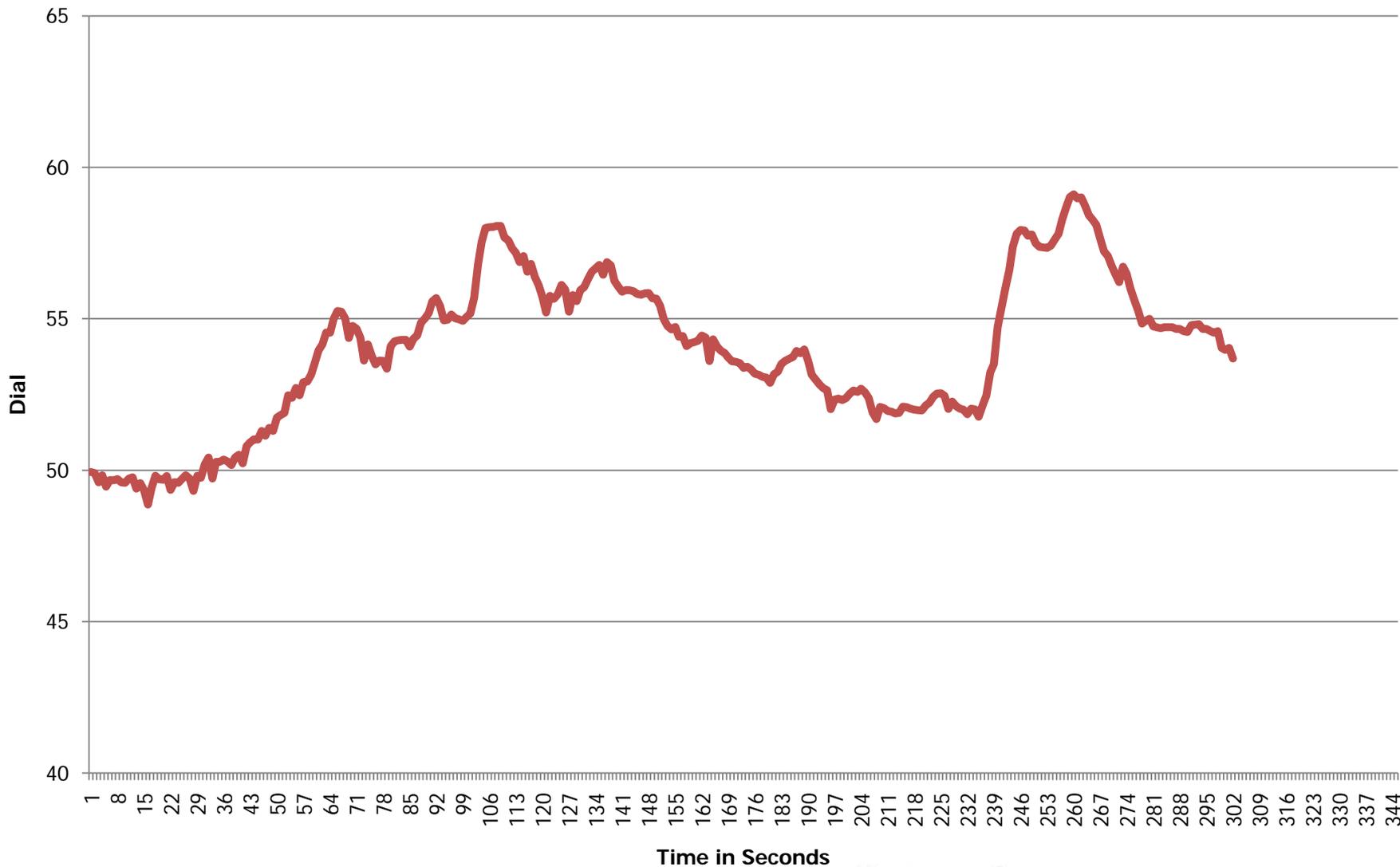
Salmonella Outbreak Simulation: Point of Initial Warning



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Audience Perception for Entire Video

