

Module 17: Communicating climate change & health



To set up to deliver this module, ensure you have: 5 large tables at the back/sides of the room with a pad of flip chart paper and markers on it. You'll also need a blank wall large enough for 10 flipchart pages to be put up, blu tak (ideally already divided into small balls) to stick the pages up with, and a pile of markers nearby (enough for one for each person). For the closing exercise you'll need a small pile of wide post it notes on each table (enough for 3 post its per person) and one marker pen per person. You'll also need a clear patch on a wall someone in the training room for people to post their post its.

Our last module for this training package is on communicating climate change and health. We haven't left this till last because it's least important. In fact, we think that learning to communicate on health and climate is critical. It's all very well to have new knowledge on the ways that climate change affects health, and what we can do to manage and reduce the impacts. But acting on that knowledge is what's then important, in order to create change in the communities, regions and countries we

work in.

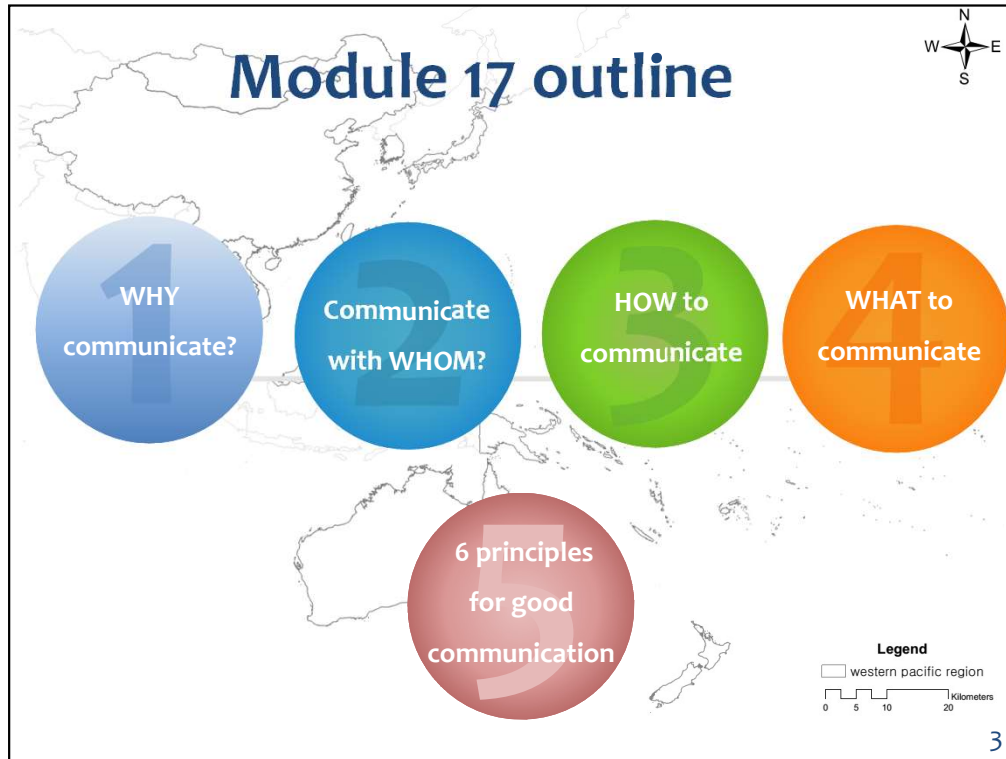
Key messages in Module 17

- Communicating the main messages of climate change & health is one of the health sector's responsibilities
- It is important to know the fundamentals of good communication
- Clarifying the message will help to advocate for appropriate responses to the health risks posed by climate change

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There are three key messages from this short module on communication:

1. The importance of professionals within the health sector strengthening their skills to communicate the main issues around health and climate change. No one else is necessarily going to do this for us, so we need to become more visible and 'front-and –centre' of this discussion.
2. We are very rarely taught the basics of good communication, and it is vital that we understand what these are in order to continue our advocacy and research work
3. If we are clearer about our messages, and how to relay these, then this will assist our ability to advocate



This is a short module, and will be centered around two main areas – the first is the basics of communication. That is, why do we communicate? With whom do we communicate (i.e. our audience)? How do we communicate? And what do we communicate?

