Why don’t people think like we think?

changing strategies to better engage with changing communities.

Dr Craig Cormick

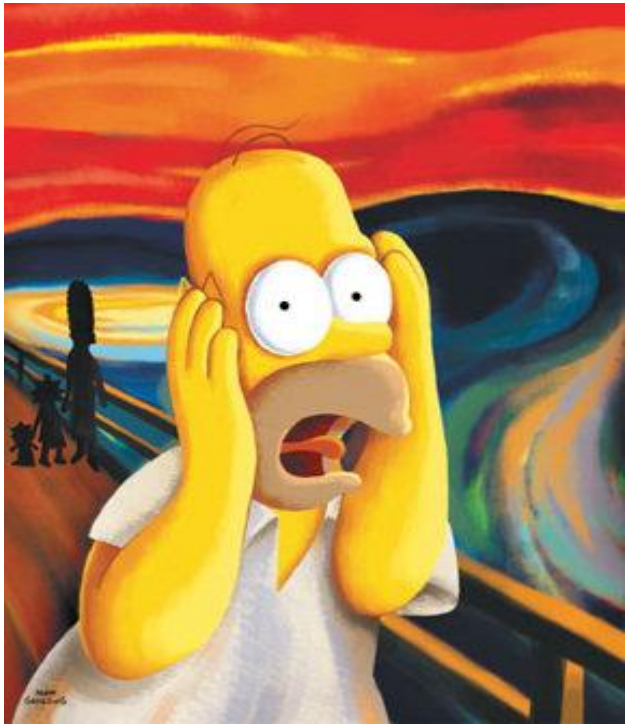
We are going to talk about….

1. What drives the different ways we think
2. Understanding ways to segment people in like-minded groups
3. Risk vs perceived risk
4. How values drive attitudes and values segments
5. How you use that knowledge to better engage with communities – via a case study

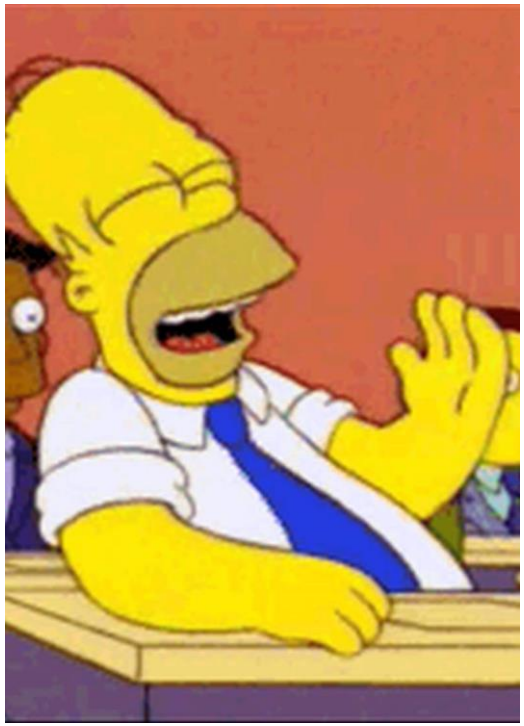
Quick poll

1. **Arachnophobia** – The fear of spiders (30%)
2. **Ophidiophobia** – The fear of snakes (30%)
3. **Acrophobia** – The fear of heights (10%)
4. **Claustrophobia** – The fear of small spaces (10%)
5. **Agoraphobia** – Fear of open or crowded spaces (5%)
6. **Aerophobia** – The fear of flying (8%)
7. **Any other**…?

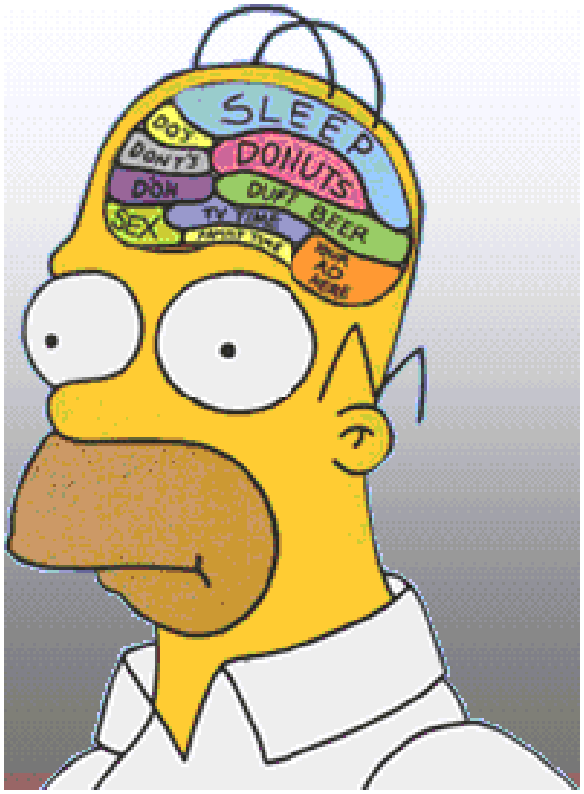
Ask the person next to you – ‘What do you most fear?’



Now tell them that their fear is completely illogical and counter to factual evidence of risk



Did that make any difference to the way they think?



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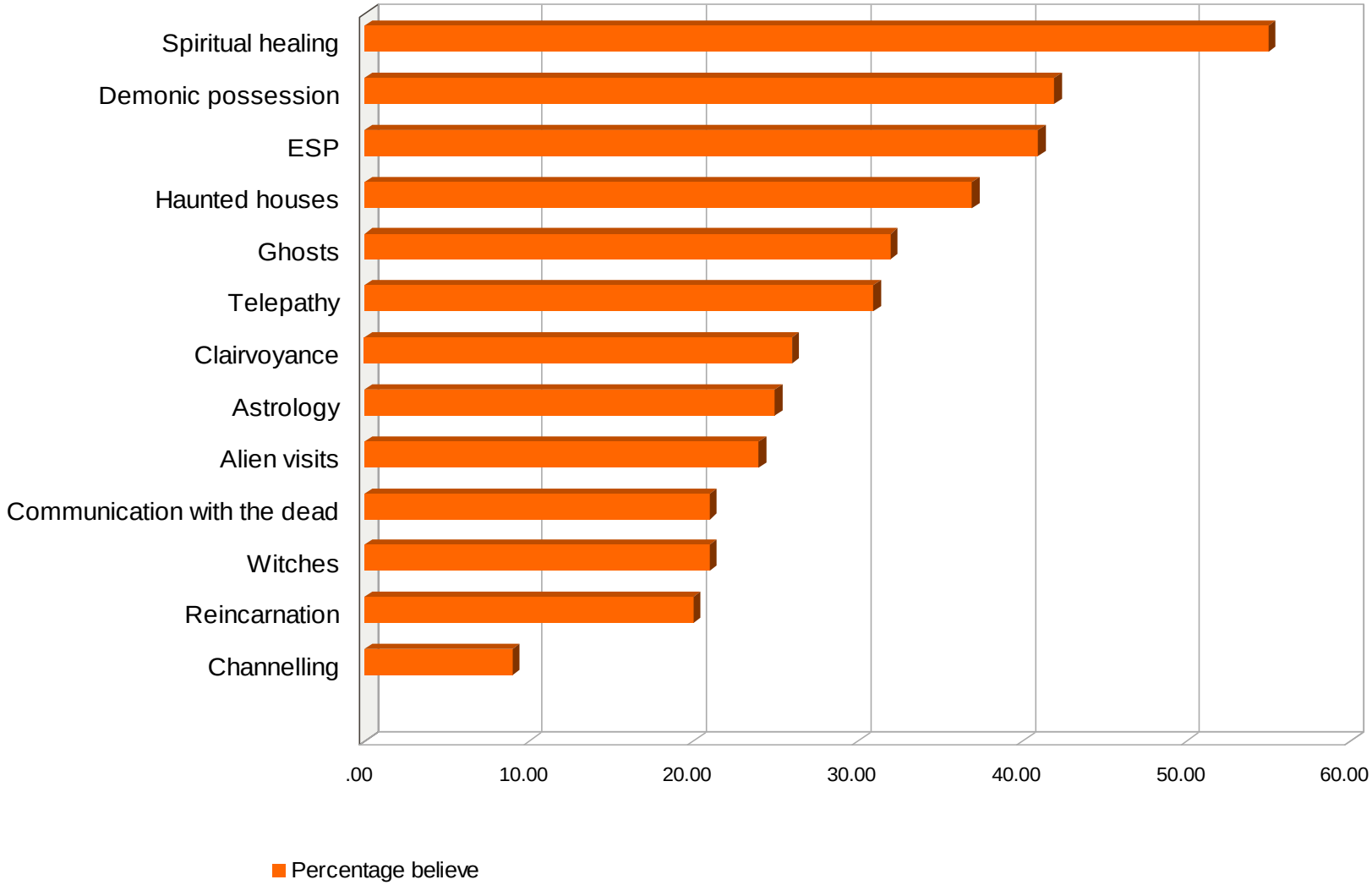
Key learnings

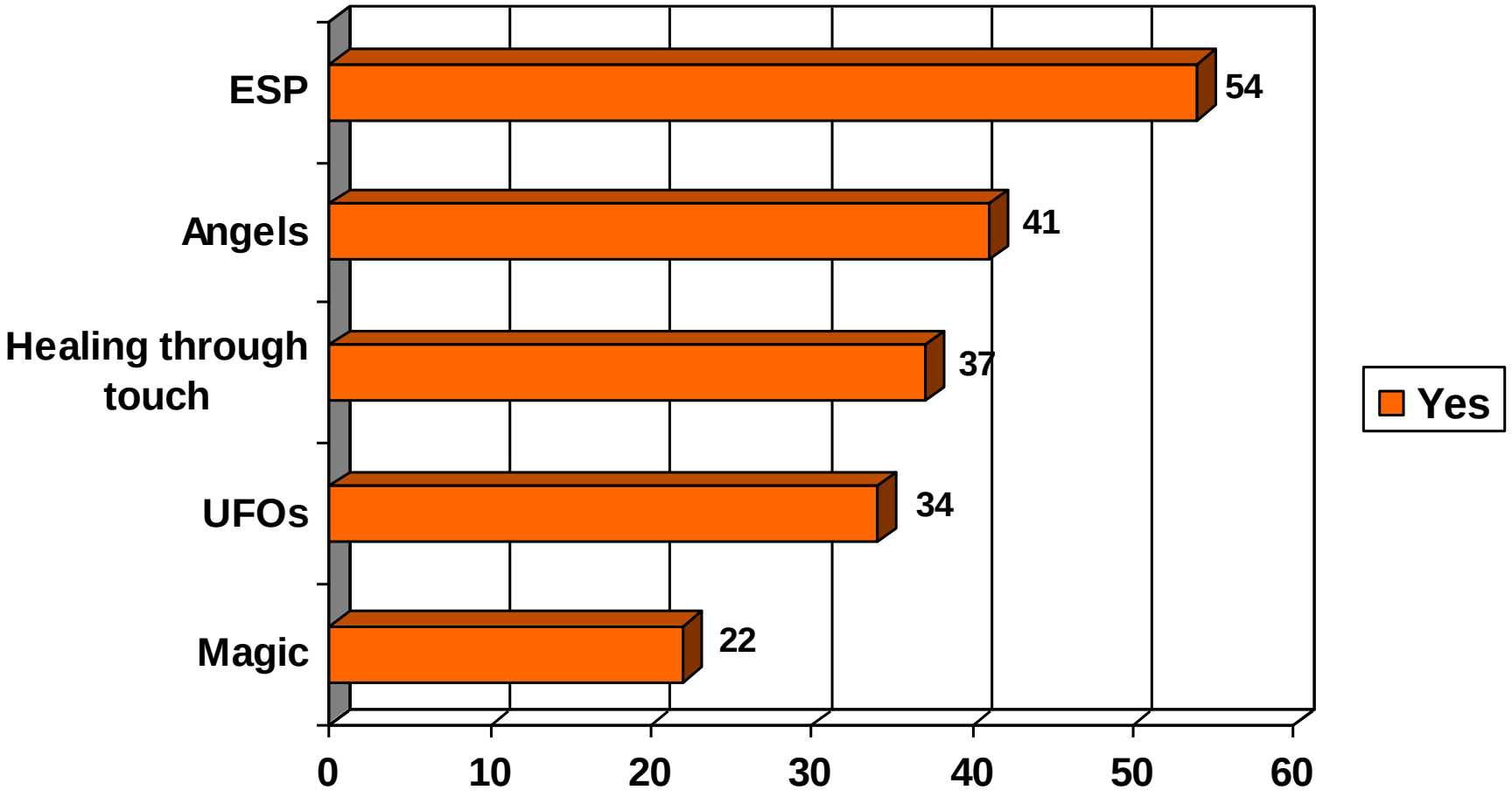
1. When **information is complex**, people make decisions based on their **values and beliefs**.
2. People seek **affirmation of their attitudes** (or beliefs) – no matter how fringe – and will **reject** any information or facts that are **counter** to their attitudes (or beliefs).
3. Attitudes that **were not formed by logic** are **not influenced** by logical arguments.
4. Public concerns about contentious science or technologies are **almost never about the science** – and scientific information therefore does little to influence those concerns.
5. People **most trust** those whose **values mirror their own**.

