

Climate Communication 2.0

Engaging the Public -
Getting Through to Your Boss

Susanne C. Moser, Ph.D.

Stanford University

Susanne Moser Research & Consulting

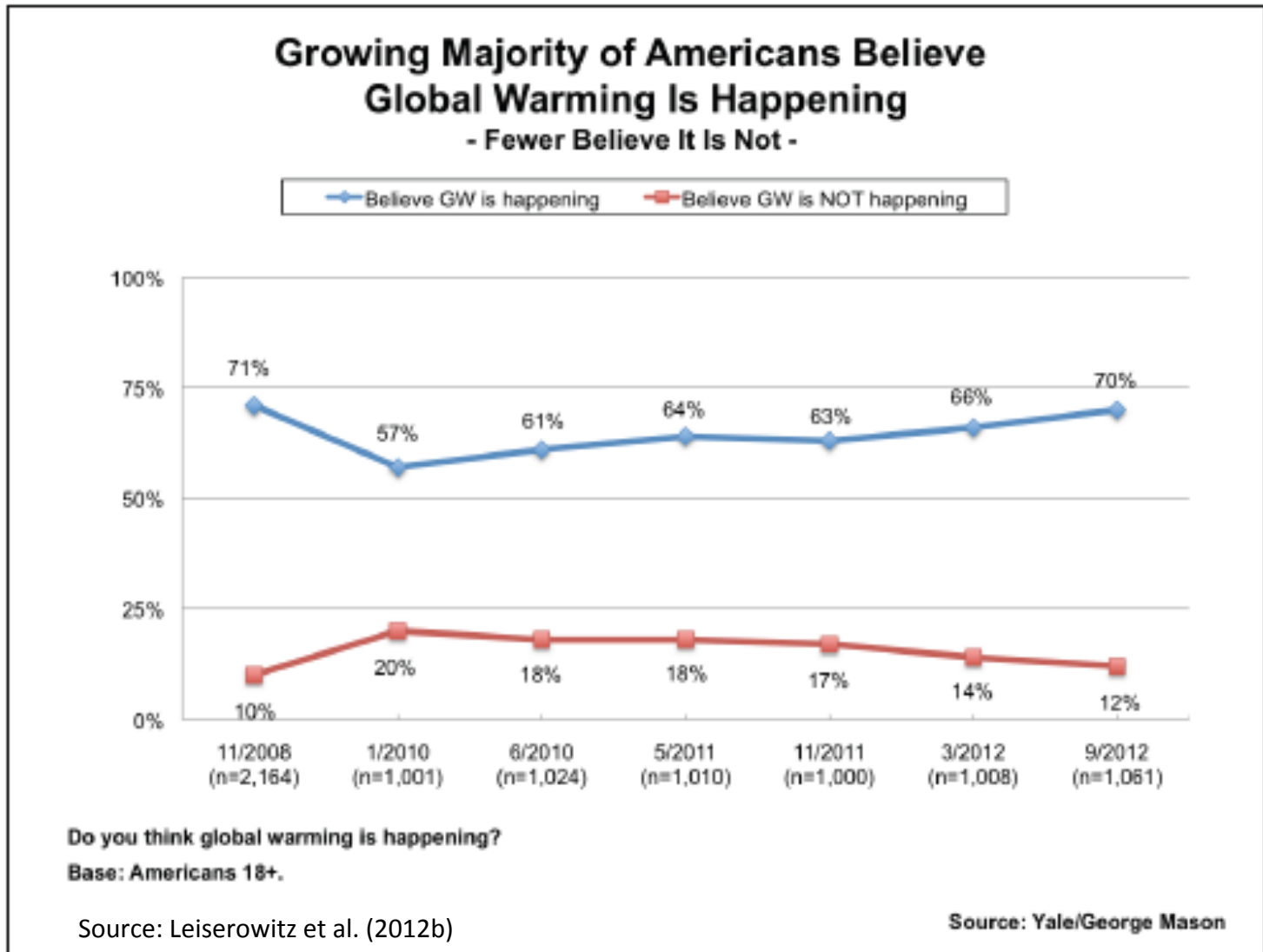
Overview

- A precarious moment in public engagement
- Communicating when climate change “comes home”
- Taking charge – embracing change
- Reaching people where they’re at
- Stories of success
- Engagement & empowerment:
Creating our future

