

Risk Communication:

Strategies for Responding to Public Concern Associated with Biocontainment Laboratories

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Animal Production and Protection: Challenges, Risks, and Best Practices



What is risk communication?

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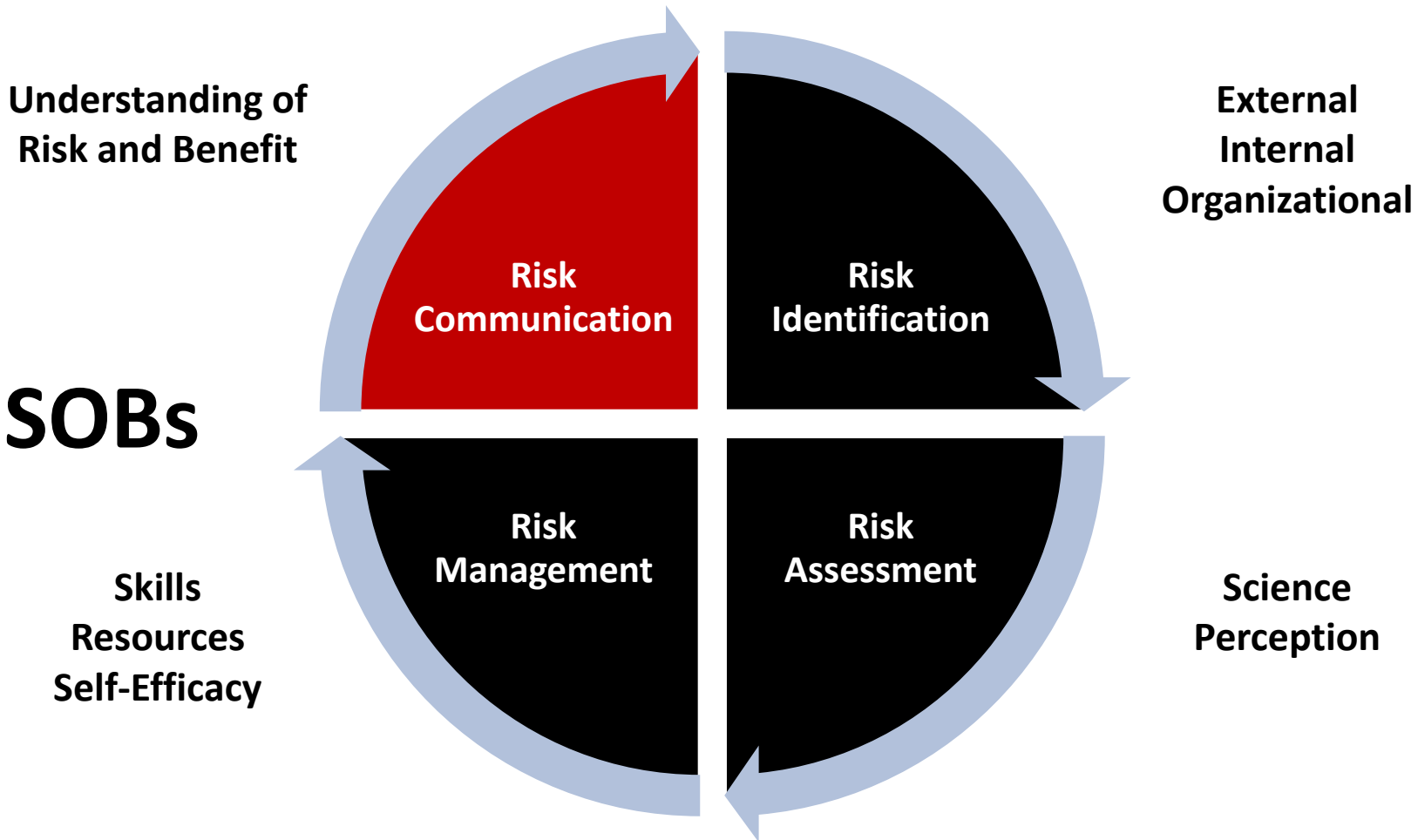
**Much, much more than
communicating about a risk.**

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Stages of Risk Mitigation @ Workforce Level



Risk communication as a strategy.

