

Risk Communication Design Considerations Module 5 – RC for FRM course

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US Army Corps of Engineers
**PLANNING SMART
BUILDING STRONG®**



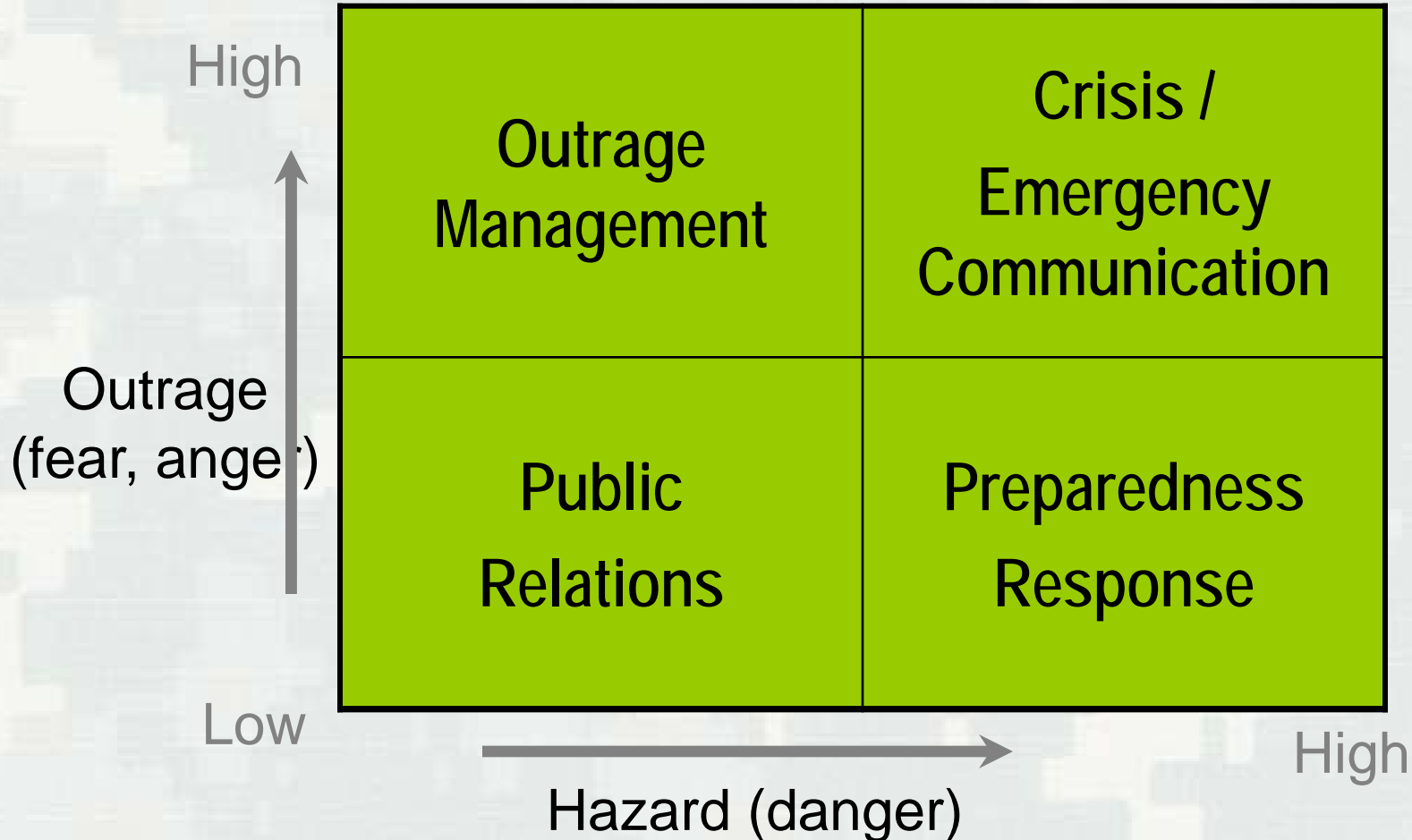
Risk Comm

Take-aways so far?

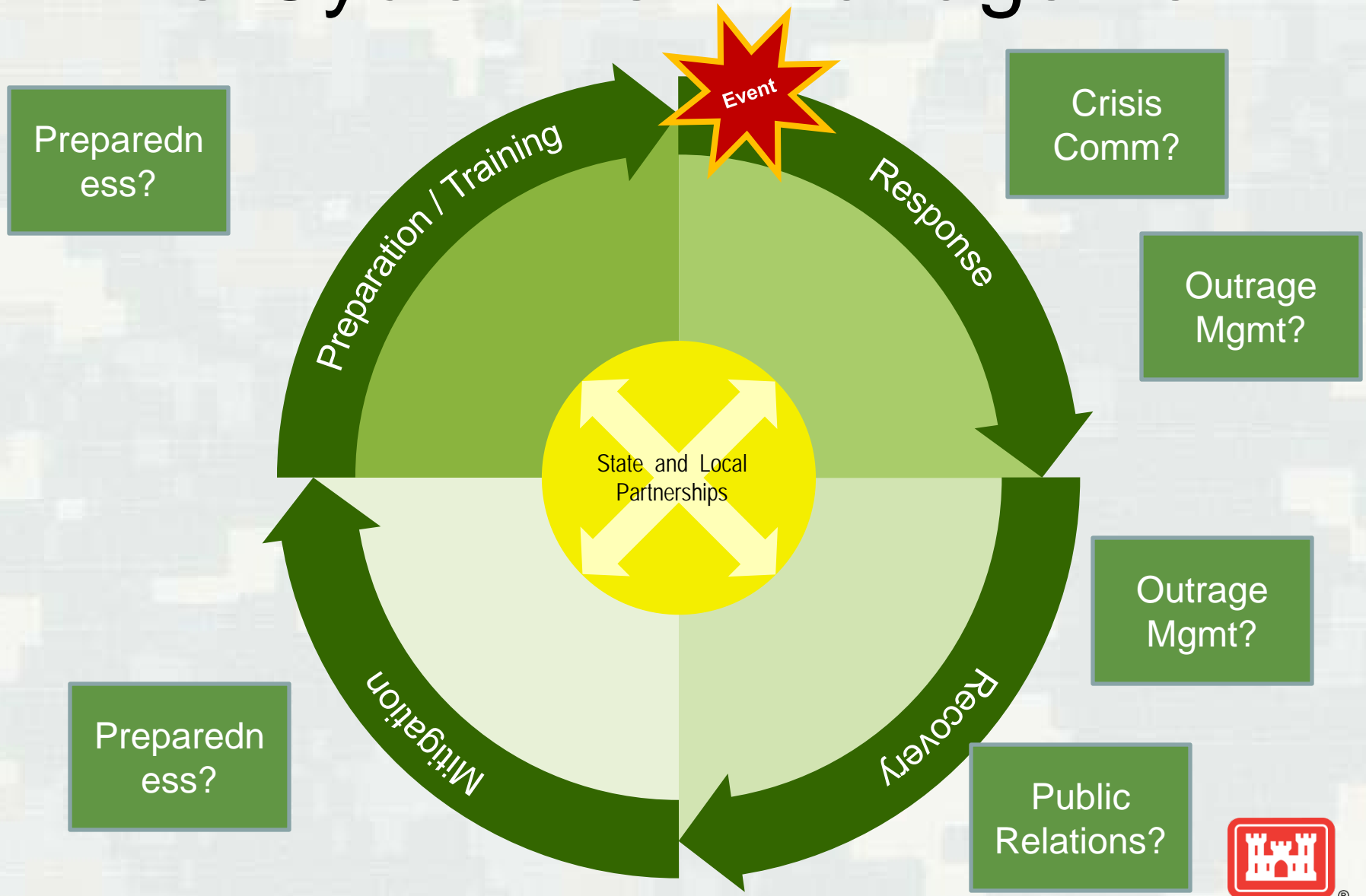
- Simplify
- Pictures
- Personal Connection
- Objective based
- Non Technical factors matter
- Shared responsibility
- Risk comparison?
- Dialogue is important
- Know your Audience
- Relevant to Audience
- Messenger matters
- Provide an Action
- Challenging