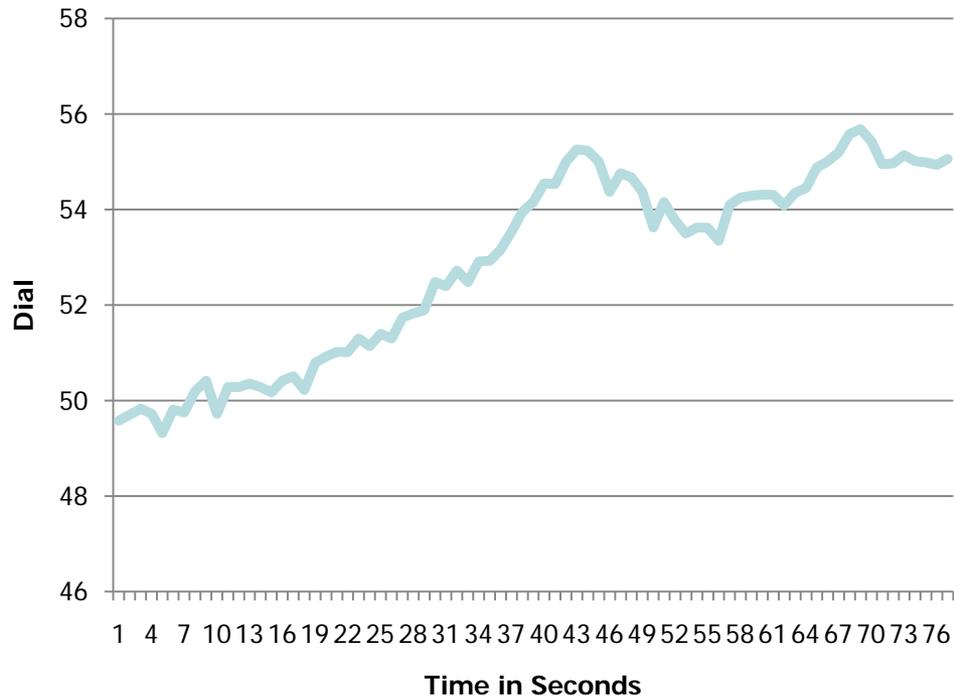


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Abstract Conceptualization

CDC Message: Part 1



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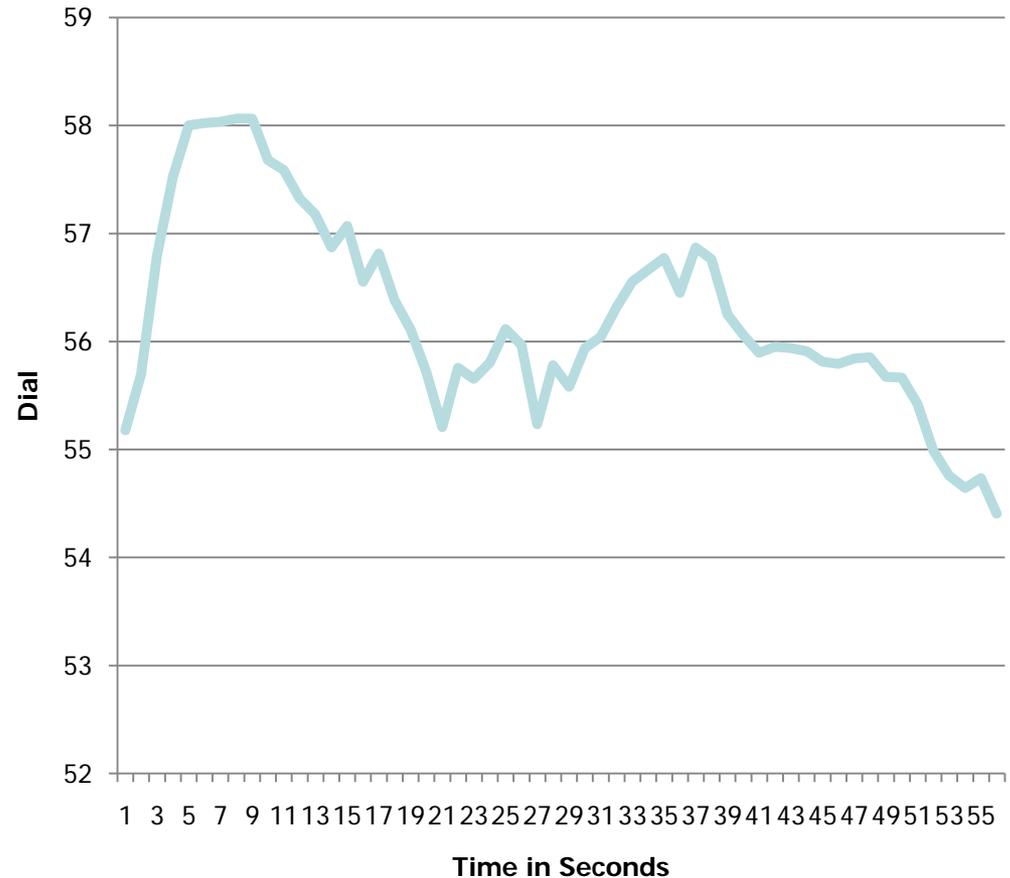
Active Experimentation

