

Crisis Communication:

Some Important Anchoring Frames in Crisis Situations

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1. *People are frightened and you're trying to reassure them.* Start by explaining why it makes sense that they are frightened, before saying why you think the risk is low.
2. *People are apathetic and you're trying to alert them.* Start by acknowledging that it must seem like you are over-reacting, before saying why you think the risk is serious.
3. *People want to take a precaution you think is unwise.* Start by agreeing that the precaution is tempting and seems like it ought to be helpful, and that it is natural to want to find some precautions to take.
4. *People are shocked or disgusted or put off their normal behavior.* Start by conceding that, technical risk aside, the revulsion is natural.
5. *People are responding as if a distant risk were here already.* Start by validating that it really is potentially very serious and worth getting ready for, even though it's still far away and precautions aren't needed yet.
6. *People are responding as if a distant risk were guaranteed not to get here.* Start by validating that it really is far away and precautions aren't needed yet, even though it's potentially very serious and worth getting ready for.
7. *People know what you predicted would happen, and now something different has happened.* Start by reminding them of your original prediction and describing how it turned out wrong.
8. *People know what your policy has been, and you're about to change the policy.* Start by reviewing the old policy and the reasons for it, before getting to what changed that led you to revise the policy.
9. *People don't trust you.* Start by admitting that many people don't trust you and going back over what happened to cause the mistrust.