



Re.Climate™

COMMUNICATING FOR CHANGE

Re.Climate is Canada's centre for training,
research and strategy on climate change communication
and engagement at Carleton University.

TODAY'S SESSION

- Five Trends Influencing Climate Conversations
- Five Gaps Undermining Public Support
- Five Strategies for Building Climate Action
- Discussion & Questions



TRACADIE, PEI — A washed-out at Tracadie Wharf Sunday, Sept. 22, 2022 caused by hurricane Fiona. The storm washed out wharfs, tore roofs off of homes, overturned cars and buildings, felled power lines and many trees across the Island. (Devin Wolters/ CBC Online)

FIVE FACTORS

Shaping Climate
Conversations Now

5 min

FIVE TRENDS

1.

WEAK MENTAL MODELS

Weak understanding and narratives of climate change.

2.

AFFORDABILITY IS MORE THAN MONEY

Many feel they have no choice and only the wealthy can afford.

3.

PEOPLE SHAPE INFORMATION

Passive communications is declining - people share, shape and debate info.

4.

DECLINING TRUST

People are moving to peers; declining trust in media, gov't and advocacy groups.

5.

RISING FATALISM

People feel unsafe and insecure.

QUESTIONS (5 MIN)

FIVE TRAPS

Undermining Public Support
for Climate Action

5 min

FIVE TRAPS

1.

FOCUSING ONLY ON TARGETS & PLANS

Too abstract and distant, few trust that they can and will be achieved.

2.

OVER RELYING ON POLITICIANS

People need a variety of messengers, leaders need visible community support.

3.

BURYING CLIMATE

Fails to build understanding, hides what's happening, and silences support.

4.

TALKING TO "THE PUBLIC"

General messages cause frustration, feel "disembodied" and waste precious resources.

5.

FIGHTING WITH FACTS

Feelings don't care about facts – stories shape understanding and motivation.

FIVE STRATEGIES

To Build Public Support for
Climate Action Right Now

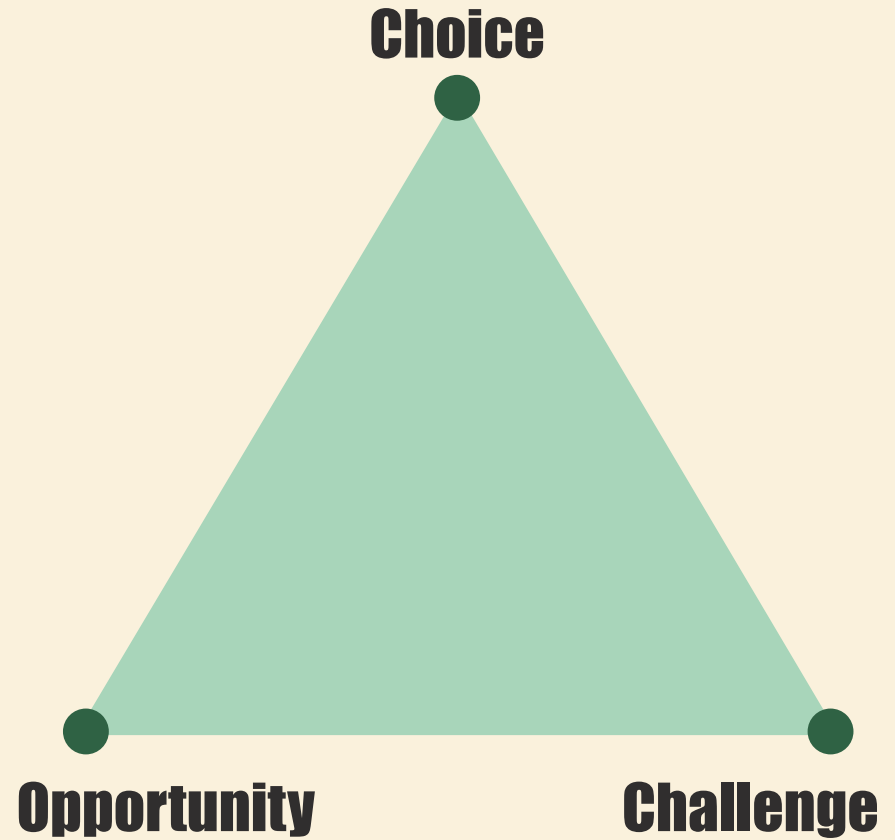
10 min

1. FOCUS ON PEOPLE AND CHOICES, NOT CONCEPTS.

*Use stories and articulate
your challenge, choice and
opportunities.*

Calgary, AB — Wearing a protective mask, dog walker Leslie Kramer ventures out as heavy smoke from northern Alberta forest fires comes south to blanket the downtown area in Calgary, May 16, 2023. LARRY MACDOUGAL/THE CANADIAN PRESS VIA AP

NARRATIVE STRUCTURE



EXAMPLE: ENERGIZE BRIDGEWATER

“...I just put the heat on in my bedroom and stayed in there,’ Seymour said of one chilly night.”

