

## Risk Communication & Public Involvement

Captain Alvin Chun, USPHS (Ret.)  
Trainer & Consultant  
riskcom1@yahoo.com

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## Workshop Objectives

- Provide insights and tools
- To make your experience enjoyable

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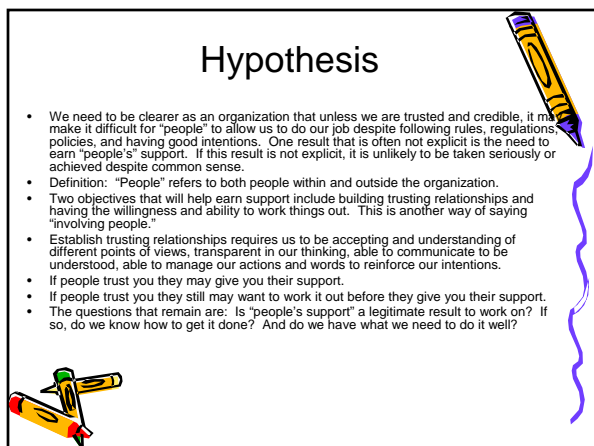
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## Hypothesis

- We need to be clearer as an organization that unless we are trusted and credible, it may make it difficult for "people" to allow us to do our job despite following rules, regulations, policies, and having good intentions. One result that is often not explicit is the need to earn "people's" support. If this result is not explicit, it is unlikely to be taken seriously or achieved despite common sense.
- Definition: "People" refers to both people within and outside the organization.
- Two objectives that will help earn support include building trusting relationships and having the willingness and ability to work things out. This is another way of saying "involving people."
- Establish trusting relationships requires us to be accepting and understanding of different points of views, transparent in our thinking, able to communicate to be understood, able to manage our actions and words to reinforce our intentions.
- If people trust you they may give you their support.
- If people trust you they still may want to work it out before they give you their support.
- The questions that remain are: Is "people's support" a legitimate result to work on? If so, do we know how to get it done? And do we have what we need to do it well?

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## DESIRED RESULTS?

- TRUST ?
- RELATIONSHIP ?
- SATISFACTION ?
- ASSURANCE ?
- RESPECT?


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## Traditional Results

- Number of Teaching Plans Prepared
- Number of Classes Taught
- Number of Students Passed
- Number of Permits Renewed
- Number of CEU Completed
- Number of .....


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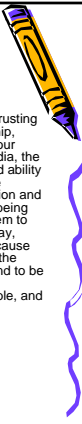

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## Hypothesis

- You are in a very powerful and influential position if you can maintain a trusting relationship with people. When you do something to harm the relationship, people can disengage and seek others who will listen to them such as your Dean, your Principal, the School Administrator, the Mayor, the news media, the PTA, or other concerned parents. Then you have lost your influence and ability to negotiate ... this is a loss of "power." The consequences can be quite devastating to all your good work, the reputation of your entire organization and yourself. When people are frightened and upset they can view risks as being higher than if they were more calm. This may be enough to motivate them to act accordingly. It is possible that when enough people feel the same way, they can effectively change a decision despite all your careful work. Because of the potential power that people have, they may be more deserving of the title, "Boss." If you see people as potential bosses, your attitudes will tend to be more respectful, open, and flexible. If you don't see people as potential bosses, your attitudes will be less respectful, less open and more inflexible, and create perceptions of high risks.


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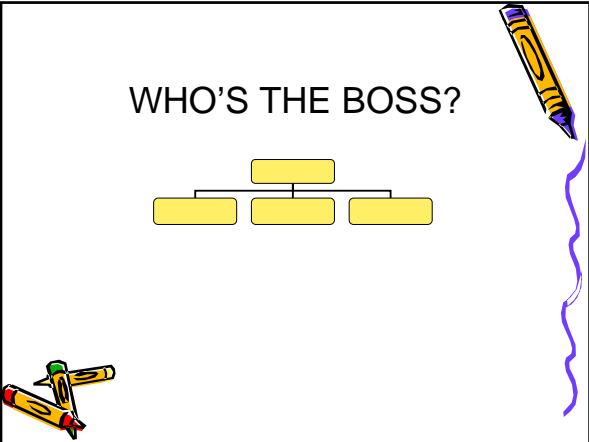
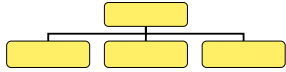
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## WHO'S THE BOSS?