US Paranormal Beliefs

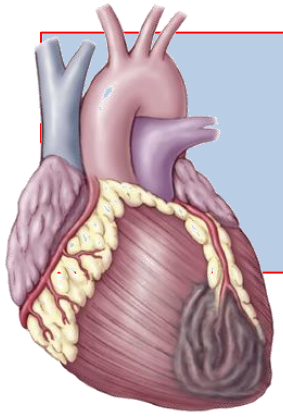


Australian Paranormal Beliefs

Do you believe in the existence of any of the following? (Aust)



DIISR April 2011



The heart of the problem

- Is the way **we are wired** psychologically
- Leads us to **common errors** in our **thinking** that in turn leads to **distortions of perception**, **inaccurate judgments** or **illogical interpretations.**

How we think

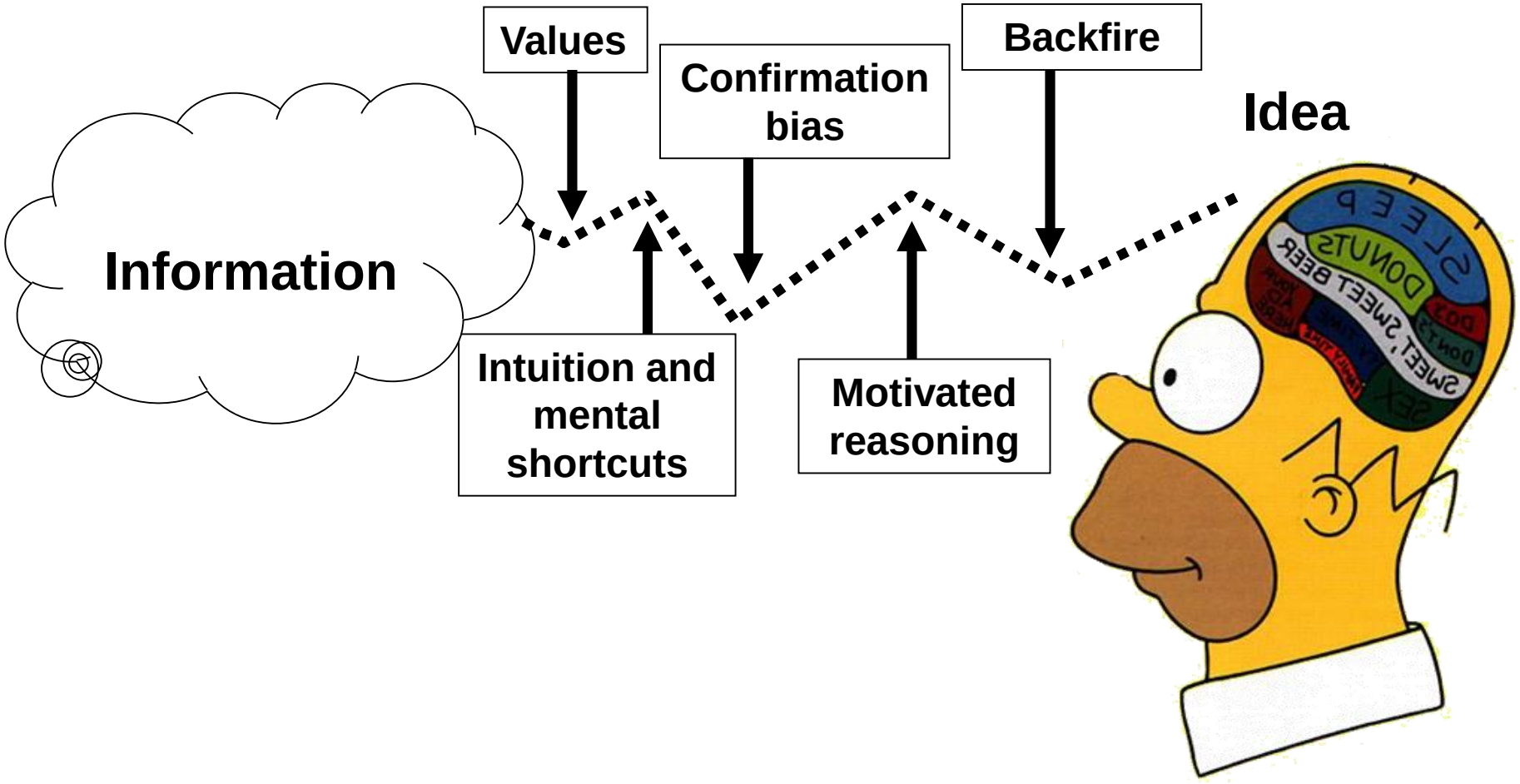
- When we are **time poor**, **overwhelmed** with data, **uncertain**, driven **by fear or emotion**, we tend to assess information on **mental shortcuts** or VALUES not LOGIC.
- And opinions that were **NOT formed** by **LOGIC** or **FACTS** are **not then** able to be easily **influenced by LOGIC or FACTS**.

The fraught path of attitude formation

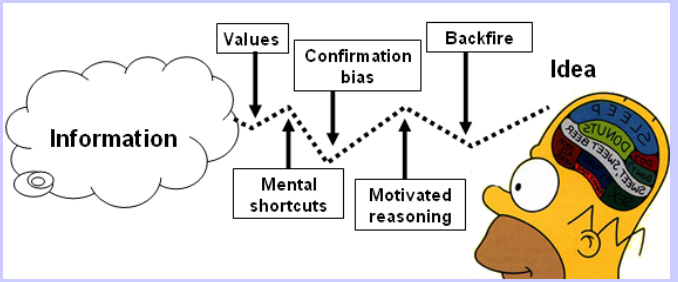
Information

Idea

The fraught path of attitude formation



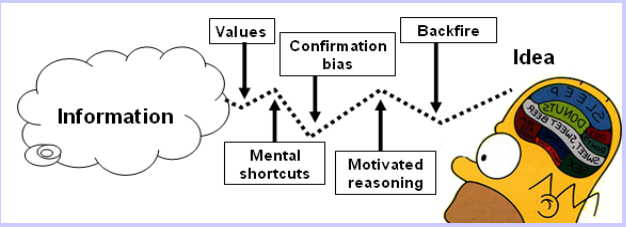
1. Intuition is unsuited to modern world



- Our **intuition** has served us well for **tens of thousands** of years.
- Has **stopped** us from stepping out of the safe cave into the **dangerous** dark of night.
- But it is **largely unsuited** to the **modern world**, leading to **superstitions**, **pseudoscience and beliefs** that are counter to **scientific evidence**.

[Frank Furedi, professor of sociology at the University of Kent]

2. Value driven attitude formation



- Most people, when faced with an issue related to science and technology, adopt an **initial position of support or opposition**, based on a variety of **mental shortcuts** and **predisposed beliefs** rather than scientific evidence.

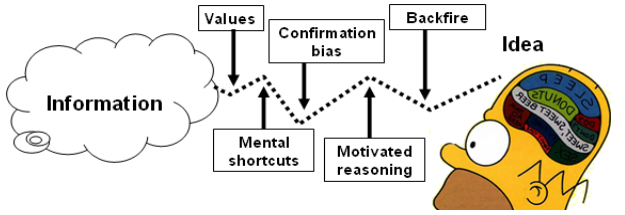
  Eg: **Climate change denial** and **anthropocentricism,**

  Anti GM foods and **natural values.**

  Anti-embryonic stem cells and **right to life**.

[Dr. Andrew Binder, at North Carolina State University]

2. Value driven attitude formation



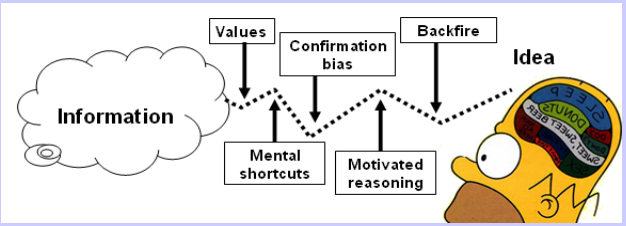
Understanding how values drive attitudes helps explain how:

Having **pro-development values** can lead to you saying **respect the science** on **GM foods**, but the **science** on **climate change** is **dubious**,

yet

Having **pro-environment values** can lead to you saying **respect the science on climate change**, but the **science** on **GM foods** is **dubious**.

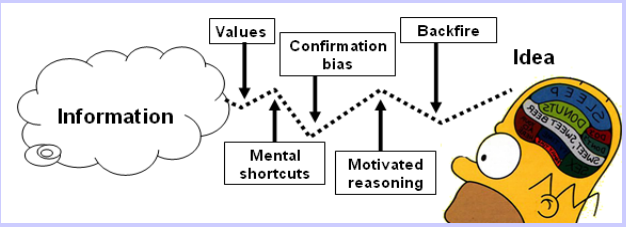
3. Backfire



- When people are shown information **proving that their beliefs are wrong**, they actually become **more entrenched** in their original beliefs.
- Highly intelligent people tend to suffer **backfire** more than less intelligent people do – making us immune to any facts that are **counter** to our **strongly-held beliefs**.

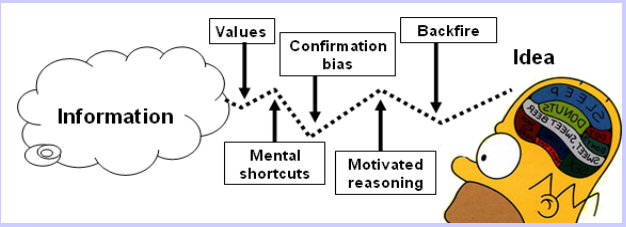
[BRENDAN NYHAN AT the University of Michigan]

4. Confirmation bias



- When presented with **both sides** of an argument people tend to focus only on the **arguments that support** their **existing point of view**, become **more entrenched** in that view, and are less likely to see the merit of other viewpoints.

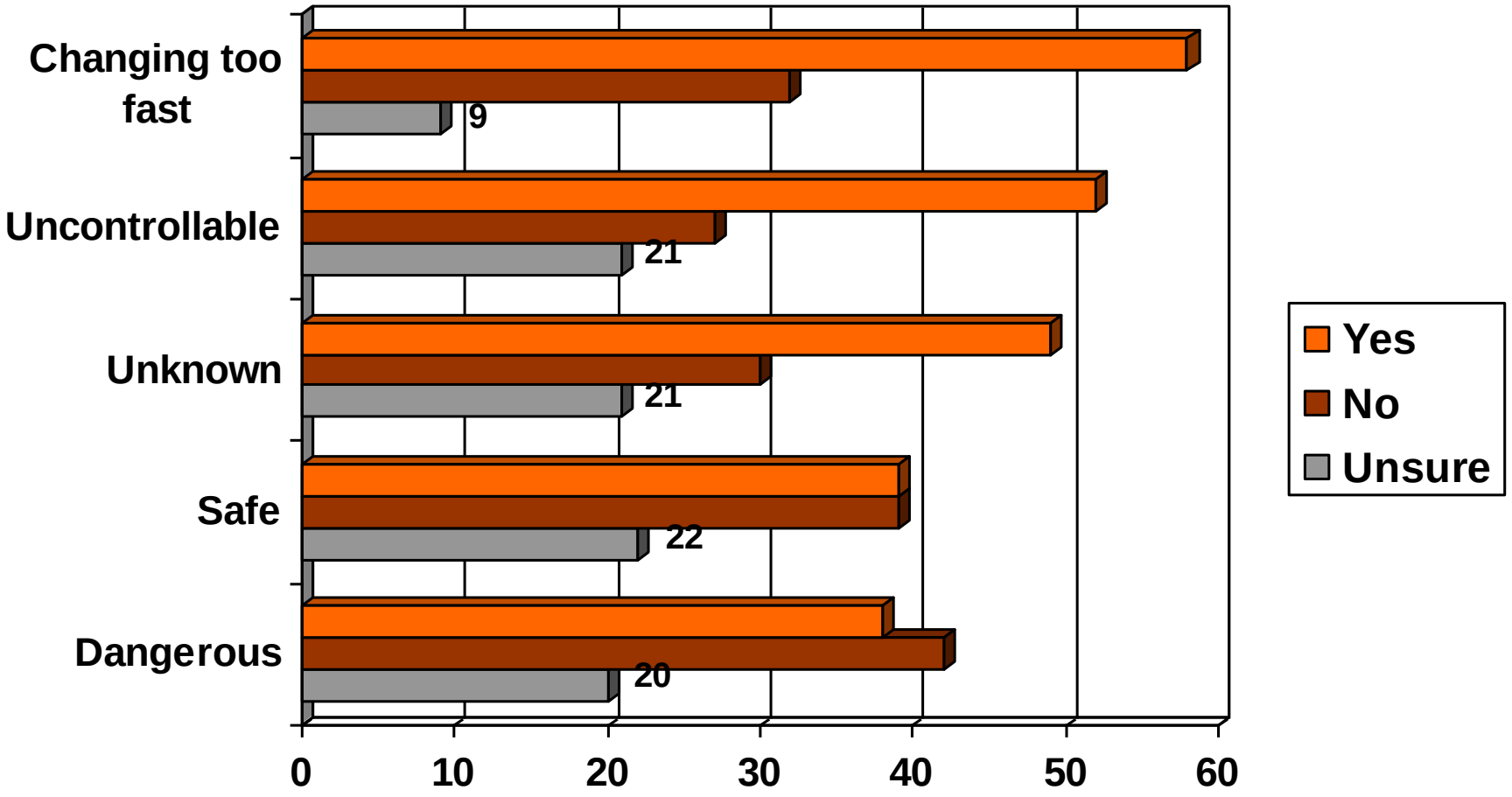
5. Amplification of Risk



- The more people with **opposing points of view talk** about the topic, the **less likely** they will **agree** on any issue or even see it the same way.

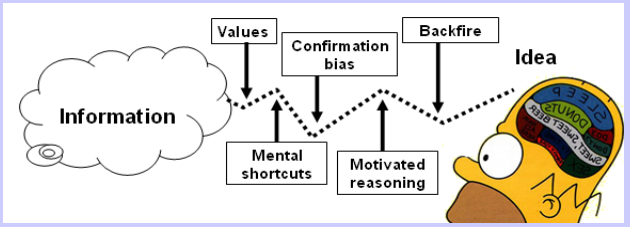
[Dr. Andrew Binder, at North Carolina State University]

Is life and the world around you?