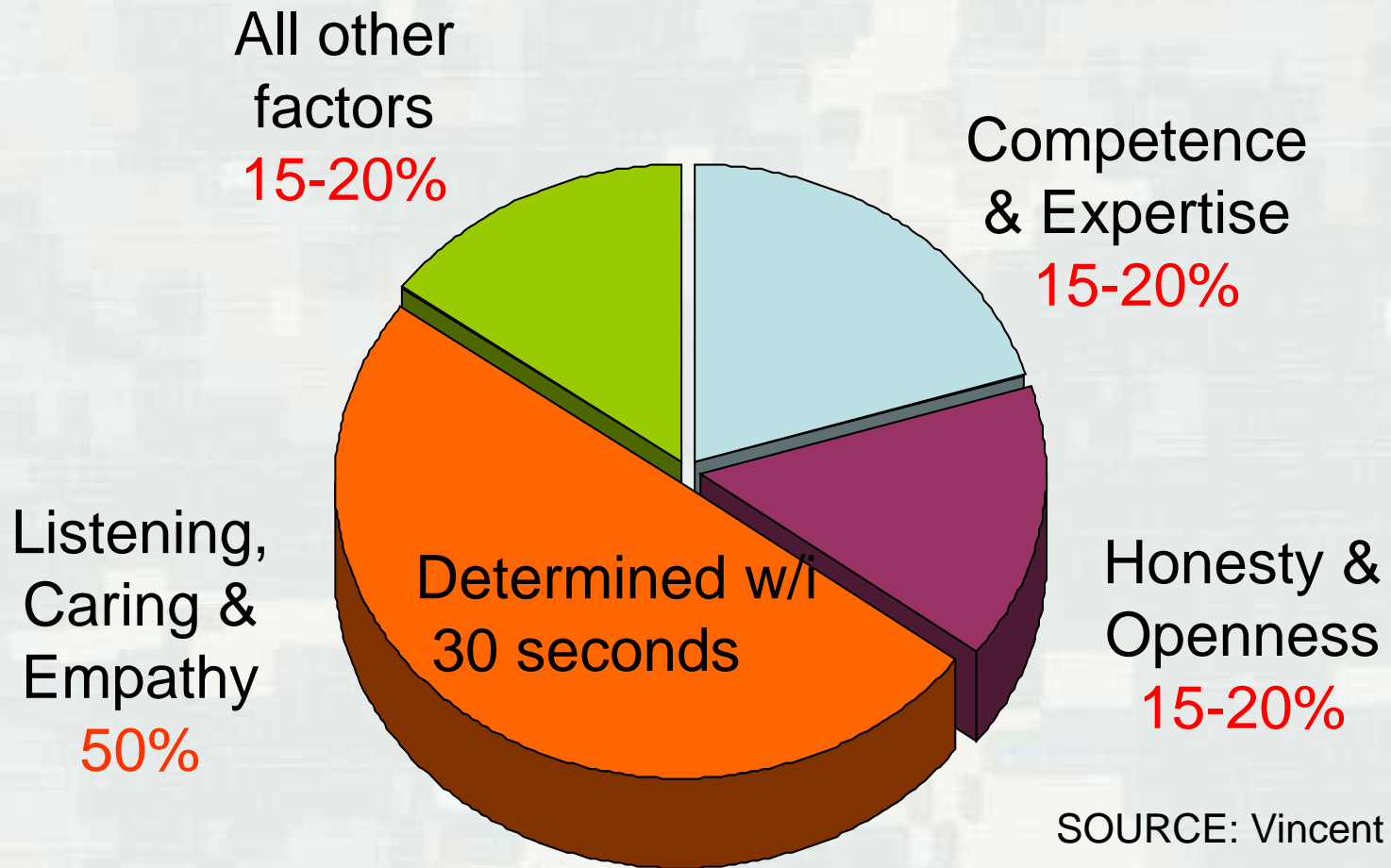
Risk Communication Contexts



Life-Cycle Risk Management

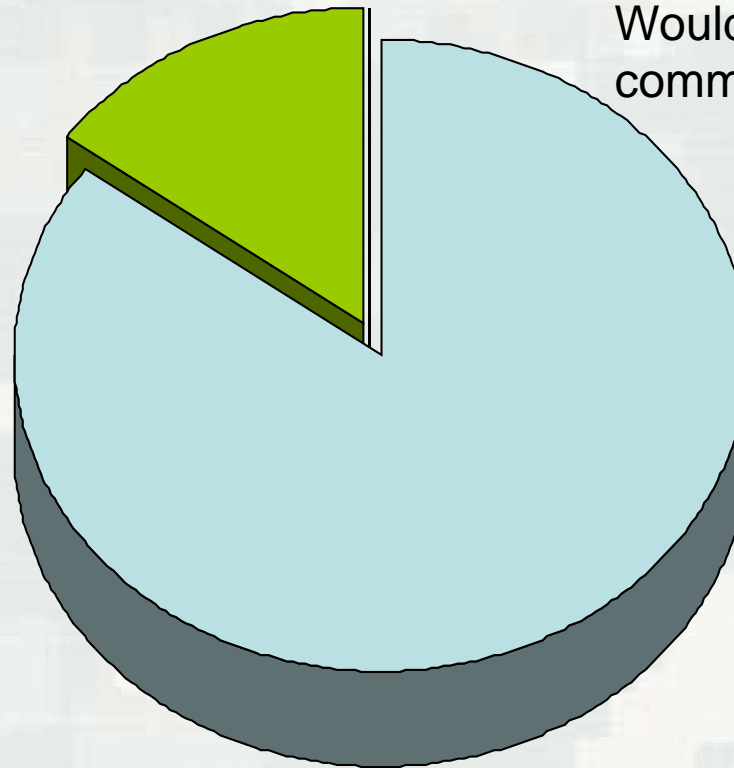


Trust Factors in HIGH stress situations



Trust Factors in LOW stress situations

All other
factors
15 - 20%



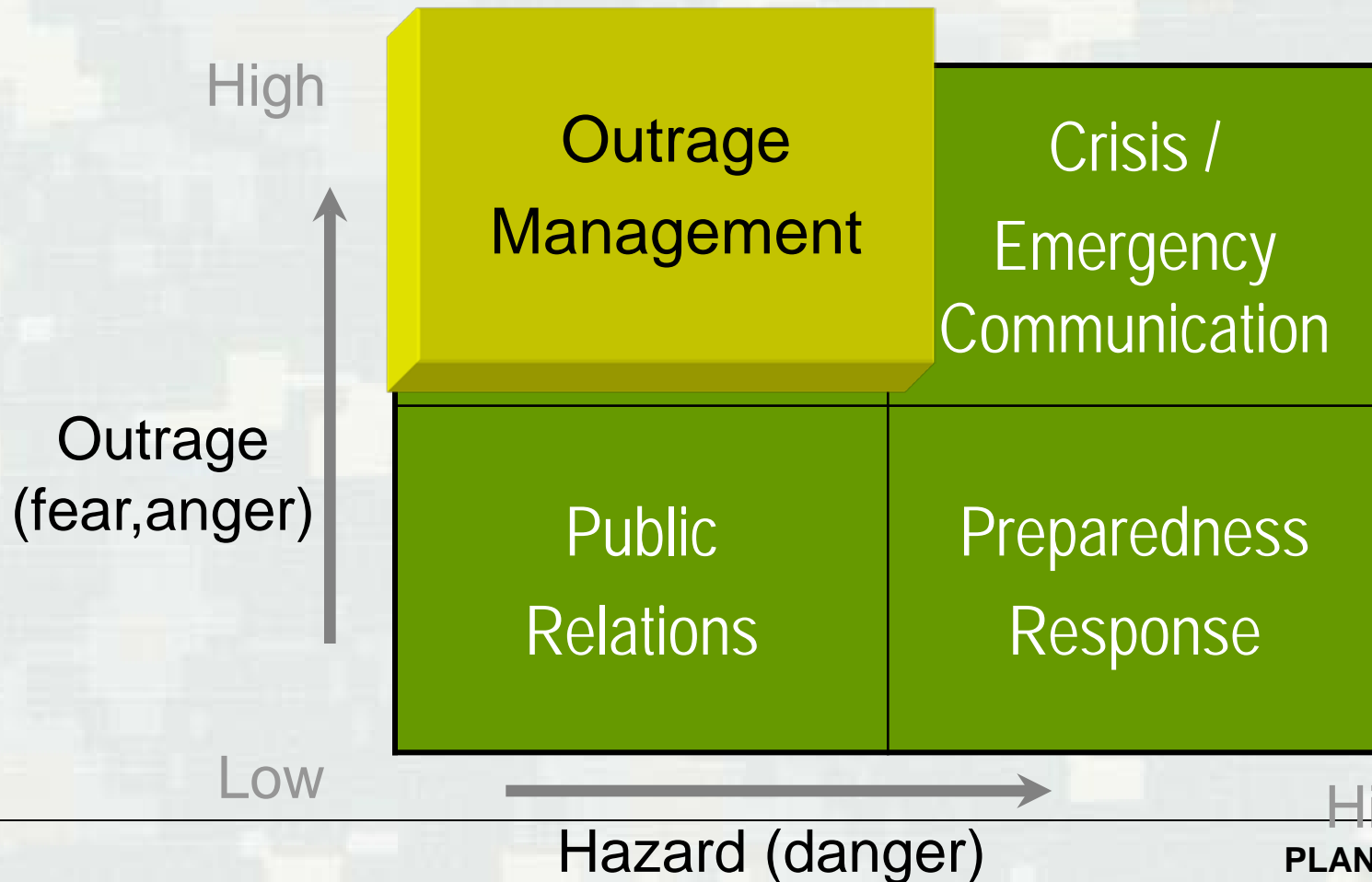
Public Relations & Precaution
Advocacy are low stress. Who
Would be most/least trusted/
communicators?