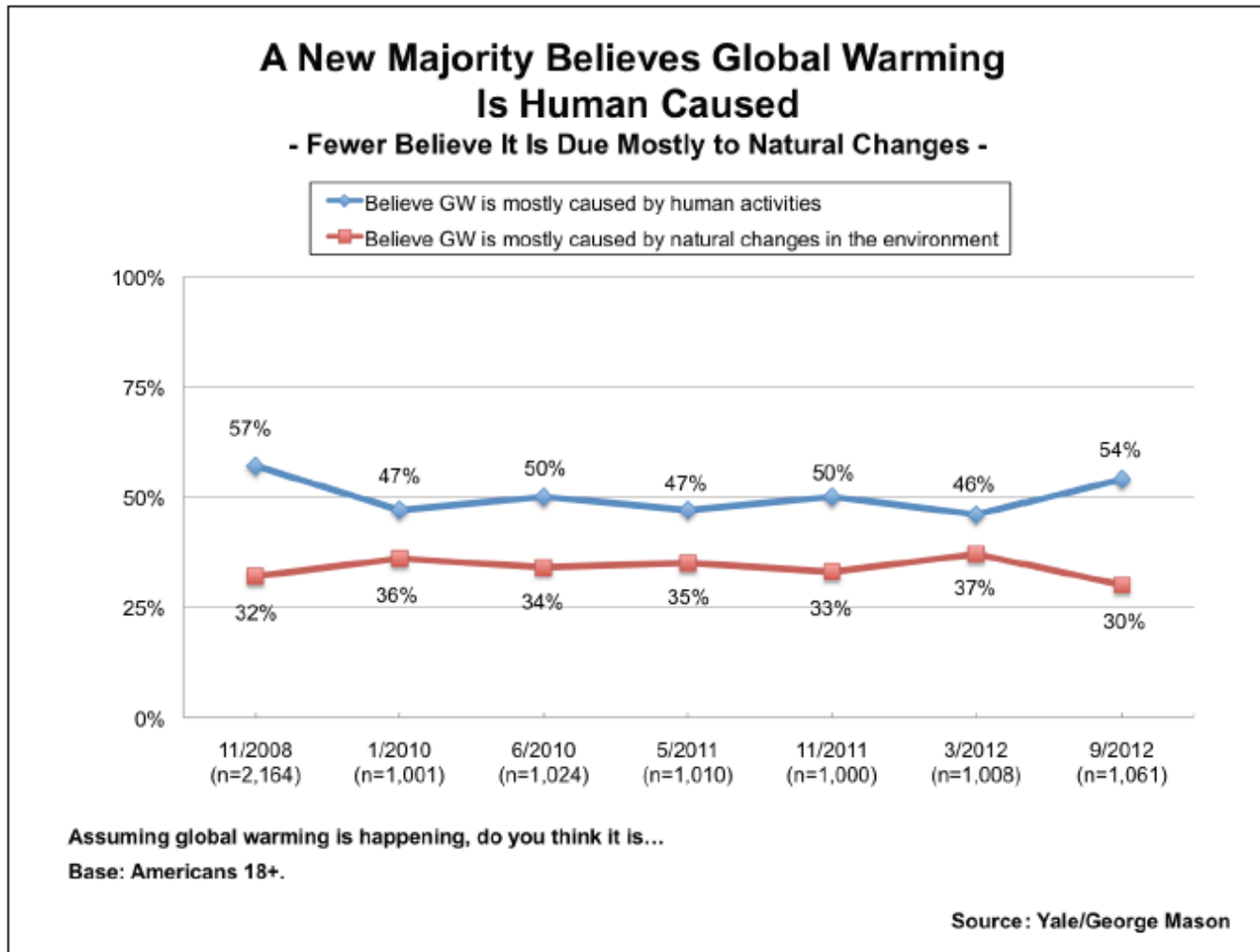


*A Precarious
Moment in
Public Engagement*

People are Catching up with Reality



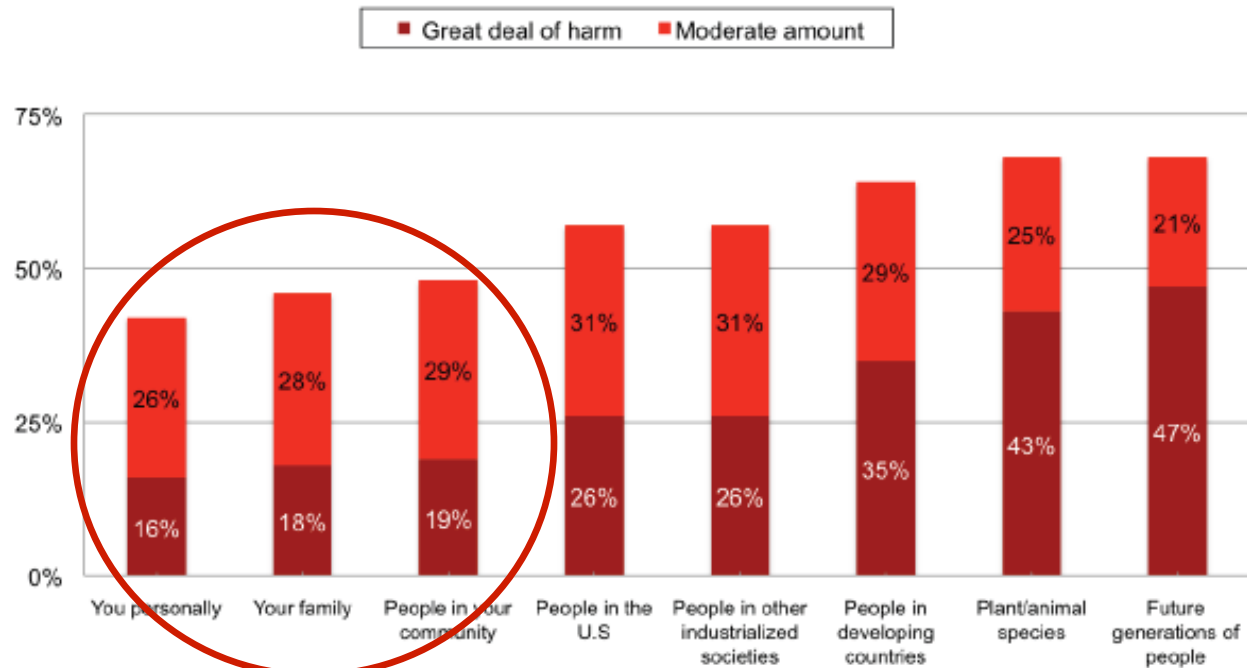
Majority Now Believes in Human Causation



Source: Leiserowitz et al. (2012b)

But...Still a Distant Threat

Global Warming Still Seen as a Relatively Distant Threat



How much do you think global warming will harm...?

Base: Americans 18+ (n=1,061)

Source: Yale/George Mason

Adaptation in the American Mind

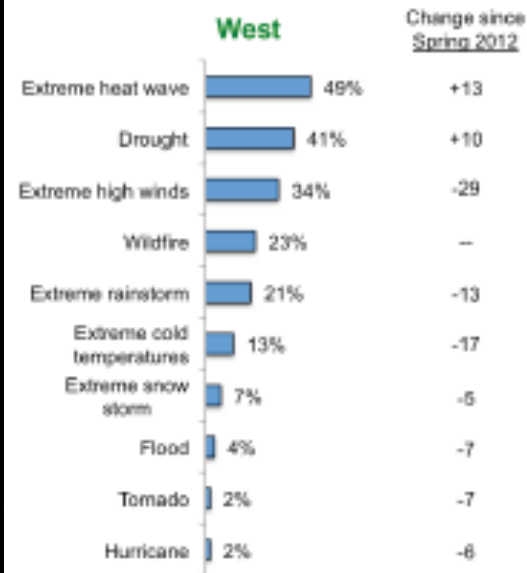
- A large and growing majority of Americans believe that global warming is affecting weather events worse
- A majority (55%) of Americans say they have thought some or a great deal (55%) about preparing for a natural disaster, but only ~a third have a plan/kit



Source: Leiserowitz et al. (Sept 2012a)

Personal Experience of Extremes

Extreme Weather Personally Experienced in the South and West Over the Past Year



In the past year, have you personally experienced each of the extreme weather events or natural disasters listed below?

Bases: South in Spring 2012, n=374; in Fall 2012, n=380. West in Spring 2012, n=230; in Fall 2012, n=247

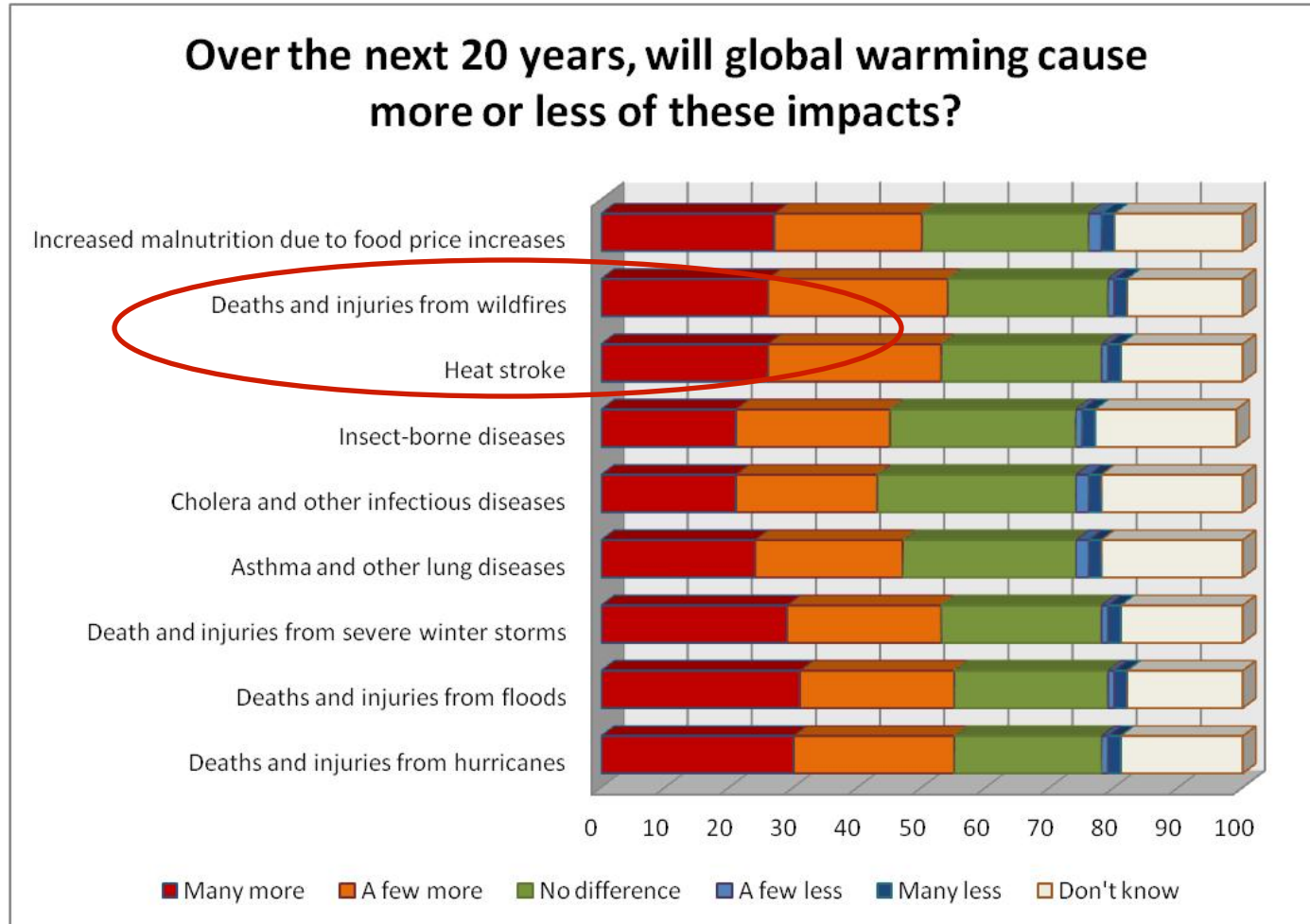
Personal Experience of Climate Change Impacts