CDC Message: Part 2

**FOOD POISONING
CAN LEAD TO**

**Stomach Cramps
Diarrhea
Fever
Sometimes Death**

ad to stomach cramps, diarrhea, fever,

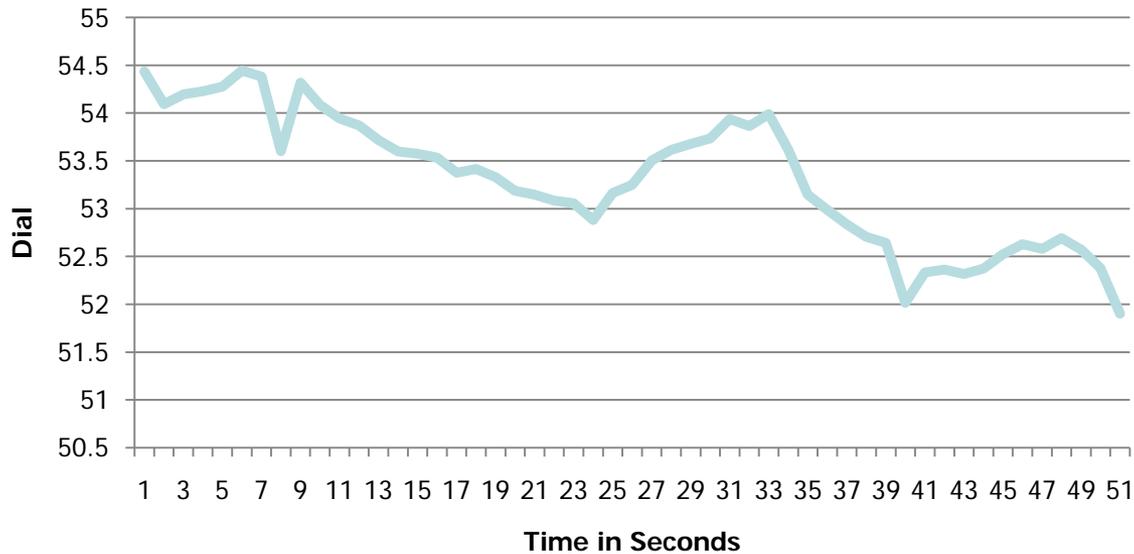


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Reflective Observation I

CDC Message: Part 3

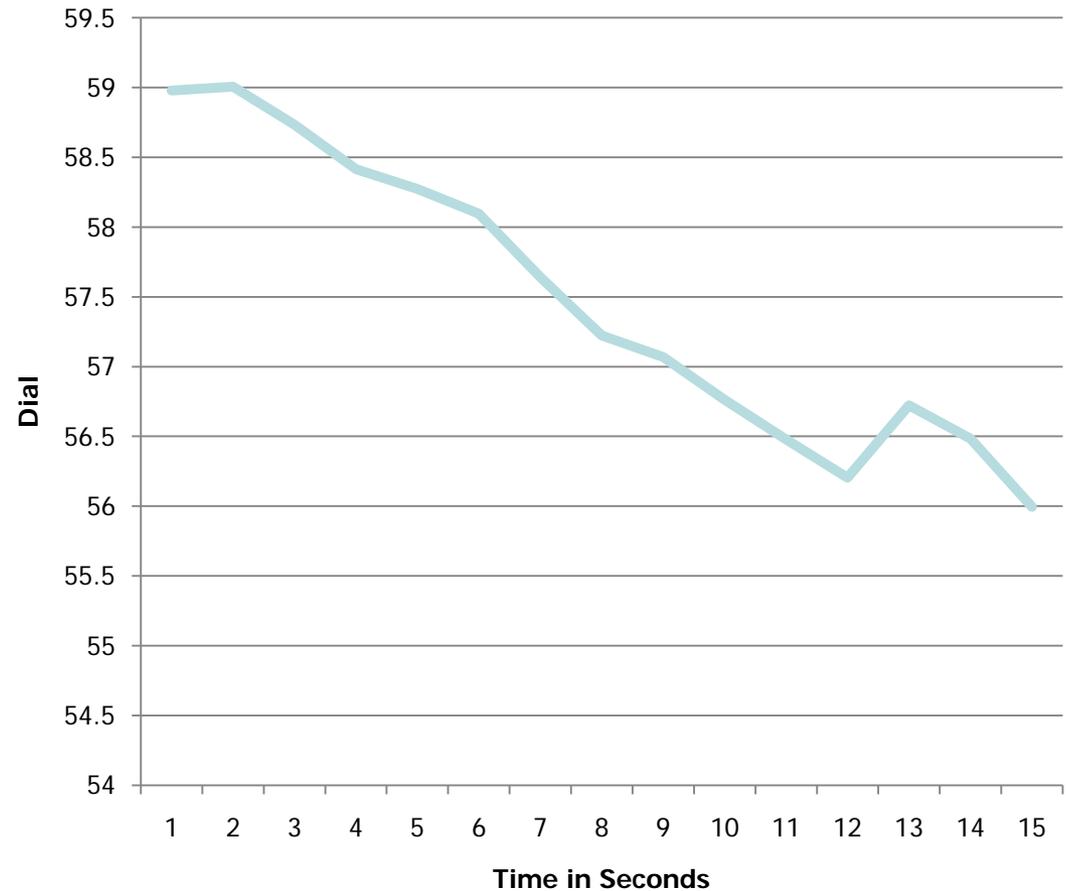


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Reflective Observation II

Food Corp Representative



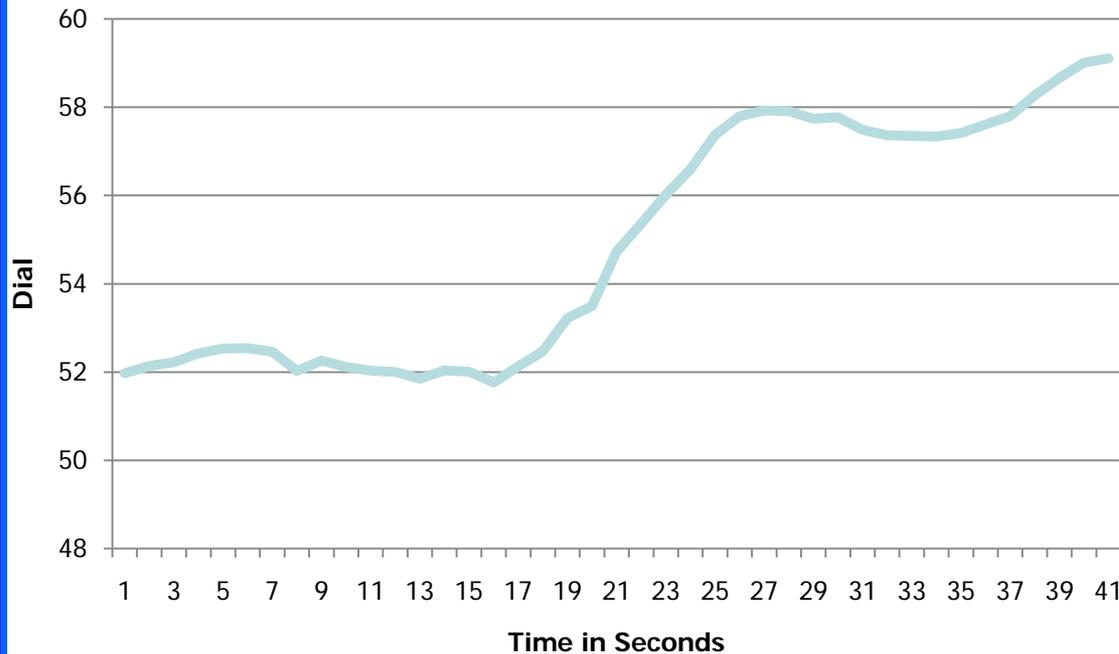
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Concrete Experience