We will end the module by illustrating the 6 main tenets of good communication, which is based on a framework developed by Heath and Heath (2007). You'll have to wait until the end to find out what this acronym stands for!

Communicating climate change & health messages

1. Why?
2. With whom?
3. How?
4. What?



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We start with the four main areas that we need to assess in order to properly develop our message. This is relevant for any subject that we are developing communication messages on, not just climate change and health.

So, firstly, we want to be clear about why we want to communicate this message – the ‘why’. Is this because the message is unclear? Or that it is just not being heard by those who we think need to hear it? We need to make sure that there is a need for the communication, before we go ahead and spend time and money on developing our messages.

Secondly, we need to identify our audience. Who do we think needs to hear our message? Identifying our audience will assist us to target our message. I.e. if our audience is policy makers, then we know that the message needs to (for example) outline the problem, the possible solutions and how much this might cost – it all needs to be very brief and succinct. If we are communicating to community

members, we might have a bit more flexibility in terms of the amount of material we communicate, and we may need to communicate this in a simpler manner that can cut across a variety of experiences and backgrounds.

Next, is the 'how'. We will talk about 'framing' in this section, to illustrate how powerful the 'framing' or setting the issue in an appropriate context, is.

And finally the 'what'. What is it that we actually want to communicate with our messages? We will have an interactive discussion around the main points that we feel are the key ones to include in our messages.

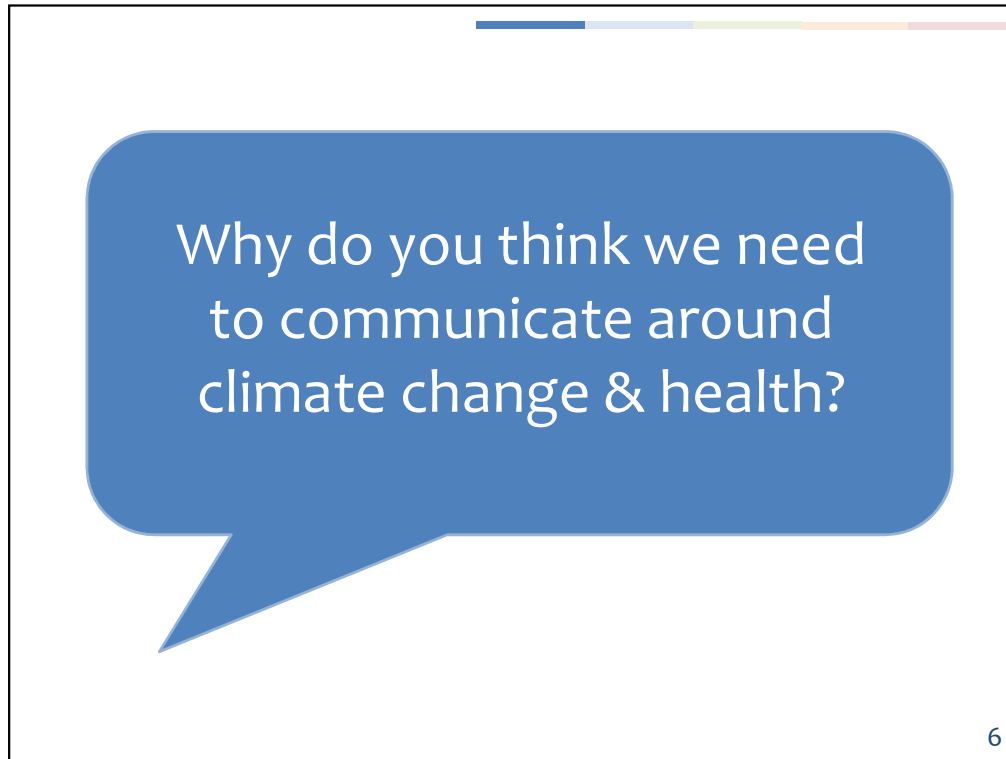
We'll now go through each of these in more detail.

This tip sheet to be printed as a visual guide to these sections:

<http://climateaccess.org/resource/tip-sheet-communication-tips-public-health-professionals>



WHY
communicate on
climate change &
health?



“Why do you think we need to communicate around climate change and health?”

What are the first thoughts that jump into your head to justify communicating the health impacts of climate change? Raise your hand if you have a reason why. A few words is fine.”