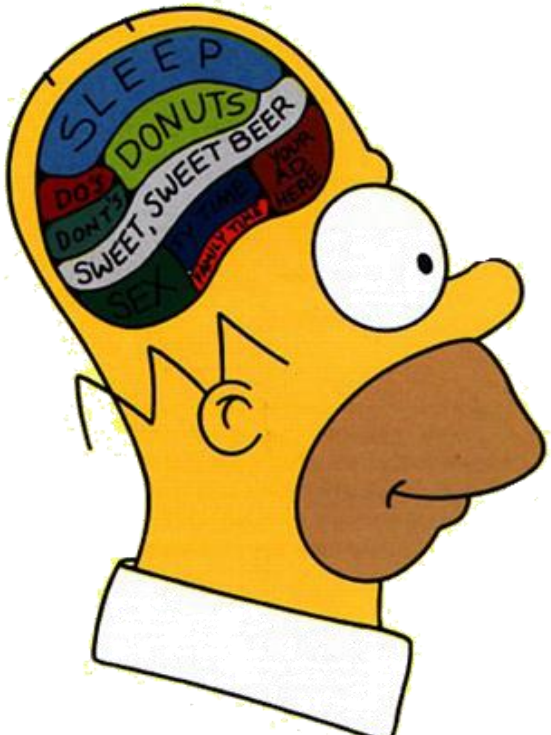


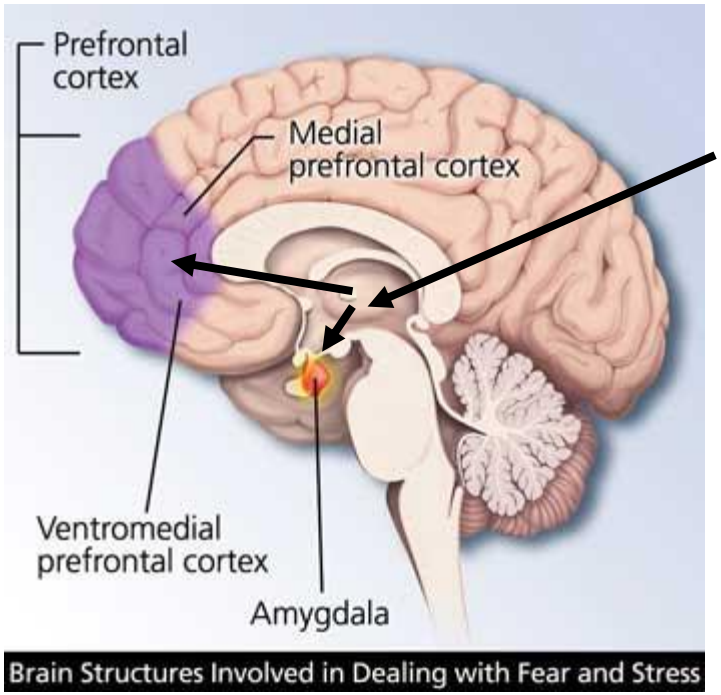
DIISR April 2011

6. Even our brain wiring works against us



3. Prefrontal cortex: responsible for our higher order thinking and decision making



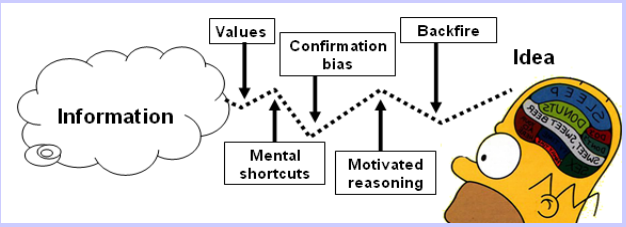


Brain Structures Involved in Dealing with Fear and Stress

1. Thalmus: the brain's post office

2. Amygdala: The 'danger, danger' part of the brain

6. Even our brain wiring works against us

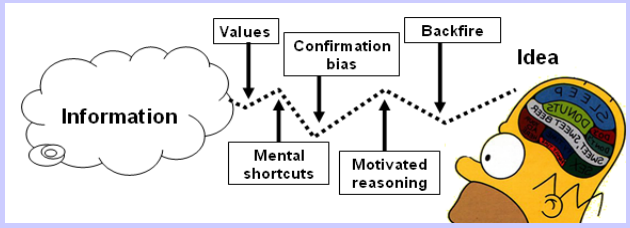


As David Ropeik says:

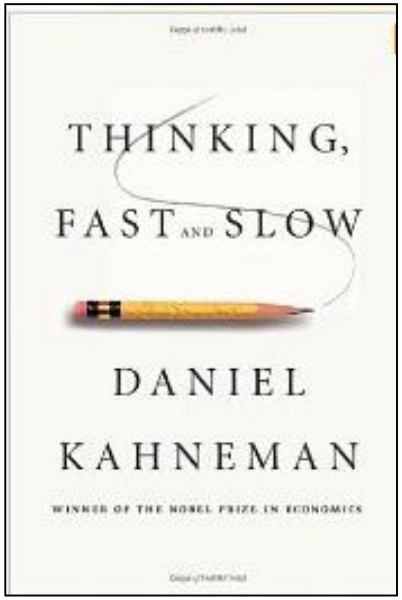
*"Both the physical architecture and biochemistry of the brain ensure that **emotion and instinct** have the upper hand over **reason and rationality**. … **Before you know you are afraid, you are**. The inescapable truth is that, when it comes to risk, we are hardwired to feel first and think second."*

David Ropeik, Risk Perception in Toxicology, 2011

What is all means in practice



- **Fast thinking** uses **mental shortcuts** and is prone to the **errors** they bring
- **Slow thinking** needs a lot **of energy**, uses more **analytical** and critical thinking, but is still **prone to errors** by **limited information** we have at hand



- We can **spot biases** in **other's thinking**, but **rarely** in our **own!**

One of the core problems with science-based communication is that public and scientists' opinions are often far apart

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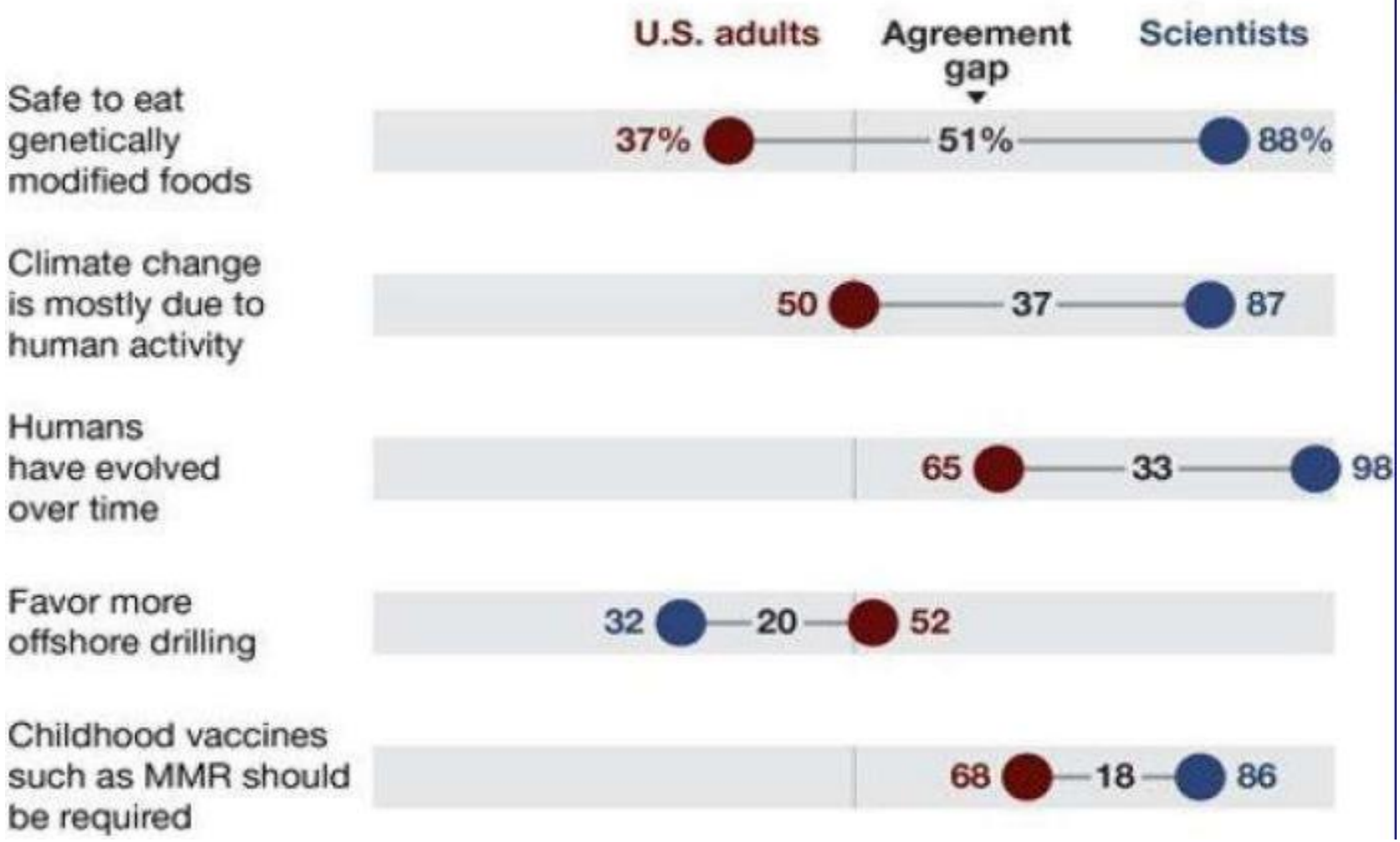
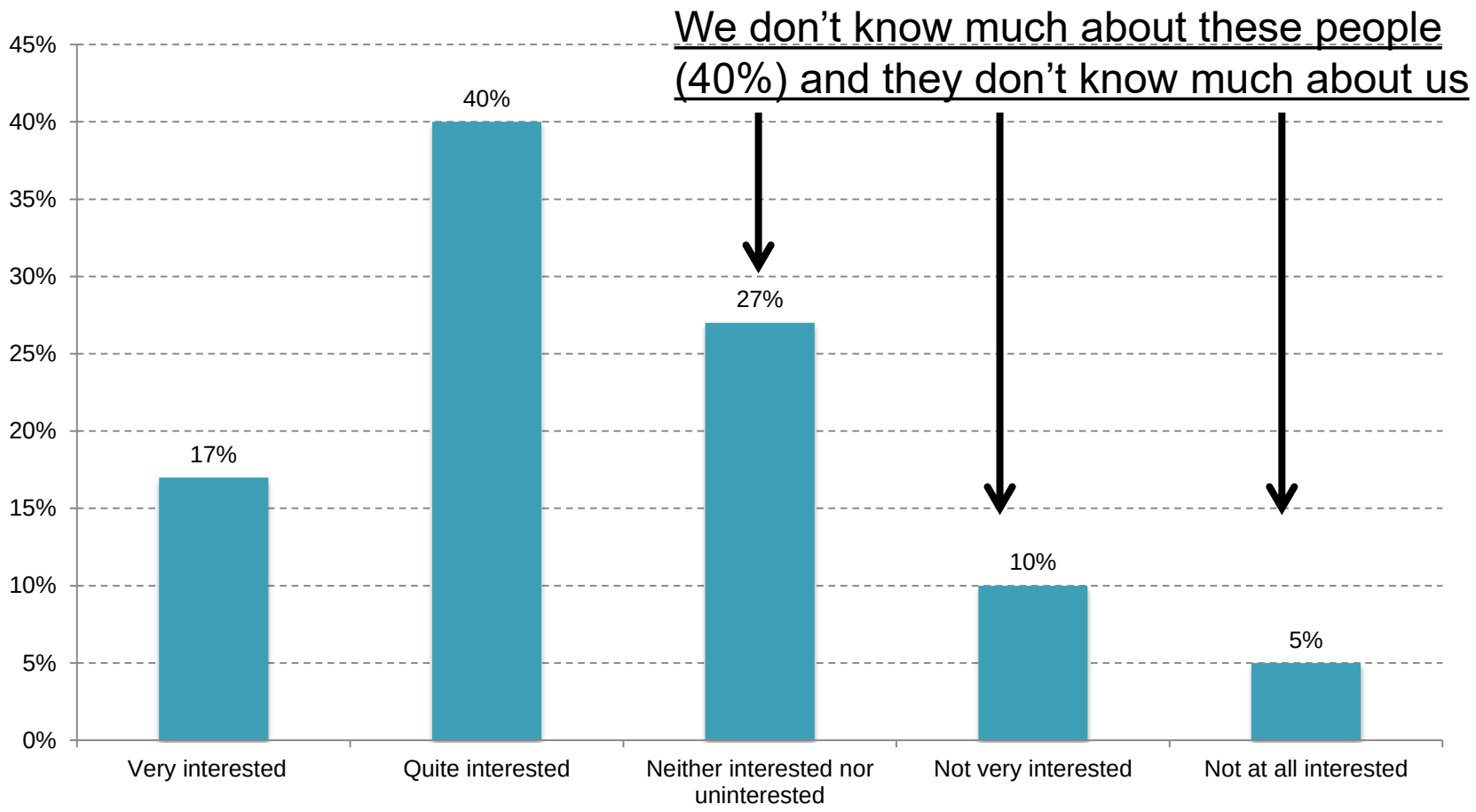


What do we know about our Public Attitudes to Science?