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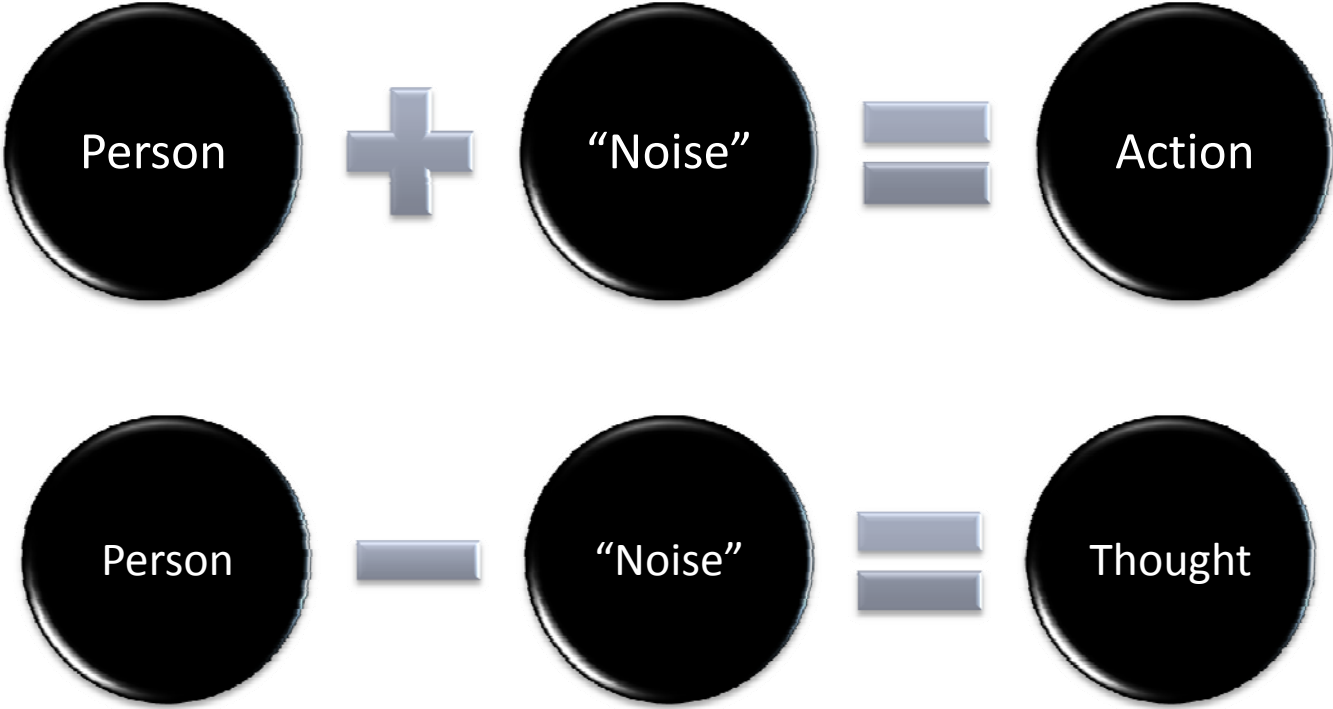