The Story of Dorothy



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Key Points of Intervention: Modeling Food Recalls and Warnings

Matthew Seeger Ph.D.
Wayne State University
Department of Communication

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A Broken system

- Slow Identification
- Cascading Warnings
- Passive Communication
- Complex Messages
- No Targeting of Messages
- Risk Fatigue

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Peanut product recalls

By The Associated Press – Feb 20, 2009

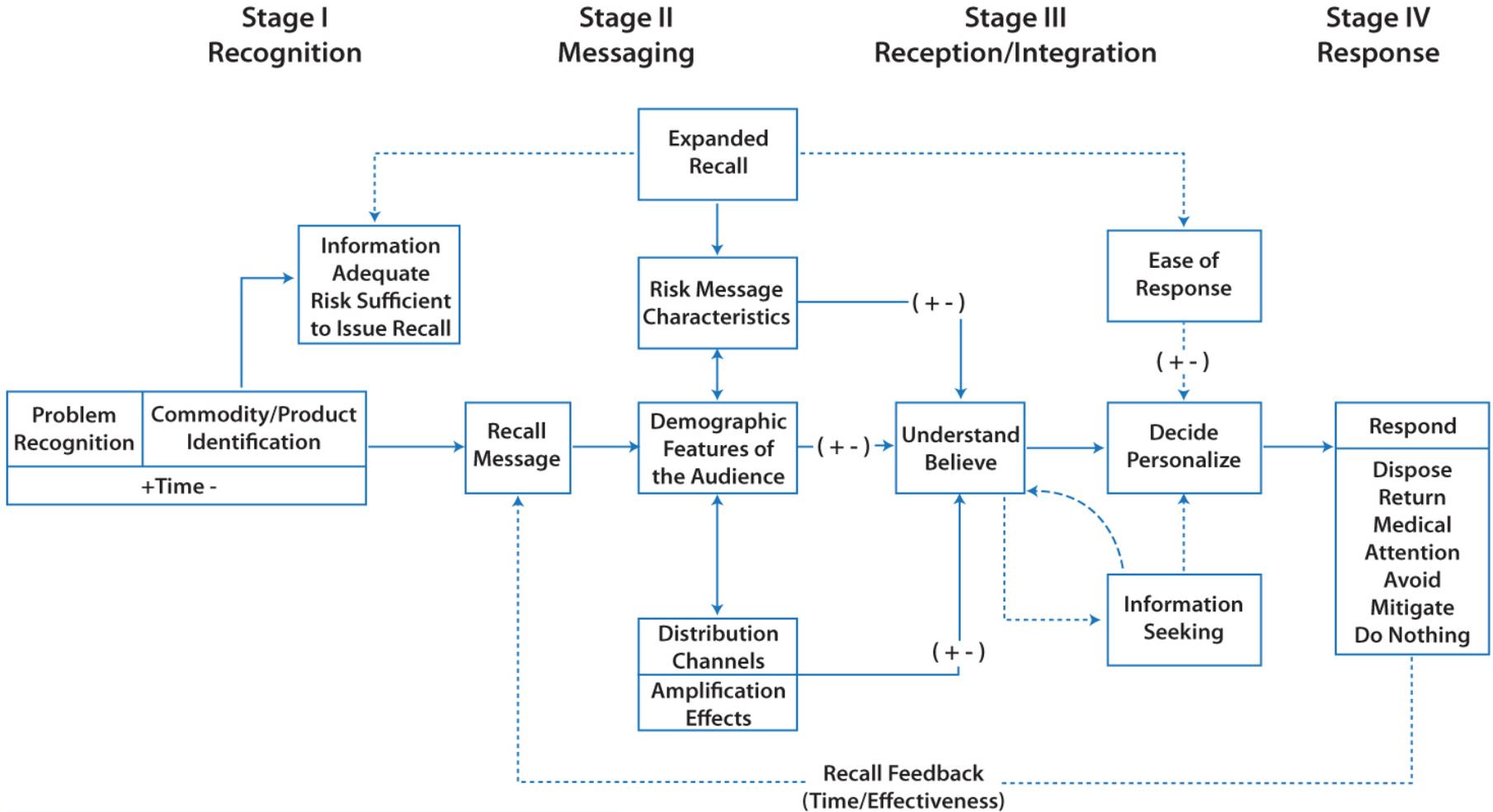
The following recalls have been announced because the products may be contaminated with salmonella, an organism that can cause serious and sometimes fatal infections, especially in young children, the elderly and those with weakened immune systems:

American Health Kennels Inc. is recalling certain baked dog treats containing peanut butter. In pets, this organism can cause diarrhea, vomiting, fever and abdominal pain. It can be transferred to humans handling the treats. The company said it has had no reports of illness. Details: by phone at 954-781-0730.

