

Exercise 3: Why is Communicating Climate Change So Difficult?

A discussion with your training partner(s)

Important caution: We are suggesting you do the following exercise with your chosen (or assigned) partner(s). However, due to the corona virus pandemic, we ask you to *do this exercise virtually*, i.e., to talk by phone, Skype, or any other social media app you feel comfortable with. If you cannot use any of the virtual options and are meeting in person, please adhere to all local guidelines on social distancing during the COVID crisis: maintain at least a 1.5 m distance to your partner(s) and other people. Behavioural guidelines during the pandemic are updated frequently and you can see the latest at the [WHO website](#) and, particularly, the [Seychelles Department of Health](#) guidelines.

Purpose of Exercise

The purpose of this exercise is for you to:

- *Understand and deepen into the various hypothesis about why communicating about climate change is so challenging* presented during the Unit 1 – Part 2 lecture
- *Explore the challenges you and others experience when trying to communicate about climate change.*

Needed Supplies

- Pen and paper or Notebook/journal

Time Requirement

20-30 minutes

Instructions

1. Reacquaint yourself with the relevant parts of the training lecture (Unit 1 – Part 2), which presents some of the challenges associated with communicating climate change (Slides 10-25) (Note: The five hypotheses are summarized on the next page)
2. Discuss with your partner the merits of each hypothesis:
 - What makes sense to you? What does not?
 - Why do you think so?
 - Which of these – do you think – hold merit in Seychelles?
 - If none of them do, what do you think is going on instead?
3. Take notes on your conversation, your main points of discussion, so you are ready to report on your thoughts. We will debrief this issue during our first Zoom call.

Key hypotheses why it is difficult to communicate about climate change

- **Distraction hypothesis:** Given more immediate, more familiar issues and distractions, most people don't pay enough attention to make climate change sufficiently important to act on it.
- **Social norm hypothesis:** Because of a lack of visible action by others (conveying a social norm), people don't take action themselves.
- **Lack of efficacy hypothesis:** Political engagement is lacking because of a lack of political, collective and solutions efficacy.
- **Worldviews hypothesis:** Most people's worldviews are such that they don't believe they can or need to take any action on climate change.
- **Existential threat hypothesis:** People may not be fully conscious of the existential threat, but nevertheless sense it deep down; thus, they shut down, turn away from, or debate the issue (but not engage constructively).