

How To Have More Productive Conversations About Vaccines (and Other Controversial Topics)

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DISCLOSURES/DISCLAIMER

No financial conflicts of interest to disclose.

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LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Review current factors influencing attitudes and decision-making related to vaccination.
- Review psychological factors that undermine communication between HCPs and patients.
- Apply effective counseling and communication strategies to promote vaccine acceptance among hesitant individuals.

PART 1:
ANTECEDENTS TO VACCINATION READINESS

Measuring the 7Cs of Vaccination Readiness

Mattis Geiger[1], Franziska Rees[1], Lau Lilleholt[2], Ana P. Santana[2], Ingo Zettler[2], Oliver Wilhelm[1], Cornelia Betsch[3], and Robert Böhm[2]

European Journal of Psychological Assessment (2022), *38*(4), 261–269

Confidence

Complacency

Constraints

Calculation

Collective Responsibility

Compliance

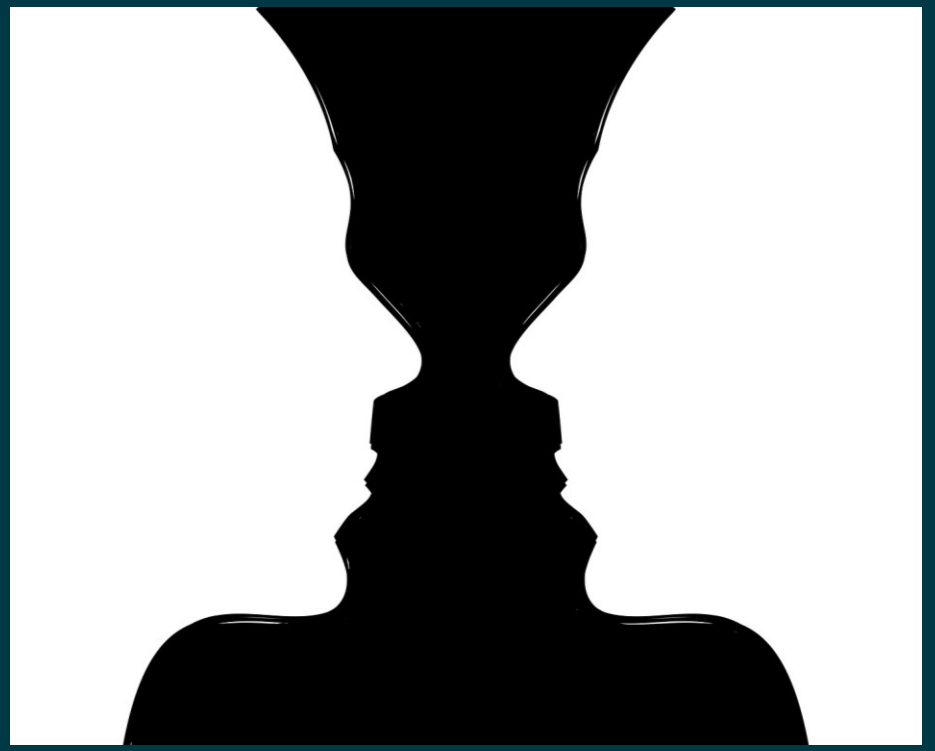
Conspiracy

PART 2:
PSYCHOLOGICAL FACTORS THAT CAN UNDERMINE COMMUNICATION

NAÏVE REALISM

Belief that our

subjective experiences = objective reality



Griffin, Ross. Advances in Experimental Social Psychology 1991;24:319-359

CURSE OF KNOWLEDGE/EXPERTISE

Knowledge significantly reduces our ability to take a naïve perspective





EGOCENTRISM

Self-relevant information is weighted more heavily than other-relevant information

FOCALISM

Tendency to focus on one aspect or option while ignoring or minimizing the others




AFFECT/
EMOTIONS

AFFECT HEURISTIC



Our perceptions of risks and benefits influenced by how we feel

Slovic, Peters. Curr Dir Psychol Sci 2006; 15(6):322-325



RISK AS FEELINGS

Our BELIEFS about a risk and FEELINGS of a risk can push us in different directions