The recall includes:

_American Health Kennels Inc. Cookie Bars: Creamy Peanut Butter UPC 725999522004; PB & Carob Chips UPC 725999523001; Lucious Carob UPC 725999521007; 4 pack Cookiebar Assortment UPC 725999538005; Best Before: 11/09

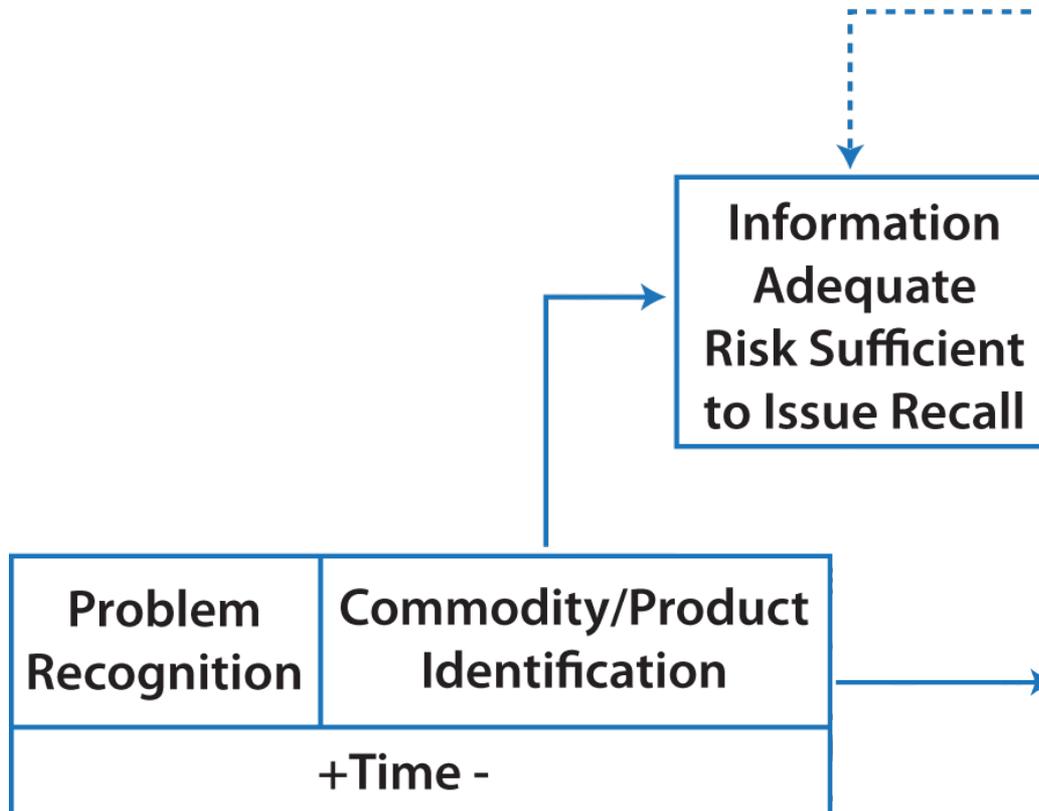
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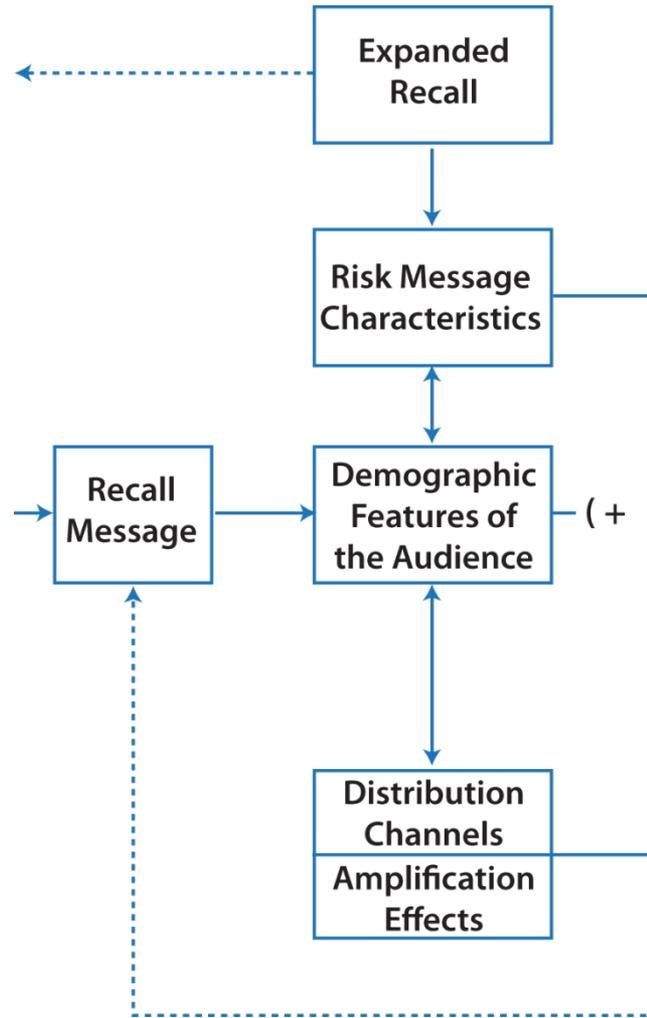
Stage I Recognition