strat-e-gy

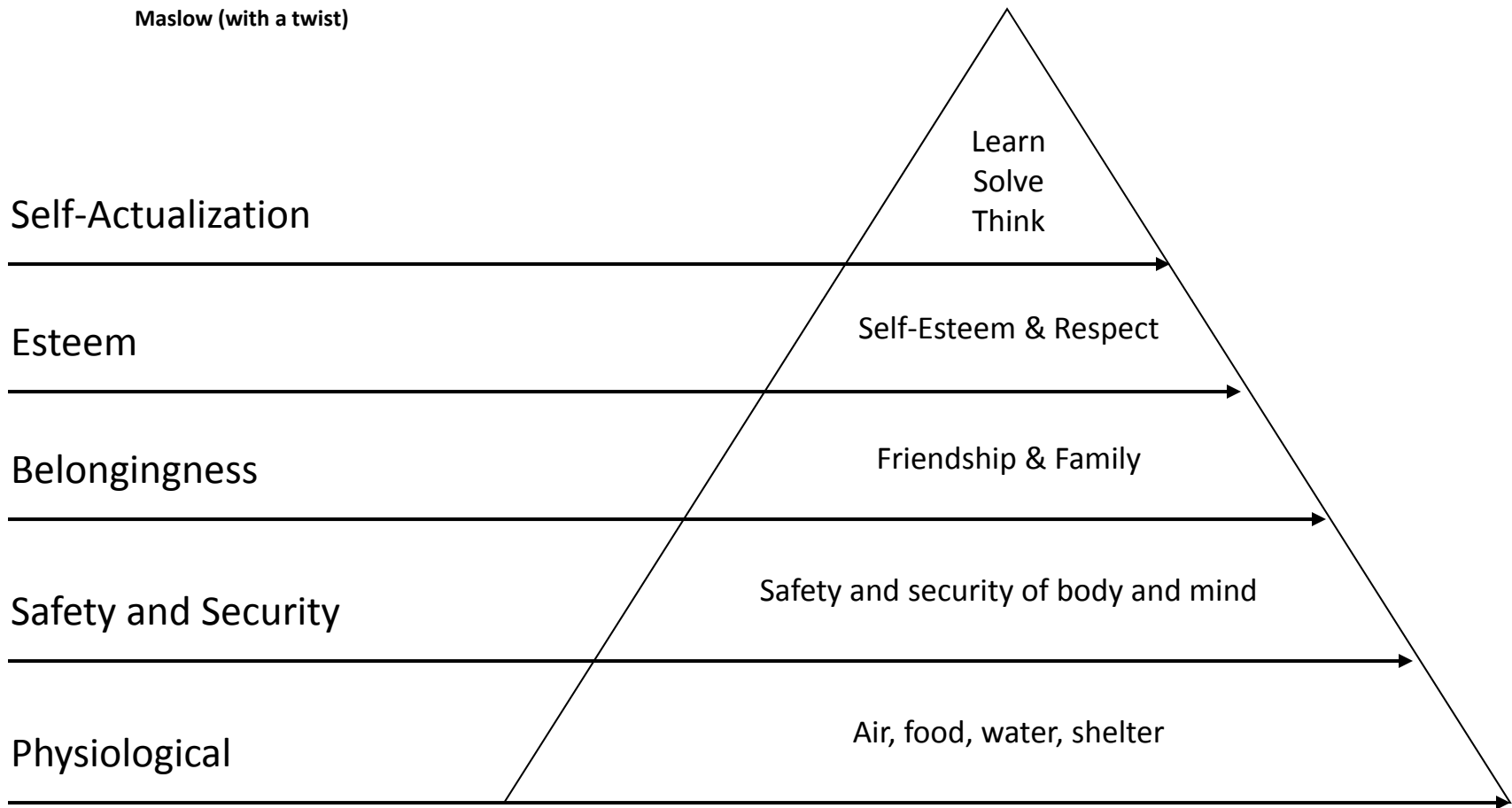
Strategy: (a) a careful plan or **method** : a clever stratagem (b) the art of devising or employing plans or stratagems toward a **goal**.

Webster's Dictionary

Motivation and Human Behavior



Calm and Outrage: The Presence and Absence of “Noise”