34%... and growing

Q236. I have personally experienced the effects of global warming.

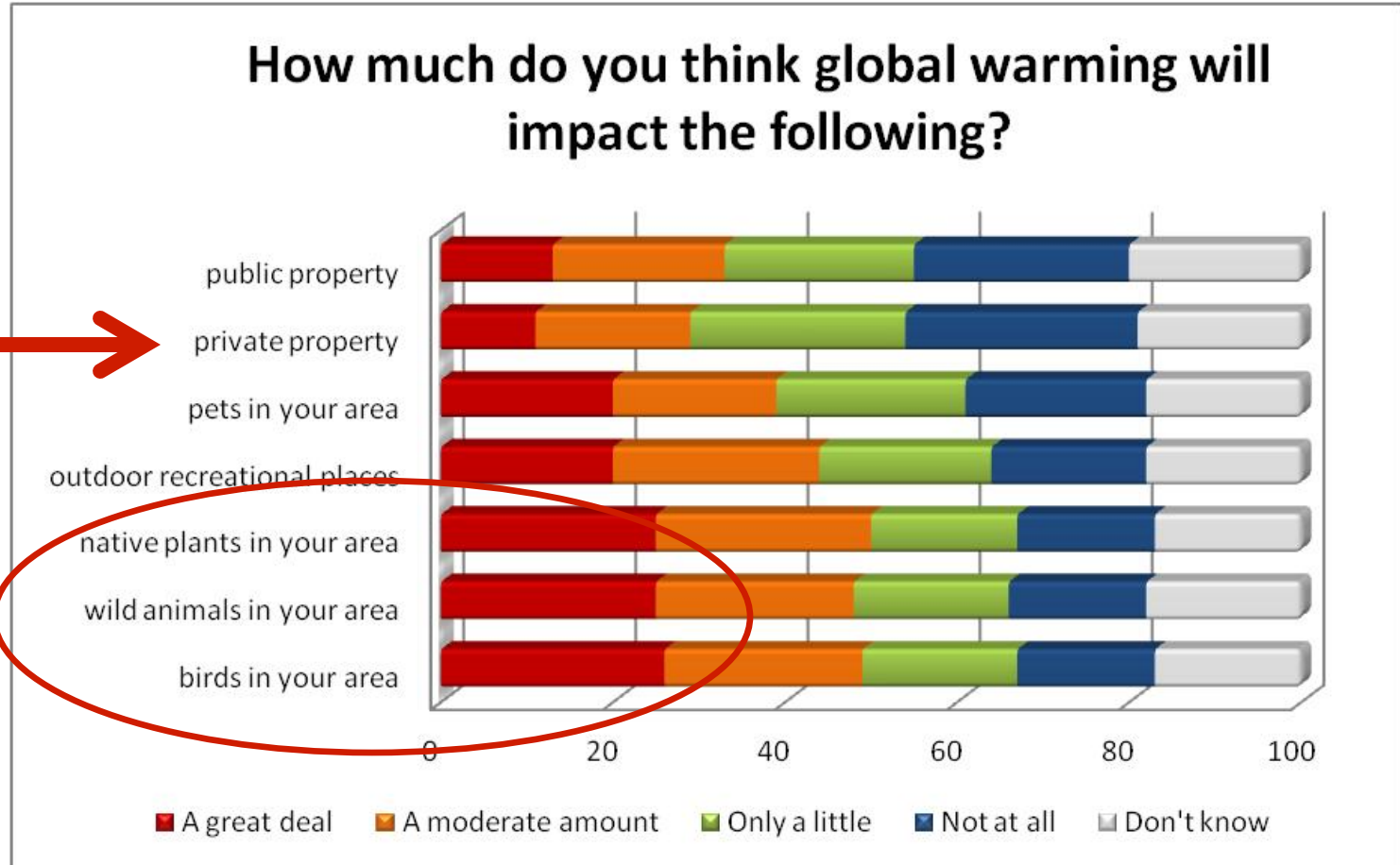
	May 2011	June 2010	Jan 2010	Nov 2008
Strongly agree	5	5	5	4
Somewhat agree	29	25	21	29
Somewhat disagree	34	35	35	43
Strongly disagree	32	35	40	24

Expectations of Future Impacts?



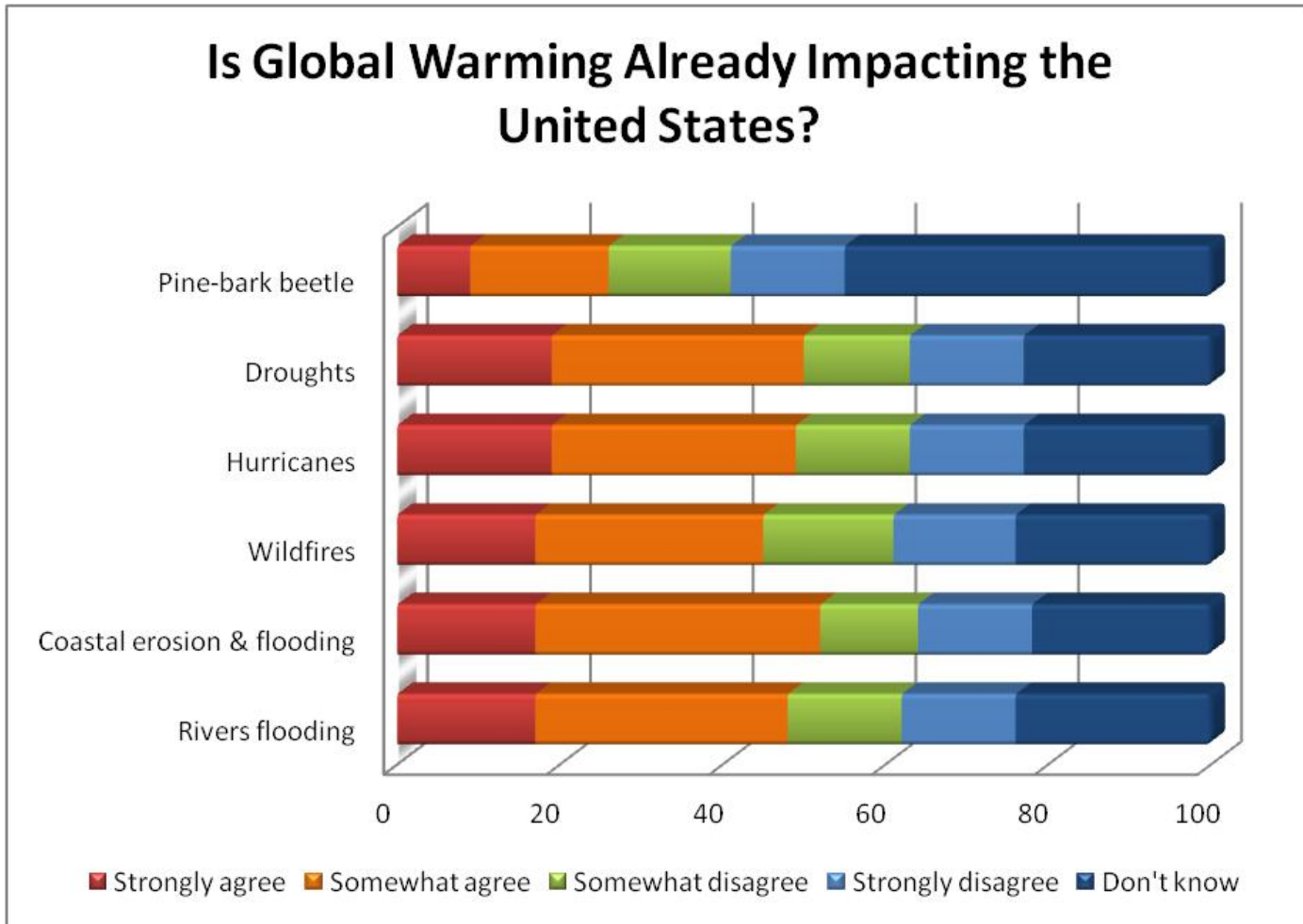
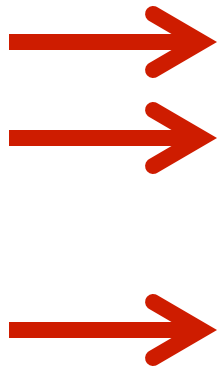
Source: Based on data by Leiserowitz et al. (2011)