Finucane, Alhakami, Slovic, & Johnson, 2000 Journal of Behavioral Decision Making

MOTIVATED REASONING

- Process of constructing, accessing, evaluating beliefs



MOTIVATED REASONING

- "Hot" Motivations: Defense, Desirability





Kunda. Psych Bull 1990; 108(3):480-498

MOTIVATED REASONING

- "Hot" Motivations: Defense, Desirability
- "Cold" Motivation: Accuracy





Kunda. Psych Bull 1990; 108(3):480-498



CONFIRMATION BIAS

BIAS BLINDSPOT

"Other people are affected by biases, but I'm not"



PART 3:
PSYCHOLOGICALLY-INFORMED STRATEGIES TO IMPROVE COMMUNICATION

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TIPS FOR DISCUSSING COVID-19 VACCINES DURING PATIENT VISITS

Authors: Rosenbaum M, Skelly K, Scherer A, Butler N, Johnson K, Pomeranz K, Abou-Arab E, Connett M
Design Assistance: Jill Parjani Wenger



Our primary goal should be maintaining and building trust



ASSESS, don’t assume


Use the
“WHAT ELSE?”
tactic

Using the "What Else?" tactic…

- Is an opportunity to gather information
- Strengthens relationship
- Reduces likelihood of "backfire" or "boomerang" effects





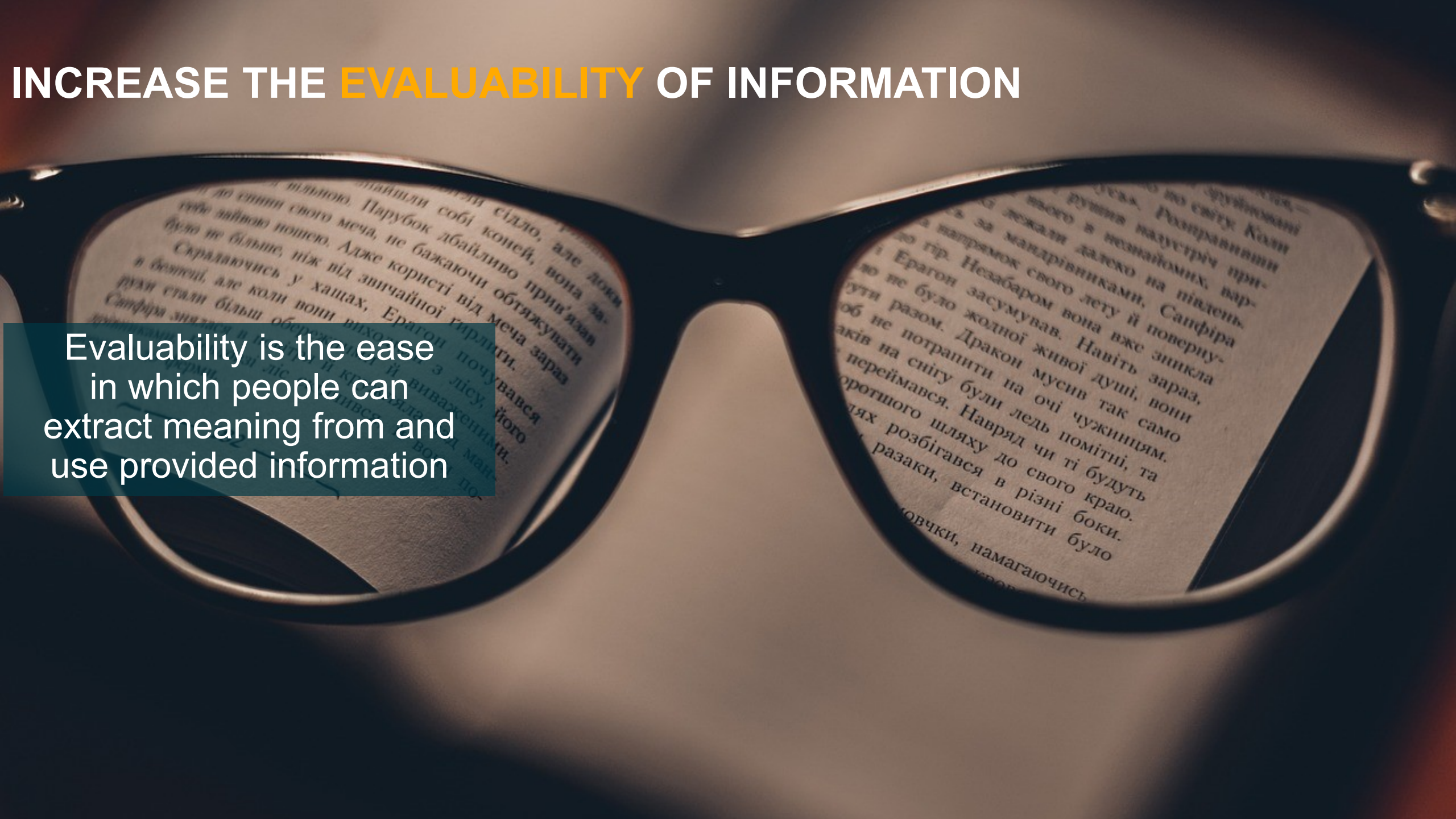
Engage in active and empathetic listening