Competence
& Expertise
80 - 85%

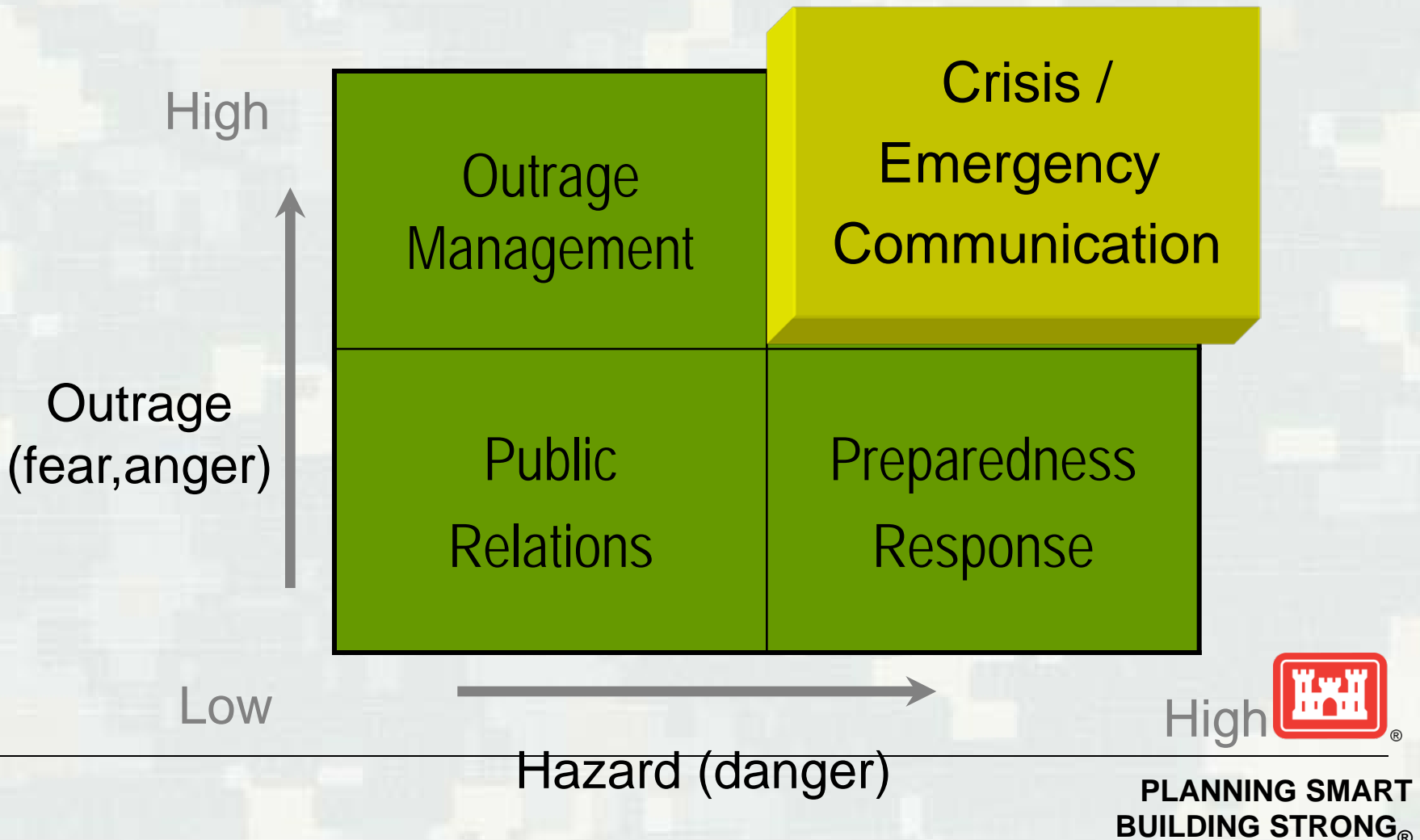
SOURCE: Vincent Covello



Goal: Reduce outrage so people don't take unnecessary precautions