Expectations of Local Impacts



Source: Based on data by Leiserowitz et al. (2011)

Has Climate Change Arrived?



Source: Based on data by Leiserowitz et al. (2011)



*Communicating
when Climate
Change “Comes
Home”*

Why Bother with Communication?

- Support for high-level leadership and policy
- Behavior change and civic engagement
 - Actively doing their part in reducing their own emissions
 - Actively doing their part in reducing risks from climate change impacts
- Deeper, transformative change (values, culture, worldviews)



Do We Actually Know How to Communicate Adaptation?

- **Observations:**

- Mostly unexamined approaches to communicating adaptation (language choices)
- Fear of local officials about publicly addressing adaptation in their communities
- Indications that communication local impacts and adaptation needs may involve different challenges than communicating climate science or mitigation
- Growing organized resistance to local adaptation planning efforts

Some Challenges We Face

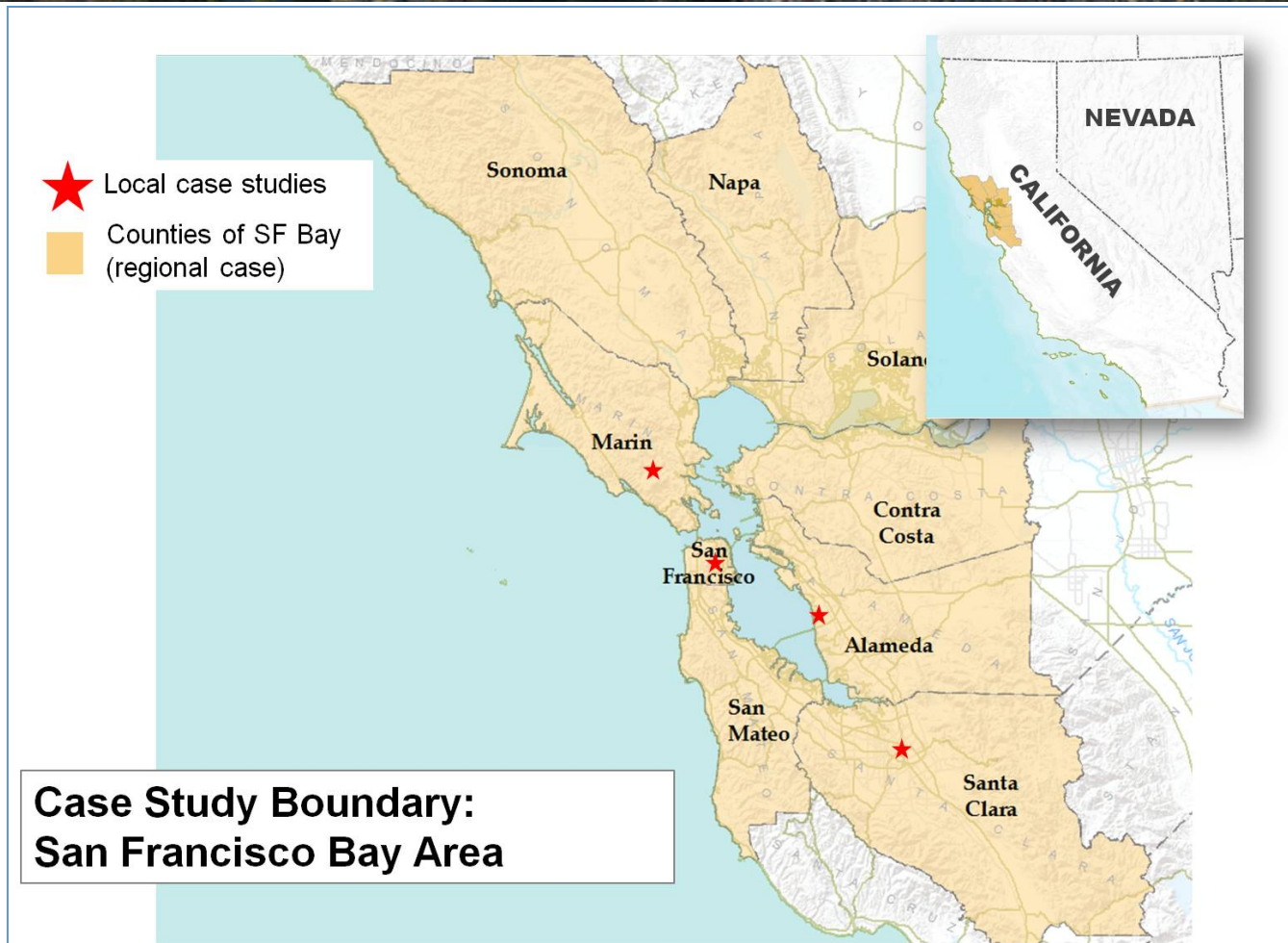
- Climate risks are “coming home”
- The risks are not yet local for many
- Preexisting interpretive lenses
- Framing effects
- Global-local disconnect
- Missing voices, trusted messengers