How interested are you in science generally? n=647

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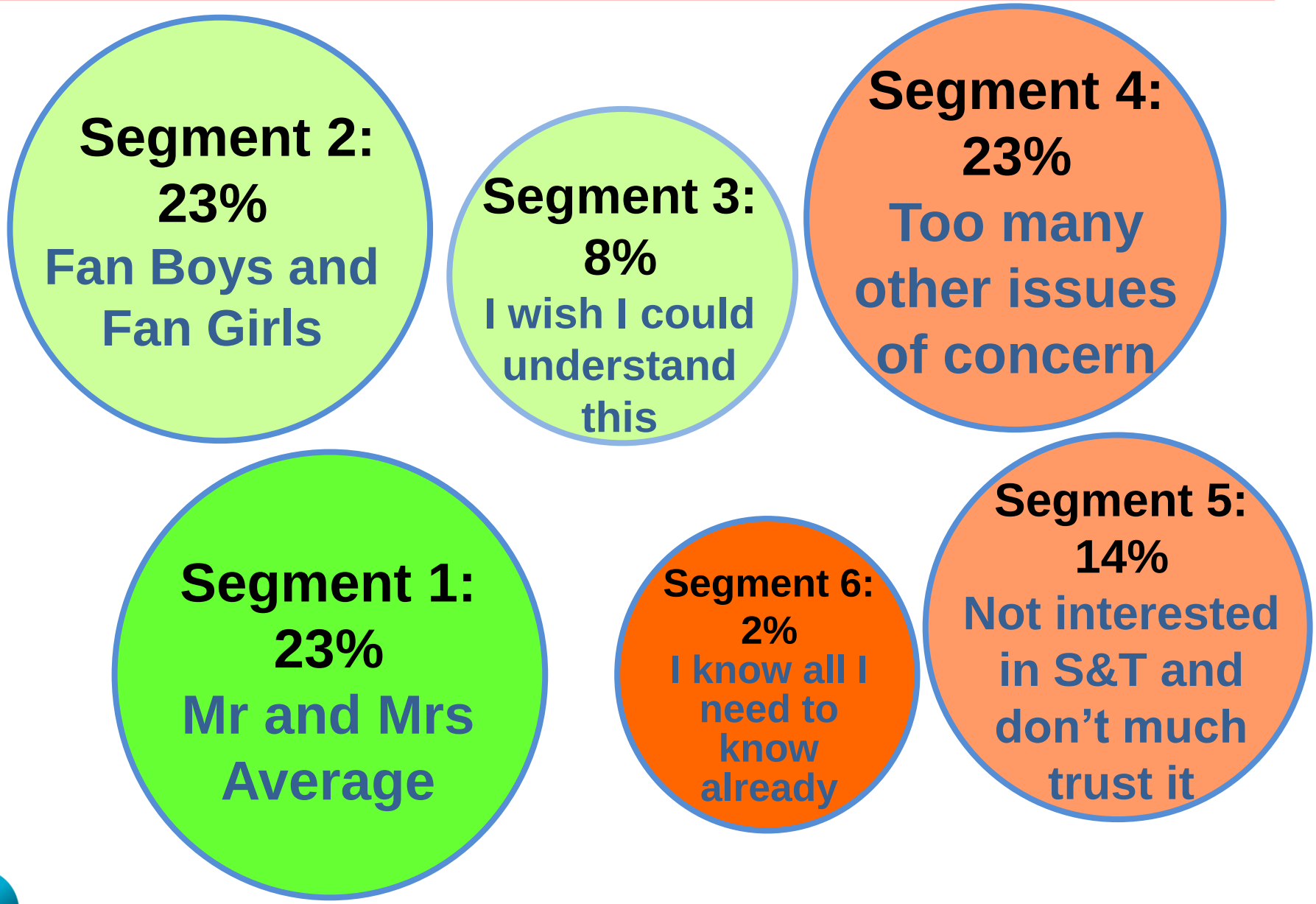
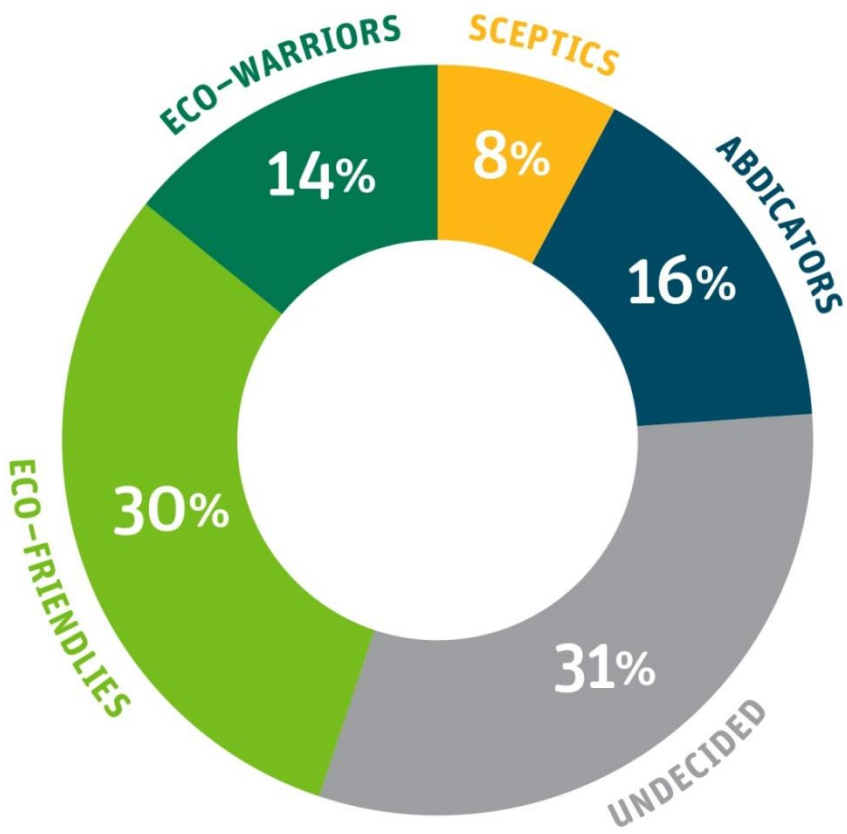
Australian Segments by attitudes to science



CSIRO Segments by Attitudes to Climate Change



SEGMENT 1: SCEPTICS (8%)
Exemplified by older males who either do not believe that climate change is happening or believe that it is a natural phenomenon. As such, this group is named 'Sceptics'.

SEGMENT 2: ABDICATORS (16%)
Again mostly male and believe that climate change is a natural fluctuation in the earth's temperatures. This group is named 'Abdicators'.

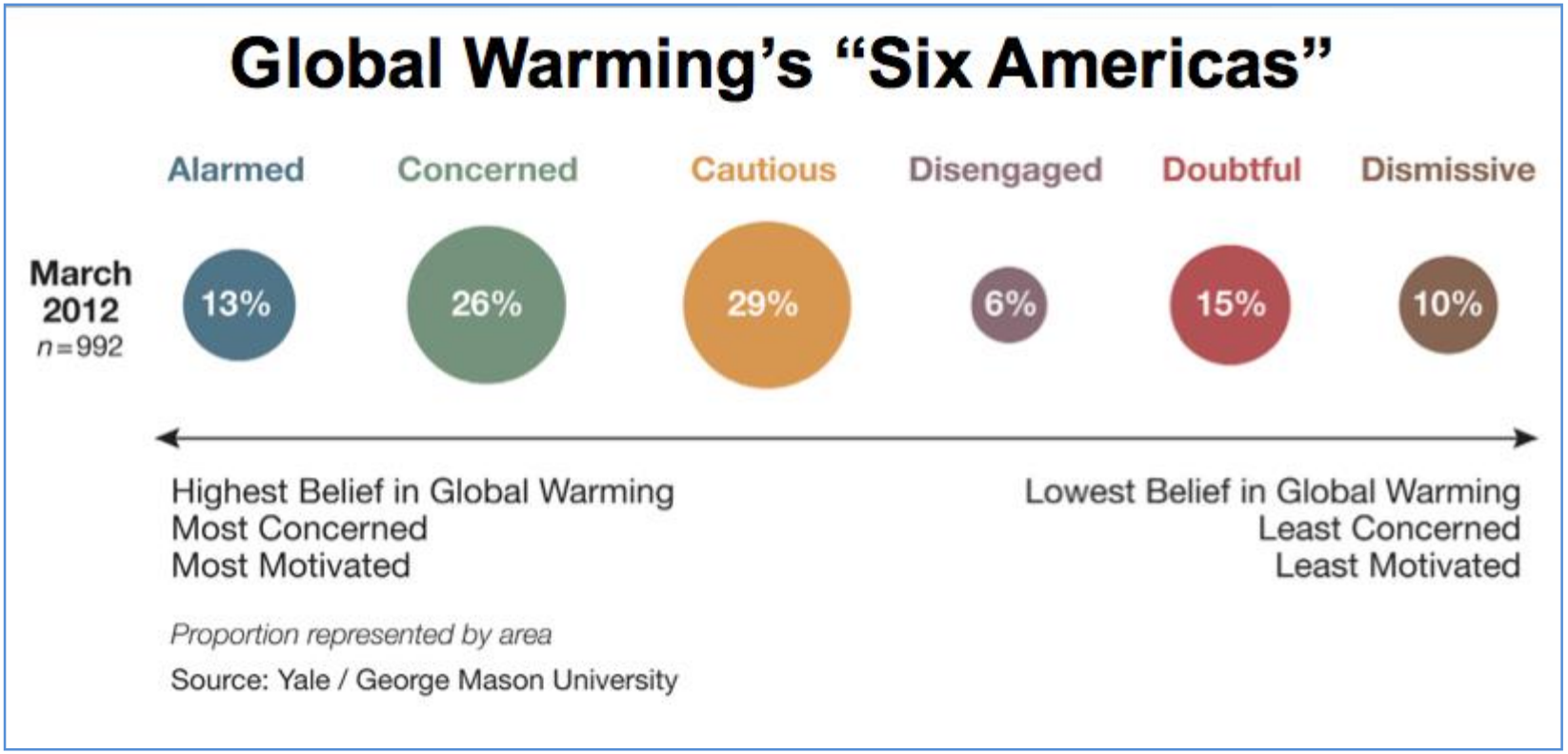
SEGMENT 3: UNDECIDED (31%)
Had a female skew and believe that climate change is happening but are unsure as to the reasons why, thus this group is named 'Undecided'.

SEGMENT 4: ECO-FRIENDLIES (30%)
Again had a slight female skew and the majority believe that humans are largely responsible for climate change, but are less extreme in their views than segment 3. This group is named 'Eco-Friendlies'.

SEGMENT 5: ECO-WARRIORS (14%)
Predominantly female and strongly believe that humans are largely responsible for causing climate change. This group is named 'Eco-Warriors'.

CSIRO, 2014

USA Segments by Attitudes to Climate Change



Seven ‘archetypes’ of attitudes and behaviours towards bushfires

1. Can do defenders – action orientated and self sufficient, confident and determination to protect property and deal with fire

2. Considered defenders – strongly committed to staying to protect their property – recognise risks and make efforts to prepare

3. Livelihood defenders stay to protect property, stock and assets from fire if possible

4. Threat monitors – don’t intend to remain if the threat is serious, but don’t want to leave until they feel it is necessary

5. Threat avoiders – conscious of the fire threat and feel vulnerable; plan to leave before there is any real threat

6. Unaware reactors – don’t believe there is a risk area, either unaware of risk, or have no reason for concern

7. Isolated & vulnerable - physical or social isolation, that may limit their ability to respond safely.

Segments by safety behaviour

Adoption stage	Involvement level	Explanation
Innovators	High involvement	'Global visionaries': May invest a high level of learning, time and creativity in innovating new solutions to community safety issues. Does not count the cost of engagement.
Early adopters	Medium involvement	'Private visionaries': May engage in significant learning as they adopt lifestyle improvements to enhance personal and family safety. Personal benefits outweigh the cost.
Early majority	Low involvement	Pragmatists open to better safety practices: they want simple guaranteed 'products or services' with minimum learning and investment of personal time (in other words, costs).
Late majority	Resistance	Pragmatists in denial about safety issues, but will follow mainstream trends. Currently they do not see the benefits as substantial.
Laggards and sceptics	Strong resistance	Those resistant the need for safety from natural hazards. They deny any benefits and will require regulatory and enforcement solutions.