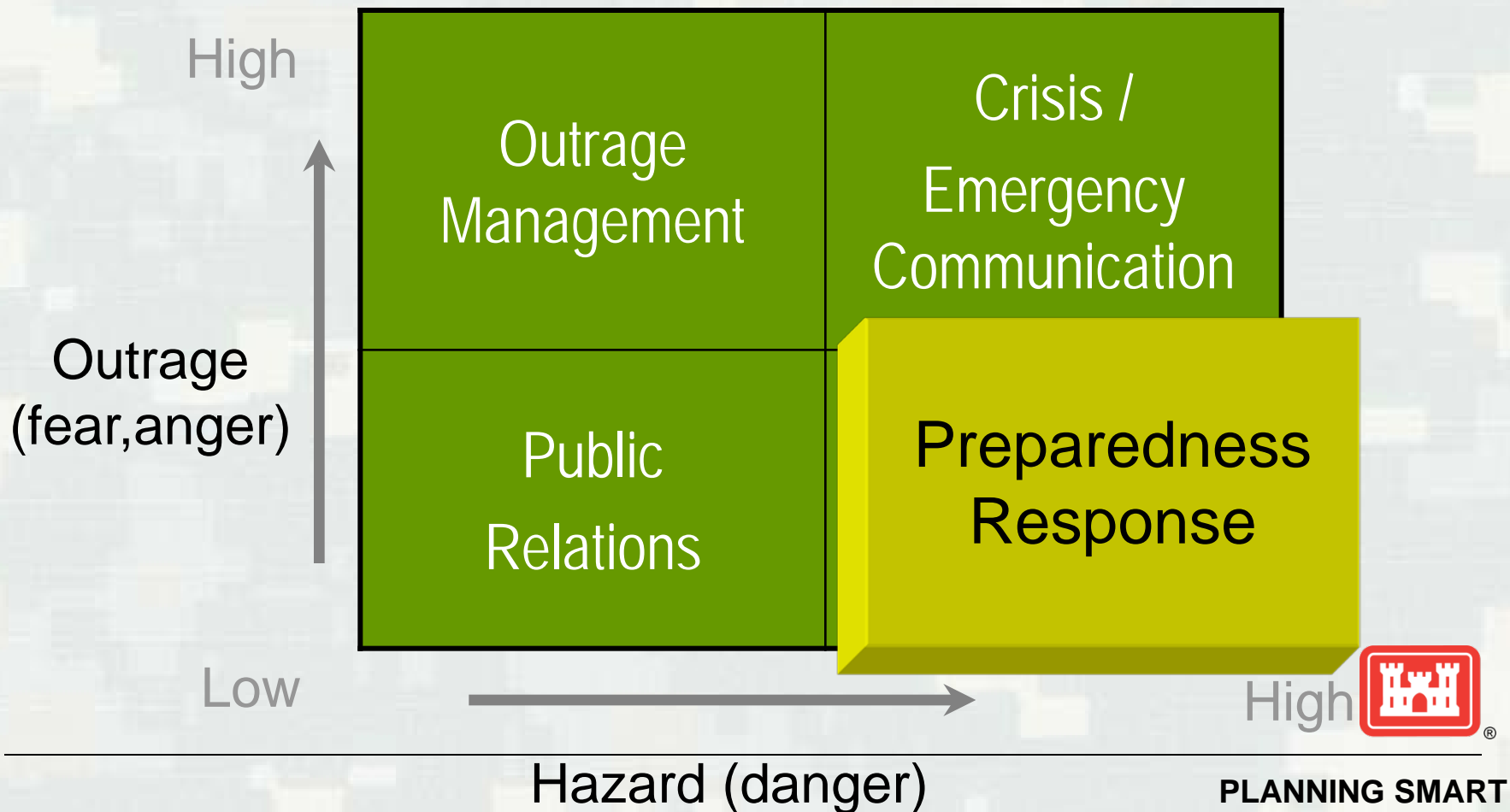
Goal: Acknowledge hazard, validate concern, give people ways to act



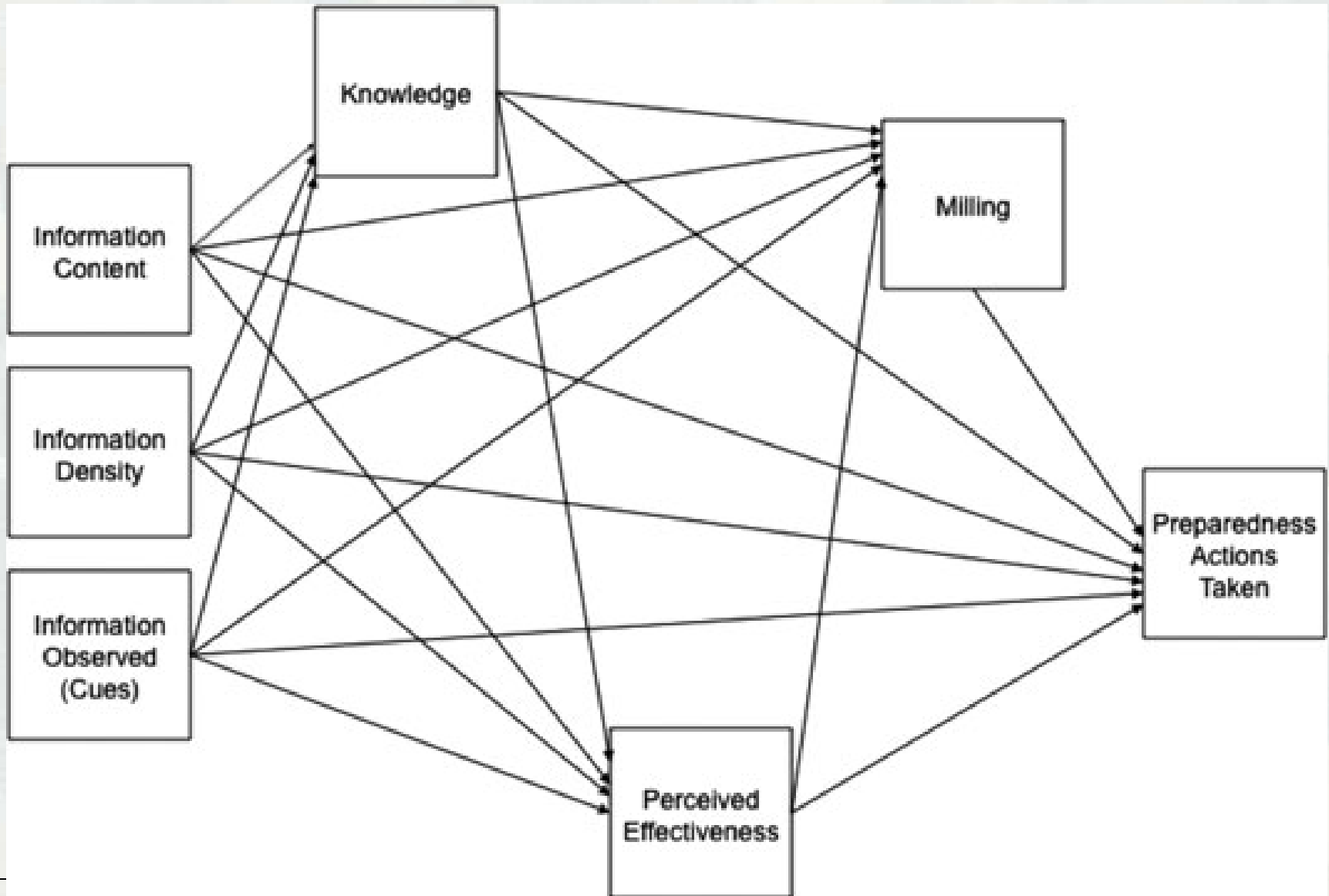
Tailoring Risk Communication for the Context

