How to Win at Whack-a-Mole in a Minefield:
Reaching Vaccine-Hesitant Parents

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AAP OHIO CHAPTER
# OBJECTIVES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Describe</th>
<th>Identify</th>
<th>Develop</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Describe the cognitive biases that contribute to vaccine fears and refusals</td>
<td>Identify opportunities for common ground and storytelling to connect emotionally with vaccine-hesitant parents</td>
<td>Develop key talking points for common vaccine fears</td>
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<td><strong>Employ</strong></td>
<td><strong>Utilize</strong></td>
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<td>Employ strategies similar to motivational interviewing to help parents reframe concerns about vaccines and understand evidence-based recommendations</td>
<td>Utilize empathy and compassion in communication strategies while avoiding inadvertent paternalism</td>
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WHY IS VACCINATION SO CONTROVERSIAL?
DO NOT VACCINATE!!

[Image: A woman with a baby runs from a skeleton and a snake labeled "VACCINATION"]
MR. ABEL
FARRINGDON
BERKS.
What if...?

Are vaccinations safe?

Why do my children “need” vaccines so young?

Why are there so many?

Which vaccines should we get?

Do vaccines cause________?

Are vaccines really necessary?

Are they effective?
That’s why your job probably feels like this.
Caution Minefield
SHOULD I VACCINATE MY CHILD?

100 SIMPLE ANSWERS
“VACCINATION IS A FUNDAMENTALLY VIOLENT ACT.”

“You pin a child down against their will and inject them with a biological substance when they’re healthy. It’s an aggressive act.”
Ragged tooth shark, Aliwal Shoal, South Africa. Photo by Tara Haelle
Tiger shark, South Africa. Photo by Tara Haelle
Tiger shark, South Africa. Photo by Tara Haelle
Convincing Facts!

Those who disbelieve in vaccination should ponder the following figures issued by the Health Committee of Gloucester:

Total admissions to hospital for smallpox: 350

Unvaccinated: 319

Vaccinated, but so long ago as to be unprotected: 18

Vaccinated during incubation period of disease: 13

'The Times.' July 25, 1923.
DEFICIT MODEL

Presumption that “vaccination skeptics lack the ability to access or understand evidence.”

WHY DOES THE DEFICIT MODEL PERSIST?

• “scientists' training results in the belief that public audiences can and do process information in a rational manner”

• “tied to scientists' perceptions of the individuals who comprise the public… as an ignorant, homogenous group”

• Allows simplicity for policy advocacy

• “underestimating how complex the decision-making process is for publics as they form attitudes toward science topics”

WHAT’S ACTUALLY GOING ON UNDER THE HOOD

- Automated processes
- “auto-pilot”
- Ancestors in the forest (snake!)
- Selective attention (photographing the shark)
HEURISTICS
Cognitive shortcuts that let us skip the process of receiving, interpreting, analyzing, assessing, and acting on every stimulus we're exposed to.
What is a heuristic?

- "rules of thumb"
- "best practices"
- "intuitive judgments"
- "common sense"

Source: Abby Covert, Information Architect
CONFIRMATION BIAS

An unintentional tendency to search for information in such a way that it confirms one’s preconceptions

OR

Interpreting new evidence as confirmation of existing beliefs
Dunning-Kruger Effect

Unskilled and Unaware of It: How Difficulties in Recognizing One's Own Incompetence Lead to Inflated Self-Assessment.

Nobel Prize Psychology 2000

Confidence

No nothing

Experience

(Knowledge in field)

Expert

0%

100%
SURVIVORSHIP BIAS

A selection bias: focusing on the people that survived a process/event while unwittingly neglecting those who did not because they aren’t visible.
Ragged tooth shark, Aliwal Shoal, South Africa. Photo by Tara Haelle
AVAILABILITY BIAS

Relying too much on immediate examples that come to mind while evaluating something

More recent, personal, emotional, memorable... the brain magnifies these events
What’s your phobia?
Is it rational?
“In 1736 I lost one of my sons, a fine boy of four years old, by the smallpox taken in the common way. I long regretted bitterly and still regret that I had not given it to him by inoculation.

