What's in it for me?
Risk Communication Theory and Cultural Cognition in Food Safety Messaging

Katherine Waters DVM, MPH

University of Minnesota
School of Public Health and Food Safety Extension
Goals of risk communication

• Provide meaningful, relevant and accurate information, in clear and understandable terms targeted to a specific audience
• Supports informed decision making
• Discourages negative behavior
CULTURE

The complex whole which includes knowledge, values, beliefs, law, behavior patterns, language, symbols, expressions of creativity and institutions acquired by an individual as a member of an organization or group.

“One of the largest challenges facing risk and crisis communicators is making relevant information accessible and understandable to highly varied subgroups in society” Kreps, 2005
Objectives

Understand how develop more focused and impactful food safety communications by:

• Understanding your target audience
  – And the role of literacy, language and culture

• Choosing appropriate communication vehicles and messengers

• Designing relevant messages that empower the consumer to make informed food safety decisions
Who is your audience?

Cultures
Ages
Literacy Levels
Roles: Food Service worker vs Manager
       Consumer vs Producer
Tailoring

- Communication method (vehicle)
- Communicator (messenger)
- Message
Diversity in Food Service

Restaurant Employee Profiles

- 64% (Caucasian)
- 17% (Hispanic)
- 13% (African-American)
- 6% (Asian-American)

9.5 million workers
Minnesota’s immigrant populations are diverse and changing

People from Mexico, India, and Somalia make up three of Minnesota’s fastest-growing immigrant groups in the past decade. But these three groups have very different English language skills, education and income levels, and other characteristics. Check out all our Immigrant Groups at a Glance profiles.

View topic: Immigration
NUMBER OF LANGUAGES SPOKEN BY EMPLOYEES IN MINNEAPOLIS RESTAURANTS (N = 130)

17 Languages spoken

- English - 129 (99%)
- Spanish - 79 (61%)
- Somali - 5 (4%)
- Vietnamese - 5 (4%)
- Arabic - 4 (3%)
- French - 4 (3%)
- Oromo - 3 (2.3%)
Hmong
Culturally based storytelling used successfully as a method to convey farming safety information to Hmong families.

Stories reinforce facts and provide a context for understanding risk prevention.

Orphan boy the farmer: evaluating folktales to teach safety to Hmong farmers. Schermann
Minnesota has the largest number of Somali’s in the U.S, estimated to be around 50,000 or more. Why here? Somalis originally came to Minnesota because of the good economy and low unemployment. More recently they have come because there is a recognized community here — Somali shops, businesses and restaurants.
Minneapolis Health Department study

Cultural Norms Study Informs Food Safety Strategies

A recent study points to the need for greater awareness about food safety to prevent food-borne illness among Latino and Somali populations. A total of 12 focus groups were conducted on food safety practices and perceptions.
Collaboration

MULTICULTURAL APPROACH TO ACHIEVE COMPLIANCE

Minneapolis Regulatory Services
Environmental Management & Safety

A Collaborative Effort Between the City of Minneapolis
Environmental Health, the
University of Minnesota School of Public Health, and
the Minnesota Department of Agriculture / Minnesota
Department of Health

June 1, 2007
Somali Male Focus Group

To raise food safety awareness in the community, participants encouraged more oral and visual modes and spoke of Somali TV. They supported the creation of DVDs and messages communicated via religious sermons and town hall meetings. Other participants encouraged print materials distributed to halal markets and engaging school children in food safety education.

Multicultural Consulting Service. (2014, June) *Food Safety and Cultural Norms: Focus Groups with Somali Men*
Wash Your Hands
Somali Women

Participants were concerned about preservatives used in food in the US that were not to their knowledge used in Somalia. There they purchased meat that was freshly slaughtered from sources they knew and trusted. Are preservatives causing cancer? The concern was not for them but for their children.
ECHO (EMERGENCY COMMUNITY HEALTH OUTREACH)
Food Service

Prevention motivation:
“Notions of chance and harm can be woven into a story about a particular event that will be relevant to the listener” (deBoer)
“The use of cultural agents to help gain access to multicultural populations and to contribute to the development of successful projects”

Littlefield and Thweatt (2004) 10 Tips

Louis Adams of Arlee, of the Confederated Salish-Kootenai Tribes
CLANS

Traditionally, clans provide all social services to its members, and act as extensions of the families within. *Clan leaders often participate in significant household decision making*
Inspector as Messenger

“The inspector makes a list of problems, and is intimidating when they don’t communicate during the inspection. The inspector needs to explain what is to be done with the list”

City Minneapolis Hispanic food service owner focus group

“Chinese restaurateurs who receive respect from food safety educators and health inspectors will show their respect in return by following recommendations”

Liu
Vehicles

• Info sheets

“Results of the research demonstrate that posting food safety info sheets is an effective intervention tool that positively influences the food safety behaviors of food handlers.”

Chapman and Powell
Media

“Videos and pictures are great training tools.”

City of Minneapolis, A multicultural approach to achieving compliance
Be creative

Mobile Apps

Can I Eat This?

Travelers’ diarrhea—whatever you call it, it can ruin your international trip. Help prevent travelers’ diarrhea by using CDC’s Can I Eat This? app. Select the country you’re in and answer a few simple questions about what you’re thinking about eating or drinking, and Can I Eat This? will tell you whether it’s likely to be safe. With Can I Eat This?, you can be more confident that your food and drink choices won’t make you spend your international trip in the bathroom.

Key Features

- Authoritative recommendations from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
- Access recommendations offline (no data connection needed)
- Easy to use and fun

To give feedback about this app, contact CDC-INFO.
Recipes

• Recipes tied with food safety message, watch short videos with recipes for new Hispanic dishes with integrated food safety information

Yepiz 2010
Efficacy of a Food Safety Comic Book on Knowledge and Self-Reported Behavior for Persons Living with AIDS

Dworkin
Text Messaging

- Grocers will send loyalty program customers text when recalled item is something they purchased.
Messaging

• Challenges
  – Literacy
  – Stress decreases comprehension (Covello)
  – Need to result in prevention motivation
    • Overcome “Not relevant to me”
  – Uncertainty
    • as outbreak investigation progresses
    • recalls
• Terminology
  – Our science is complex
  – Avoid idioms, unnecessary jargon and assumptions
  – Examples cross contamination, pathogens, danger zone

• Show-and-tell
  – use visuals
Message basics

• Know your audience
• Keep messages short and focused (think single sentences & headlines)
• Save the background info for later
• Give action recommendations in positive terms (“do” rather than “don’t do”)
Self efficacy

• Perception that one has the personal capability to do the things necessary to avert a threat.
  – is easy
  – affordable
  – can do it
  – it works
Message Mapping – Key Questions

• What are the most important things your audience would like to know?
• What are the most important things you would like your audience to know?
• What are the most important things your audience is most likely to get wrong unless they are emphasized?
Other message formats

- Must do
- Could do
- Should do

- Primacy: 1st, 2nd, 3rd
My key points and WIIFYou

• Cultural cognition
• Get to know your audience
• Tailor to your audience
  – Messenger
  – method
  – message
    • Realize you may need multiple methods and messages
• Follow basics
  – Focus on key points
  – Emphasize relevant information and practical steps to avoid risk
  – Use plain language, graphics, images
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