During a Crisis	Preparedness / Recovery
<i>Reduce Outrage</i>	<i>Inform on Potential Crisis</i>
<i>Inform about Current Crisis & Response</i>	<i>Understand Community Priorities & Preferences</i>
<i>Motivate individual actions</i>	<i>Motivate Individual action</i>
<i>Mostly 1-way</i>	<i>2-way</i>

Goal: Increase concern for a real hazard to motivate preventive action



Objective - Individual Behavior Change



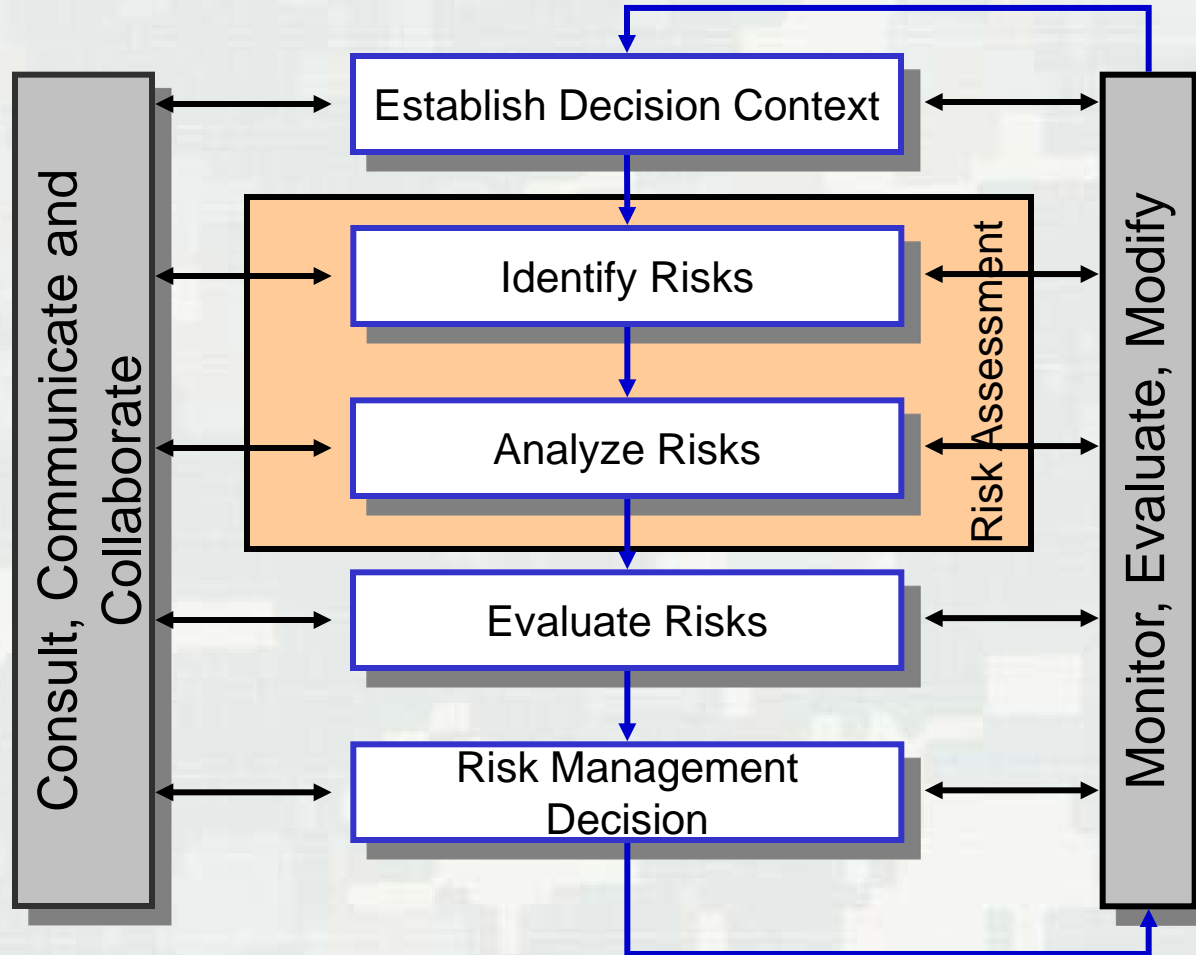
(wood et al 2011)

Risk Communication in **planning mode**

- May need to **increase** level of anxiety
- Recognition of two-way communication
- Goal ? - **raise the level of understanding** of relevant issues or actions for those involved
- Risk Communication as a **learning process** not one of education



Risk Management



Risk Communication in Public, Risk-based decision making

- Public participation should inform
 - ▶ the types of risks to be analyzed and
 - ▶ the questions to be addressed
- Focus on reducing **uncertainties that matter**
- Analytic-Deliberative Model
 - ▶ A 2-way learning process
- Science may not resolve the most controversial issues
- “Failures of organizations to communicate well with each other virtually ensures failure to communicate with outside audiences”



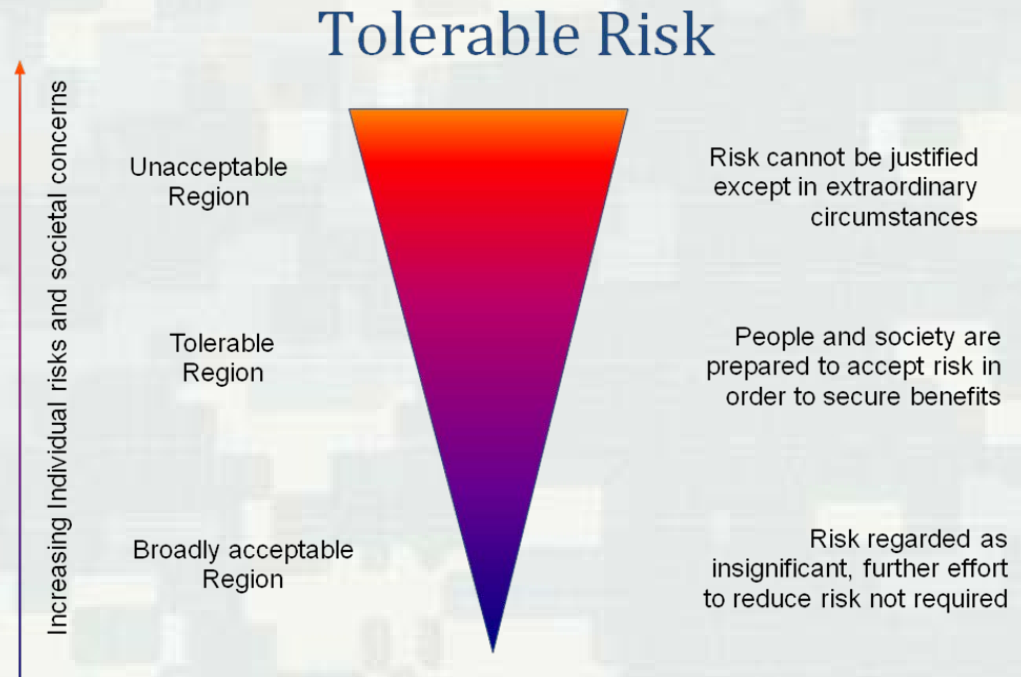
Risk Communication in Public Risk-based Decision-processes

- Not just about better messages – focus on the process
- 2 way communication
- “reducing conflict about risk is not a matter of more effective translation of risk information. Instead, making decisions about risk needs to involve *interested and affected parties*”
- must involve *interested and affected parties in defining the risk problem and the requisite analysis*



Is Risk Acceptable?