This I mention for the sake of the parents who omit that operation, on the supposition that they should never forgive themselves if a child died under it; my example showing that the regret may be the same either way, and that, therefore, the safer should be chosen.”
OMISSION BIAS

A belief that a harmful action is comparatively worse than an equally harmful inaction because the action is more obvious or “intentional”

BUT CAR SEATS...
MISCONCEPTIONS ABOUT VACCINE BELIEFS AND FEARS
“Any parent who doesn’t fully vaccinate their child is NOT NECESSARILY an anti-vaxxer.”
Continuum of Vaccine Acceptance

- refuse all
- refuse but unsure
- delay/refuse some
- accept but unsure
- accept all
## Types of parental immunization attitudes:

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Parent Type</th>
<th>Belief about vaccines</th>
<th>Percentage of Parents</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Immunization Advocates</td>
<td>Strongly agree vaccines are necessary and safe</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Go Along to Get Alongs</td>
<td>Agree vaccines are necessary and safe</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health Advocate</td>
<td>Agree vaccines are necessary but are less sure about their safety</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fence-sitters</td>
<td>Who slightly agree that vaccines are necessary and safe</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Worrieds</td>
<td>Slightly disagree that vaccines are necessary and strongly disagree that vaccines are safe</td>
<td>3%</td>
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“The anti-vaccine movement DID NOT start with Wakefield’s fraudulent 1998 Lancet paper attempting to link the MMR with autism.”
The Cow-Pock — or — The Wonderful Effects of the New Inoculation!
“The anti-vaccine movement is NOT rapidly growing.”

(CLUSTERS ARE A DIFFERENT STORY.)
“Parents who don’t vaccinate are NOT ALL either rich, dirty hippies, Tea Partiers, Trump supporters, SJWs, or Big pHARMa conspiracy theorists…”
PSYCHOLOGICAL ROOTS OF ANTI-VACCINATION ATTITUDES

• 5,323 participants in 24 countries across six continents
• #1: high levels of conspiratorial thinking
• #2: high in “reactance” – the proud nonconformists
  – Skeptical of consensus, being told what to think
• #3: high levels of disgust toward blood and needles
  – Subclinical fears/phobias (“naturalistic fallacy”)
• #4: strong individualistic and hierarchal worldviews
  – Hierarchal values commerce/free market over government
• #5: demographics & level of education had little/no influence

“Parents who don’t vaccinate are NOT ‘pro-disease’ or all seeking chickenpox parties.”
“Parents who don’t vaccinate are NOT stupid and uninformed.”

(MOTIVATED REASONING AND DUNNING-KRUGER PLAY A ROLE.)
50 Studies the AAP Avoided to Mention

There is a robust, worldwide body of published science from highly esteemed scientists questioning the safety of many different aspects of vaccines—how come we never hear from them? The majority of the most compelling science has been published since 2010. Below find 50 such studies to consider, sorted chronologically, and note that these studies only represent a portion of the published work implicating vaccinations in a wide variety of negative health outcomes.

The American Academy of Pediatrics made representations to President Trump in a letter dated 2/7/2017 that are utterly indefensible and inaccurate, as any rational review of the studies below quickly demonstrates. For example, the AAP wrote:

"Claims that vaccines are unsafe when administered according to expert recommendations have been disproven by a robust body of medical literature...we write to express our unequivocal support for the safety of vaccines."

We contend that the AAP's statements to the President are baseless, reckless, and easily refuted. The AAP's letter alone supports the President's desire to field a Vaccine Safety Commission and do all we can to make vaccines as safe as possible. Please click here for a list of all 50 studies detailed below.
50 Studies


3. Autoimmune/Inflammatory Syndrome Induced by Adjuvants and Sjogren's Syndrome *IMAJ* VOL 18, March-April 2016, Serena Colafrancesco, Carlo Perricone, Yehuda Shoenfeld


7. Aluminium in brain tissue in familial Alzheimer's disease *Journal of Trace Elements in Medicine and Biology*, November 2016, Ambreen Mirza, Andrew King, Claire Troakes, Christopher Exley

8. Evidence that Food Proteins in Vaccines Cause the Development of Food Allergies and Its Implications for Vaccine Policy *Journal of Developing Drugs*, 2015, Vinu Arumugham


17. Human exposure to aluminium Environmental Science Processes & Impacts, 2013, Christopher Exley

18. Human Papilloma Virus Vaccine and Primary Ovarian Failure: Another Facet of the Autoimmune/Inflammatory Syndrome Induced by Adjuvants American Journal of Reproductive Immunology, 2013, Selena Colafrancesco, Carlo Perricone, Lucija Tomljenovic, Yehuda Shoenfeld

19. Relative trends in hospitalizations and mortality among infants by the number of vaccine doses and age, based on the Vaccine Adverse Event Reporting System (VAERS), 1990-2010 Human and Experimental Toxicology, 2012, GS Goldman, NZ Miller


“Parents who don’t vaccinate DO NOT NECESSARILY think they’re smarter than their doctors.”