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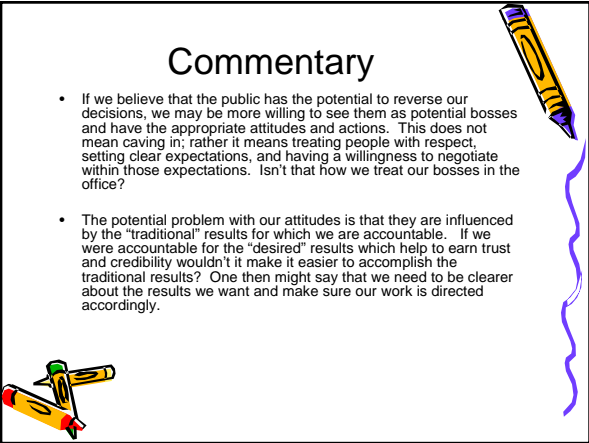
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## Commentary

- If we believe that the public has the potential to reverse our decisions, we may be more willing to see them as potential bosses and have the appropriate attitudes and actions. This does not mean caving in; rather it means treating people with respect, setting clear expectations, and having a willingness to negotiate within those expectations. Isn't that how we treat our bosses in the office?
- The potential problem with our attitudes is that they are influenced by the "traditional" results for which we are accountable. If we were accountable for the "desired" results which help to earn trust and credibility wouldn't it make it easier to accomplish the traditional results? One then might say that we need to be clearer about the results we want and make sure our work is directed accordingly.



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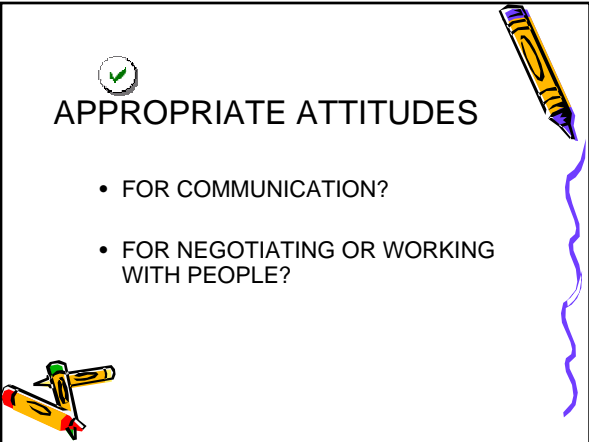
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## APPROPRIATE ATTITUDES

- FOR COMMUNICATION?
- FOR NEGOTIATING OR WORKING WITH PEOPLE?



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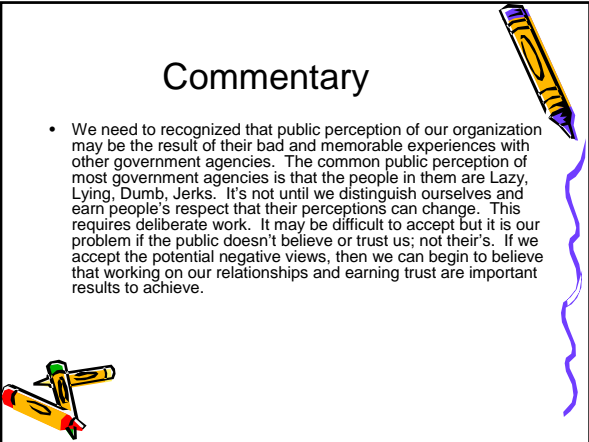
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## Commentary

- We need to recognize that public perception of our organization may be the result of their bad and memorable experiences with other government agencies. The common public perception of most government agencies is that the people in them are Lazy, Lying, Dumb, Jerks. It's not until we distinguish ourselves and earn people's respect that their perceptions can change. This requires deliberate work. It may be difficult to accept but it is our problem if the public doesn't believe or trust us; not their's. If we accept the potential negative views, then we can begin to believe that working on our relationships and earning trust are important results to achieve.




