


## Vaccines, Public Health, and the Media

**Marion Ceraso, MHS, MA**  
Associate Professor of Practice  
School of Social and Behavioral Health Sciences  
College of Public Health and Human Sciences  
Oregon State University



Oregon State University  
College of Public Health and Human Sciences

hot topics in practice [www.mhccp.org/whatsnew](http://www.mhccp.org/whatsnew)

**Northwest Center**  
FOR PUBLIC HEALTH PRACTICE

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### Question for the Viewers

*In your work, how much direct engagement do you have with the news media (i.e., TV, radio, online)?*

- A. High level
- B. Moderate level
- C. Low level
- D. Other (please type in chat)

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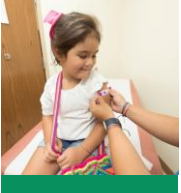

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<h4>The Media and the Role of Message Framing</h4> 	<h4>Principles of Framing Vaccine Coverage</h4> 	<h4>Strategies for Improving Media Coverage</h4> 
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Eyes on the Prize

Overall goal: Achieving healthier populations through **improved immunization rates**.

The slide features a purple header with the title 'Eyes on the Prize'. Below the title, the overall goal is stated: 'Achieving healthier populations through improved immunization rates.' Four circular images are arranged horizontally: a family with children, a close-up of a baby's face, a woman holding a child, and a woman in a professional setting.

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The Three P's

Three primary audiences:

The slide features a purple header with the title 'The Three P's'. Below the title, it lists 'Three primary audiences:' followed by three circular images: a family, a professional, and a government building. Each image is accompanied by a brief description of the audience's role.

**Parents and families:** Can ensure their children get all required vaccines; can advocate to policymakers for health-protecting vaccine policies.

**Professionals and other gatekeepers:** May be trusted sources in community.

**Policymakers:** Can advance health-protecting vaccine policies.

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### Defining the Media



#### Traditional media

Television  
Radio  
Newspapers



#### In-person

Family  
Friends/Colleagues  
Healthcare providers  
Constituents



#### Online media

Internet searches  
Social media

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### Framing Matters

**Framing** plays an essential role in media storytelling. So, what is it?

**Frames:** Guides that help people decide where to focus attention and interpret what they see. Frames help us understand, evaluate, and describe information.

- Multiple elements organize meaning
- How we think about vaccines and vaccine policy depends on framing

Source: Frameworx Institute. What's In a Frame  
<http://www.frameworxstitute.org/article/whats-in-a-frame/>

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### Visual Framing of Vaccination



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### The Trap of the False Balance

What are the effects of a false balance in media coverage?

When media frames focus on the reason vaccines are needed, vaccination rates rise in response.

When media frames highlight vaccine opposition, conflict and controversy, conspiracy beliefs can increase, driving down support for vaccines.



Sources: Saleem AF et al. Vaccine, 2018  
Fowler FJ, Gollust SE. Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, 2015

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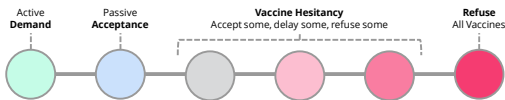
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### Polarizing Depictions of the Continuum



**Vaccine Hesitancy:** A delay in acceptance or refusal of vaccines, despite available services. Is complex and context-specific, varying across time, place, and vaccine.

Sources: World Health Organization  
Stephenson N et al. Critical Public Health, 2018

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### The "Myths and Facts" Paradox



CDC Director Robert Redfield  
imgtr country: CDC

"Vaccines are **safe**.  
Vaccines **do not cause autism**.  
*Vaccine-preventable diseases are dangerous.*"

Statement from CDC Director Robert Redfield

Sources:  
Nyhan B. et al., *Pediatrics*, 2014; <https://www.pediatrics.com/content/134/5/e122>  
Lakoff, George Lakoff (2010) *Why is Matters How We Frame the Environment*, *Environmental Communication*, 4(1), 70-81, DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1080/17513758.2010.482242>

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### Individual v. Population Health Stories

Tendency to focus on stories about individuals or episodic events rather than tell broad systems stories

- Loss of historical, systems-level perspective
- Invisibility of public health as a system
- Limited information on contextual factors driving health and illness



Source: Gilliat SE et al., *Annual Review of Public Health*, 2019.

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### The Social Dilemma



- Bots and trolls promote *both pro- and anti-vaccine messages*
- Algorithms create hard and fast divides by channeling fragmented realities
- Spokespersons and leaders amplify misinformation when they are the source of anti-science rhetoric

Sources:  
*Wired* Health Communication: Tether Bots and Russian Trolls Amplify the Vaccine Debate. <https://www.wired.com/story/health-communication-tether-bots-and-russian-trolls-amplify-the-vaccine-debate/>, October, 108 (10), 1378 - 1384, 10.1016/j.wired.2018.10.045

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**Question for the Viewers**

Do you agree with the following statement?  
"In my agency, we have identified specific strategies or resources for engaging the media effectively."

- A. Yes
- B. No
- C. I'm not sure

**NOTE:** If you answered "Yes", please share your strategies or resources in the chat box.

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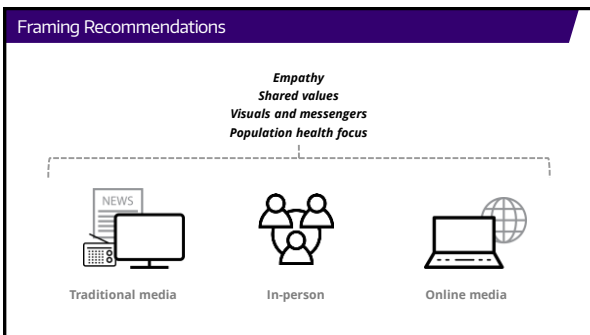
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### Examples: Modeling Empathy

"On vaccines, I understand the science, so if I offend you: good!"

vs.