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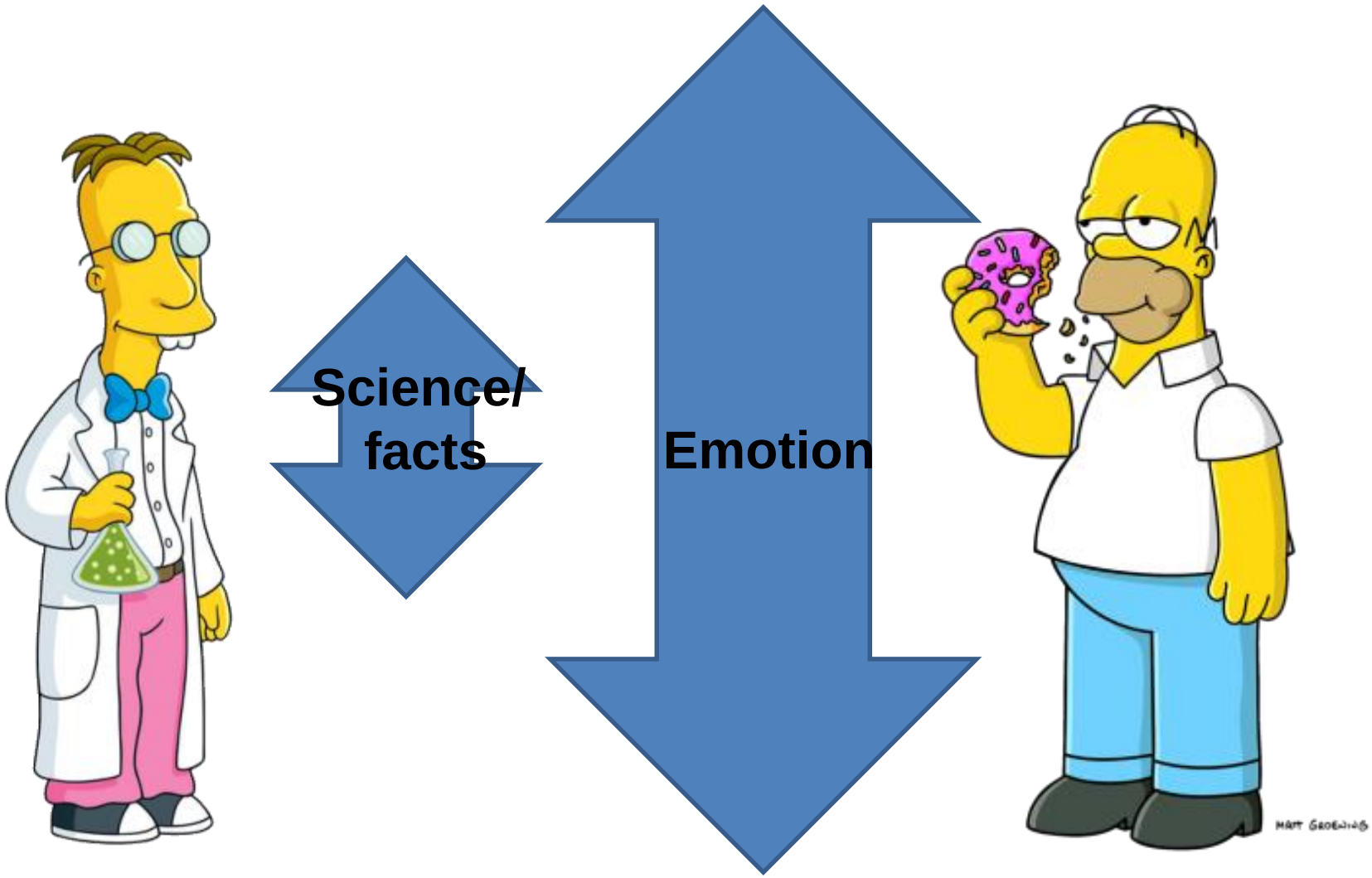
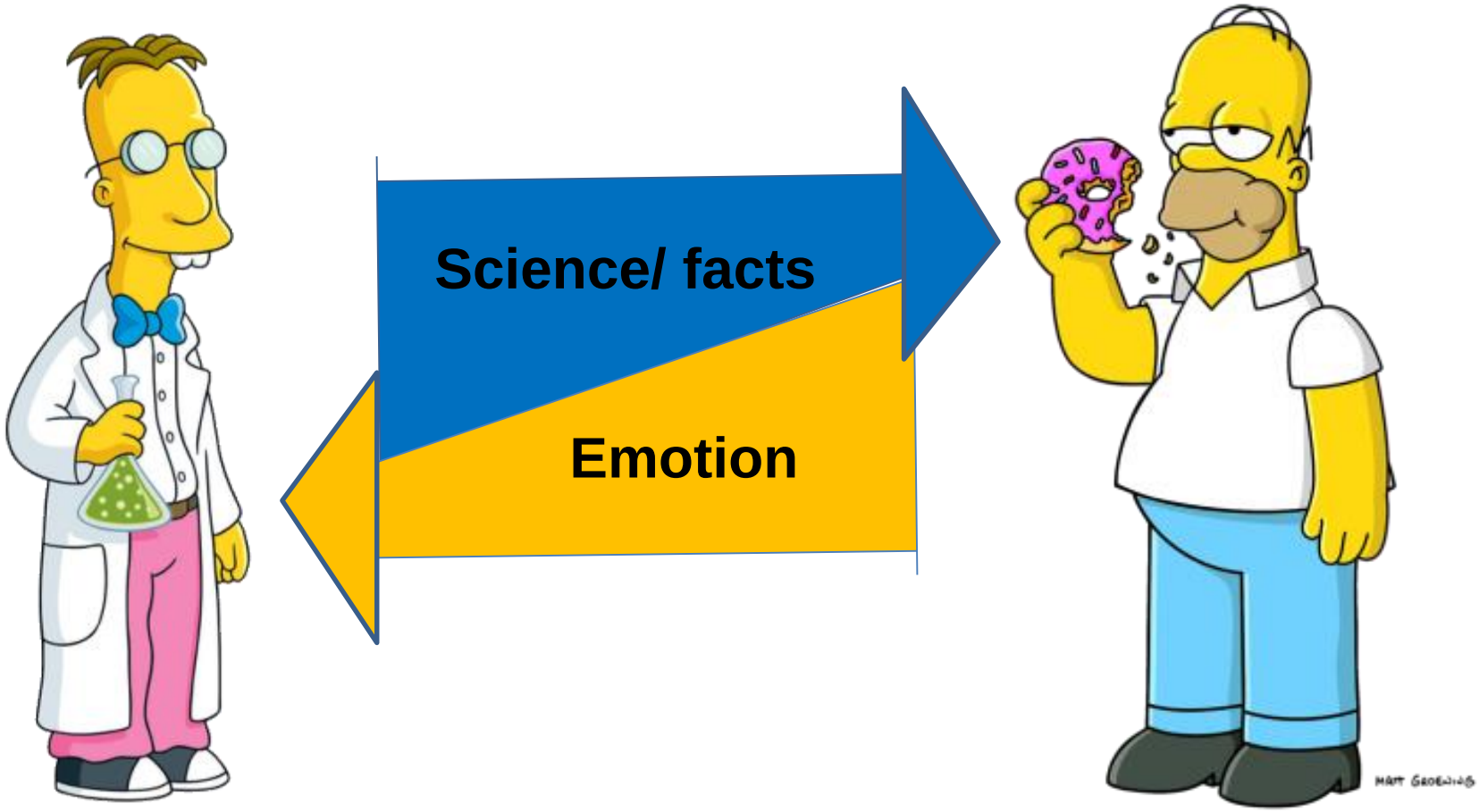
Risk perception gap



Risk Communication



Public perceptions of risk vs Scientific view of risk

Scientific view of risk:

Risk = Probability x Impact

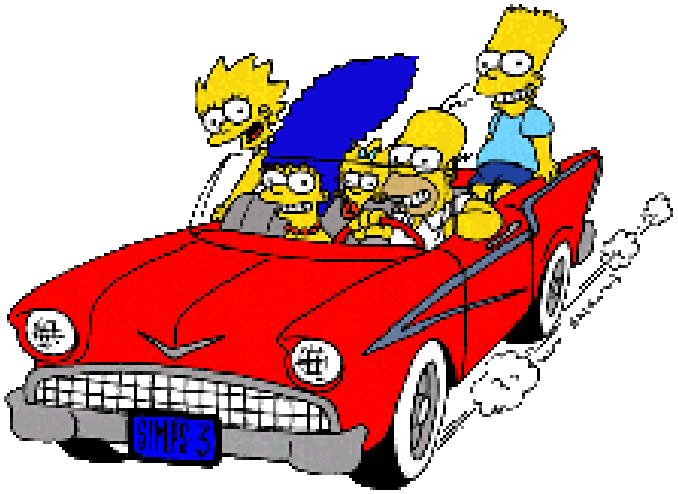
Public view of risk:

Risk = OMG x WTF

Perceived risks vs scientific reality

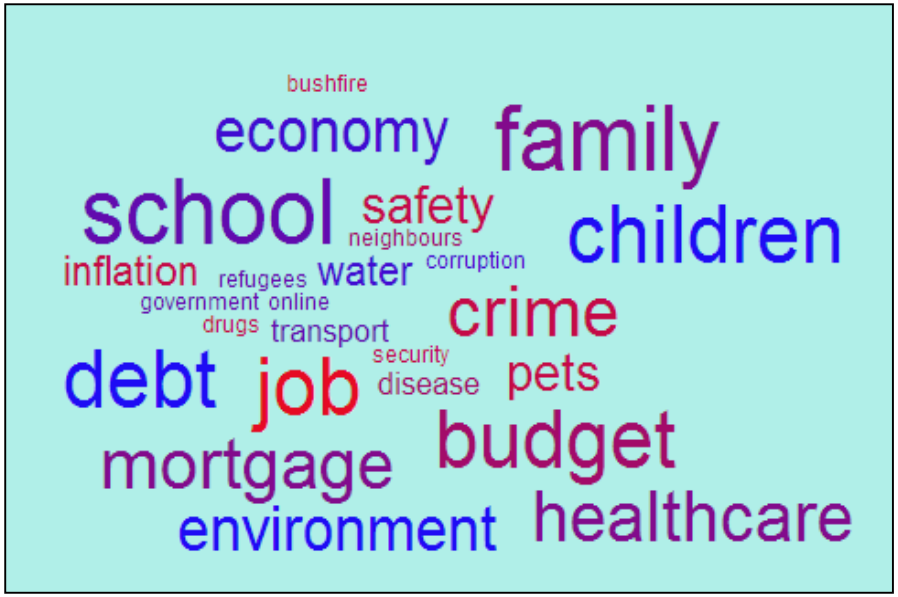
Perceived risk of flying

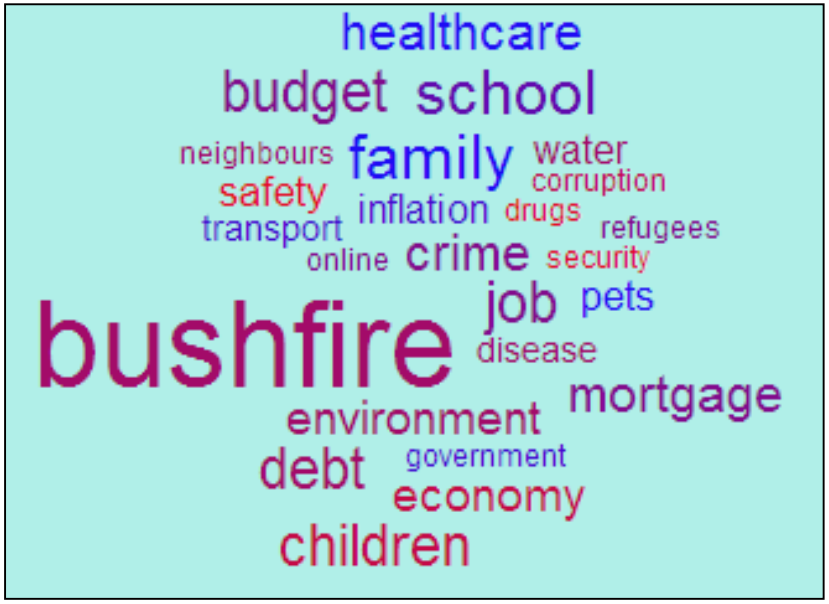
Actual risk



Perceived risk of driving

Actual risk





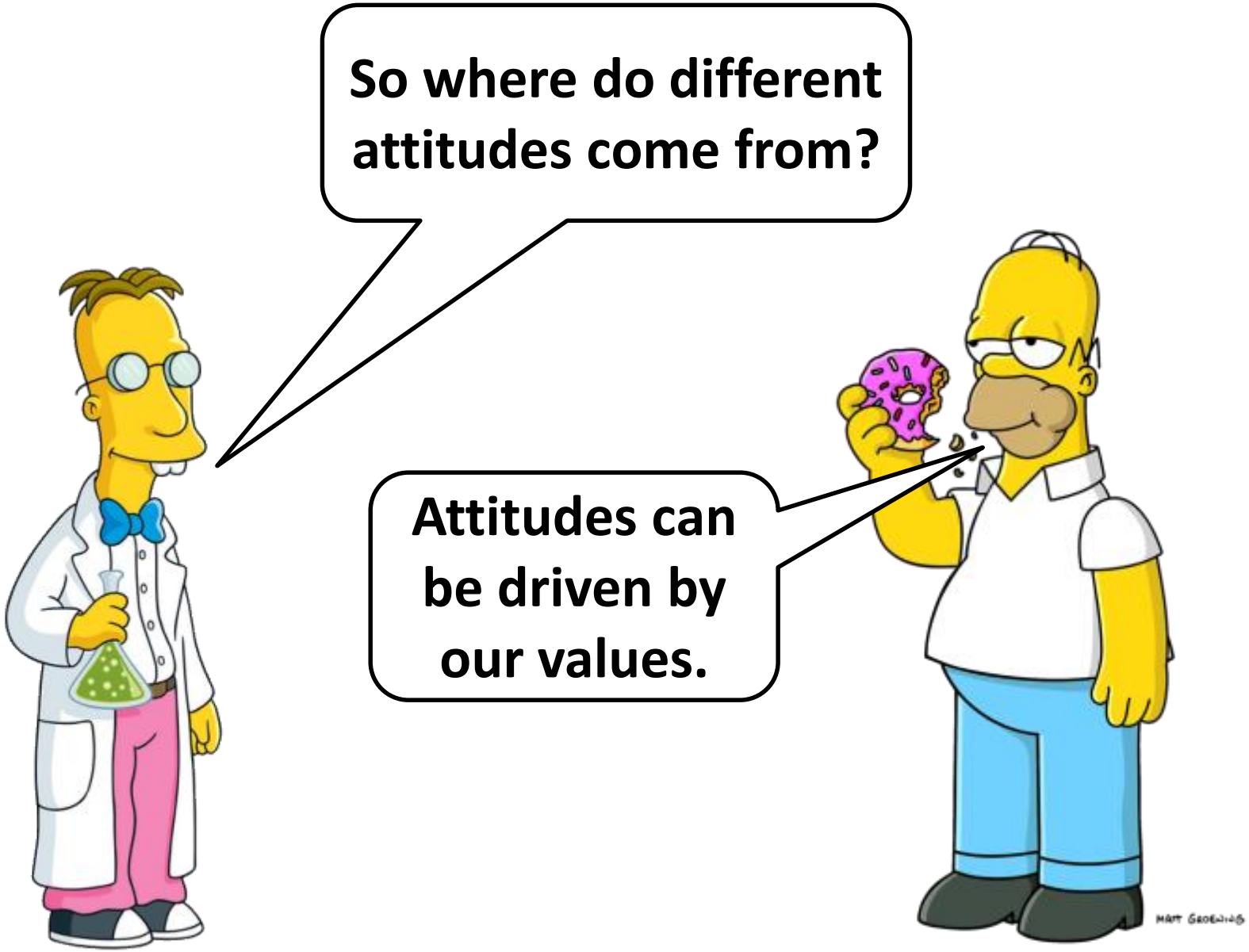
Risk perception also need to be understand in relation to everyday concerns.

Q: Which represents emergency service agencies' perception of risk and which represents public perceptions of risk?