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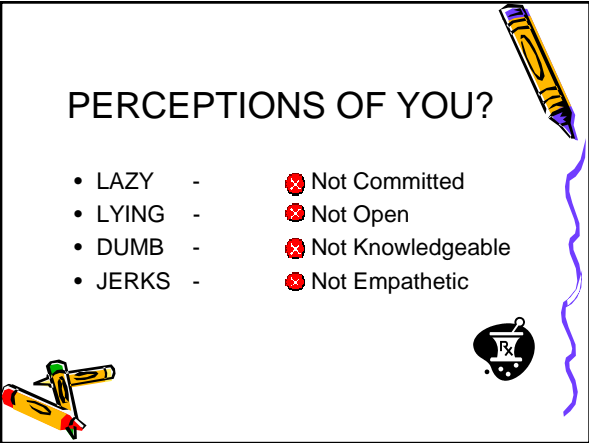
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## PERCEPTIONS OF YOU?

• LAZY	-	⊗ Not Committed
• LYING	-	⊗ Not Open
• DUMB	-	⊗ Not Knowledgeable
• JERKS	-	⊗ Not Empathetic




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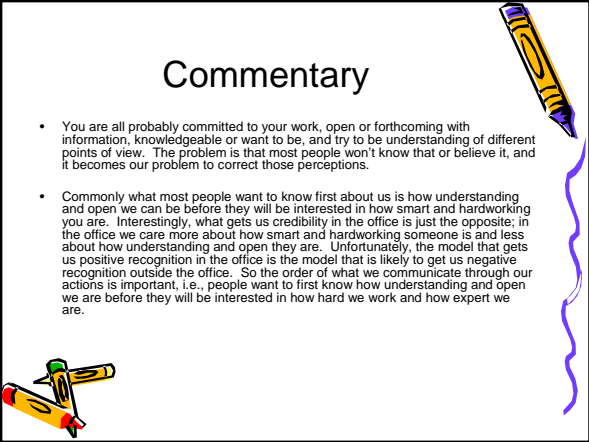
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## Commentary

- You are all probably committed to your work, open or forthcoming with information, knowledgeable or want to be, and try to be understanding of different points of view. The problem is that most people won't know that or believe it, and it becomes our problem to correct those perceptions.
- Commonly what most people want to know first about us is how understanding and open we can be before they will be interested in how smart and hardworking you are. Interestingly, what gets us credibility in the office is just the opposite; in the office we care more about how smart and hardworking someone is and less about how understanding and open they are. Unfortunately, the model that gets us positive recognition in the office is the model that is likely to get us negative recognition outside the office. So the order of what we communicate through our actions is important, i.e., people want to first know how understanding and open we are before they will be interested in how hard we work and how expert we are.




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## PERCEPTIONS OF YOU?

- **COMMITTED**  - **Hard Working**
- **OPEN**  - **Transparent**
- **KNOWLEDGEABLE** - **Smart** 
- **EMPATHETIC**  - **Understanding**



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## Commentary

- If we understand the potential losses people may be experiencing, we may be more willing to accept their behaviors. If we also believe that people may be very influential (i.e., bosses), that may give us the attitude to respect and listen first rather than to explain or be defensive. When people experience or think they will be experiencing losses, they often go through a grieving process. If we accept that, then we may be more willing to adjust our behavior and not take their anger too personally. This will serve our interest in establishing trusting relationships.



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## TYPES OF LOSSES

- Trust
- Health
- Environment
- Life
- Fairness
- Control
- Money
- Property Value
- Job
- Quality of Life
- Peace of Mind
- Credibility



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## Commentary

- There are typically five stages of grief and people go through them in a non linear fashion, e.g., when people get depressed they may go back to anger or denial.
- We can either help people get through their grief or make it more difficult, e.g., when people are angry it helps to hear them out and not interrupt them when they are talking or lashing out. Traditionally and with good intentions, we often treat people's anger with information believing that if they only understood what we do, they wouldn't be angry. When people are angry they usually want to be heard first because it is a way of acknowledging their feelings (see the Crisis Communication Slide) which will help to lessen their anger. Understanding people's anger by actively and sincerely listening, will give you some insight into the problems as they view them. This is valuable since it will give you a handle on "the problem" from their perspective, and allow you to address it if possible. Until people believe you understand or respect their problem, they may continue to be angry and frustrated. Think about how you treat your boss when they are angry, or how you treat a loved one when they are experiencing a loss and are angry. Your positive experiences with concerned bosses and loved ones can serve as models for risk communication.