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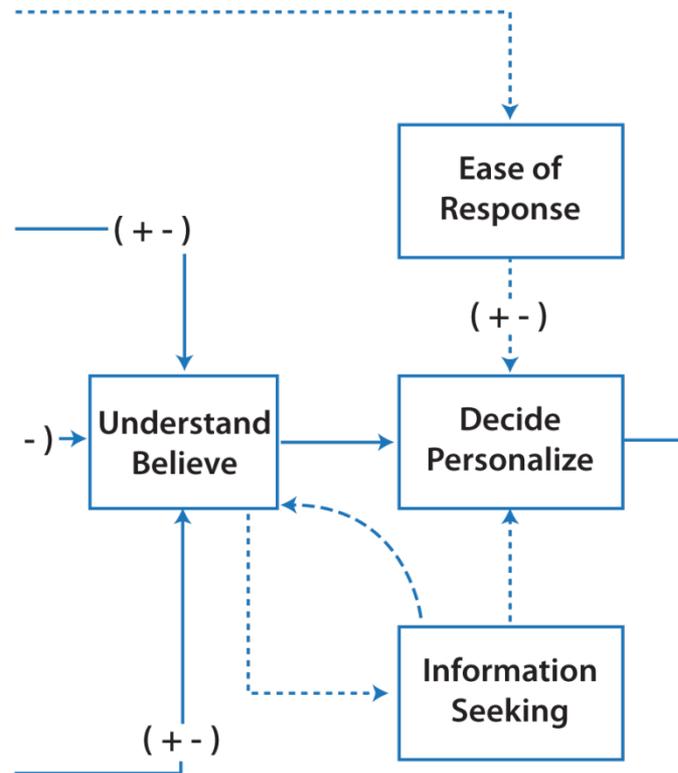
Stage II Messaging



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Stage III Reception/Integration

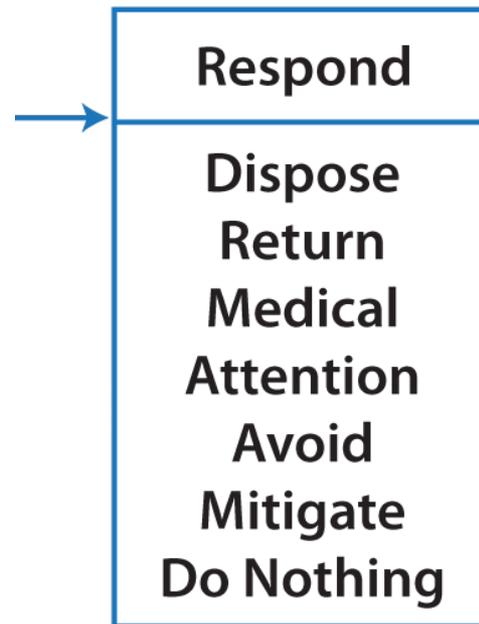


Recall Feedback
(Time/Effectiveness)

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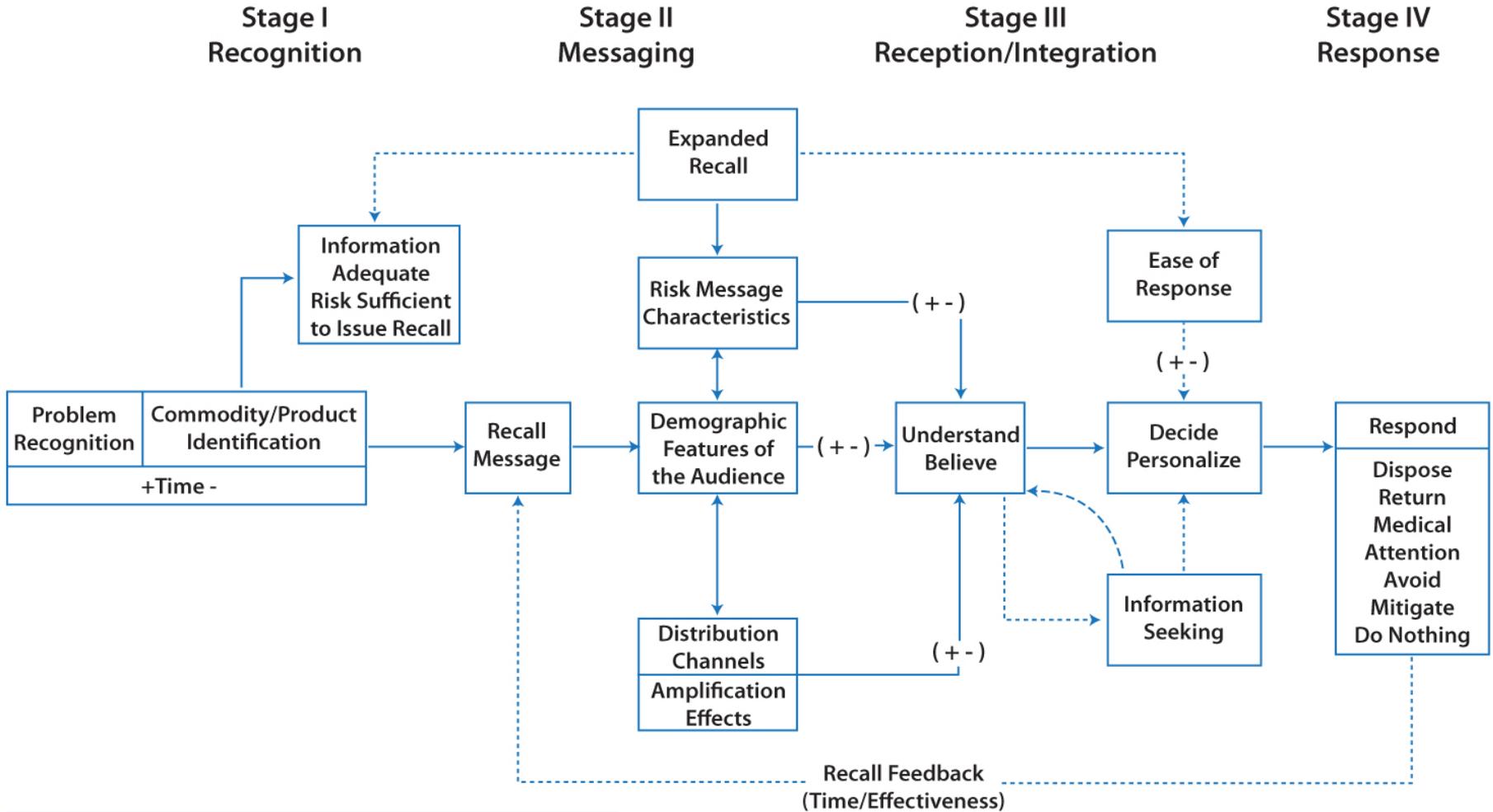
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Stage IV Response