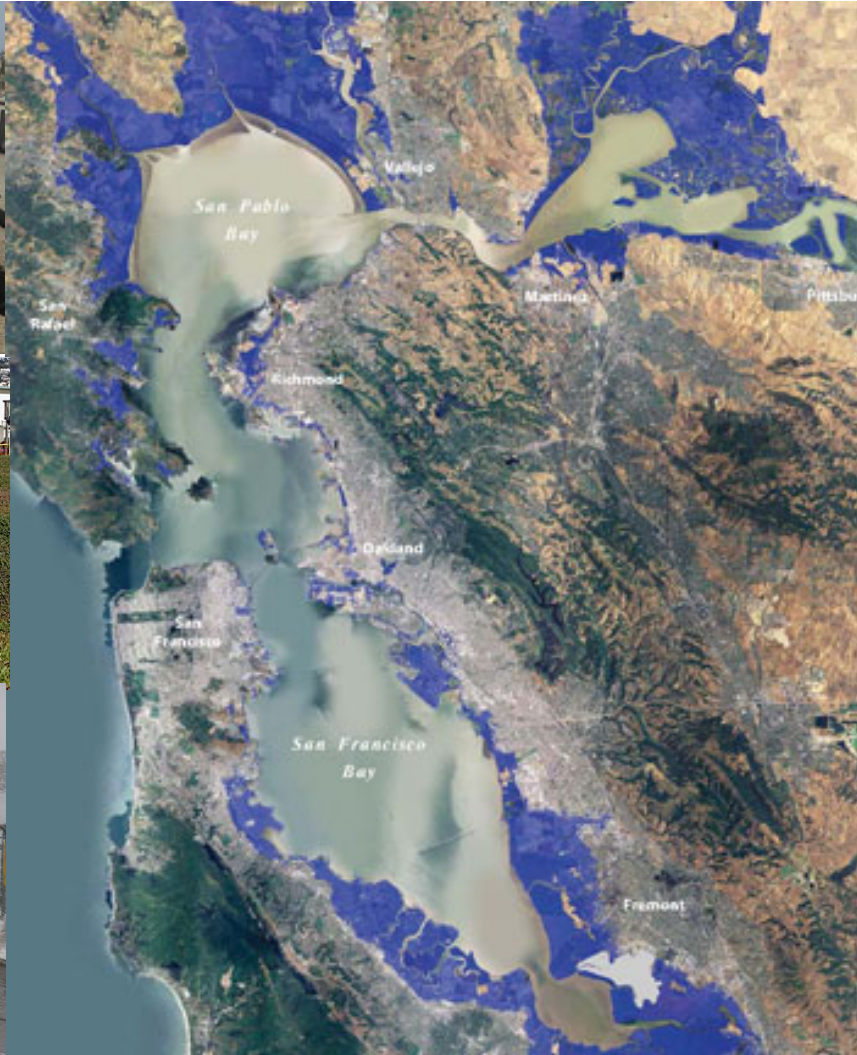


Taking Charge – Embracing Change

San Francisco Bay



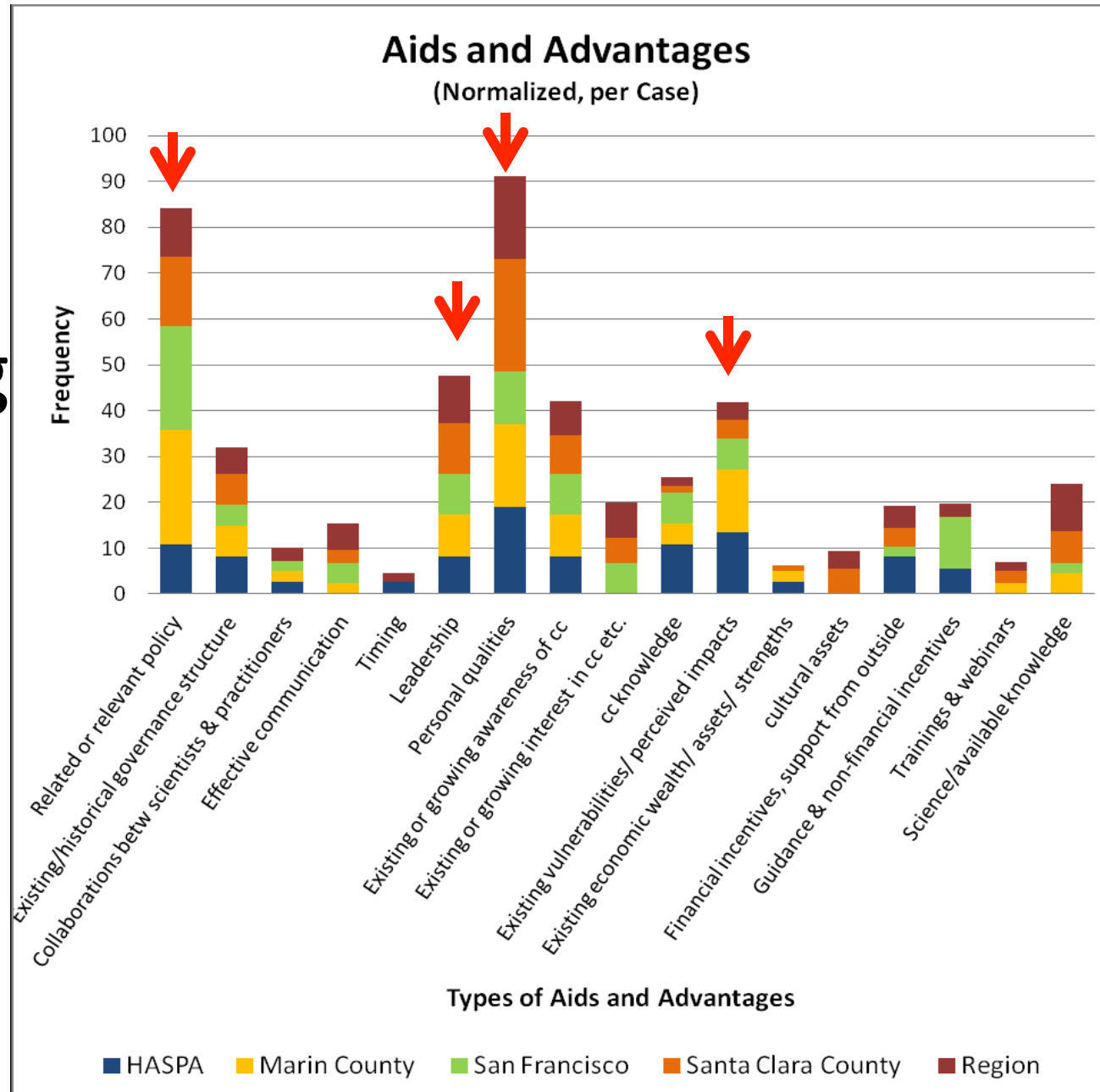
What Got Them Started?



But Really...