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## GRIEF PROCESS

- Denial
- Anger 
- Discussion/Negotiation
- Depression
- Acceptance



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## Response To Anger

-  Allow and Respect It 
-  Don't Interrupt
-  Understand What It's About
-  Acknowledge What You Understand
-  Ask For Permission to Respond



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## Commentary

- When people are angry or scared, they may feel like they are in a crisis. In handling a crisis effectively, it's important to have a good reputation or relationship so that people will listen to you. When a good relationship or reputation hasn't been established, it will be important to acknowledge people's concerns, share with them what you know, don't know, how you feel and what you are doing or plan on doing; this is being open or transparent. The more information you share gives people greater control and confidence. It is a way of involving people so that they will be less likely to let their imagination run wild. Lastly, it will be important to provide people with additional control such as options on actions which they can take, or negotiate with them on things they can do, e.g., providing a contact person to speak with, or giving them precautions to take, or danger signs to watch for. You can intensify a crisis by doing the opposite, i.e., disregard and ignore their concerns, keep them in the dark, and provide no way they can access help or help themselves.



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## CRISIS COMMUNICATION

1. BUILD TRUSTING RELATIONSHIPS
2. ACKNOWLEDGE PEOPLE'S VIEWS
3. GIVE "FACTS" AND MANAGE EXPECTATIONS
4. NEGOTIATE SOLUTIONS OR GIVE OPTIONS



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## Bringing Out the Best in People

1. BUILD TRUSTING RELATIONSHIPS
2. ACKNOWLEDGE PEOPLE'S VIEWS
3. GIVE "FACTS" & MANAGE EXPECTATIONS
4. NEGOTIATE SOLUTIONS OR GIVE OPTIONS



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## Leading Effectively

1. BUILD TRUSTING RELATIONSHIPS
2. ACKNOWLEDGE PEOPLE'S VIEWS
3. GIVE "FACTS" & MANAGE EXPECTATIONAS
4. NEGOTIATE SOLUTIONS OR GIVE OPTIONS



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## Commentary

- Not Traditional Risks -
- If our reputation is bad or unknown we may by default be communicating high risk and it will be necessary to devote work to regaining trust and credibility.
- If our attitudes are disrespectful, our actions will reflect it and the perception we present to people is one of high risk and that we are doing things that are unacceptable.
- Unless our words match our actions, actions will speak louder and the inconsistency will likely be read as high risk.
- Our inactions and silence may be perceived as high risk if we don't explain them.



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## RISK COMMUNICATION IS CONVEYED THROUGH

- Our Reputation
- Our Attitudes & Actions
- Our Words
- Our Inactions
- Our Silence



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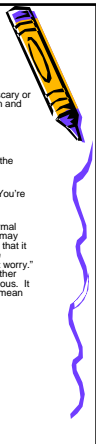

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## Commentary

- If we don't communicate sincerely, and in a way people can understand, it may be assumed to be scary or high risk. For complex scientific information, it will be important to set a goal for any communication and gear it to the audience's language, concerns, and needs.
- If it isn't perceived to be sincere and understandable, it will also be viewed as high risk.
- If we talk about things that people aren't interested in, we will appear to be out of touch or avoiding the issue; this will likely generate perceptions and feelings of high risk.
- Example: The risk of you dying from using that pesticide is  $7 \times 10^7$  if we assume the worst case. You're more likely to be hit by lightning (Didn't you know?!). So don't worry (What's the big deal?!).
- The example is trying to communicate that the pesticide is safe but it is not understandable to a normal intelligent citizen because it's not in their language. When it is jargony and not understood, people may assume it's bad especially when the words "risk", " $7 \times 10^7$ ", "assume" and "worst case", all suggest that it is bad. The comparison to lightning may be taken as an insult and people usually don't want to be insulted. Nor do they want to be patronized when their concerns are shrugged off by saying, "Don't worry." As a whole this message can suggest just the opposite of what you had intended. People would rather have you say it more directly because that is usually what they want, e.g., All pesticides are dangerous. It is safe to use this pesticide if you follow the instructions. We know this because ..... What we mean by safe is: ..... Does that address your concern or should we have more of a discussion?