(IT’S NOT PERSONAL.)
“Autism is not necessarily the main fear non-vaccinating parents have about vaccines.”
MAJOR VACCINE CONCERNS

- Brain damage
- Death
- “too many too soon” overwhelms the immune system
- SIDS/higher infant mortality
- Allergies/autoimmune problems
- Paralysis
- Increased risk of other disease
- Vaccine gives you the disease
- “Shedding” will sicken others
- Vaccines aren’t tested well enough
- Package inserts list many effects
- Cause bacterial resistance
- Dangerous “chemicals” (formaldehyde, aluminum, antibiotics, etc.)
- Inadequate immunity (natural infection is superior)
- Aborted fetal cells violate pro-life stance
- Vaccines don’t work (why risk it)
- Diseases aren’t that bad (why risk it)
- Vaccines aren’t needed (deaths dropped before vaccines)
- Spacing out vaccines is safer
- Vaccines aren’t tested together or aren’t safe enough
No promises.
“Shaming anti-vaxxers will NOT make them change their minds and vaccinate.”
“Parents who don’t vaccinate are not necessarily just listening to Jenny McCarthy and Andrew Wakefield.”
“Giving parents straight facts about vaccines will not simply persuade them to vaccinate.”

(MOTIVATED REASONING CAN CAUSE THEM TO DIG IN DEEPER.)
“Parents who don’t vaccinate are NOT beyond hope – you can sometimes change their minds.”

IT’S NOT HOPELESS.
THE REALITY

- (Nearly) every parent wants the best for their child
- Parents are terrified of making the wrong decision
- It’s NOT personal
- You need to connect with parents
- Compassion and empathy trump shame
WHAT WORKS
PRESUMPTIVE OVER PARTICIPATORY

• Participatory:
  – "Do you want to vaccinate your child today?"
  – "What do you think about vaccines?"
  – "Would you like to hear about the vaccines we offer for today's visit?"

• Presumptive:
  – "Today your child is due for 2 vaccines. We will be giving MMR and varicella."
  – "It's time for an annual influenza vaccine. Your child is old enough to receive either the inactivated shot or the live nasal spray."

C.A.S.E.

- **Corroborate**: Acknowledge the parents' concern and find some point on which you can agree. Set the tone for a respectful, successful dialogue.

- **About Me**: Describe what you have done to build your knowledge base and expertise.

- **Science**: Describe what the science says.

- **Explain/Advise**: Give your advice to patient, based on the science

Source: AAP, Alison Singer, MBA, Autism Science Foundation
DON’T FEAR DISCUSSING RISKS

David Salamone, who contracted polio from vaccine and helped spur changes in U.S. immunization policy, dies at 28

David Salamone contracted polio from an oral vaccine when he was a baby. The story of his suffering spurred change in U.S. Immunization policy. (Family photo)
REFRAME THEM

- OPV risks → today’s policy
- Rotashield → new clinical trials’ guidelines
- HIV in polio? Tell them about Cutter… and what happened as a result
- The WORST thing that can happen with the MMR…
  - CDC risks
  - Move into measles risks → SSPE
Get down your talking points

8 Reasons Parents Don't Vaccinate (And Why They Should)
Here, experts weigh in on common myths surrounding the practice of vaccination – and why those myths are wrong.

By Tara Haelle
Tell a story.
“The Historian” Image in public domain.
Achilles tending the wounded Patroclus (Attic red-figure kylix, c. 500 BC)
Baiame, the creator spirit who comes from the sky in the Dreaming of several language groups of southeastern Australia. Photo by T. Wright.
Vishnu, Shiva, and Brahma. Image in public domain.
Abraham Meets the Three Strangers (the Old Testament Trinity). 1000 A.D. Public domain.
BUT IT DIDN’T WORK…

• What’s driving THIS PARENT’S fear?
• What does THIS PARENT need?
• Specific questions? Offer to research the answers for next visit
• It’s a marathon, not a sprint!
Don't ever give up!
GOT QUESTIONS?

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