Trust Factors in High Risk/Concern Situations

Assessed in first 30 seconds

* Vincent T. Covello


So where do different attitudes come from?
Attitudes can be driven by our values.

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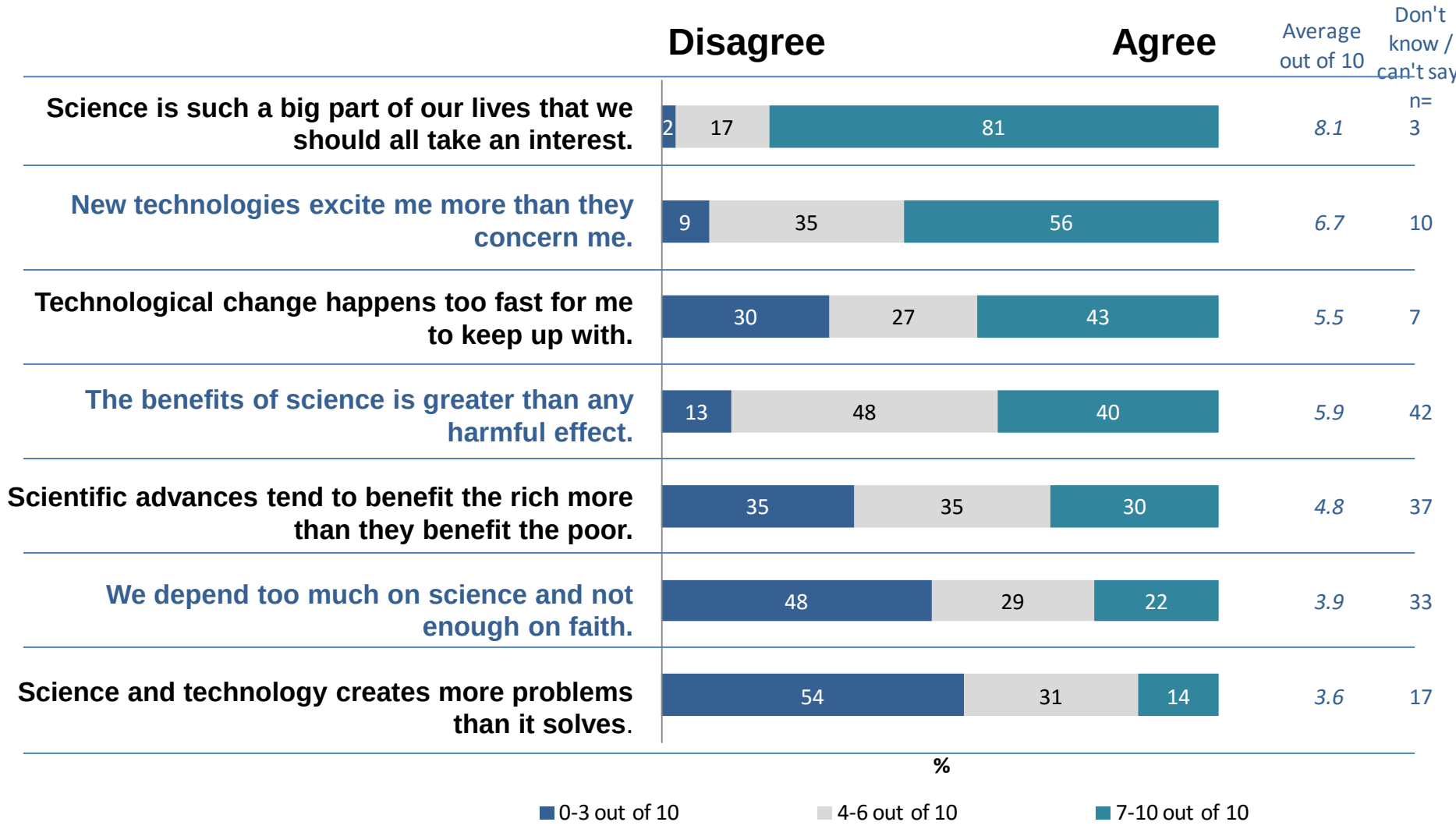
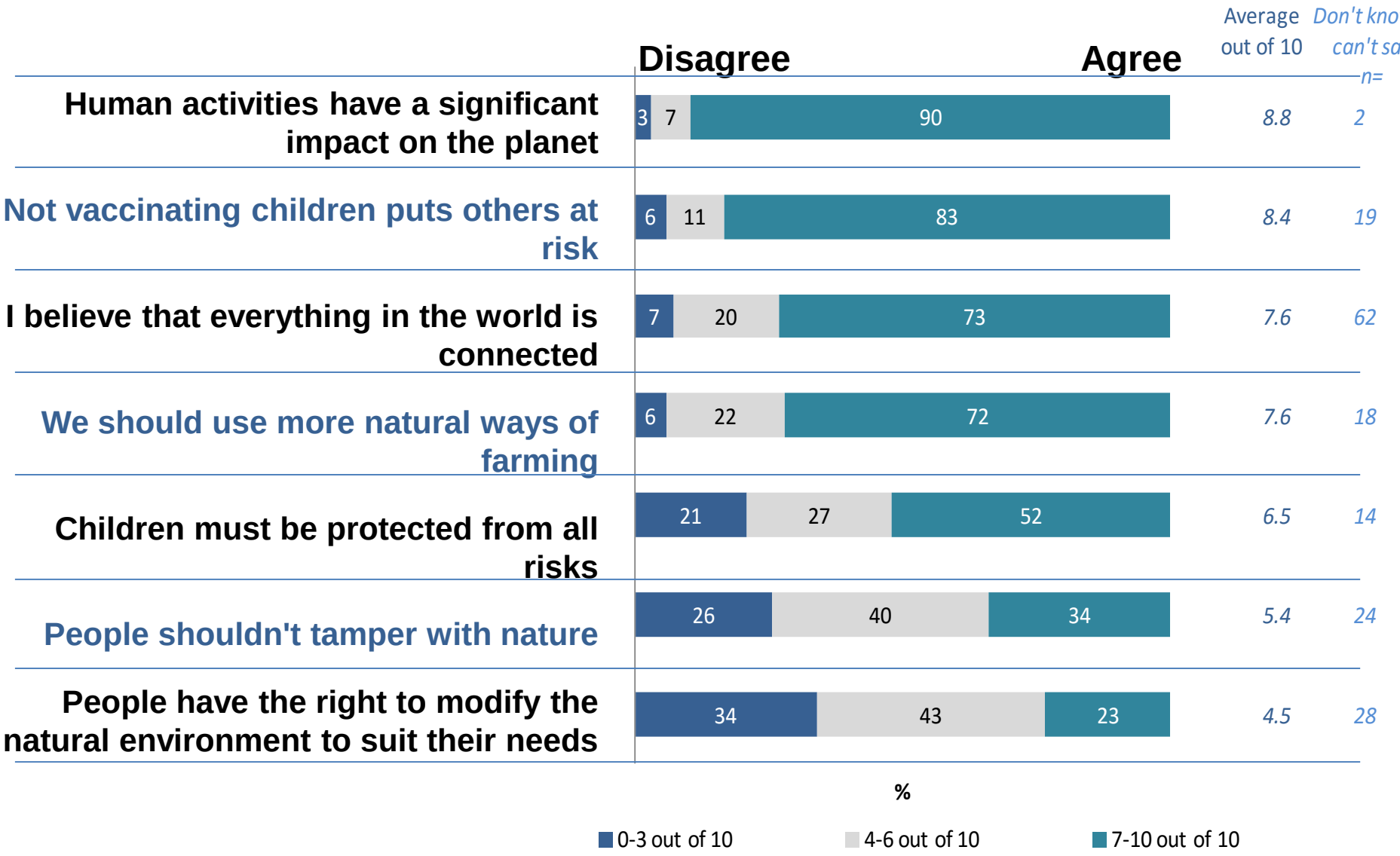
Values are the Rosetta Stone to understanding Risk Communications

Understanding VALUES towards S&T



Values towards the world around us



Values segmentation profiles

Science fans
- Mostly male.
- -High support for all S&T
- *"Everyone should all take an interest in science'*

4

Cautiously keen
- Belief that benefits of science outweigh risks,
- but: "*children should be protected from all risks"*

3

Risk Averse
- High awareness but high risk concerns
- *S&T can be dangerous and risky*

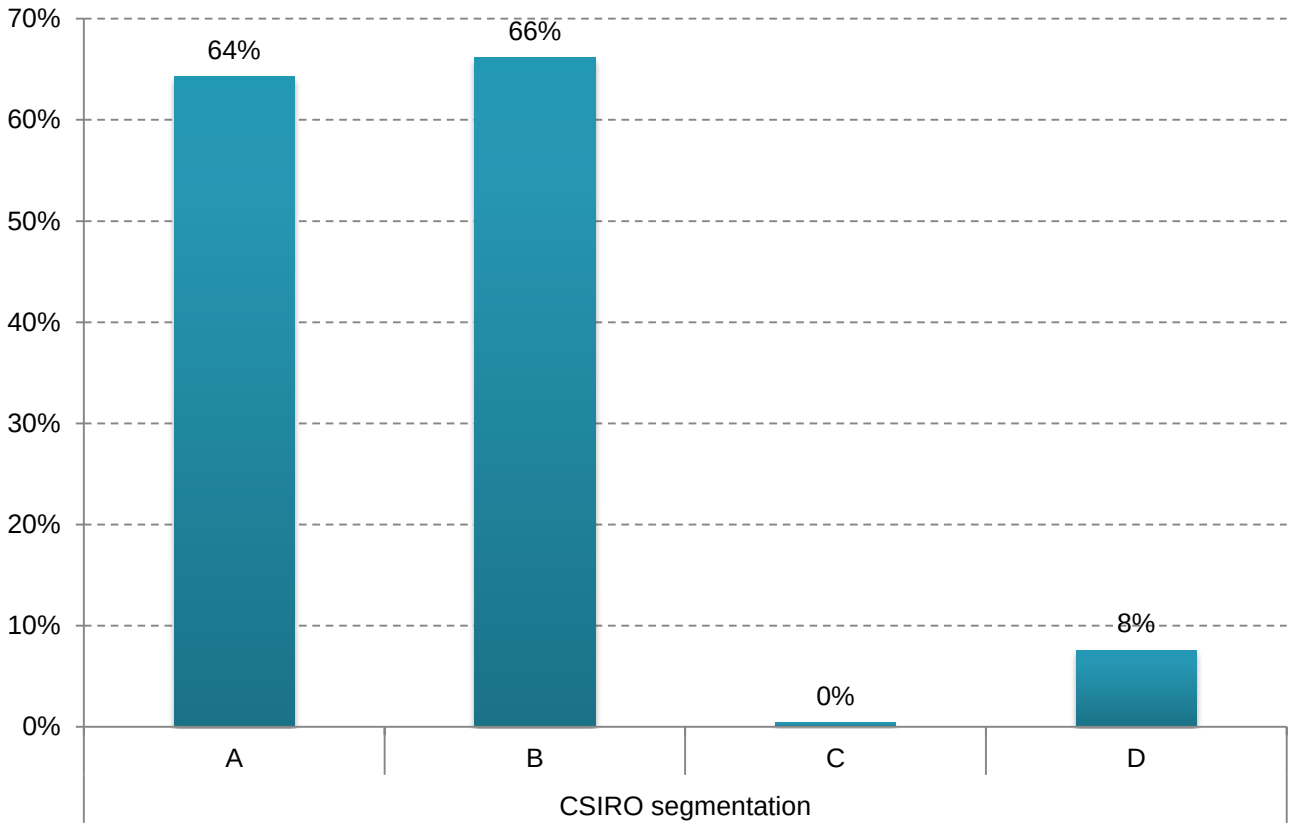
2

Concerned
- Low Awareness and high concerns
- Conservative
- "the pace of technological change is too fast"

1

Q: Hands up for each segment

Actively looking for information on Science - segmentation



Understanding values segment divides

Disagree strongly

Agree strongly

Values

New technologies excite me more than they concern me

Science and technology creates more problems than it solves

People shouldn't tamper with nature

Technological change happens too fast for me to keep up with

We depend too much on science and not enough on faith

Segment 4 are outliers – further from the average point of the public than any other segment. It also means the not only do the other segments have small chance to understand Segment 4, but Segment 4 have small chance to understand other segments well.