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## EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

- Sincere
- Clear
- Perceived to be Sincere & Clear
- Wanted





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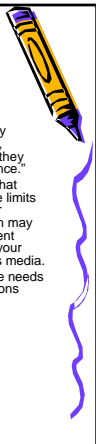

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## Commentary

- To plan strategically, it will be important to get a broad view of who the likely stakeholders are or could be, their particular interests, concerns, questions, possible demands, and their views of you, and based on those views what they expect you will do. This is a more specific way of saying "know your audience."
- Based on that important information, you can then set practical objectives that need to be addressed to get you the results you want. Of course, you have limits on what you can do so understanding the audience will help you direct your resources and activities to the most important actions first. This information may also be used to justify additional resources to help maintain your engagement rather than losing control and have it redirected to higher levels or outside your organization, e.g., to the head of your dept., to elected officials, to the news media.
- Given the objectives you have set, and considering the stakeholders unique needs and perspectives, you will be in a position to decide on the appropriate actions needed to get the results you have in mind.


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## Communicating Complex Science

- AUDIENCES – Who, Concerns, Interests, Questions, Demands, Perceptions, Expectations?
- OBJECTIVES – What Results Do You Want?
- HOW BEST TO ACCOMPLISH - GIVEN WHAT YOU KNOW ABOUT THE AUDIENCE? – Your Next Steps: Who, What, When, Where, How?



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## Knowing Your Audience

- Who is your target audience?
- What are their concerns regarding your project and things related to it?
- What is their interest in the project?
- What questions will they have?
- What demands will they have?
- What are their perceptions of the project?
- What are their perceptions of you?
- What will they expect from you?



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## Commentary

- Your understanding of your audience will help determine the type of communication and actions that will meet and exceed their expectations. Knowing such things as the audience's interests, concerns, questions, and demands, are some examples which will help you decide what needs to be done.



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Don't Know Your Audience?

- What To Do?

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Deciding on Your Goal

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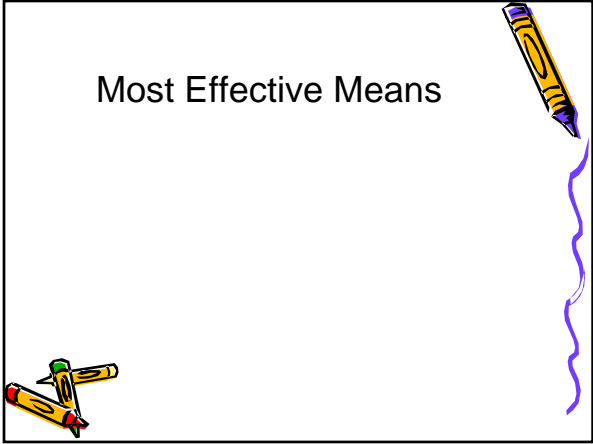
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Most Effective Means

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## STRATEGIC PLANNING

- AUDIENCES – Who, Concerns, Interests, Questions, Demands, Perceptions, Expectations?
- OBJECTIVES –The Results?
- HOW BEST TO ACCOMPLISH - GIVEN WHAT WE KNOW? – The next steps?



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## Commentary

- Anticipating people's demands will allow you to find the limits of your organization's ability to meet those demands and allow you to set realistic expectations and manage them.
- It will make you look more knowledgeable and confident.
- It will help to minimize surprises and embarrassment for your organization.



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## DEMANDS?

- Satisfaction
- Assurance
- Control
- Respect
- Enforcement
- Intervention
- Resolution



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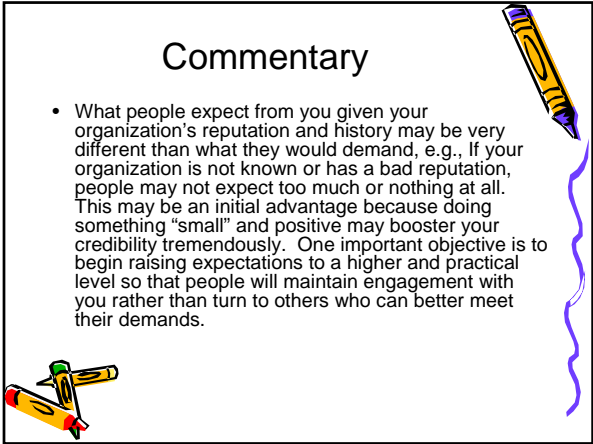
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## Commentary

- What people expect from you given your organization's reputation and history may be very different than what they would demand, e.g., If your organization is not known or has a bad reputation, people may not expect too much or nothing at all. This may be an initial advantage because doing something "small" and positive may booster your credibility tremendously. One important objective is to begin raising expectations to a higher and practical level so that people will maintain engagement with you rather than turn to others who can better meet their demands.