- Is the risk acceptable?
VALUES question
- Tolerable Level of Risk based **risk, cost, benefit** tradeoff
- Need stakeholder and public input to reduce unacceptable risks to a **tolerable** level



What about Levee Safety discussions?

- High Risk
- Low Outrage?
- 1-way or 2-way communication?
- What is the objective?



Risk Communications Plan

- Why are we communicating?
- Who is our audience?
- What do our audiences want to know?
- What do we want to get across?
- How will we communicate?
- How will we listen?
- How will we respond?



Resources Available

Materials/ Websites

- FEMA – FloodSMART
- Risk Comm Toolbox
- NOAA (from CSC)
- NCFPD
- Peter Sandman
- EPA
- Natl Research Council reports

Training

- Risk Comm / Public Participation
- Communication
- Risk Informed Decision Making
- IAP2



WRAP UP



Risk Comm Wrap up

- Risk Comm is distinctive because of the **technical & risk-based** nature of the information
- **Subjective** Risk trumps Technical Risk
- Risk Comm as a **Dialogue**
- Risk Comm as a **thought-out process**
- Skills are needed – **Training & Practice**;
- A **Shared Responsibility** – a team sport.



Risk Comm Wrap up

- Techniques vary based on audience & objectives & Context
 - ▶ Crisis Response
 - ▶ Planning
 - ▶ Motivating Behavior change
 - ▶ Explaining Agency Action

Outrage Management	Crisis / Emergency Communication
Public Relations	Preparedness Response

- Basic Communication rules apply - know your audience, Simplicity, empathy, listening, clarity
- Lots of references / help out there



Risk Comm

Take-aways so far?

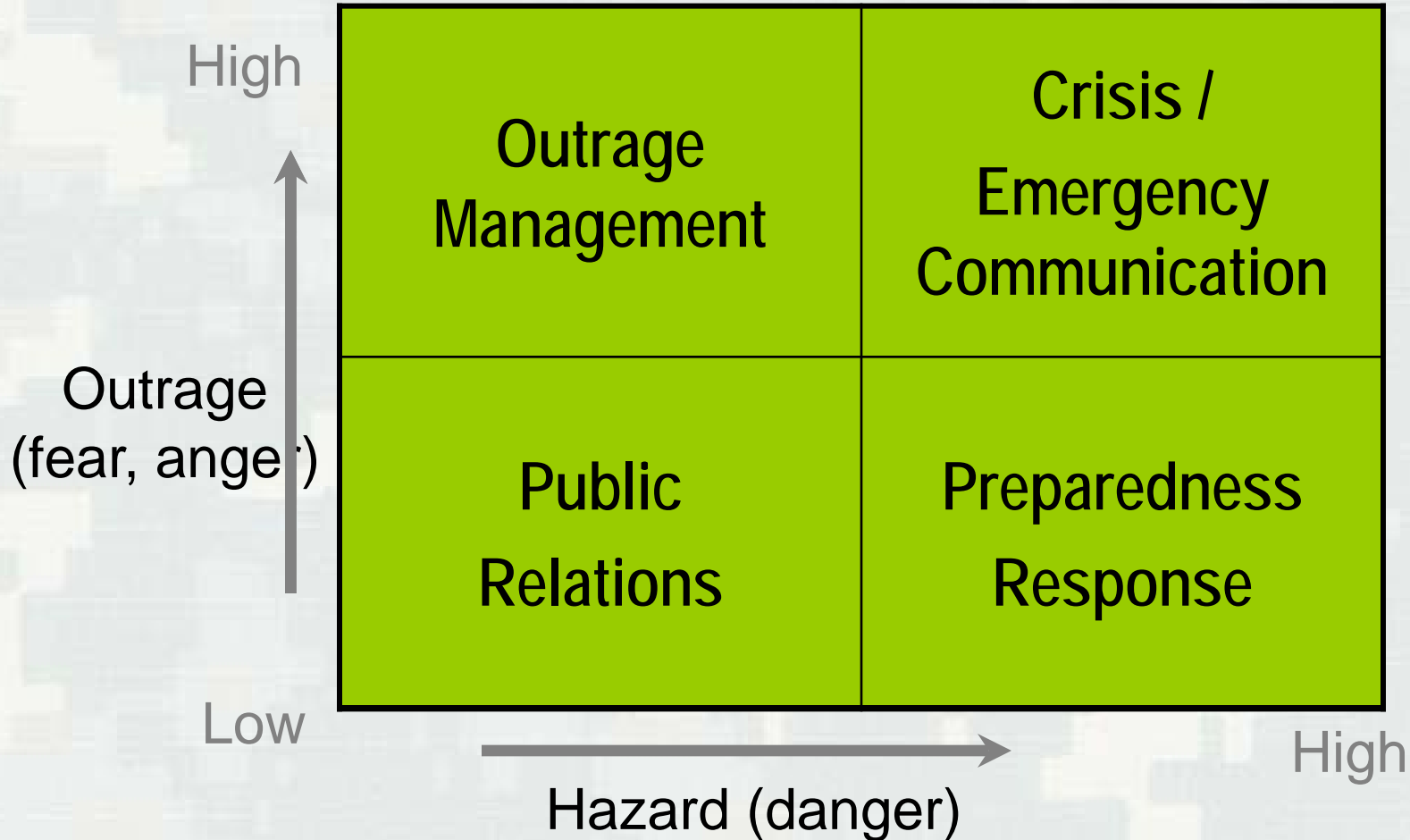
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Risk Communication Contexts



Risk Communication Evolution

- ▶ Origins with crisis communication
- ▶ In Crisis -
 - Objective - reduce the level of anxiety, allow communication to happen
 - Principles – Open, honest, empathetic
 - Goal - “Recipients accept the views or arguments of the communicator”
- ▶ Focus on Risk Messages



Communication Shifts in LOW to HIGH Stress Situations

LOW Stress

Process avg of 7 messages

Info processed in linear order
(1,2,3)

Info processed at avg grade
level

Focus on competence,
expertise, knowledge

HIGH Stress

Process avg of 3 messages

Info processed in primacy
(1,3,2) or recency order (3,2,1)

Info processed at
minus 4 grade levels

Focus on listening, caring,
empathy, compassion

SOURCE: Vincent Covello



Risk Comm in diff contexts & parts of the FRM life-cycle:

Tools & Techniques, Principles & Best Practices



Presentation Outline

- Contexts & Characteristics
 - ▶ RIDM – Risk Comm in Planning Mode
 - ▶ Public Awareness – Risk Comm in Presenting Information
 - ▶ Motivating Behavior Change – Mileti
- Communicating Quantitative Information
- Materials available



Risk Comm in Preparedness/Recovery Mode

- **Increase** level of outrage
- Get message heard
- HEAR messages - 2 way communication