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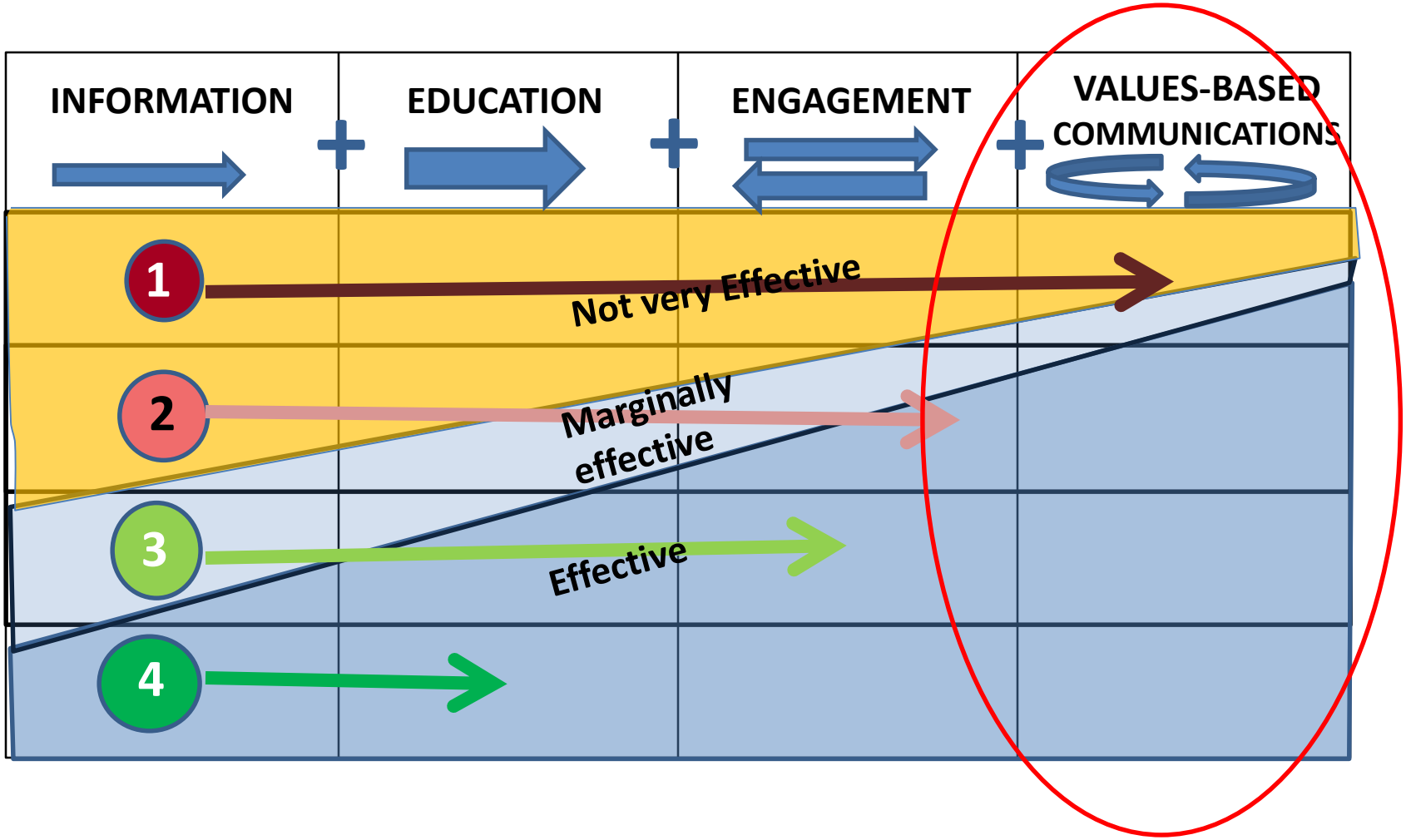
Mapping the four values segments against a communication activity matrix

INFORMATION +	EDUCATION +	ENGAGEMENT +	VALUES-BASED COMMUNICATIONS
1			
2			
3			
4			

Mapping the four segments against a communication activity matrix



Communication case study

How to use values to better communication with communities

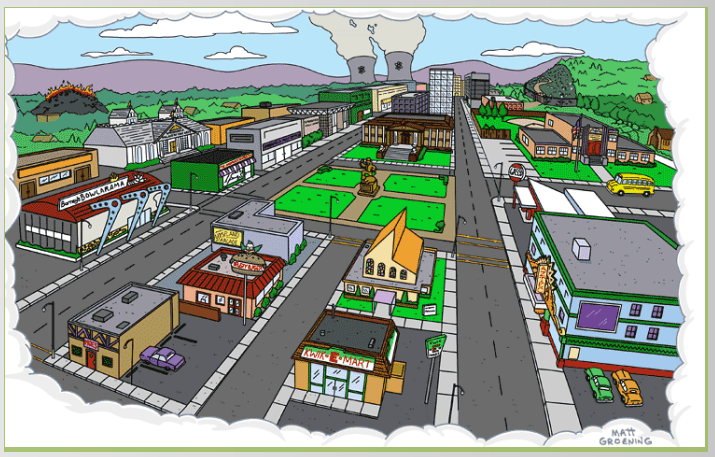
Changing Rural Communities

"One of the tasks facing fire agencies is to develop communication strategies aimed at localities undergoing **social change**, often as a result of **migration**, usually **from** **urban areas**, into **fire-prone areas**. These localities include **region-urban areas** and **sea-change/tree-change** places. Within such areas there is the movement of **younger families** to the **urban fringe**, **middle age** and **older persons retiring** to such areas, **holidaymakers** and others."

Fairbrother et al (2014)

Case study: Four different community profiles

high support for prescribed burning



Less support or strong caveats

High community unity

More diverse community

Case study: Four different community profiles

high support for prescribed burning

Less support or strong caveats

Town A

Population of about 140. Recent fires in 2003, 2007, 2009 and 2014. Majority lived in are for over 20 years or moved into the community a long time ago. Very homogenous group.

High community unity

More diverse community

Case study: Four different community profiles

high support for prescribed burning

Less support or strong caveats

Town A

Population of about 140. Recent fires in 2003, 2007, 2009 and 2014. Majority lived in are for over 20 years or moved into the community a long time ago. Very homogenous group.

Town B

50 kilometres north of Melbourne. Population of about 8,000 people. A major centre for low-cost family housing within commuting distance.

High community unity

More diverse community

Case study: Four different community profiles

high support for prescribed burning

Less support or strong caveats

Town A

Population of about 140. Recent fires in 2003, 2007, 2009 and 2014. Majority lived in are for over 20 years or moved into the community a long time ago. Very homogenous group.

Town B

50 kilometres north of Melbourne. Population of about 8,000 people. A major centre for low-cost family housing within commuting distance.

Town C

150 kms north west of Melbourne, Population of about 85,000 people. Large mix of recent arrivals and those who have lived in the area a long time.

High community unity

More diverse community

Case study: Four different community profiles

high support for prescribed burning

Less support or strong caveats

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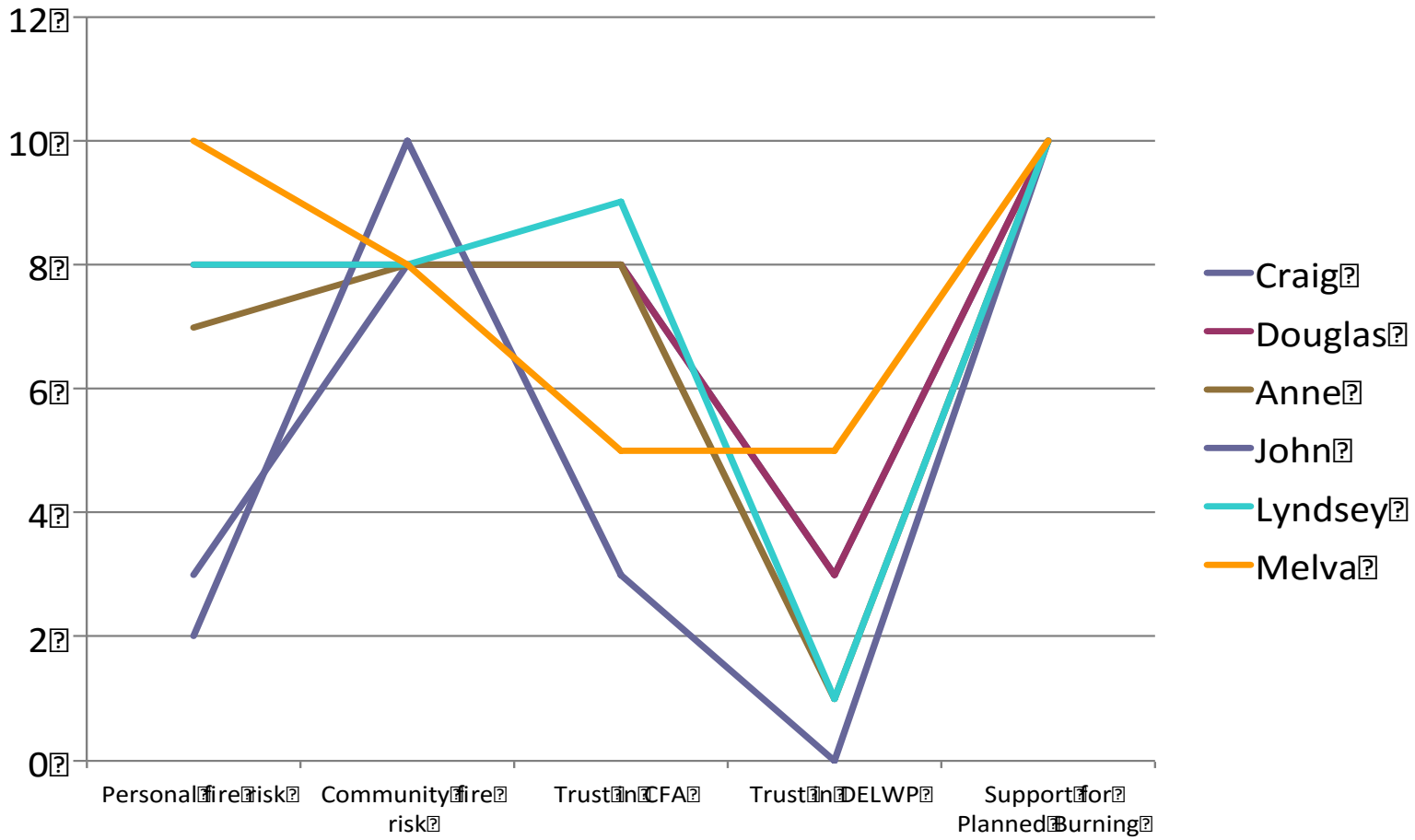
Town D

North of State. Population of over 2,000. Major industry is tourism.

High community unity

More diverse community

Town A


12
10
8
6
4
2
0
Personal fire risk
Community fire risk
Trust in CFA
Trust in DELWP
Support for Planned Burning
Craig
Douglas
Anne
John
Lyndsey
Melva

Analysis of TOWN A

1 TOWN A

Diverse personal risk, uniform high risk for community, high trust in CFAs, low trust in Government agencies and uniform highest levels of support for planned burning.

- demonstrated a strong and cohesive community with long-term residents, with deep knowledge of bushfire behaviour at the local level, and strongly supported planned burning.
- The community was very proactive in how their fire plans were developed and implemented, and took the lead in filling consultation gaps with agencies.
- The community felt that fire agencies should better coordinate their activities with each other, and treat the community as a partner, with better use of local knowledge.

Top Values within Town A

People and sense of community

Environment: and foliage, great climate, river and hills

Serenity: the peace and quiet and ease of getting to know people

Spirit of the community and ease of fitting in.

Top Values within Town B

- Sense of community
- Peace and tranquillity
- Opportunities for the kids
- Close to facilities in Melbourne
- Safety
- Wildlife

Top Values within Town C

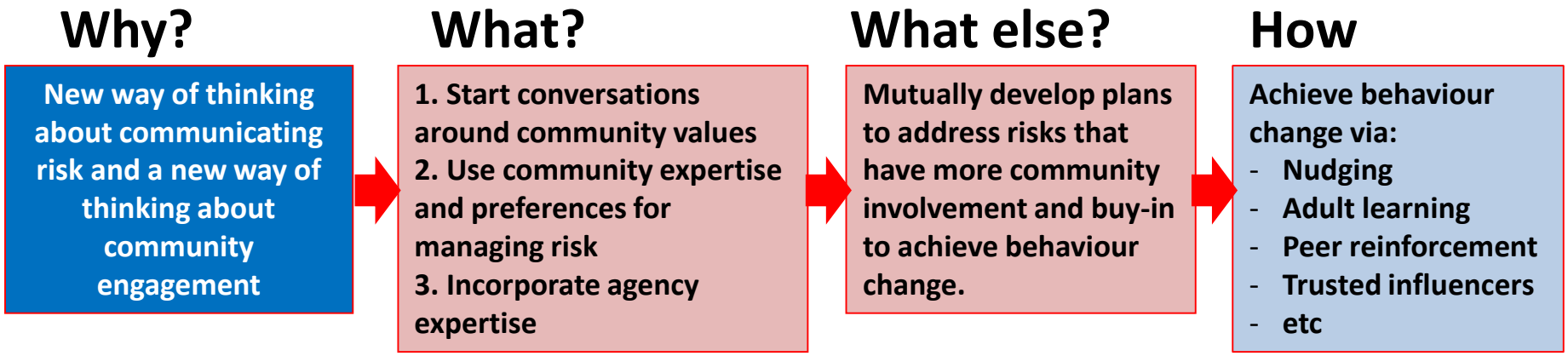
- Family and friends
- Central location
- Environment, trees and native plants
- Close community and very relaxed
- Arts community
- Health and education and good job opportunities
- Cheap housing