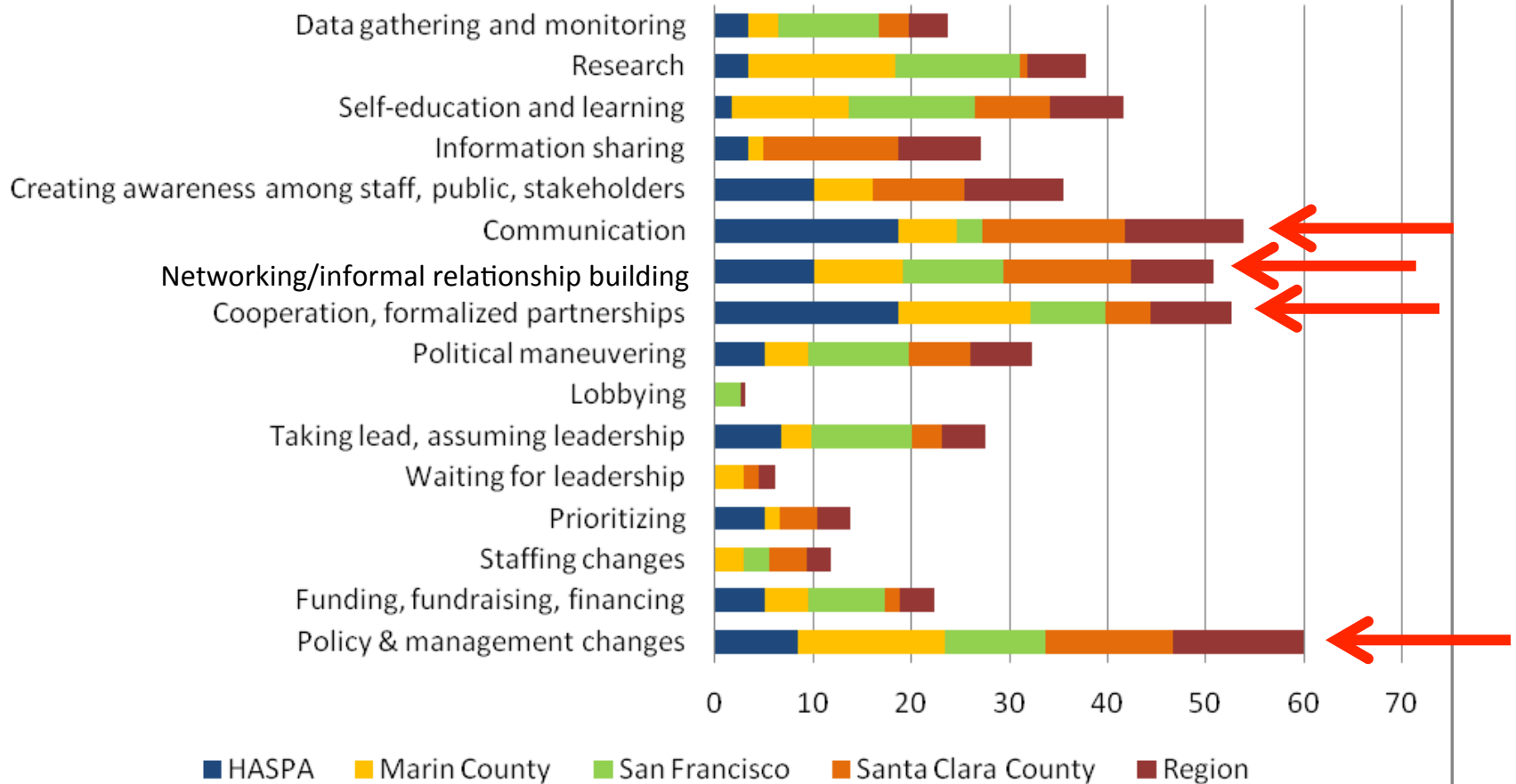
What Kept
Them Going?
What Helped
Avoid Getting
Stuck?



Source: Moser & Ekstrom (2012)

What Strategies They Used to Overcome Barriers

Strategies Used to Overcome Barriers
(normalized, per case study)



Source: Moser & Ekstrom (2012)



*Reaching People
Where They're at*

Audience Segmentation

- Yes, absolutely
 - Six Americas
 - Political/ideological spectrum
 - Gender
 - Race/ethnic background
- But don't forget to look at the person in front of you!



Three Common Challenges

- You get it – they still don't
- They get some of it – but nowhere near all
- They really get it – and they'd rather not



The Critical Importance of Framing It

Global Warming

When his ship first came to Australia, Cook wrote, the natives continued fishing, without looking up. Unable, it seems, to fear what was too large to be comprehended.



Jane Hirshfield
After (2006)

The Big 4...



*... then &
now*

What Difference Framing Makes

Some examples:

- The science is clear...
- Our health is at risk
- Protecting our way of life
- Unleashing the creativity of free enterprise to meet America's energy needs
- An ounce of preparedness is worth a pound of avoided loss and distress
- Precaution: Money-saving insurance when the future is uncertain
- Building climate-resilient communities: Prevent, prepare, respond, recover



More Framing Examples

- Pioneers: Facing the future with a Western spirit
- Responsibility: Each of us doing our part (or: it's irresponsible not to think ahead)
- We are the stewards of God's creation and our neighbors' keeper.
- Investing in clean technologies means creating opportunities now and for the future
- A time-tested American tradition: Leaving a better future for our children

Do We Have to Talk About “Climate Change”?



Finding the Right Messenger

The story of the hairdressers



What qualities make for a good messenger?

- Trusted
- Chatty/extroverted
- Popular
- Well connected (with the target audience)
- “PLU”
- Congruent with the frame
- Surprising source
- ...

Communicating Uncertainty

Do's

- Lead with certainty and confident knowledge
- Translate scientific jargon into “common” uncertainty language
 - Odds (9 out of 10) and %, but not pdf, cdf
 - Use metaphors, comparisons with everyday experiences
- Explain sources of uncertainty
- Put climate uncertainty in context of other uncertain issues

Don'ts

- Don't start out with all the things we don't know yet
- Don't hide and acknowledge what is less certain
- Don't ever oversell certainty (in words or graphics)
- Don't assume people mean the same as you do by qualitative uncertainty language (e.g., un/likely)

Dealing with Contrarians

- **Don'ts:**

- No name-calling
- No shouting match
- No arguing (tit for tat)

- **Dos:**

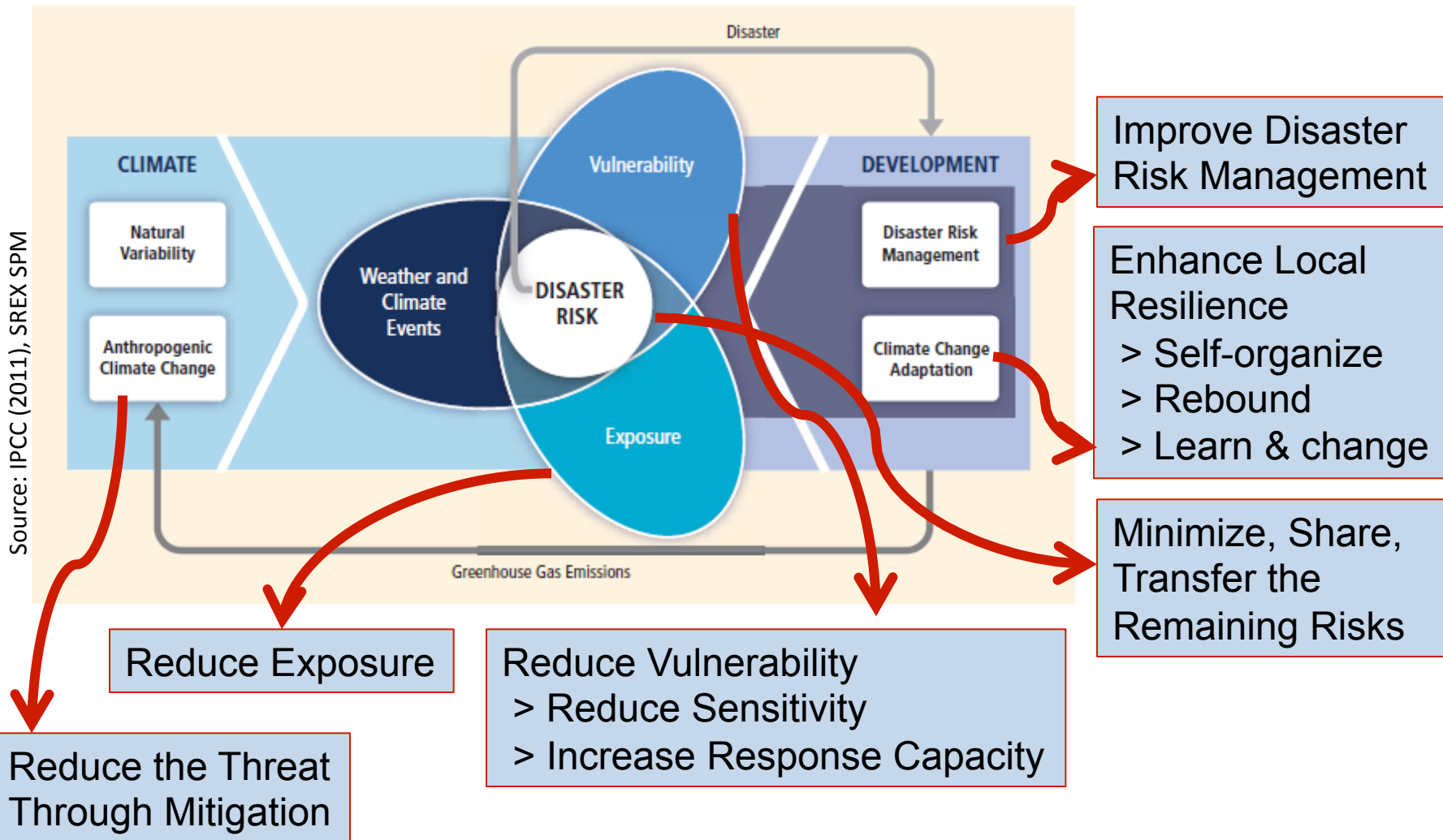
- Correct the worst mistakes and misstatements but don't get in a tit-for-tat; get back to people with answers if you don't know it
- Expose the argument for what it is: not over science but values
- De-escalate, de-polarize, affirm the other's sense of self
- Proactively frame the issue or reframe the debate, rather than argue within the contrarian frame