“...Rudderham says the goal of our program is to bring energy costs down through efficiency...”

“Bridgewater Mayor David Mitchell believes power bills will continue to rise, so taking steps to lower power consumption is vital.”

“If your power bill goes up by 10% but your power consumption goes down by 50%, then we’re starting to see a difference.”

Southshore Breaker, March 6, 2024

IMMEDIATE PROBLEM

KITCHEN TABLE ECONOMICS

CHOICE

OPPORTUNITY

SOUTH SHORE BREAKER

Find more local stories at SaltWire.com

Wednesday, March 6, 2024

Turning up the heat on energy poverty

PAUL PICKREM
SOUTH SHORE BREAKER

As cold winter nights grip many parts of the province, Dottie Seymour sometimes turns on the heat in her bedroom hideaway so she can turn it down in the rest of her apartment. Her goal is to save a little on her power bill.

“I just put the heat on in my bedroom and I stayed in there,” Seymour said of one recent chilly night.

Seymour lives in the upstairs two-bedroom apartment in one of the many older homes in Bridgewater. She fears the rising cost of heating the space with electric heat will soon become more than she can pay.

Seymour said she receives \$960 a month from social assistance. After she pays \$672 for rent, her social worker takes \$90 to cover her monthly budget with Nova Scotia Power.

That leaves Seymour with less than \$200 to cover food, phone, cable and personal items.

“On my income, that’s all I can afford on my power bill budget,” said Seymour.

“If I told my (social) worker to take, say, another \$50, then I am really going to starve,” she said.

Seymour suffers from COPD and asthma and is an insulin-dependent diabetic. She has to spend more money



Dottie Seymour is one of many Bridgewater residents Energize Bridgewater says is living in energy poverty. CONTRIBUTED



Ron Morrissey, a home energy advisor with Energize Bridgewater, is shown preparing a home energy assessment designed to help homeowners and landlords cut power consumption to lower the cost of energy. CONTRIBUTED

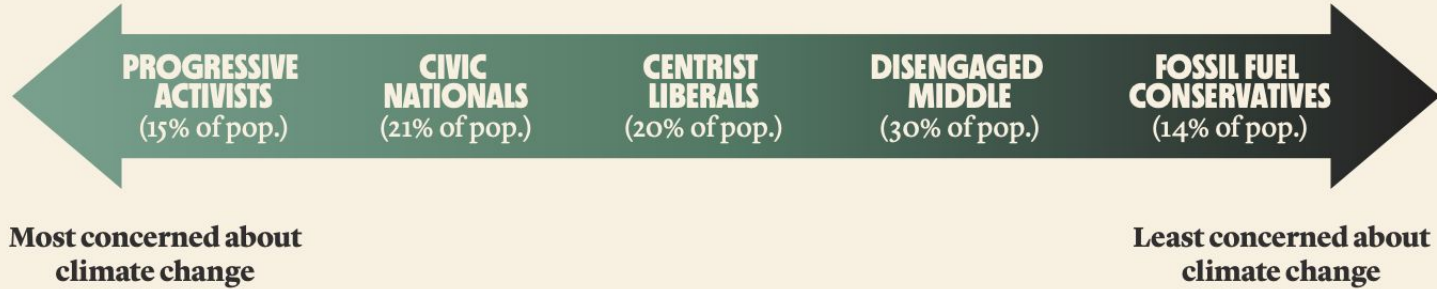
2.

TALK TO PEOPLE, NOT “THE PUBLIC”

Identify your target audience and use messages and methods to match.

The Five Canadas

Segments ranked on climate change concern



Segments ranked on social and political values



3.

ACTIVATE

TRUSTED VOICES

Feature people who have done it themselves and trusted front-line experts.

**NON-PARTISAN
KNOWLEDGEABLE
AUTHENTIC
FRONTLINE**



EXAMPLE: FARMER ADAM MACLEAN, SOUTH MELVILLE



PEI Climate Stories: Shepherd Adam MacLean of South Melville, PE



Copy link

Climate change - Climate change refers to long-term shifts in temperatures and...



