

TITLE: RADIATION CONCEPTS/COMPARISON MESSAGE TESTING

CENTER/DIVISION: NCEH, EHHE, RSB

Principal Investigator(s): Oak Ridge Associated Universities, Karen Carera, PhD

CDC Project Officer(s): M Carol McCurley

Sponsoring institution(s): NA

Study background:

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)'s Radiation Studies Branch (RSB), often uses analogies to explain technical radiation concepts to their target audiences. For example, on the RSB website the following analogy is used to explain external contamination, "Radioactive material can settle on your clothing and your body, like dust or mud." CDC health communication experts are interested in testing communication messages that assess public understanding of radiation concepts, particularly public understanding of radiation principles illustrated through comparison analogies.

Project goals and objectives:

Goal:

Explore the effectiveness of the radiation concepts/comparison messages among the public.

Objectives:

- Evaluate the extent to which the messages effectively communicate radiation concepts during an emergency.
- Evaluate the extent to which the messages are relevant, comprehensible, credible, appealing and motivate desired action.

Role of CDC:

CDC's Radiation Studies Branch has contracted with Oak Ridge Associated Universities (ORAU) to conduct this audience assessment to inform message development of these radiation concept/comparison messages.

Populations to be included:

The target audience for this research is the public. All participants will:

- Be at least 18 years of age
- Be comfortable conversing in English

The following criteria will be used to select public participants:

- Have at least some high school education
- Have not participated in a focus group/interview in the last 6 months
- Does not work in any of the following fields:
 - For a market research company
 - For an advertising agency or public relations firm
 - In the media (TV/radio/newspapers/magazines)
 - As a healthcare professional (doctor, nurse, pharmacist, dietician, etc.)
 - Is not an employee for any of the following:
 - U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

- State or local health department
- Department of Homeland Security
- State or local emergency management agency
- Nuclear power plant, radiation safety officer, health physicist or other radiation-related occupation

Interviews

Additional criteria for interviews include: participants must have an interest in English word usage (e.g., retired newspaper editors, voracious readers, people who write and publish articles as part of their work duties, and others with demonstrated interest in editing documents and analyzing subtle differences in language).

The respondents will provide approximate representation reflective of the community in terms of:

- Gender
- Age
- Education
- Race/ethnicity

It is understood that with the small number of respondents for the interviews and groups, it will not be possible to have respondents representing all combinations of characteristics in the interviews and groups.

Plans for data/sample collection and analysis:

Recruitment

The commercial market research facility in Charlotte, NC, and Philadelphia, PA, will utilize their existing database to retrieve names of potential public participants for the focus groups and interviews. Participants will be screened using the screening questionnaire to ensure they meet the screening criteria (See Attachment A for the Interview Screener and Attachment B for the Focus Group Screener). Participation will be strictly voluntary.

Interviews

Data will be collected using up to 16 in-depth, in-person interviews with the public who have an interest in English word usage (e.g., retired newspaper editors, voracious readers, people who write and publish articles as part of their work duties, and others with demonstrated interest in editing documents and analyzing subtle differences in language) (see Attachment B for the Interview Screener). Each interview will last one hour. A professional interviewer will conduct the interviews. The moderator's guide for the interview is included as Attachment E.

Focus Groups

In addition, a total of 8 focus groups (4 in each city) with members of the public will also be conducted. Each focus group will have up to 8 participants and it is expected to last about two hours. A professional moderator will guide the discussion of the focus groups. The focus groups will be audio-recorded and transcripts will be prepared from these recordings.

During the beginning of the interviews and focus groups, the moderator will provide an overview of the study and ask the participant(s) to introduce themselves using only their first name. Next, the moderator will show a video to introduce the topic to the participants. The video will also show the messages to the participants. After the messages are shown (Attachment C), the moderator will ask questions to the participants about the content of the messages such as if the messages effectively communicate the radiation concepts. Also, feedback from participants will be used to determine if the messages are relevant, comprehensible, credible, appealing and

motivate desired actions. The interviews and focus groups will conclude with questions to participants about information sources, such as spokespersons and communication channels. The moderator's guide is included as Attachment D.

The possibility exists that some participants will find contemplation of such subject matter upsetting. Therefore, participants will receive the email and phone number for the Radiation Studies Branch at CDC and the RSB website at the end of the study (See Attachment F).

Incentives to be provided:

The commercial market research facility being used for recruitment will offer gift cards to the participants as a token of appreciation for participants' willingness to engage in the project. The token of appreciation offered, \$40 per participant for an interview and \$75 per participant for the focus group, is impacted by a number of variables for this project, including the following:

- Total participation time of 60 minutes: length of the interview; 2 hours: length of the focus group
- Specifications that each participant has to meet to participate in the study
- Recommendations from the market research facilities

Human Subjects:

This audience assessment has been approved by Oak Ridge Site-Wide IRB with an exemption status.

Collection and management of personal identifiers:

The commercial market research facility will recruit the participants and the facility will not provide personal identifiers (e.g., last names, address, phone numbers) to ORAU or CDC. ORAU will only receive screening qualification criteria (first name, gender, race/ethnicity, etc.).

For the interviews and focus groups, no personal identifiers (e.g., last name, last initial, address, completed screening instruments) are to be provided to ORAU or CDC.

Additionally, ORAU will:

- Retain the audio recordings, and at least one copy of any report it produces;
- Deliver the report to CDC;
- Not deliver to CDC or others any personal identifiers of participants;
- Retain records and audio recordings for up to three years, then burn, shred, or otherwise destroy them.

The staff from the commercial market facility hired by ORAU, will audio-record and transcribe the interviews and focus groups. No individually identifiable information is being collected during the interviews and focus groups. The proposed data collection will have little or no effect on the participants' privacy. Only comments, quotes, and responses from participants will be noted and used as feedback to inform revisions to the messages. ORAU and CDC staff may observe the focus groups and interviews on site in an observation room and/or by live-video streaming. Facilities will provide ORAU two copies of audio recordings of each session. No videotaping is to be conducted. CDC will receive a final report generated by ORAU

Plans for protection of privacy and data security:

The commercial market research facility will recruit the participants and the facility will not provide personal identifiers (e.g. last names, address, phone numbers) to ORAU or CDC. ORAU will only receive screening qualification criteria (first name, gender, race/ethnicity, etc.).

For the interviews and focus groups, no personal identifiers (e.g., last name, last initial, address, completed screening instruments) are to be provided to ORAU or CDC.

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Projected time frame for the project:

Data collection is expected to occur during June 2017.

Plans for publication and dissemination of the project findings:

N/A.

References:

N/A

Please also attach any relevant documents pertaining to this project, such as protocols, consent forms, surveys or other data collection instruments, technical assist letters, nondisclosure agreements, or IRB approval.