Communicating scary things to enable action

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Sea Level Rise Practitioner Workshop

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Challenge #1: This is depressing and terrifying, and I don’t want to think about it.
Natural hazards and climate change are overwhelming...

Idea #1: Reframe the challenge in a positive light.
Our current risk is human-caused...and so with a bit of humility can be human-solved.
Challenge #2: There’s a heck of a lot of science to wade through (and it is uncertain).

- **Tide**
  - Deterministic
  - Periodic fall and rise of ocean surface

- **Storm Surge**
  - Probabilistic
  - Localized increase in water levels due to low pressure system in atmosphere (storms)

- **Wind set-up**
  - Probabilistic
  - Strong onshore winds blowing over shallow water leading to water ‘piling’ along shore

- **Wave set-up**
  - Probabilistic
  - Large waves leading to static increase in water level

- **Wave run-up**
  - Probabilistic
  - Wave effects when breaking along shore

+ **Sea Level Rise**
Science jargon is hard to digest, and risk literacy is low...

Idea #2: Keep it simple. Tell stories. Don’t be afraid of the messiness. Make it personal.
Icons for big ideas

Simple language title first

No timeline to manage uncertainty

Depths that mean something
Challenge #3: Who reads reports anymore?
We learn in different ways...

Idea #3: Use a range of visuals and multiple media types.
Recap...just in case (because repetition is also important 😊)

Idea #1: Reframe the challenge in a positive light.

Idea #2: Keep it simple. Tell stories. Don’t be afraid of the messiness.

Idea #3: Use a range of visuals and multiple media types.