- Similarities w/traditional marketing



LSAC



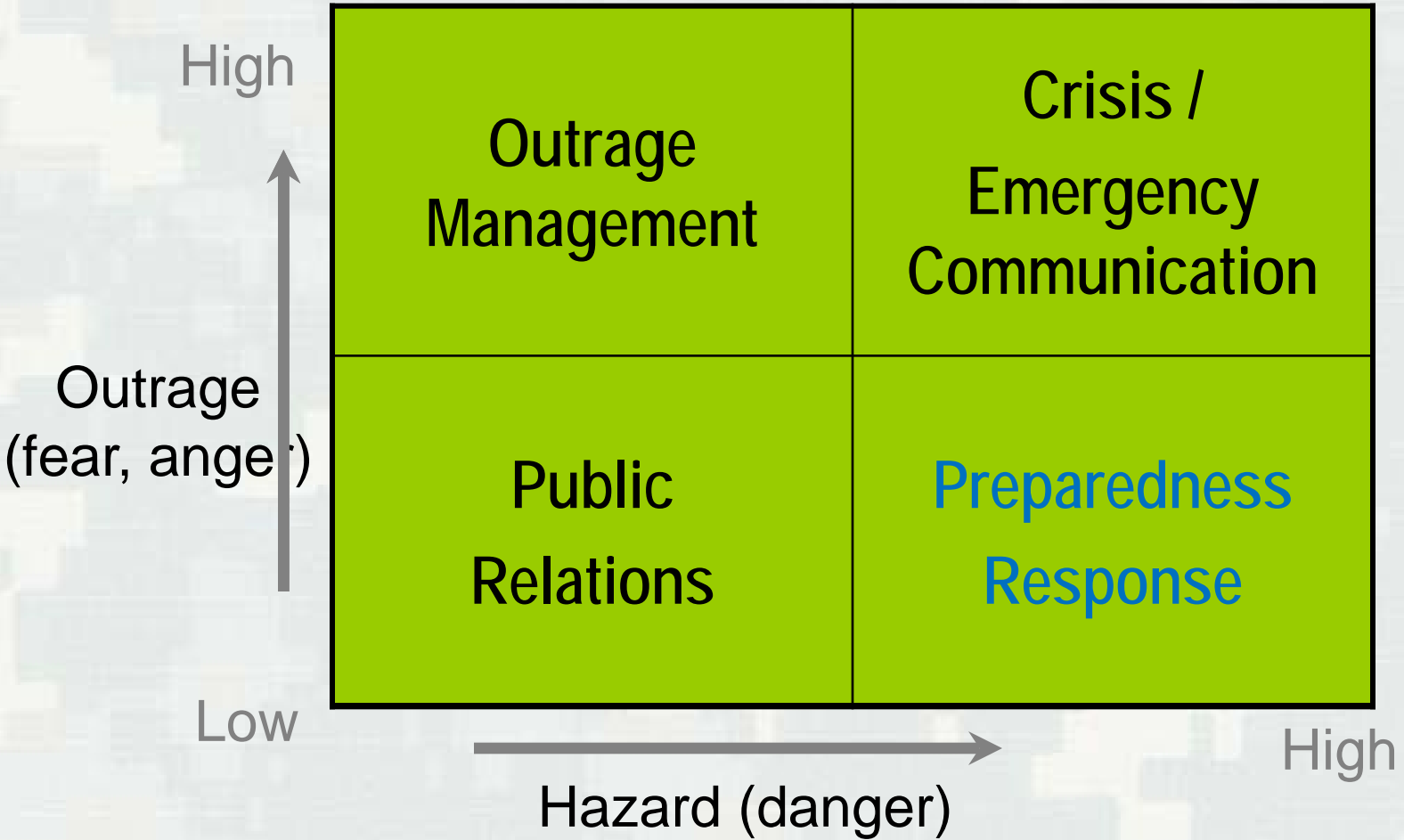
What About LSAC?

- High Risk
- Low Outrage?
- 1-way or 2-way communication?
- What is the objective?

- Need slides from Pete & Carol



Motivating Individual Behavior Change



Recognize Emotional Content of messages

- Cognitive Dissonance
- Fear-mongering or Guilt-tripping as a motivator
- Two guilt provoking messages on risk – which one is more effective?



- *The way we live has improved more in the last hundred years than in the previous thousand, thanks to technology. What wonderful inventions we have created to nurture our quality of life! And then very belatedly, just in the last two decades, we have learned that some parts of our wonderful technology are contributing to an unintended, unanticipated, horrible outcome – a horrible outcome we call global warming. Who knew? Who could have known? It's not our fault, it's nobody's fault. But now we desperately need to do something about it.*
- *It's you, you greedy, lazy, over-consumptive American! It's your insistence on living high on the hog that is ruining the world! It's your SUVs and air conditioners, your total obliviousness to the welfare of other nations and other species. Wake up and mend your ways before*

it's too late!



Media

- Use multiple channels for your multiple audiences
- Become familiar with different means of communicating



Messenger

- Caring and empathy may be more important than experience & competence
- Messenger with real connection to audience (my family and I eat this food)
- Trusted Advisors as messengers
- Social Media as messagners



Motivating Action

- Understand your Audience
- Effective Messages
- Effective Messengers

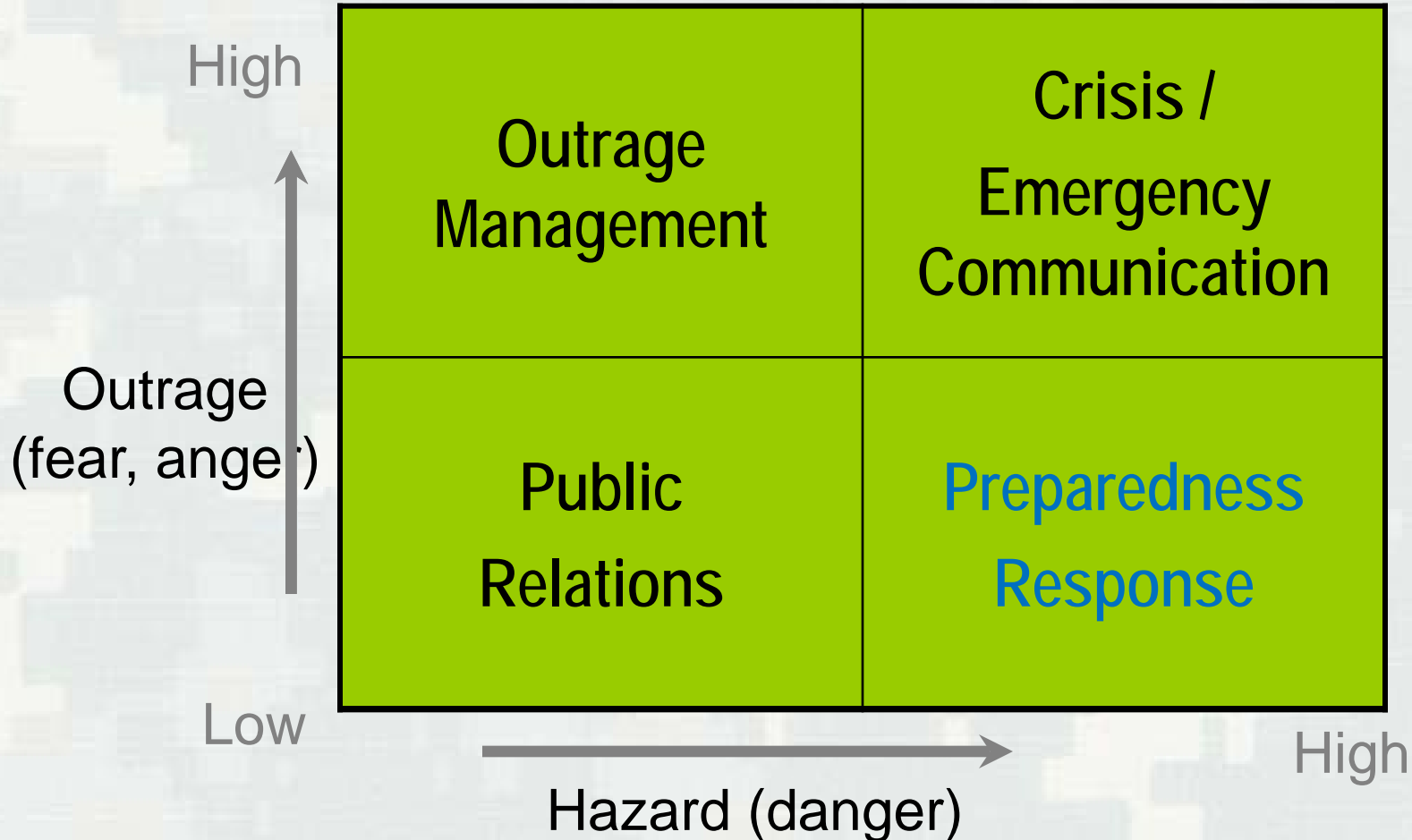
- Promoting Conversations / Dialogue
 - ▶ 2-way
 - ▶ Multiple sources
 - ▶ Action & Consequence - oriented