Stories of Success

Goals of Adaptation to Climate Impacts and Related Extreme Events



Failure-to-Success Continuum

- **Maladaptation**
 - Responses that worsen the situation or transfer the challenge from one area, sector or social group to another (see Barnett & O'Neill 2011, 2012)
- **Inadequate response**
 - Responses that only partially address the causes or symptoms of degradation, situation continues to worsen, maybe more gradually
- **Stabilization of a degrading situation**
 - Responses that halt negative trends or compensate for increasing stresses
- **Repair and recovery**
 - Responses that ameliorate the situation despite multiple stresses
- **Building something better**
 - Responses that create a new and better situation altogether

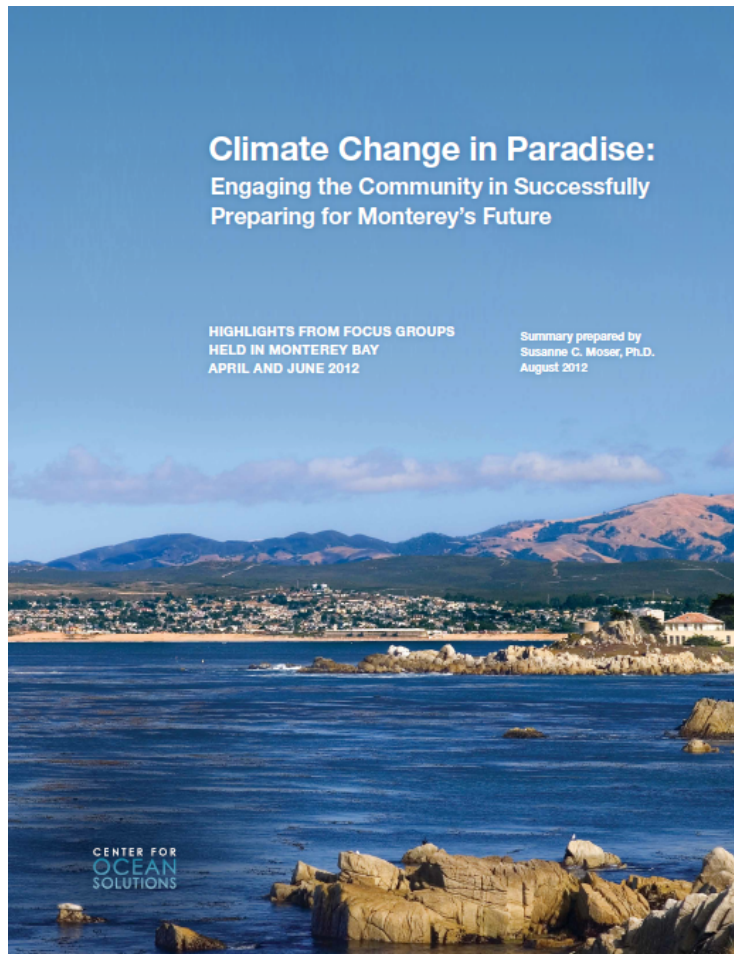


Expectations of “Success”

- Not much empirical evidence
- Some early indications of what we want from managing change:
 - Something better than what we have
 - Suggests people hope for panaceas, magic bullets
 - The same as what we have
 - Reflects people’s risk aversion, unwillingness to consider losses
 - Tolerance of livable range of conditions
 - Reflects historical experience with “coping range”, humans’ substantial (psychological) adaptive capacity and ingenuity



Importance of Involving Community in Visioning a Desirable Future



- People's connection to place, land is crucial
- Language of adaptation is not inspiring
- People have complex views of present, future
- Problems without solutions are terrifying
- They want leaders to step up and meaningful engagement



*Engagement &
Empowerment:
Creating
Our Future*

Engaging the Public inTheir Own Future

Much the same – with a twist

- Most management issues not new, just bigger
- It's hard to get people to come
- Everyone needs to be at the table
- Same interest groups likely to care
- Some “sacred cows” will need to be addressed
 - Private property rights
 - Development and growth
 - Responsibilities and risk sharing between public and private parties
- Impacts on lives, livelihoods, communities



Why People Don't Engage Even If They Have a Stake in the Issue

Why do people not engage?

- Distrust in sponsoring agency or leaders
- Skepticism of process
- Lack of opportunity to really make a difference
- Disappointing past experience
- Dislike, distrust of, conflict among participants
- Perceived lack of involvement of key players
- Lack of time and/or financial resources to participate effectively
- Lack of mandate to participate
- Lack of understanding of issue
- Perceived or real lack of expertise
- Lack of interest in issue or process
- History of social relations
- Shyness to engage in public



Empowerment – What Does It Mean?

- Attaining the power to make choices
- A form of emancipatory change
- Growing or gaining the capacity to not just make different choices but affect the outcome
- What kind of power?
 - Power over (influence, coerce)
 - Power to (enabled, increased capacity)
 - Power with (solidarity, strength in numbers)
 - Power from within (confidence, self-esteem)



What Empowers?

- Solutions
- Intrinsic motivations
- Practical help, skills, confidence, intentions
- Sense of competency
- Sense of the collective
- Public commitments
- Visibility for leadership, accomplishment



Going for the Deep

The sources of our deepest motivation:

- **Autonomy**
 - Self-direction, freedom to do it your way, do what you really want to do
- **Mastery**
 - Urge to excel (or get better) at something
- **Purpose**
 - Need for meaning

Why Dialogue?



- Mass /one-way communication is not enough, often detrimental (reinforcing old beliefs)
- Need for social support
- Need for safe forums for deeper social engagement, ongoing dialogue, and social accountability
- Deliberation and dialogue help overcome differences, build trust, increase openness to different opinions & risk information

One Recipe...



- Start with the positive
- Make it visual
- Make it tangible
- Make it desirable
- No figures and dates
- Include real people
- Reflect common values and needs; big picture goal

- Show the alternative
- Choice is now, not later
- Link the problem and the solutions
- Make the threat personally relevant

- Short list of big actions
- Link individual actions to collective effort
- Specify actions now, in five years, etc.
- How it can get done
- How people will be involved along the way
- Show how it's fair, no room for cheaters

- Give everyone something to do
- Provide details (how much/how many, when, how, cost, etc.)
- Personal payback – what's in it for me
- Practical advice/help
- Ask for commitment

Engagement Outcomes?