Facilitate responses, getting a wide range of reasons from across the room.

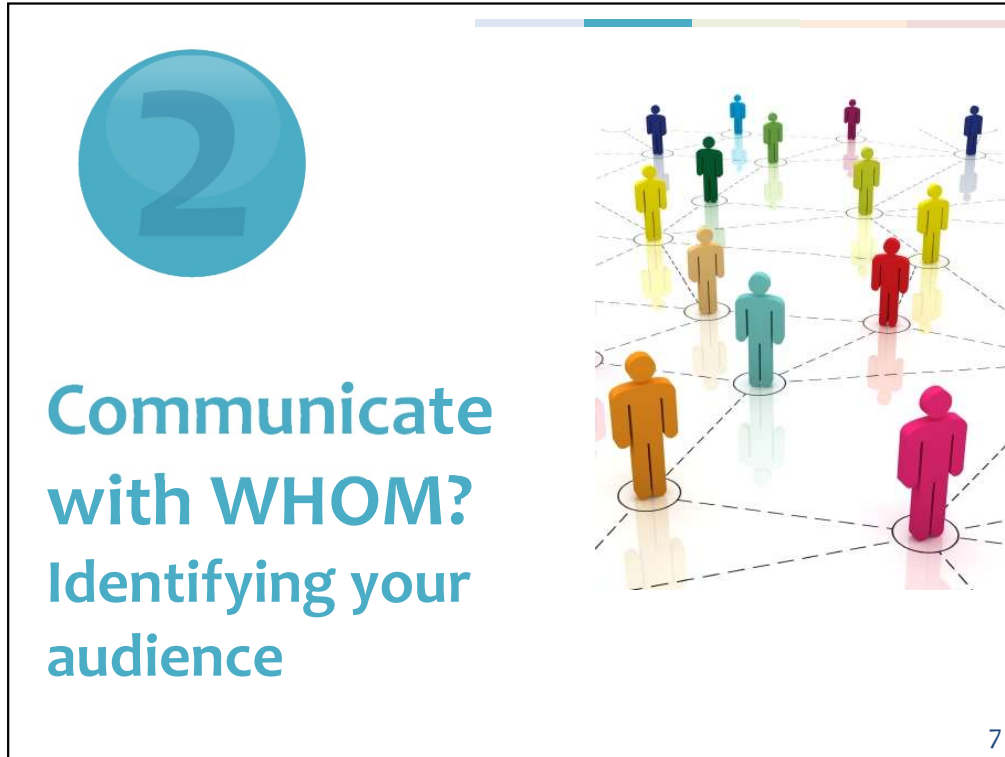
Acknowledge people’s responses, and continue to ask “Why else do we need to communicate?”

Answers might include:

- Because CC is a threat to human health and wellbeing
- Climate change will affect us all
- People in SE Asia and the Pacific will be impacted particularly by climate change
- Impacts are already being experienced

- Many people currently have low levels of understanding
 - We need to prepare for the health impacts of climate change
 - Everyone needs to be involved in reducing our contribution to climate change
 - Public health professionals have an obligation to do their best to prevent CC from harming human health – therefore it is important that we are involved in effectively informing the public and decision-makers about the risks and potential responses.
- etc.

Wrap up the input that's been provided with a quick summary, thanking people for their input and adding in your own or ideas above if any of these are not covered.



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**Communicate
with WHOM?
Identifying your
audience**

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So I think we have a good understanding of why communication around health and climate change is important.

Let's now look at who we are likely to need to communicate with.



I'd like you in a minute to define who your audience is in your work in communicating messages around the climate change and health. Who do you need to reach?



Your audiences will vary, depending on the reasons for communicating messages. You might be interested in communicating broadly, including with other health professionals, professionals in areas related to health (e.g. water, agriculture, disaster management), the general public, media agencies, and decision-makers (including bilateral and multi-lateral donors). Or in your area of responsibility, you might be responsible for reaching a particular target group such as women and children.

I'll give you **4 minutes** now to list down or map out your key audiences that you want to reach in the notes space next to this slide, or on another piece of paper if you need more space. Please be specific about the departments, groups, and

representative organisations you may need to influence.

Give a time warning: **3 minutes** “Ok I’ll give you another minute to finish off your audience mapping.” **4 minutes** “And I’ll get you to finish off now, thanks.”