"There's a lot of misinformation about vaccines online and among parenting groups. We help you sort out what's credible and what's not."

"I do want people to understand that testing on Thursday so you can party on Saturday. That doesn't work. It's not effective and you really are in some ways wasting a valuable resource."

vs.

"We understand that this is hard and that social connection is important for health, so we will support you in gathering more safely."

Sources:  
 BOOZ Dragon: <http://www.boozdragon.org/common-concerns>  
 Mancini, The Atlantic, 2020: <https://www.theatlantic.com/idea/archive/2020/12/its-the-season-for-shame-and-judgment/61735/>

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### Examples: Appealing to Values

#### Ingenuity

- "Help is coming, and it's coming soon....When we get both of those things together — vaccine and public health measures — **that would really be a game changer.**"
- "I want every child to have the opportunity to grow up...**we can do that, we have the technology.**"

Sources:  
 Fucci, R. MarketWatch, 2020: <https://www.marketwatch.com/story/help-is-coming-and-its-coming-soon-d-9ca3ca5ee-when-covid-19-vaccination-will-be-available-to-all-americans-2020-11-12>  
 More U.S. Children Not Vaccinated against Any Disease, CBS News: <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/20-year-olds-child-en-not-vaccinated-against-any-disease/>

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### Examples: Appealing to Values

#### Purity

- Vaccines can boost your child's **natural** defenses against disease and keep them **pure** of infections."

#### Liberty

- "When you take **personal control** of your child's health you can help *your child and others* be **free** to live a happy and healthy life."
- "We Oregonians cherish our **independent spirit**. But we also care deeply about the people in our **community**. Vaccines can protect your family and your community."

Sources:  
 Sun '18, Washington Post: <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/health/wp/2017/12/20/parents-have-very-different-views-on-vaccines/>  
 Oregon Immunization Program, Oregon Health Authority: <https://www.ohha.gov/oha/pla/enforcement/oregon-immunization-program-mandatory-pages/ohha-medical-exemption.aspx>

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Messengers

“Amid history of mistreatment, doctors struggle to sell Black Americans on coronavirus vaccine”



Dr. Gary Gibbons, Director National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute

“Trusted messengers” provide “accurate, credible, authentic messages.”

— Dr. Gary Gibbons

Source: Fatima, Washington Post, 2020. [https://www.washingtonpost.com/social-issues/black-vaccine-trust/2020/12/07/924f4e2a-342c-11eb-859e-a87153f19c2\\_story.html](https://www.washingtonpost.com/social-issues/black-vaccine-trust/2020/12/07/924f4e2a-342c-11eb-859e-a87153f19c2_story.html)

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Visuals to Increase Vaccine Confidence



Visuals should aim to reduce fear and anxiety around vaccines, communicating **factual information**:



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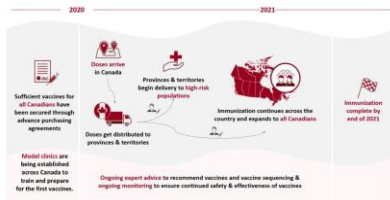
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Visual Framing of Vaccination

Graphic produced by the Public Health Agency of Canada to communicate national immunization roll-out plan visually.



Source: Canada's COVID-19 Immunization Plan: Saving Lives and Livelihoods. [https://www.canada.ca/content/dam/phac\\_aspc/document/serVICES/2019-novel-coronavirus-infection/canadas-response/canadas-covid-19-immunization-plan-en.pdf](https://www.canada.ca/content/dam/phac_aspc/document/serVICES/2019-novel-coronavirus-infection/canadas-response/canadas-covid-19-immunization-plan-en.pdf)

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### Telling Population Health Stories

- Historical, systems-level perspective stories
- Ensure the work of the public health system is visible
- Engage with journalists on reporting on the contextual factors driving health and illness



Godley M. National Public Health, 2020. <https://www.pup.org/2020/09/18/0142815566/cover-13-may-there-is-more-serious-impact-on-formerly-redlined-communities>  
 Northwest African American Museum, YouTube, 2019. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ca12R430t0c>

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### Research and Practice Questions

- How can public health **more effectively collaborate** with the media to improve coverage of vaccine-related issues?
- What type of research is needed to better understand what **increases or undermines** vaccine confidence and uptake?
- What are **meaningful reforms of social media** (and traditional media) that can prevent the “filter bubbles” that drive divisiveness, and should public health be in those discussions?
- How might **improved reporting** help increase visibility, salience and support of the public health system?

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### QUESTIONS?




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A Chat with Marion Ceraso



Allene Mares



Marion Ceraso

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Resources

- **The Frameworks Institute**  
<https://www.frameworksinstitute.org/>
- **Oregon Health Authority**  
Vaccine Education Module  
<https://www.oregon.gov/oha/ph/prevention/wellness/vaccines/immunization/gettingimmunized/pages/non-medical-exemption.aspx>
- **Communicating about the COVID-19 vaccines: Guidance and sample messages for public health practitioners**  
Berkeley Media Studies Group report  
<http://www.bmsg.org/resources/publications/communicating-covid-19-vaccines-guidance-and-sample-messages-for-public-health-practitioners/>
- **Center for Humane Technology**  
<https://humanetech.com>
- **The Social Dilemma**  
<https://www.thesocialdilemma.com/>
- **Boost Oregon**  
<http://www.boostoregon.org/>
- **Vaccine Confidence Project**  
<https://www.vaccineconfidence.org/>

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