Ask permission to share your perspective




Be CLEAR about ASSUMPTIONS and TERMS

INCREASE THE EVALUABILITY OF INFORMATION



Evaluability is the ease in which people can extract meaning from and use provided information

CONTEXTUALIZE INFORMATION

In the first 6 months of life of an infant's life, they'll receive…

5 milligrams of aluminum if they get **recommended vaccines**

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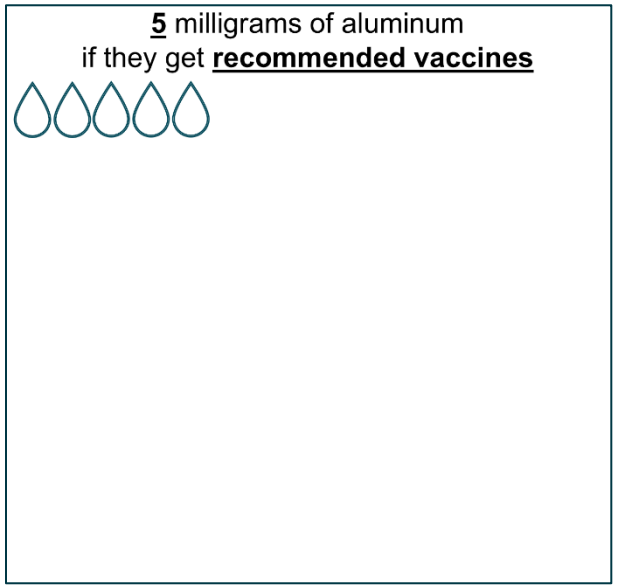
7 milligrams of aluminum if they are **breastfed**

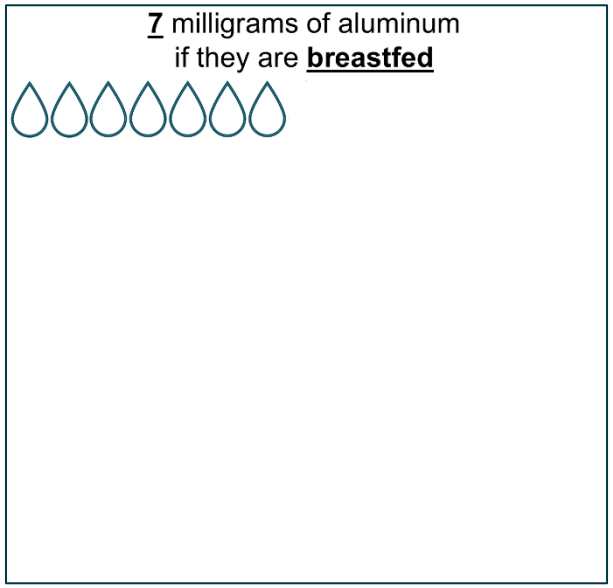
38 milligrams of aluminum if they drink **regular formula**