I hope that gave you some specific ideas about who you’re likely to need to communicate with when you’re back home. This will likely entail forming a relationship and learning more about the needs and priorities of these different audiences. Because we need to target our messages differently depending on who our audience is, as we will discuss next.



HOW to communicate on health & climate change

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Once you've determined who you need to communicate with, you then need to decide how to communicate. Communicating automatically as we would tend to usually is unlikely to work. We are not our audience, and we need to factor in who specifically we're communicating to in designing our message.

On the next slides are some steps that make for more effective communication design.

1. Framing



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The first step is framing your message.

Framing is setting an issue within an appropriate context for that audience, to achieve a desired interpretation or perspective. Frames can also help communicate why an issue might be a problem, who or what might be responsible, and, in some cases, what should be done.

- Framing is not intended to deceive or manipulate people, but to make credible climate change information more accessible to the public.
- Framing can be a subtle art—even the choice of a single word can make the difference between winning and alienating an audience.

While they may not be aware of it, people feel better and more positive about achieving their goals and are more likely to sustain their behavior when their goals are framed in a manner that feels naturally comfortable to them.

Trainer notes.

For future development, the following could be inserted/added here:

- Insert a climate change and health example of framing showing the message before and after framing (as slide 11) to make it clear what framing is
- Print off a health frame example for reference, turning this into a mini exercise by getting pairs to read and discuss the example

Tips for framing your message

- **Select a frame/frames that will resonate with your audience** & what they care about
- **Consider your audience's subculture** – how could you connect with their identity & social influencers?
- **Prepare numerous frames ahead of time**
- **Don't focus on only one aspect** – help the audience keep the bigger picture in mind

Source: Centre for Research on Environmental Decisions, Columbia University 11

Tips for framing how you communicate include: (CLICK for each of the four tips)

- Select a frame/frames that will resonate with your audience. What do they care about? What do they already know about and have familiarity with?
- Consider the audience's membership of specific subcultures (groups of people with distinct sets of beliefs, or based on race, ethnicity, class, age, gender, religion, occupation, etc.).
- Prepare numerous frames ahead of time (i.e., climate change as a health, religious, youth, or economic issue).
- When framing climate change, be careful not to focus so intently on one particular aspect that the audience loses sight of the bigger picture.

Source: Psychology of Climate Change Communication: A Guide for Scientists, Journalists, Educators, Political Aides, and the Interested Public', Centre

for Research on Environmental Decisions, Columbia University:

<http://guide.cred.columbia.edu/guide/principles.html>

Tips for framing your message

- Tap into people's **desire to avoid future losses** rather than realize future gains
- Focus on **potential current & future losses related to inaction** on climate change, instead of current & future gains
- Frame action on climate change as **'losing a little bit now instead of losing much more in the future'**

Source: Centre for Research on Environmental Decisions, Columbia University 12

Other helpful tips on how to frame your message around health and climate change are: (**CLICK** for each of the three tips)

- Tap into people's desire to avoid future losses rather than realize future gains.
- Present information in a way that makes the audience aware of potential current and future losses related to inaction on climate change instead of focusing on current and future gains.
- Remember that audiences may be more likely to make changes to their behavior if climate change information is framed as "losing a little bit now instead of losing much more in the future.

Source: Psychology of Climate Change Communication: A Guide for Scientists, Journalists, Educators, Political Aides, and the Interested Public', Centre for Research on Environmental Decisions, Columbia University:

<http://guide.cred.columbia.edu/guide/principles.html>

2. Localise the issue



The second tip on how to develop your message is to localise the issue - bring the message close to home. If we can highlight the current and potential impacts of climate change not only globally, but also locally then this will increase the audience's sense of connection with the issue.

One way to do this is to leverage local extreme weather events, using them as “teachable moments” during which to relate climate change to the experience of your audience. (However, keep in mind that although climate change may increase the chance that a particular event will occur, it does not cause an event to take place.)

3. Use 'win-win' examples



Using examples of 'win-win' scenarios is a powerful way for the health community to link itself with the broader climate change community, as well as illustrate the savings that can be made (financial and GHG) in order to appeal to those segments of the audience that need to know the 'business case' for change.