- People able to recreate their lives
- Community cohesion
- Continued or renewed connection to the land
- Continued and new productive livelihoods
- Civically and politically engaged people
- People's mental and physical health and well-being



Summary: Come As a Friendly Communicator

(The communicator as friend...)

- Validate your audience
- Affirm their sense of self
- Appreciate past accomplishments
- Speak to what they care about, treasure, value, aspire to, who they are and want to be
- Sympathize with their struggles, concerns, or worries
- Connect climate action to something they already do or can do
- Tap into their curiosity/interests
- Don't leave without giving people hope, sense of "can-do-(together)"

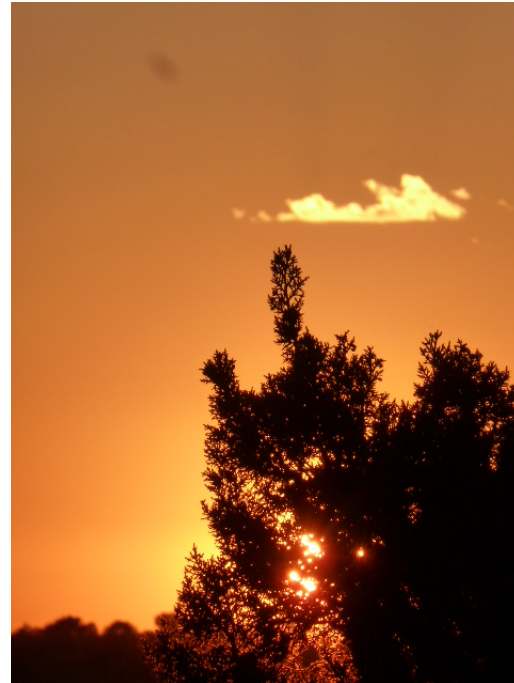


See: Cultural Cognition Project
www.culturalcognition.net

Thank you!

Susi Moser, Ph.D.

Stanford University and
Susanne Moser Research & Consulting
Web: www.susannemoser.com





Stories of Loss – *Stories of Change*

(from prediction to experience)

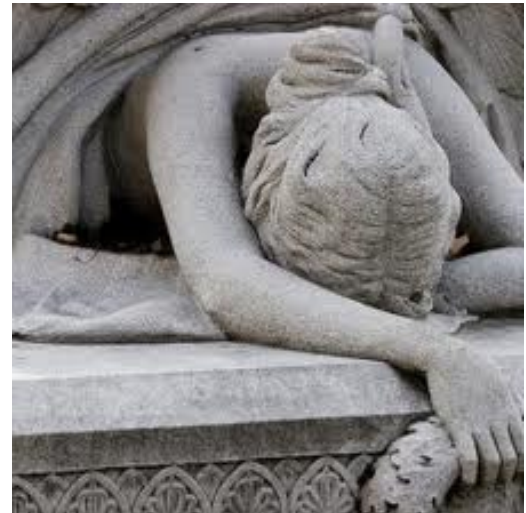
Meeting the Psychological & Social Demands of Communities in Distress

- **The bravest thing: facing the truth**
- Grief work
- Framing this time: a transition
- Growing the capacity to be with people in distress



Meeting the psychological & social demands of communities in distress

- The bravest thing: facing the truth
- **Grief work**
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You Wouldn't Think the Brits Do Grief

- But....



- “Carbon conversations”

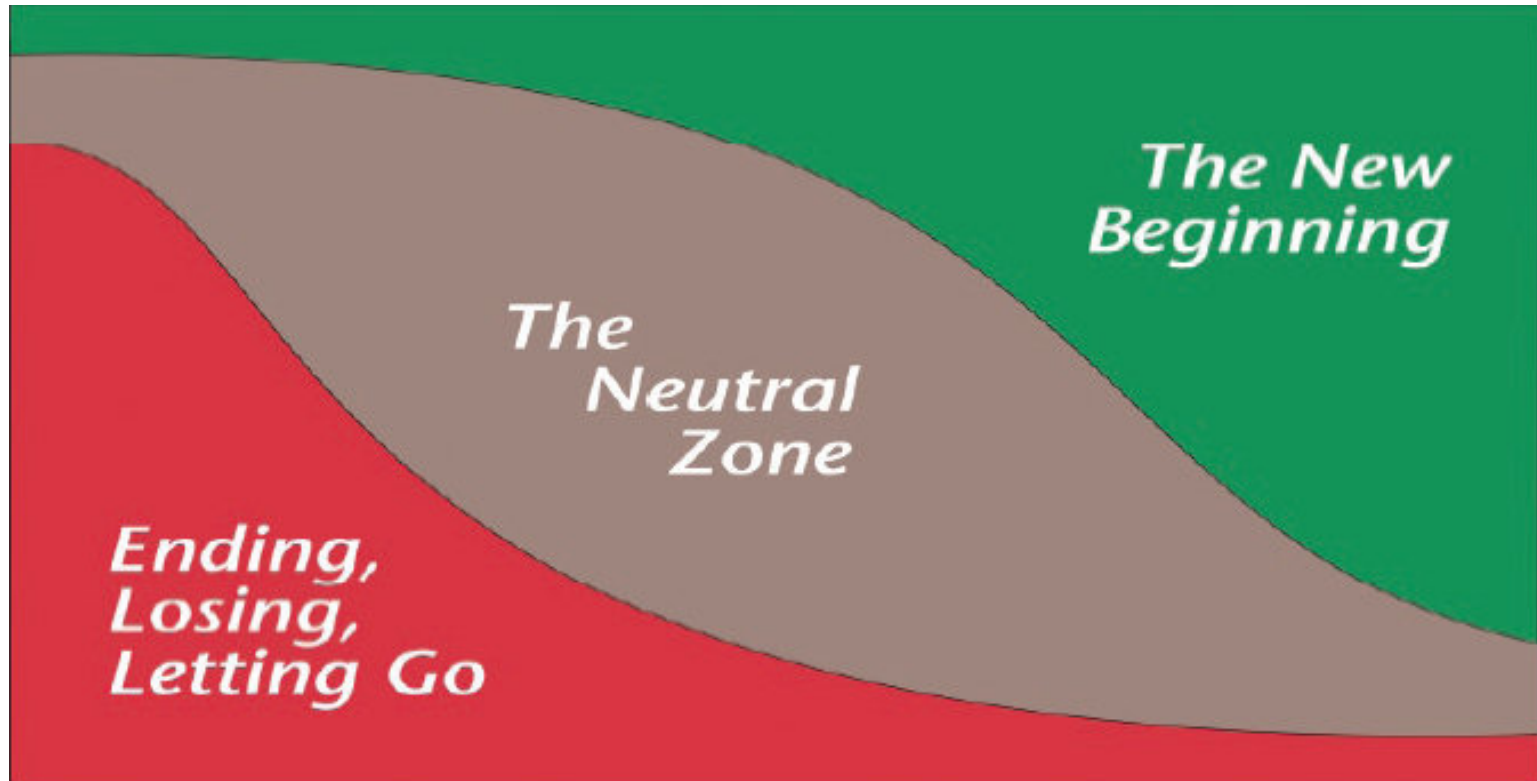


Meeting the Psychological & Social Demands of Communities in Distress

- The bravest thing: facing the truth
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- **Framing this time: a transition**
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The Human Geography of Transition



Adapted from Bridges (2004)

Meeting the Psychological & Social Demands of Communities in Distress

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- Framing this time: a transition
- **Growing the capacity to be with people in distress**

