WEBINAR SERIES: ADVANCING COLLABORATIVE CLIMATE ACTION IN BRITISH COLUMBIA
SESSION TWO: Having the Climate Conversation – Getting the Message out and Inspiring Change
Because the people shouting have a story to tell and I want everyone to hear it.

Right now we have a tremendous amount of listening and learning to do. We must commit to supporting and standing alongside a community that needs to be heard – that must be heard.

We need to continue to take action against racism and educate ourselves so that when the voices of those shouting become tired we can shout for them.

#BlackLivesMatter
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SESSION TWO: Having the Climate Conversation – Getting the Message out and Inspiring Change
Ewa Jackson is a leader in the field of municipal climate adaptation and resilience. Ewa Jackson has worked with municipal governments for over 16 years in the fields of sustainability, public participation, and climate change.

Ewa’s particular field of interest is in the area of climate communications, and how effective and targeted communications can be used to move forward with the implementation of adaptive actions. She works with specialists in the field to keep officials at the forefront and responding to the advancements being made. She often speaks publicly on the state of adaptation planning across Canada and internationally.

Ewa lives in Toronto with her family in a small house, with a big dog.
Having the Climate Conversation: Getting your message out and inspiring change

Tuesday, June 2nd, 2020
In order to be engaged, it is not enough for people to know about climate change; they also need to care about it, be motivated, and able to take action they believe will be effective.

But how? That’s the nut we’re here to crack.
What barriers do we face in trying to do this?

Distance
Polarization
Identity
Fatalism
Doom
Denial
Efficacy
Dissonance

Adapted from Climate Access, 2017
- Seen as a global and distant problem
- Connect issue of global concern with a local picture
- Remember distance doesn’t have to be geographic
- Making climate change local and meaningful to individuals can break the distance barrier
• Can be an extremely polarizing and partisan issue
• Climate change threatens their sense of self or identity
• Identity can override knowledge
• Can help turn this around by using validation and invoking local patriotism
• Making actions simple – and in some cases unfelt by individuals
Too much doom tends to have the opposite effect, can lead to three effects:

- Habituate: People react less and less each time they hear the message.
- Avoidance: People switch the channel/put down the article when it is too dark.
- Stereotyping: People tend to pigeon hole the messenger as a “fearmonger”.

People tend to avoid and deny things that scare them.

To overcome can work to “sell the dream” not the consequences.
There is often a sense of there is nothing that I as an individual, my city, or my country can do.

Denying climate change as if there is a social contract to not speak about it.

Turn a vicious cycle into a virtuous one:
- Simple behavior (install a rain barrel)
- Attitudes (there is a water shortage)
- Public support (water conservation)
- Policies (water use restrictions)
• Conflict between knowledge and action
• Our brains recognize our “bad” behavior but we rationalize why we “have to” do something
  • It was only 50°C, I had to take the car
• At the same time, we project dissonance onto others for having the same behaviour
• This can be the hardest barrier to break – must get people to see that there is a better alternative

“The Stone Age didn’t end because there was a lack of stones”
Communicating climate change: Take Aways

You’re going to need to know your audience and make sure to **speak their language**.

Climate communication is **not about winning debates**, but building relationships.

People are not motivated by a global, abstract, intellectual issue, but they are motivated by issues that resonate emotionally and locally.

But... **remember**... no magic bullets, only some rules of thumb.
• Understanding your audience’s perception of climate change is essential for effective communication.

• Know your audience and make sure you are speaking their language – each audience will interpret images, diagrams, and maps based on their own perspectives.

• Take an issue that may be of concern to your audience and present it as something over which they may have influence.

• Find credible messengers, who speak the language of your audience and share their values (Who is communicating?)
Communicate differently

- Don’t assume that the same old thing will yield different results
  - Door hangers and tax bill inserts will only get you so far
- Think about the frames you are applying and which communications methods would be most appropriate
  - If you want to talk people about vehicle electrification consider having an event with test drives of different types of EVs – compact, mid-size and family – so that all types of users could see themselves within the vehicles

*INSANITY: DOING THE SAME THING OVER AND OVER AGAIN, AND EXPECTING DIFFERENT RESULTS.*
Communicate differently: beyond brochures
Get professional help

• Competition for air time - with many messages flying at one person
• Figure out your communication needs and consider what you can do and what you need support with
• Then invest in getting support from professional communicators
Engage trusted voices

• Find credible messengers, don’t be afraid of possibly unconventional allies
  • People with lived or relatable experiences
  • People who share values or language
  • People who can overcome mis-trust or disenchantment
Release of the 3rd US National Climate Assessment

“Weather from the White House”
Meet people where they are – The Art of Change

- Partnership between UNBC & Two Rivers Gallery
- Activism, advocacy, engagement, research
- Co-curated exhibition

4000+ visitors
279 nudges
what can you do? (185)
what can they do? (94)

(Meletis, Z. & Groulx, M., UNBC, 2017)
Art as “in-reach”

THINK CHANGE
What Can You Do?

(Meletis, Z. & Groulx, M., UNBC, 2017)
Without reducing emissions, at least 3 feet of sea level rise is likely during the second half of the century.
Communicate publicly: wayfinding
We-Act Environmental Justice: Harlem Heat Project

- 12+ We-Act members monitored heat in apartments with/without AC
- Community stories shared on WNYC
- Felt experience – turned data into a sound score

Adapted from Climate Access, 2019
Communicate publicly: viewfinding
Communicate publicly: viewfinding
Communicate solutions: not just impacts

4. Climate change is bad
   (How worried are you about global warming?)

5. There are smart ways to fix global warming
   (Fund more research into renewable energy sources, such as solar and wind power)

http://climatecommunication.yale.edu/visualizations-data/ycom-us-2016/

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Consider a variety of communication methods:

- Advertisements (tv, radio, movies)
- Apps and other digital activities
- Art installations
- Brochures and handouts
- Celebrity endorsers
- Community events and networking
- Contests and other incentives
- Curriculum and programming
- Design, mascots, iconography
- Editorials and opinion columns
- Government documents and publications
- Infographics
- Lunch’n’Learns
- Mapping (formal and community based)
- Marketing products and swag
- Newsletters
- Open houses
- Press releases
- Public art
- Signage and wayfinding
- Small-scale pilots and demonstrations
- Social media blitzes
- Tours and demonstrations
- Videos
- Website updates and microsites
- Youth or neighbourhood ambassadors
Five rules of thumb for communicating climate change

#1: Know your audience so that you can target your messages to them

#2: Be aware of how peoples’ values shape their beliefs on climate change and frame your message accordingly

#3: Engage trusted voices to help with your communications and outreach efforts

#4: Emphasize the power and practicality of local climate solutions, especially community preparedness

#5: Address climate science in simple, compelling ways, and stress the certainties of what we know and what we can do
Having the Climate Conversation

- Designed to help communicate climate change
- Though it has no “magic bullet” solutions, it offers strategies to best inform and engage communities
- http://www.icleicanada.org/resources
• Case studies throughout to illustrate best practices
• Spotlights on what communities have done in the field of climate communications
• Take home messages summarize the key findings of each chapter
Reach out to share your examples of great climate communications!

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