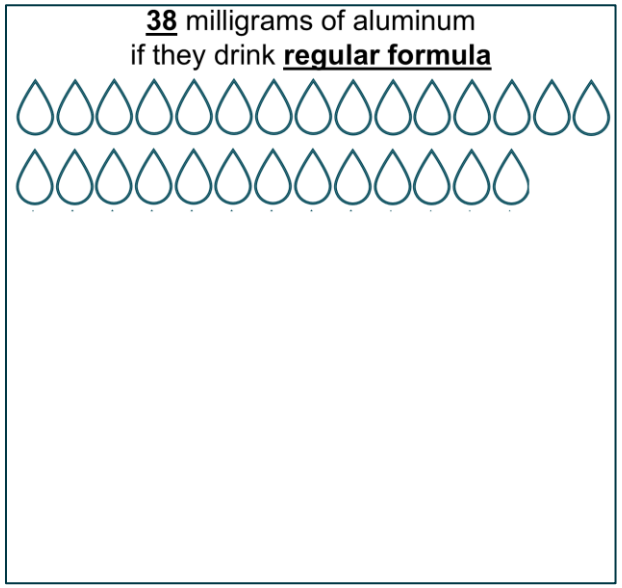
117 milligrams of aluminum if they drink **soy-based formula**

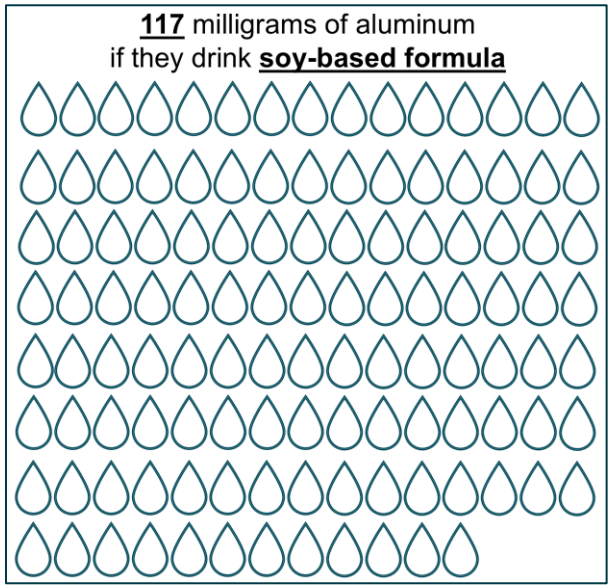
CONTEXTUALIZE INFORMATION WITH PICTOGRAPHS/ICON ARRAYS

In the first 6 months of life of an infant's life, they'll receive…









To create your own pictographs/icon arrays: https://iconarray.com/


USE STORIES TO COMPLEMENT FACTS

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Helping Patients Decide: Ten Steps to Better Risk Communication

J Natl Cancer Inst 2011;103:1436–1443

Angela Fagerlin, Brian J. Zikmund-Fisher, Peter A. Ubel

Helping People Know Whether Measurements Have Good or Bad Implications: Increasing the Evaluability of Health and Science Data Communications