We have discussed 'win-win' opportunities for health and climate change, so just a reminder here of some examples. These include:

1. Active transport such as bike riding, which benefits healthier lifestyles and reduction in GHG emissions via car use
2. Green spaces, leading to cleaner air, more room for physical activity and community connection
3. Reducing meat consumption, contributing to healthier lifestyles and a reduction in methane emissions

Summary: **HOW** to communicate on health & climate change

1. **Frame** climate change & health in an appropriate context **for the particular audience** you're communicating with
2. **Localise** the issues
3. Use **'win-win' examples** of how acting on climate change has multiple benefits

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So a reminder of these three steps in HOW to communicate effectively with your chosen audience on health and climate change:

1. **Frame** climate change & health in an appropriate context for the particular audience you're communicating with
2. **Localise** the issues
3. Use **'win-win' examples**



WHAT to communicate on climate change & health

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We've looked at why, with whom, and how we communicate effectively on climate change and health. Next up, WHAT should we communicate to get the message across around health and climate change most effectively?

There are lots of specific messages you will build up over time in your work, but let's look at 5 general messages that are valuable foundations for communication around climate change and health.

5 key points to communicate

1. Climate change is **real & human-induced**
2. Climate change has **negative effects for us & our communities** in a number of ways
3. We **need to start taking action now to protect our health** (& the health of the planet)
4. We **have enough evidence** to act now
5. **'Win-win' actions will benefit our health, our economy & the environment**

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These 5 points that are valuable foundations for communication around climate change and health are: (**CLICK** to animate each of the 5 points)

1. Climate change is real &
human-induced

2. Climate change has
negative effects for us &

our communities in a number of ways

3. We need to start taking acting now to protect our health (& the health of the planet)
4. We have enough evidence to act now
5. ‘Win-win’ actions will benefit our health, our economy & the environment



NB: This exercise will require 5 empty tables for groups to stand around (free of chairs) with either a pad of flipchart paper or a stack of A4 paper on it and a packet of markers.

“I now want to give you some time to go further into these points and come up with some specific examples. Remember that when we’re generating the content of our communication we need to do this for a specific target group in a particular location, which we won’t have for this exercise. So please assume you’re creating specific communication messages for the general public in a country in the Asia Pacific.

So for this exercise, in a minute I’ll ask you to divide into 5 groups. Table 1 will be over there (point), table 2 there – point out the five different empty tables in number order around the room. Please divide yourselves fairly evenly, so if one table is full you head to another one.” (You may need to have a few helpers circulate to help

make this happen.)

“When you get to your table, write your key point at the top of a flipchart page – table 1 will

write on communication point one (**Climate change is real & human-induced**), table 2 point 2 etc. I’ll show the slide with the 5 communication points again in a minute.

I then want you to list down some examples of what that key communication point could sound like when communicated to the public. For example, if you had point 1,

‘Climate change is real & human-induced’, you might list as a specific communication example: ‘97% of

climate scientists around the world agree that climate change is happening and that it is human induced.’ Please write clearly so that others can read the examples you come up with.

Are there any questions?”

“Ok, please find your way to one of the 5 tables – point out 1 – 5 again – where you’ll have **7 minutes** to come up with some specific examples of this key communication point.”

Project the next slide so the 5 communication points are visible and set timer

5 key points to communicate

1. Climate change is real & human-induced
2. Climate change has negative effects for us & our communities in a number of ways
3. We need to start taking acting now to protect our health (& the health of the planet)
4. We have enough evidence to act now
5. 'Win-win' actions will benefit our health, our economy & the environment

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Give time reminders: At **4 minutes** – “Ok, you have another 3 minutes to come up with some more specific examples of how to communicate this point”. **6 minutes** - “You have one minute left. Finish off your last example and then please take your page or pages to the wall (name specific location) where we’ll display them.”

7 mins – “Please finish up now. If you haven’t done so already please bring your page to the wall and stick it up in the gallery so we can see some of the great examples you’ve come up with. Please also bring a marker or pen with you.”

Once pages are up in a long gallery – “Now that these great examples are up, please spend the next four minutes exploring this gallery and looking at the examples that others have come up with. As well as looking, you’ll also have the chance to vote – please place a tick or mark on the examples that you think are particularly strong messages to use around climate change and health, using a marker near the wall.”