WRAP UP



Risk Communication Contexts



Wrap up

- Risk Comm Techniques vary based on audience & objectives
- Basic Communication rules apply - Simplicity, empathy, know your audience, listening, clarity of message
- Risk Comm is distinctive because of the technical and risk-based nature of the information that is being communicated (2-way)
- Risk Comm needs to be deliberate/thought-out public participation process; Skills are needed; A team sport.
- Lots of references/ help out there







Three M's

- Message
 - ▶ 3/3's
- Messenger
 - ▶ Empathy & trust over competence & experience
- Media
 - ▶ Multiple channels for multiple audiences



Learn to Say

- What you know for sure
- What you think is almost but not quite certain
- What you think is probable
- What you think is a toss-up
- What you think is possible but unlikely
- What you think is almost inconceivable.



Use Risk Comparisons Carefully

- Single best way to put #'s in context
- They do not work with outraged people
- Bound all comparisons
 - ▶ Worse than heavy rain not nearly as bad as Agnes
 - ▶ This is riskier than X less risky than Y
- Never use low outrage high hazard risks to compare to high outrage low hazard risks



Explaining Uncertainty

- Never sound more certain than you are
- Don't confront uncertainty
- Put bounds on the uncertainty
- Clarify that you're more certain about some things than others
- Explain what you have learned about uncertainty
- We don't know yet but it is probably this or this or this based on what our experts are telling us.
- Uncertainty is very small or very difficult to reduce further, say so



Explaining Uncertainty

- Explain conservativeness
- Report everybody's estimates
- Don't hide behind uncertainty
- Don't perpetuate uncertainty
- Never say there is no evidence of X when you have not done the study that tests the possibility
- Stress that finding out for sure may be less important than taking appropriate precautions now

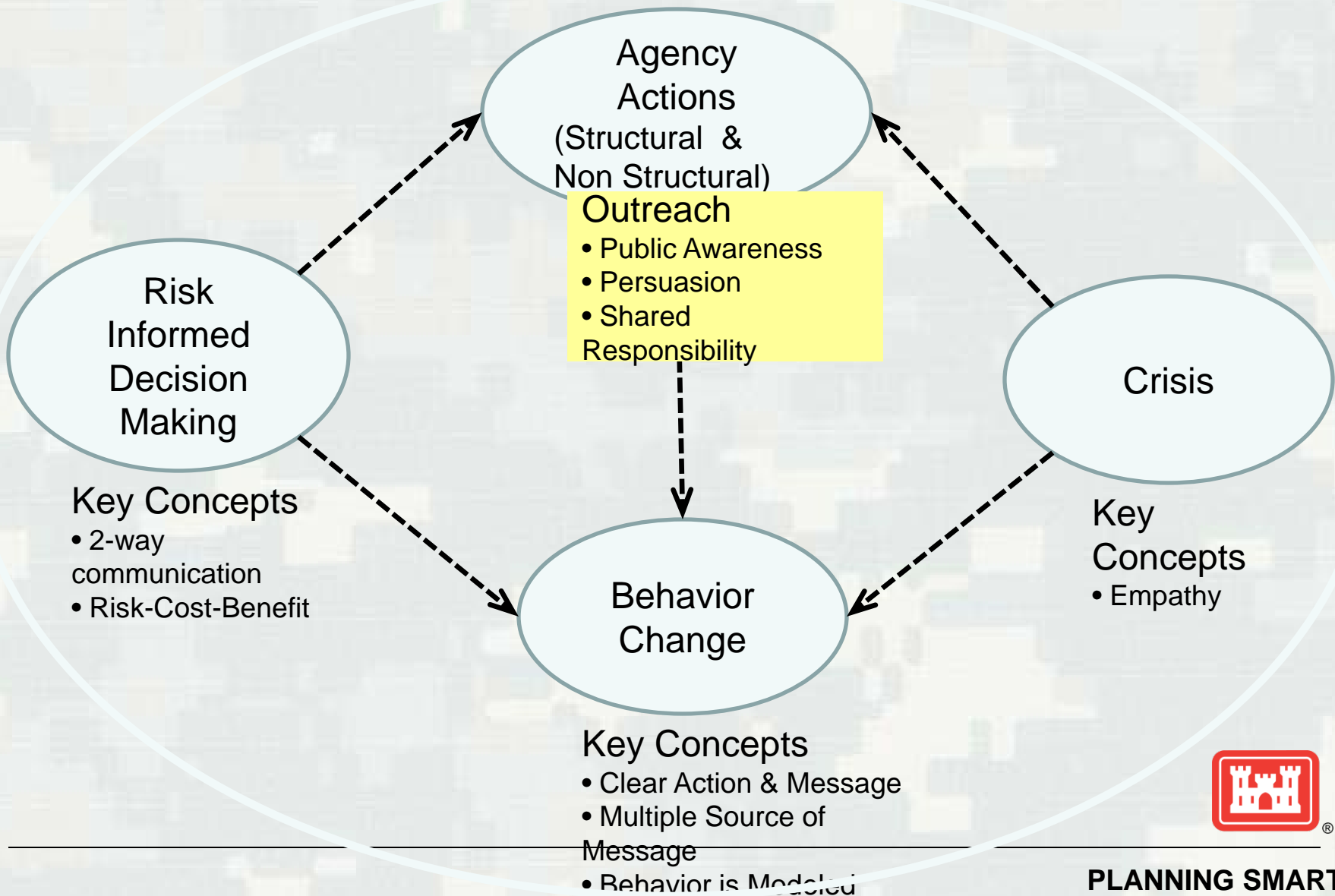


Explaining Uncertainty

- Acknowledge that people disagree about what to do in the face of uncertainty
- Get people involved in reducing uncertainty themselves



Risk Communication Model



Risk Comm

- Analogs for risk information
- Others

Public Partic

- Stakeholder assessment
- Meeting design
- Matching technique w/Pub Partic goals
- Meeting leadership

Intersection

- Public Participation enables understanding of audiences so that messages and actions can be effective
- Risk Comm Techniques promote understanding of risk by the Public



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