Policy Insights from the Behavioral and Brain Sciences
2019, Vol. 6(1) 29–37

Brian J. Zikmund-Fisher

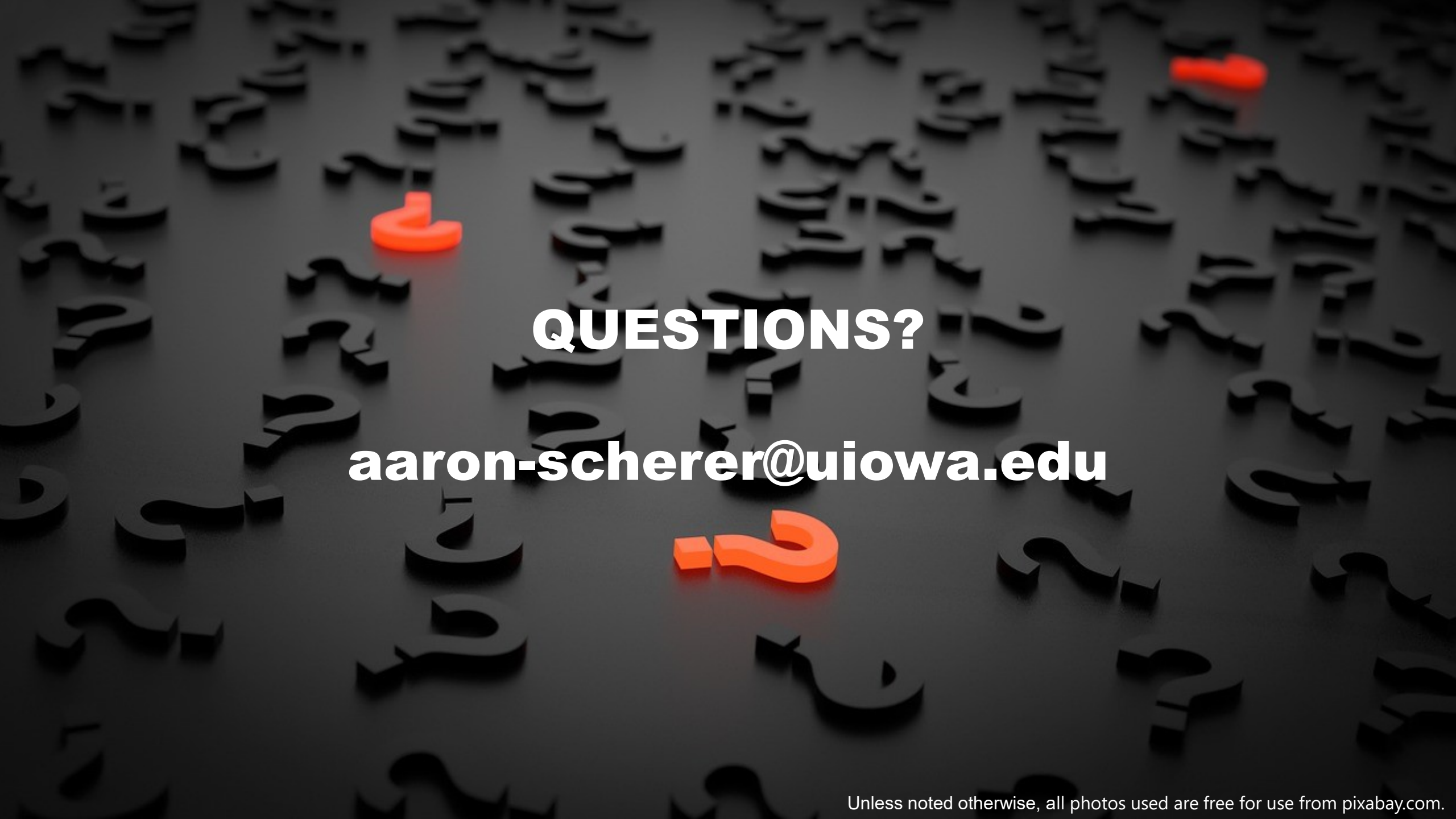
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3 KEY TAKE-AWAYS

- Consider the 7C Antecedents to Vaccination Readiness
- Be mindful of psychological factors that can undermine communication between you and your patient
- Maintaining and cultivating trust should be the primary goal of HCP-patient communication



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Resources to Address Vaccine Misinformation

- American Academy of Pediatrics: https://www.aap.org/en/patient-care/immunizations/communicating-with-families-and-promoting-vaccine-confidence/
- Public Health Communications Collaborative: https://publichealthcollaborative.org/communication-tools/vaccine-misinformation-management-guide/
- George Washington Health Sciences Library https://guides.himmelfarb.gwu.edu/correcting-misinformation/vaccine-hesitancy
- Vaccinate Your Family: https://vaccinateyourfamily.org/news-resources/vaccine-resources/
- Debunking Handbook (developed by top experts on addressing misinformation; focuses on climate change, but still helpful): https://climatecommunication.gmu.edu/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/DebunkingHandbook2020.pdf