Give a time countdown – At **2 mins**: “Make sure that you’re getting around to all five pages, and leaving a mark on what you think are the strongest communications examples.” At **3 mins** “Ok you have another minute. Make sure you read over as many of the other examples as you can, and leave your mark on those that you think are particularly strong.”

“Thanks everyone. I’ll get you to take a few big steps back from the wall. Looking across the pages, where can you see the most marks?”

Get participants to help you find some of the strongest communication messages (as voted by the group) and read them out, stating the key communication point first (1, 2, 3, 4 or 5).

“Great. Well done everybody – you’ve come up with some strong examples on what to communicate around climate change and health. I hope you’ll bring some of these messages into your future communication. You’re welcome to photograph these to take away with you if you’d like to. (Or offer to photograph them and provide them to participants if relevant.) Please return to your seats.”



In this last section of this module on communicating around health and climate change I'm going to introduce you to 6 principles that make for good communication.

SUCCES: 6 principles for good communication

- **S** – Keep it *simple*
- **U** – Make your point in an *unexpected* way
- **C** – Give *concrete* examples
- **C** – Use *credibility* to your advantage
- **E** – Allow *emotion* to accentuate the message
- **S** – Use a *story* to bring the message to life

Source: Heath & Heath (2007). 'Made to stick: Why some ideas survive & others die'.

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The fundamentals of good communication can be represented by an acronym of six features that spell 'SUCCES'. These each stand for: (CLICK to display each)

S – Keeping it simple

U – Making your point in an unexpected way – preferably not with lots of detailed data in complex tables or graphs, that people might expect

C – Give concrete examples – this way people can relate to what can be quite complex and overwhelming ideas, and not have to use their imagination

C – Use credibility to your advantage. An example of this is that 97% of climate scientists agree on the climate science, or that information you're sharing is from the World Health Organisation.

E – Using emotion is helpful, as this is how humans work – despite the fact that we think we are purely rational creatures! But make sure that you don't overuse emotion, as scaring people is also counterproductive, as they are then likely to disengage; and finally,

S – Stories bring messages to life. Is there an example of a community who has adapted to climate change whose story you can convey to someone who needs to be convinced on the importance of responding to the health effects of climate change? This is likely to be much more inspiring and empowering than just talking about the theoretical need for us to act.

Source: Heath, C., & Heath, D. (2007). *Made to stick: Why some ideas survive and others die*. New York. Random House.

Resources for further learning

Conveying the Human Implications of Climate Change:
A Climate Change Communication Primer for Public
Health Professionals

Maibach, Nisbet & Weathers (2011)

The Psychology of Climate Change Communication: A
Guide for Scientists, Journalists, Educators, Political
Aides & the Interested Public

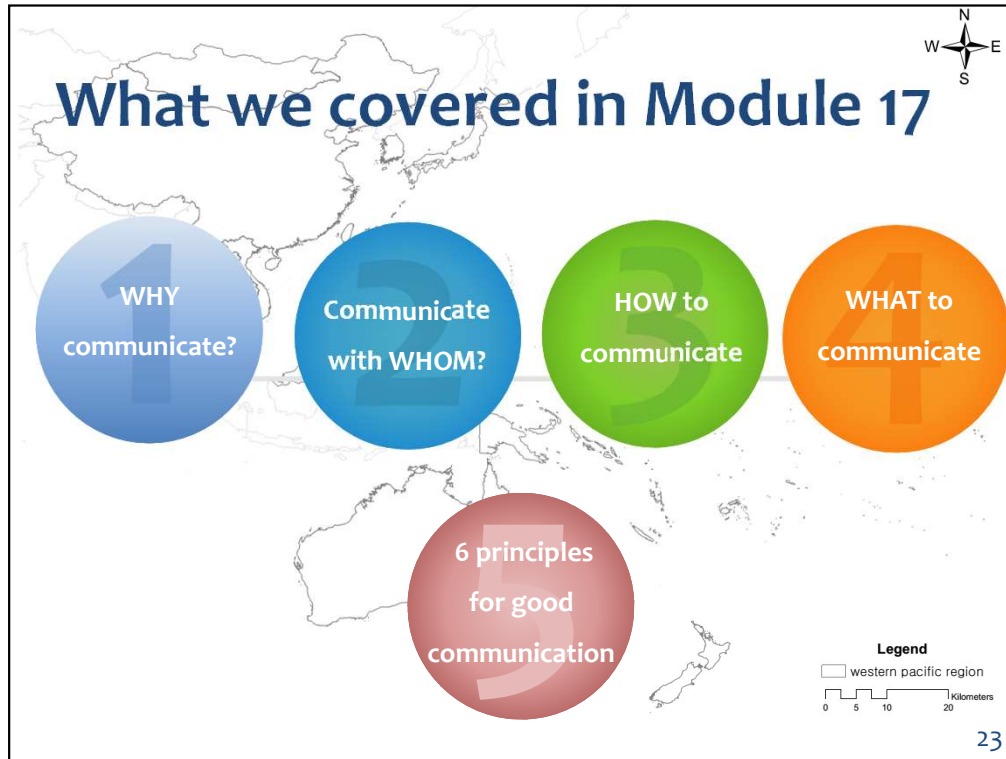
*Centre for Research on Environmental Decisions,
Columbia (CRED) (2009)*