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Communicating Risk and Crisis With Multicultural Groups: Message Testing Events of Food Contamination

***Robert S. Littlefield, Ph.D
Risk + Crisis Communication Project
North Dakota State University***

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Phase One Findings

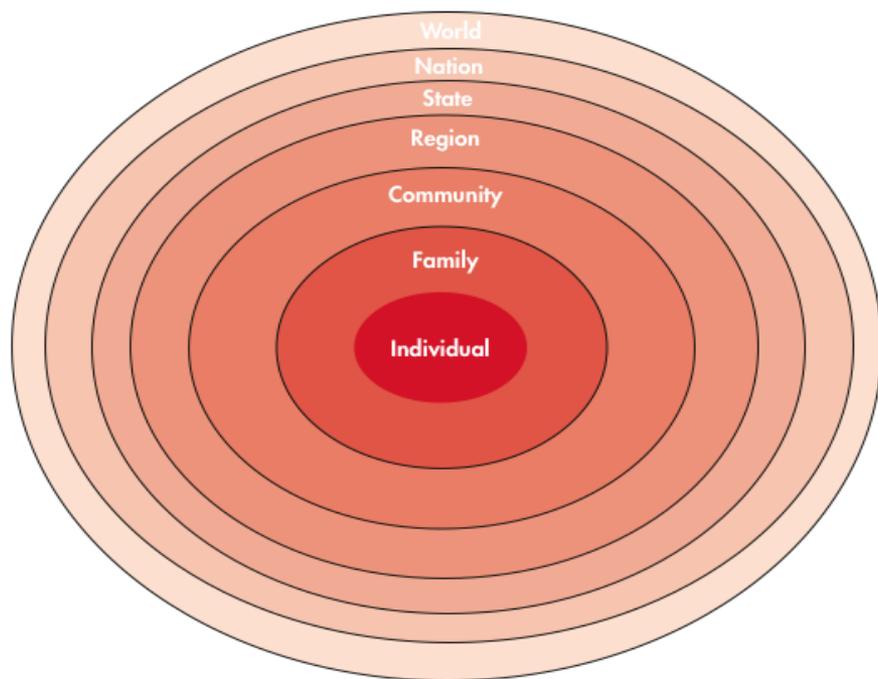
- Vulnerable publics differ in their prioritization of crisis and emergency risk information.
- Vulnerable publics prefer spokespersons that represent their culture/community.
- Vulnerable publics identify five of the best practices as key: media accessibility; compassion, concern, and empathy; honesty, candor, and openness; tolerance for ambiguity; and self-efficacy.

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Phase One Findings

Spheres of Ethnocentricity



- The focus is on issues that affect the inner spheres (self, family, community).
- Spokesperson(s) most like self, family, and community are perceived as most credible.

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Phase Two Findings

Positive:

“They are working to have us listen”

“I would believe because he is one of us”

“I would do what he says because he understands us”

“They look like they are together, like they have solidarity”

*Vicarious
Credibility*

Negative:

“He is being used.”

“I would believe him more if he was someone in my community”

“Why use someone from our group, do you think we did it?”

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Phase Three Anticipated Findings

- A relationship between preferred learning style and preference for delivery of crisis and emergency risk communication CERC messages.
- Vulnerable populations prefer lower literacy level CERC messages.
- Preferences for ways of receiving messages can be created for specific publics.

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Future Research

- Investigate vulnerable public's needs for communication during events of catastrophic intentional food contamination.
- Investigate preferred ways of receiving catastrophic information about intentional contamination of the food supply.