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## EXPECTATIONS?

- Keeping Secrets?
- Intervention?
- Resolution?
- Not Much?
- Same Old .... Same Old?



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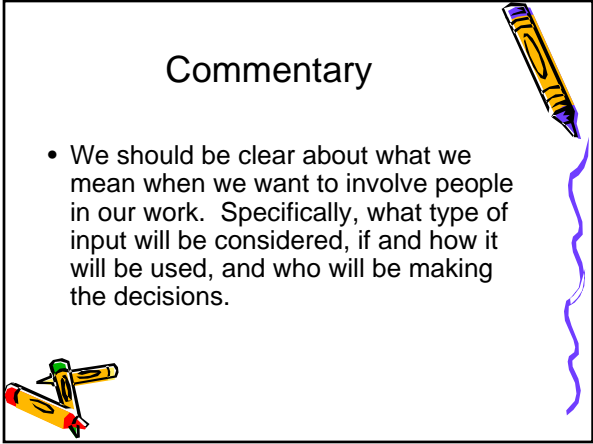
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## Commentary

- We should be clear about what we mean when we want to involve people in our work. Specifically, what type of input will be considered, if and how it will be used, and who will be making the decisions.



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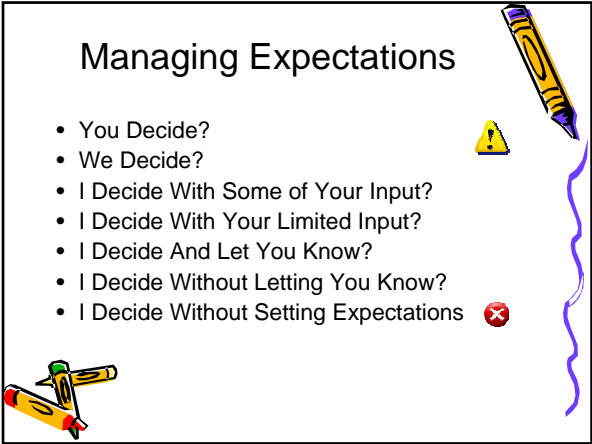
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## Managing Expectations

- You Decide?
- We Decide?
- I Decide With Some of Your Input?
- I Decide With Your Limited Input?
- I Decide And Let You Know?
- I Decide Without Letting You Know?
- I Decide Without Setting Expectations ❌



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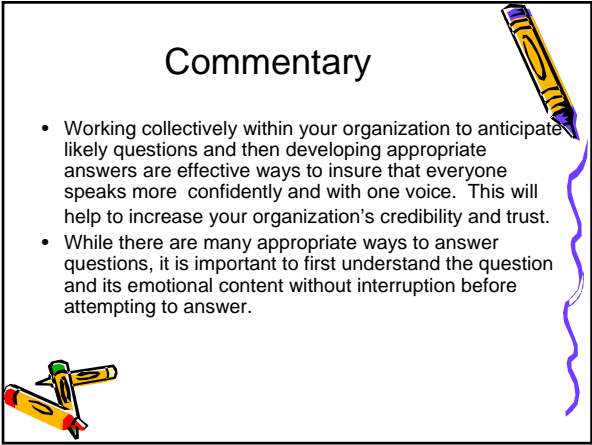
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## Commentary

- Working collectively within your organization to anticipate likely questions and then developing appropriate answers are effective ways to insure that everyone speaks more confidently and with one voice. This will help to increase your organization's credibility and trust.
- While there are many appropriate ways to answer questions, it is important to first understand the question and its emotional content without interruption before attempting to answer.