1:44 / 15:17



YouTube



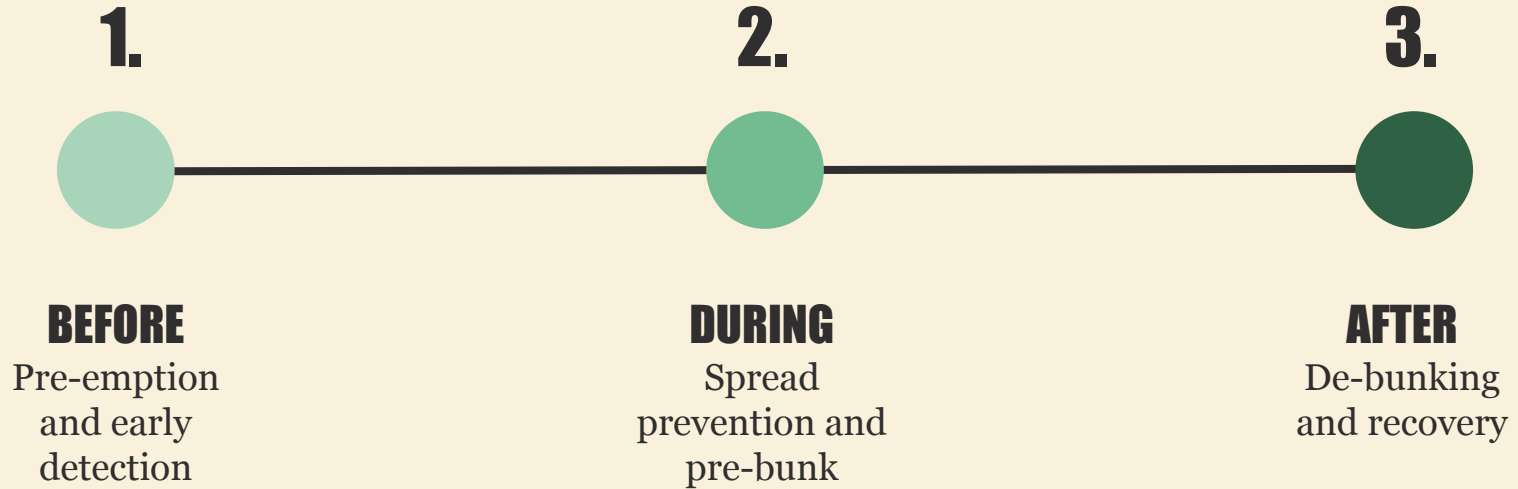
4. **CREATE SPACE FOR CONVERSATIONS**

Host conversations inside *and* outside your organization,
online and in person.

5. COMMUNITY APPROACH

Activate broader community to educate
and address misinformation.

CONTINUUM OF DISINFORMATION RESPONSE



FIVE SUPER STRATEGIES

1.

FOCUS ON PEOPLE & CHOICES

Tell local stories about effective and available choices.

2.

TALK TO PEOPLE, NOT “THE PUBLIC”

Segment and use messages and media to match.

3.

ACTIVATE TRUSTED VOICES

Feature local people who have done it themselves and everyday experts.

4.

CREATE SPACE FOR CONVERSATIONS

Host conversations inside *and* outside your organization – online and in person.

5.

COMMUNITY APPROACH

Activate broader community to educate and address misinformation.

TABLE DISCUSSION

How have you, or could you, apply these strategies in your municipalities?

10 min

Q&A

Plenary • 5 min total

RESOURCES

Climate Outreach. [Talking Climate Handbook](#). (2019).

ICLEI. [Communications Playbook](#). (2025).

Potential Energy [Talk Like a Human](#). (n.d.)

Melbourne Centre for Cities. [Disinformation in the City Response Handbook](#) (2024)

Re.Climate. [Affordability Playbook](#). (2025)

Re.Climate. [Community Leaders Program](#). (2024).

Re.Climate. [What Do Canadians Really Think about Climate Change](#). (2024)

Re.Climate. [The Five Canadas Summary](#) (2024).

Re.Climate. [Building a Social Mandate for Climate Action](#). (2024).

Re.Climate. [Wildfires and Un-Natural Disasters](#). (2024).

Re.Climate. [Heat Waves and Un-Natural Disasters](#). (2024).





Thank you.

Re.Climate