Top Values within Town D

- Family
- Health
- Friends
- Environment
- Home and security
- Personal assets

What to do with what you know

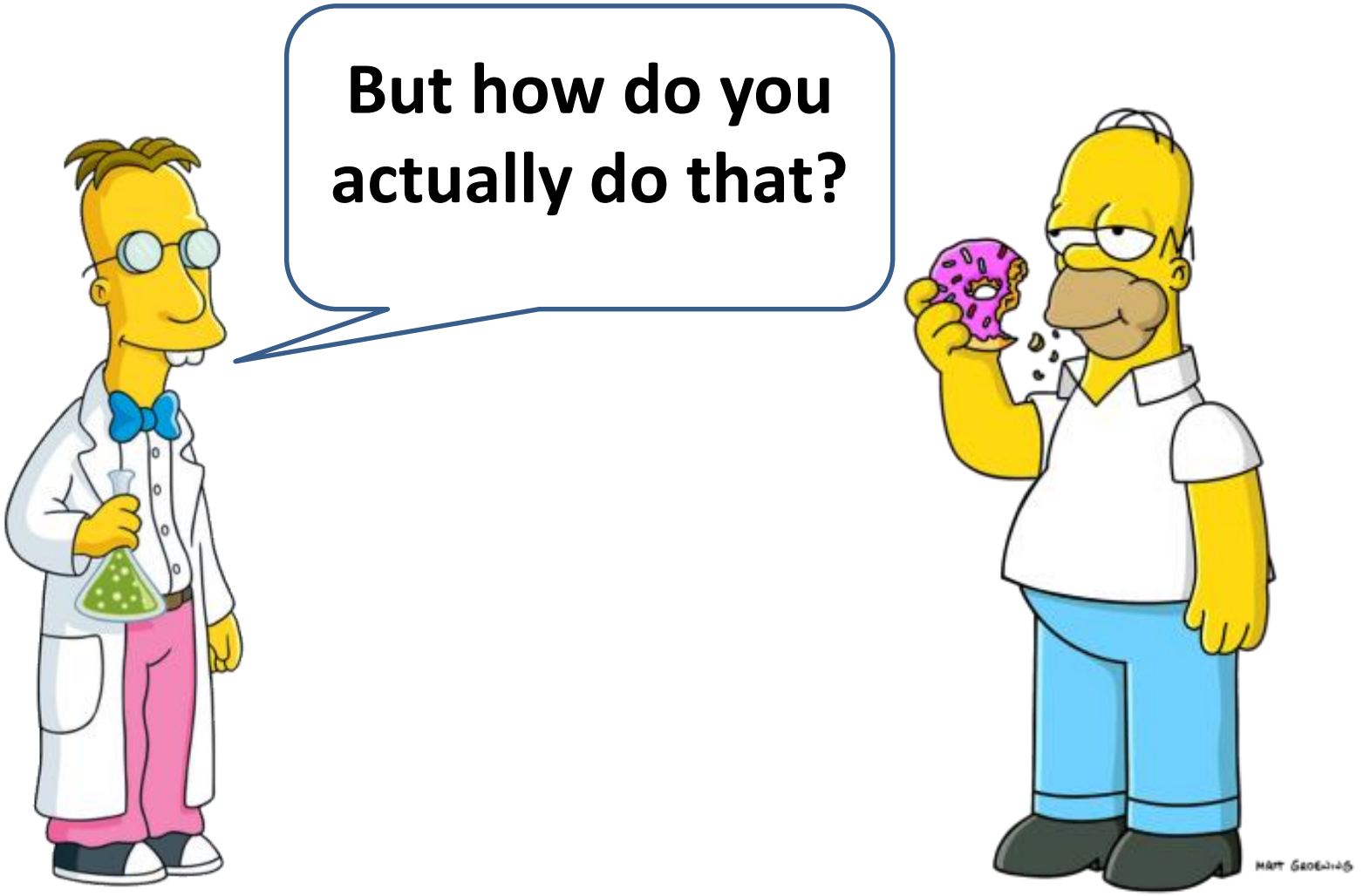
- Knowing the **top values** within a community means knowing how to **frame** your **engagement** conversations with those communities.



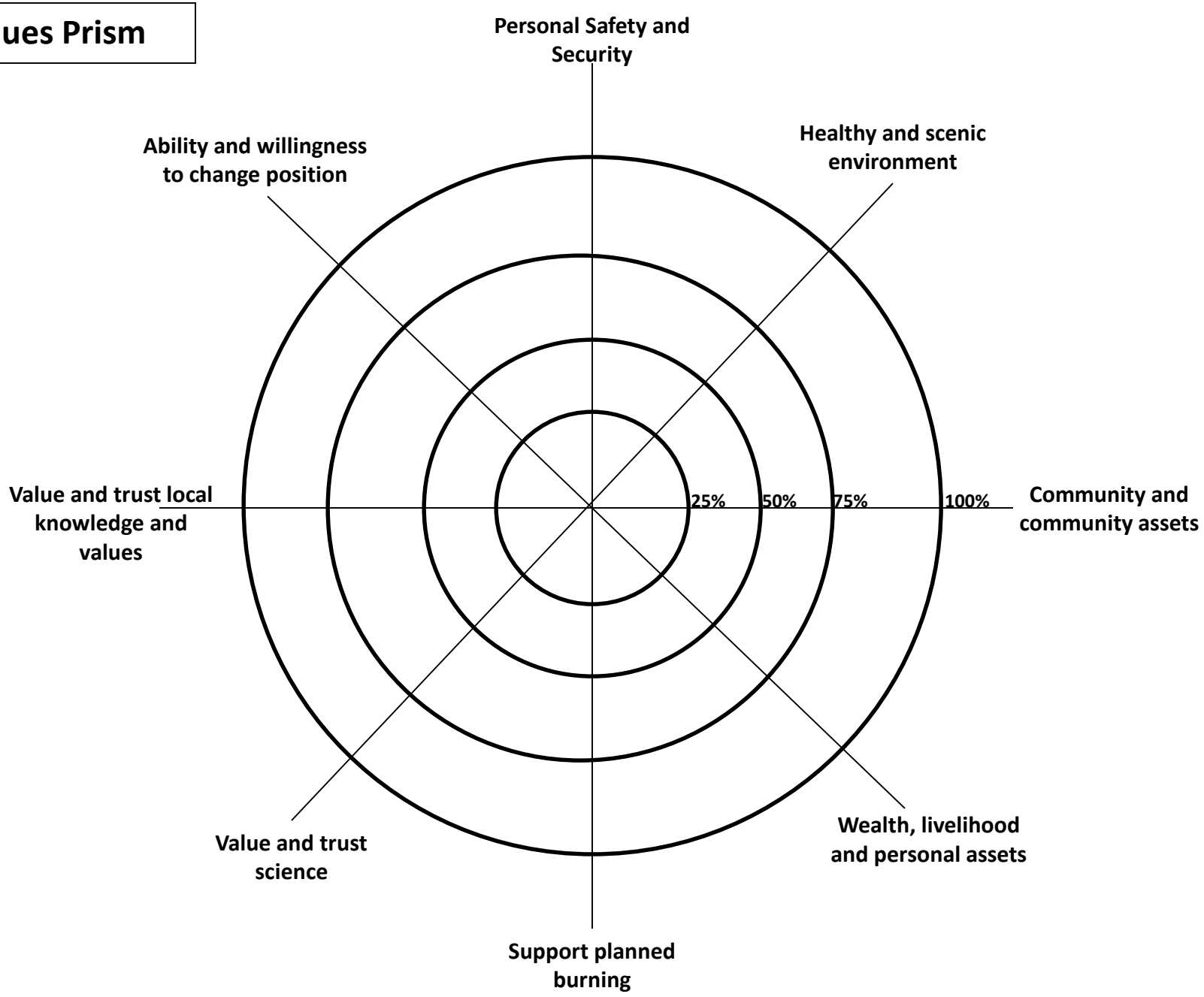
I want to tell you all about your flood and fire risk.

I want you to tell me about the things you value in your community, and then discuss how to protect them from risks.

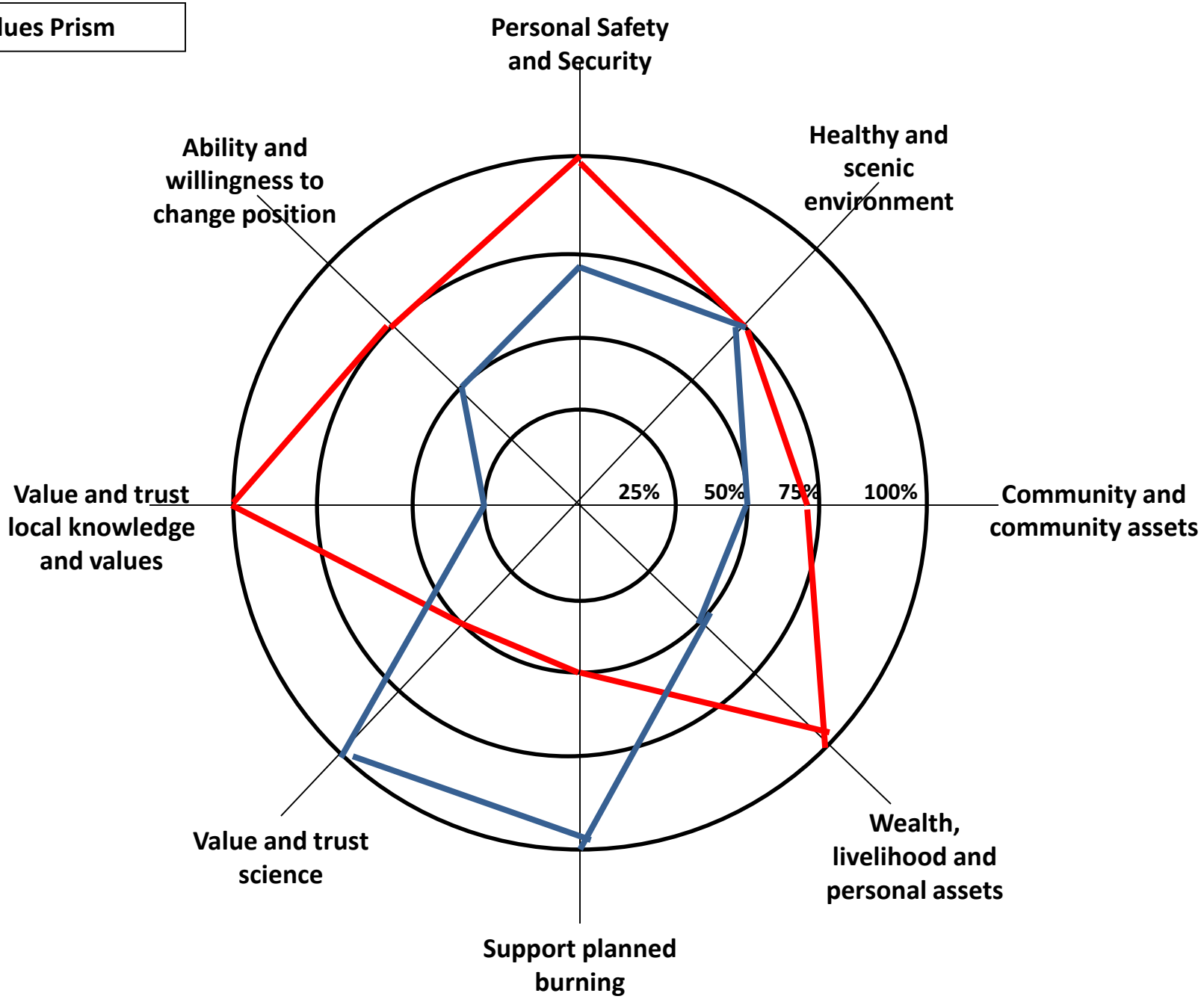
The big question



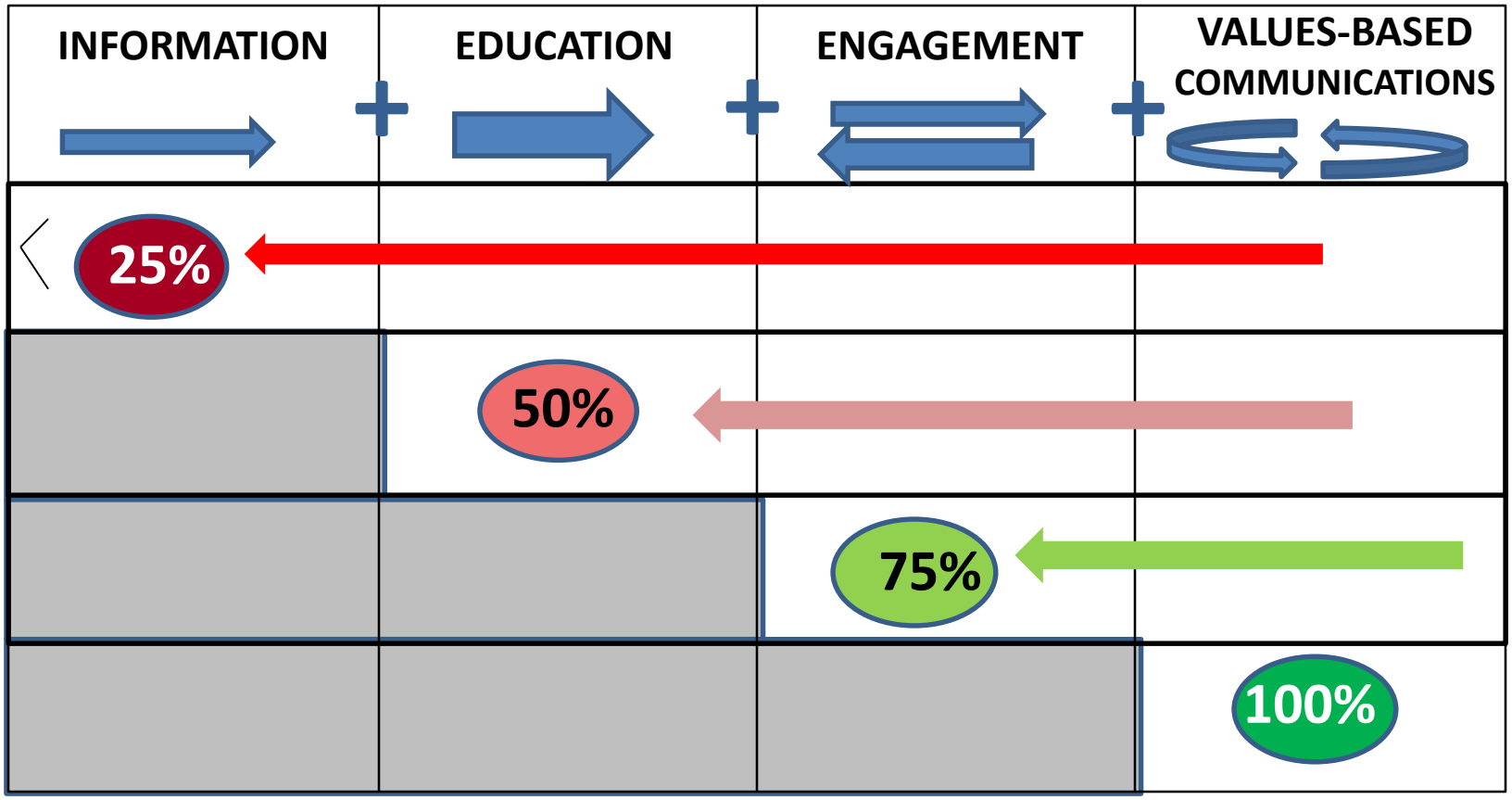
Values Prism



Values Prism



The values gap defines the Communications Strategy you need to use



What does it all mean?

Your turn!

Any questions?

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