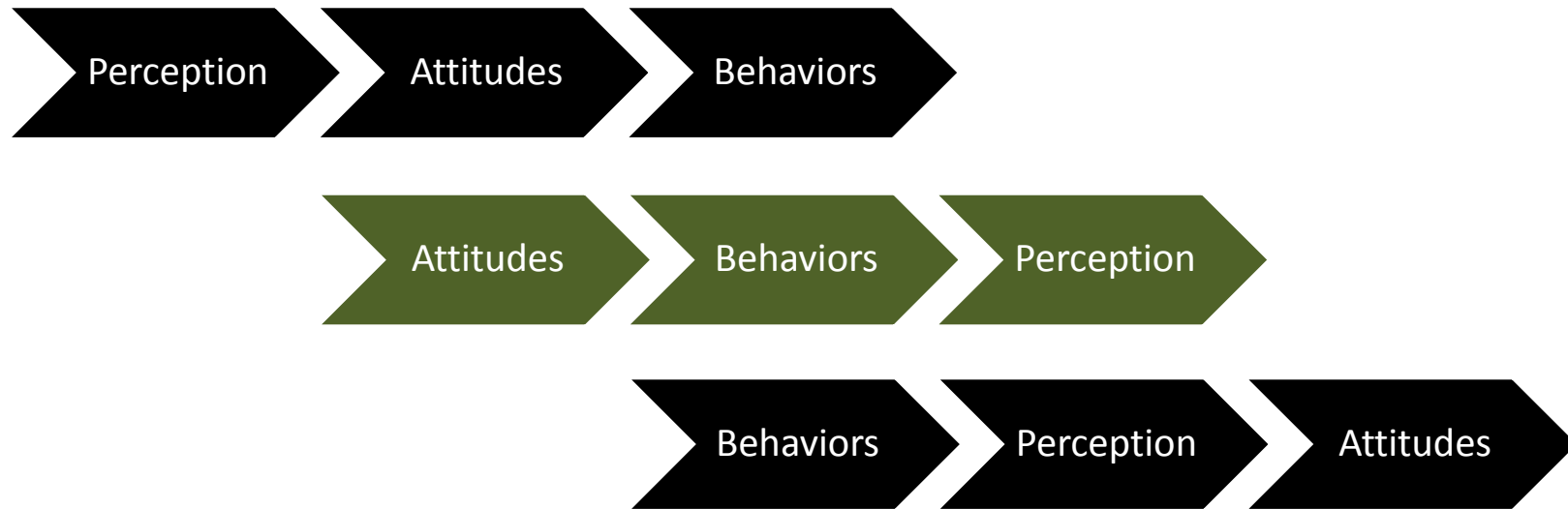


Risk communication is a strategy with the goal of either increasing (apathy) or decreasing (outrage) “mental noise”.

**Effective risk communication does not
aim to shift perception of risk.**

**Effective risk communication aims to shift
the attitude about a risk – thereby
increasing or decreasing risk tolerance.**

Attitudes, Behaviors, Perceptions: The Process



Perception is influenced by individual behavior with risk. **(Experience)**

Attitude is influenced by individual perception of risk. (Know)

Behavior is influenced by individual attitude about the risk. **(Feel)**

How do you shift an attitude toward a risk?

(aka – how do I practice risk communication?)

Step 1:
Utilize science and communicate ethically.



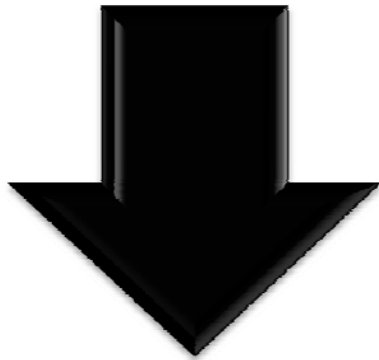
Risk communication aims to bridge the gap between how science defines risk and how the public perceives it. Failure to utilize science as a guide for risk communication may lead to unethical practices.

Step 2:

Determine the goal of risk communication.



Increase Noise
(apathy)



Decrease Noise
(outrage)

You must determine if you are going to increase or decrease “noise”. Remember – increasing “noise” will increase behavior. Decreasing “noise” will minimize behavior and increase thought.

Step 3:
Shift attitude of risk.