<http://talkingclimate.org/about/>

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The first two resources listed here have been drawn from in this module, so if you'd like to do further learning in this important area they are both great – very clear, easy to use and freely available, and also link to other resources within them.

The third resource is a general good guide for communicating about climate change (without a health focus), which you might also find useful.



A reminder that this is what we covered in Module 17:

Why do we communicate? With whom do we communicate (i.e. who is our audience)? How do we communicate? And what do we communicate around climate change and health?

We finished the module by illustrating the 6 principles of good communication, using the ‘SUCCES’ framework developed by Heath and Heath.

Learning from Module 17

- Communicating the main messages of climate change & health is one of the health sector's responsibilities
- It is important to know the fundamentals of good communication
- Clarifying the message will help to advocate for appropriate responses to the health risks posed by climate change

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The learning take aways on communicating health and climate change are:

CLICK to animate each of the three points

1. The importance of professionals within the health sector strengthening their skills to communicate the main issues around health and climate change. No one else is necessarily going to do this for us, so we need to become more visible and 'front-and -centre' of this discussion.
2. We are very rarely taught the basics of good communication, and it is vital that we understand what these are in order to continue our advocacy and research work
3. If we are clearer about our messages, and how to relay these, then this will assist our ability to advocate for appropriate responses to the health risks posed by climate change.

Summary: **HOW** to communicate on health & climate change

1. **Frame** climate change & health in an appropriate context **for the particular audience** you're communicating with
2. **Localise** the issues
3. **Use 'win-win' examples** of how acting on climate change has multiple benefits

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And just to make sure they stay with you, here is a summary of some of the key things we covered under HOW and WHAT to communicate around climate change and health.

WHAT to communicate?

5 key points

1. Climate change is real & human-induced
2. Climate change has negative effects for us & our communities in a number of ways
3. We need to start taking acting now to protect our health (& the health of the planet)
4. We have enough evidence to act now
5. 'Win-win' actions will benefit our health, our economy & the environment

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Source?

6 steps for communication **SUCCE**S

- **S** – Keep it *simple*
- **U** – Make your point in an *unexpected* way
- **C** – Give *concrete* examples
- **C** – Use *credibility* to your advantage
- **E** – Allow *emotion* to accentuate the message
- **S** – Use a *story* to bring the message to life

Source: Heath & Heath (2007). *Made to stick: Why some ideas survive & others die.*



To finish off, I'll ask you now to reflect on three key learnings or take aways – things that will influence how or what you communicate on health and climate change in your work from now on.

This might be one of the suggestions from the slides on how to communicate, such as 'I will frame my message for the specific audience I'm communicating to, not write one communication and use it for everyone'. Or it could be a key point you'll emphasise, or one of the SUCCES steps, such as always giving concrete examples of the effect of climate change.

On your table you'll see a pile of post it notes. Once you've had time to gather your three take aways or learnings, please write each one on a separate post it note.

When you've finished, come and post your note on this wall over here (point)."

People should automatically move, so shouldn't require a time count down. Moving over to the wall yourself will help remind people of the next step. Encourage informal reading and discussion around the post its. If you have time, you can get people to group the post its into themes.

When time is up/people seem to have had enough, wrap up by thanking everyone and giving an instruction about the lunch break and the time to reconvene.

Coming up next...

**Reflecting on our learning
from these 5 days**



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