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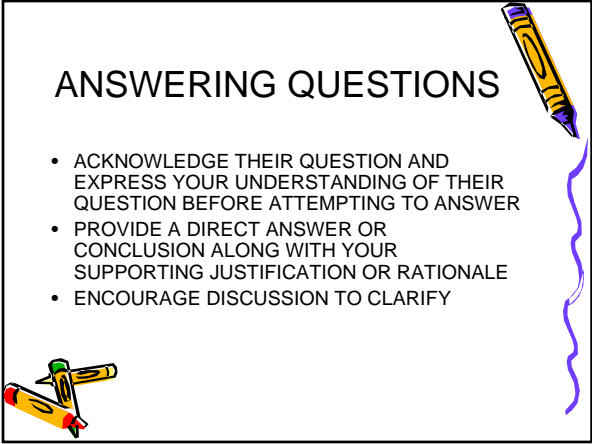
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## ANSWERING QUESTIONS

- ACKNOWLEDGE THEIR QUESTION AND EXPRESS YOUR UNDERSTANDING OF THEIR QUESTION BEFORE ATTEMPTING TO ANSWER
- PROVIDE A DIRECT ANSWER OR CONCLUSION ALONG WITH YOUR SUPPORTING JUSTIFICATION OR RATIONALE
- ENCOURAGE DISCUSSION TO CLARIFY



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## Commentary

- There are many ways to involve the public from informing them to having them be part of the decision making. The appropriate ways to involve people will depend on our objectives and constraints and their needs. While Public Meetings may be a requirement, it will be strategic to see if there are more appropriate means that help you achieve the results you want.



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## Examples of Public Involvement

- News Release 
- Flyers 
- 1-on-1 Meetings 
- Their Meetings 
- Open Houses 
- Public Meetings 
- Public Hearings 
- Public Events 
- Public Availability 



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## Commentary

- We need to understand and acknowledge the values and interests people have because it can relate to their definition of what is "safe."
- Our definition is usually limited to health, environment, and safety issues with some interests in other values which we may not have any control over.



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## What Is Safe?

- Health
- Security
- Wealth
- Peace of Mind
- Property
- Family

- Appearance
- Convenience
- Environment
- Predictability
- Business
- Quality of Life

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## Strategic Planning

- Stakeholder Audiences?
- Objectives?
- How to Best Achieve Each Objective?

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### Risk Communication & Public Involvement Workshop Key Topics & Suggested Reading

- I. Relationship and Trust Building
  - Teaching Method: Interactive Demonstration/Discussion/Relatable Experiences
  - Readings:
    - a. Emotional Intelligence: Why It Can Matter More Than IQ by Daniel Goleman, 1995
    - b. Primal Leadership: Learning to Lead with Emotional Intelligence by Daniel Goleman, 2002
    - c. Good to Great by Jim Collins, 2001
    - d. On and Off the Record: Collos on Negotiation by Thomas Colosi, 1993
    - e. One Small Step Can Change Your Life - The Kaisen Way by Robert Maurer
    - f. Principled Negotiated Leadership by Stephen Covey, 1992
- II. Attitude Formation ... Basis for Verbal and Non-Verbal Communication
  - Teaching Method: Interactive Demonstration/Discussion/Relatable Experiences
  - Readings:
    - a. The Magic of Conflict: Turning a Life of Work into a Work of Art by Thomas Crum, 1988
    - b. You Are The Message by Roger Ailes, 1995
    - c. Influence by Robert Cialdini, 1993
- III. Goal Setting ... To Assume/Persuade
  - Teaching Method: Interactive Demonstration/Discussion/Relatable Experiences
  - Readings:
    - a. One Small Step Can Change Your Life: The Kaisen Way by Robert Maurer
    - b. On and Off the Record - Collos on Negotiation by Thomas Colosi, 1993
- IV. Dealing with Fear, Anger, Conflicts
  - Teaching Method: Interactive Demonstration/Discussion/Video Case Studies/Relatable Experiences
  - Readings:
    - a. Getting to Yes: Negotiating Agreement Without Giving In by Roger Fisher, 1991
    - b. The Magic of Conflict: Turning a Life of Work into a Work of Art by Thomas Crum, 1988
    - c. On and Off the Record - Collos on Negotiation by Thomas Colosi, 1993
    - d. Critical Conversations: Tools for Talking When Stakes are High by Kerry Patterson, 2002
    - e. Leadership Effectiveness Training (L.E.T.): The Proven People Skills for Today's Leaders Tomorrow by Thomas Gordon, 2002
    - f. "Risk Communication with Grieving Communities" by Melissa Frucane,
    - g. Getting Pass No: Negotiating Your Way From Confrontation to Cooperation by William Ury, 1993

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