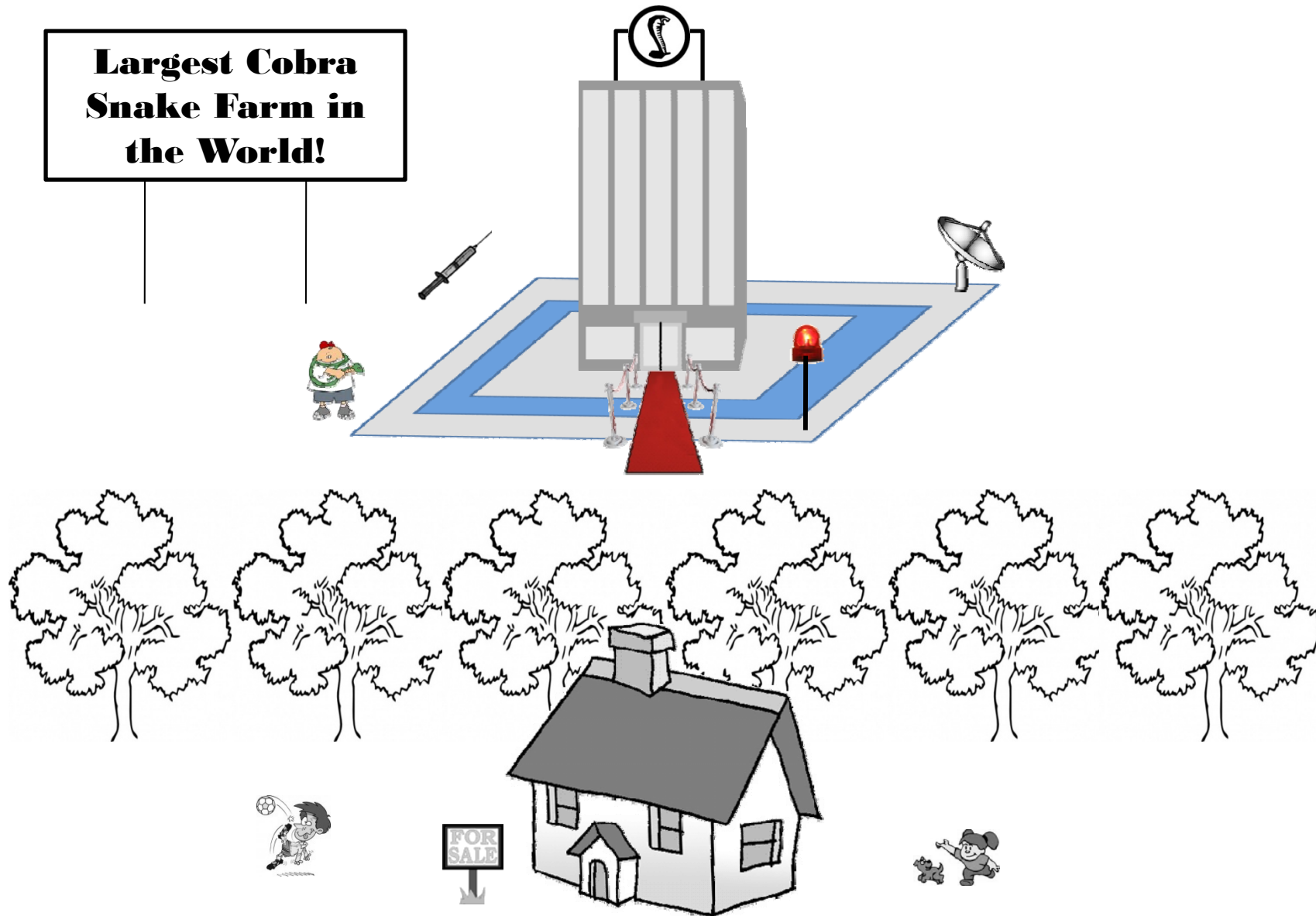


*Attitudes are changed by information –
and the communicator has a unique opportunity
to package the information specific to the risk.*

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**Largest Cobra
Snake Farm in
the World!**



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**By focusing on attitude – your approach
remains the same – independent of the
risk you are addressing.**

Attitude Changers: “Noise” Controllers

Control.....

What would you like for us to do about this risk?

We are determining what needs to be done with this risk.

Attitude Changers: “Noise” Controllers

Familiarity.....

All of us have encountered this risk at some point in our life.

Nobody is familiar with this risk - we have no experience.

Attitude Changers: “Noise” Controllers

Understanding.....

Our doors are open – please come see what we do.

Our work is very private – we cannot share what we do.

Attitude Changers: “Noise” Controllers

History.....

As you can see, we have worked with this risk safely.

We have not done what we needed to do in the past.

Attitude Changers: “Noise” Controllers

Reversibility.....

We have solutions for what we are working with.

The effects of what we are working with cannot be reversed.

Risk Communication Strategies for Biocontainment Laboratories

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Let's start....

- Reminding people they face “natural” threats everyday. (familiarity)
- Telling people what we are doing. (understanding)
- Telling people why we are doing what we are doing. (benefits)
- Showing people what we do. (understanding)
- Highlighting the safety AND security record of science. (history)
- Inviting the general public to join our review team. (control)
- Working with first responders (initial/annual training) (reversibility)

Most importantly....

Let's start utilizing SCIENCE when providing safety and security recommendations.

Contradictions in the scientific quantification of risk and safety/security guidelines creates “noise” and weakens credibility.

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