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Emerging Issues

- Bioterrorism
- Globalization
- Centralization
- Complexity of the food chain
- Cultural Differences

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Risk Communication as an Intervention Strategy: Industry Impact

Tony Flood
Director, Food Safety Communications
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Washington, DC

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The Third Annual DHS University Network Summit, March 2009, Washington, DC

PRIMARY PRODUCTION > HARVEST > TRANSPORTATION > STORAGE > PROCESSING > DISTRIBUTION > RETAIL/FOOD SERVICE > CONSUMER

International Food Information Council (IFIC)

Mission: To effectively communicate science-based information on food safety and nutrition issues to health professionals, media, educators and government officials.

Primarily supported by the food, beverage and agricultural industries.

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Consider . . .

- Intervention strategies can be used to help mitigate, reduce or even stop a process in action
 - Used in public health arena
 - Food safety examples similar to a “kill step”
- Risk communication as an intervention strategy for industry
 - At numerous points
 - During entire process

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Risk Communication is Key

- IFIC incorporates “best practices” when delivering risk-based communication messages regarding food safety
 - Ongoing process
 - Partnerships with the public
 - Give the public something meaningful to do
- Why not for food defense?

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“I, for the life of me, cannot understand why the terrorists have not attacked our food supply because it is so easy to do.”



**Tommy Thompson, former HHS Secretary
December 3, 2004**

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Risk Communication is Key

- Ongoing Process
 - Food safety is a now a priority
 - Food defense will gain support among policy makers
 - Engage the public now
- Identify and engage ALL publics
 - Public, private, media, thought leaders, etc.
- Strategies that focus on publics' needs

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In Closing . . .

- Risk communication should be expanded beyond an intervention strategy
- Partnerships are essential to any successful risk communication strategy
- The time is now to educate, engage and increase awareness to reassure publics' confidence in the food supply

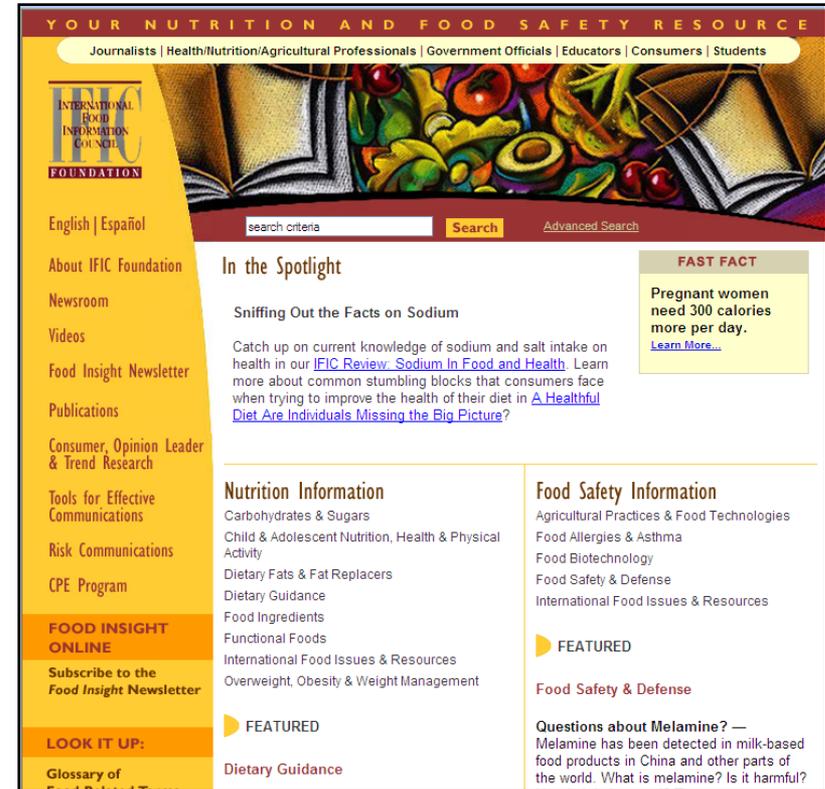
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www.ific.org

Thank you . . .

Tony Flood
flood@ific.org



The screenshot shows the homepage of the International Food Information Council (IFIC) Foundation. At the top, it reads "YOUR NUTRITION AND FOOD SAFETY RESOURCE" and lists target audiences: Journalists, Health/Nutrition/Agricultural Professionals, Government Officials, Educators, Consumers, and Students. The IFIC logo is on the left. A navigation menu includes: English | Español, About IFIC Foundation, Newsroom, Videos, Food Insight Newsletter, Publications, Consumer, Opinion Leader & Trend Research, Tools for Effective Communications, Risk Communications, CPE Program, FOOD INSIGHT ONLINE, Subscribe to the Food Insight Newsletter, LOOK IT UP:, and Glossary of Food-Related Terms. The main content area features a search bar, a "FAST FACT" box stating "Pregnant women need 300 calories more per day," and an "In the Spotlight" section titled "Sniffing Out the Facts on Sodium" with a link to a review. Below are sections for "Nutrition Information" (listing topics like Carbohydrates & Sugars, Child & Adolescent Nutrition, etc.) and "Food Safety Information" (listing topics like Agricultural Practices & Food Technologies, Food Allergies & Asthma, etc.). A "FEATURED" section highlights "Dietary Guidance" and "Questions about Melamine?".

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