



This is an emergency

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Hurricane Katrina

A few months before Hurricane Katrina, Louisiana Emergency Managers (EMs) met to discuss a better response to Category 3 hurricanes.

The EMs were well aware that many in Louisiana lacked the money, vehicles, and travel experience to evacuate.

The workshop focused on how to support the evacuation of travel-capable people – those with money, vehicles, and travel expenses.

The lack of focus on those without the money, vehicles, or travel experience was explained this way: “past approaches should be adequate.”

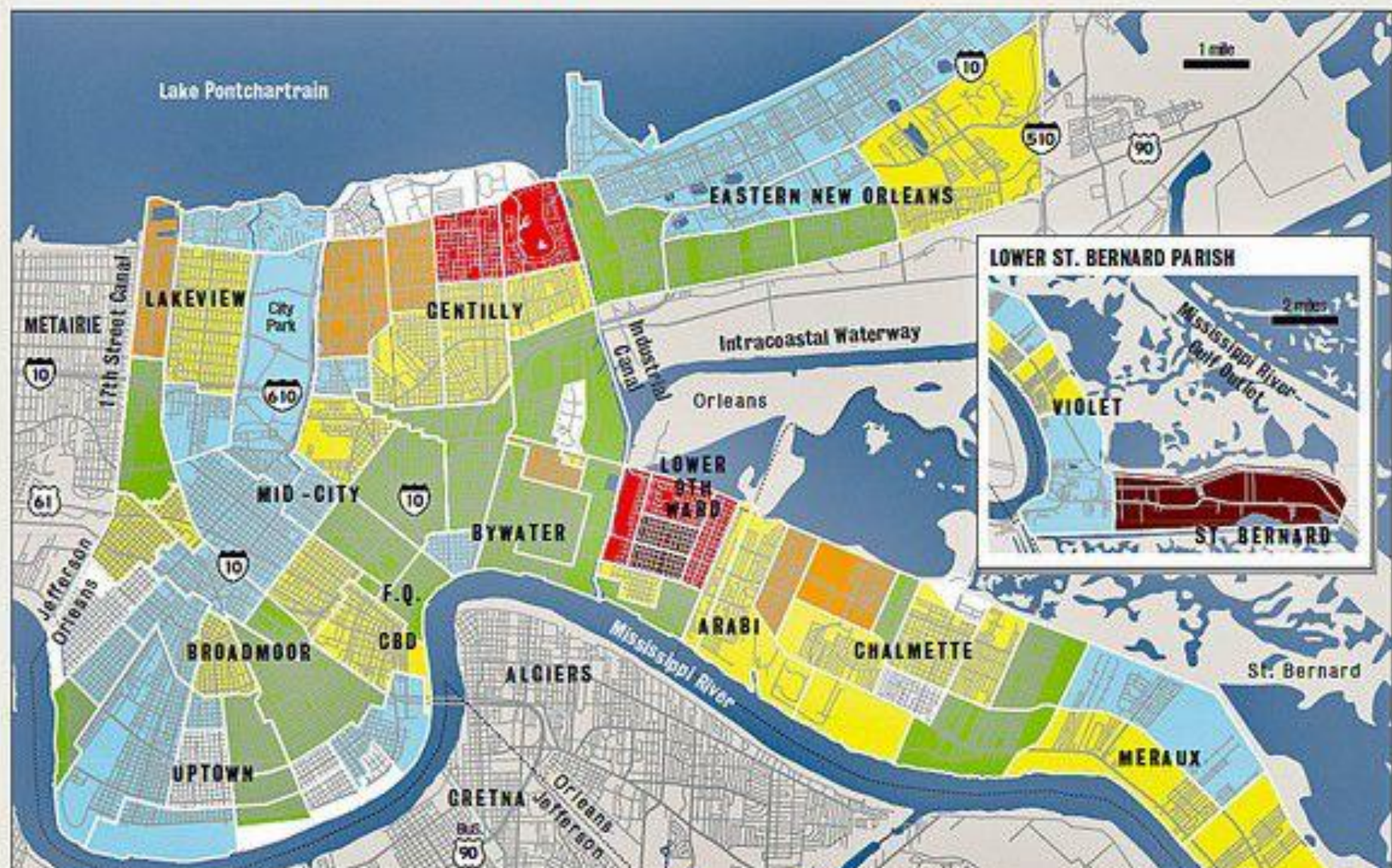
DEADLY FLOODING FROM HURRICANE KATRINA'S LEVEE BREACHES

Most Katrina deaths were caused by fast-moving, rising water. The highest numbers of fatalities were found in the Lower 9th Ward near the Industrial Canal floodwall breach and the portion of St. Bernard Parish containing St. Rita's Nursing Home.

NUMBER OF DEATHS PER 1,000 PEOPLE THAT REMAINED IN ORLEANS AND ST. BERNARD PARISH NEIGHBORHOODS WHEN KATRINA HIT*

0 0-5 5-10 10-20 20-30 30-50 50-150

*Scientists estimate 10 percent of population did not evacuate or go to shelters.







Who am I?

Where am I?

How much do I know?

What has happened to me?

What is my challenge?

Am I under stress?

What do I need to succeed?

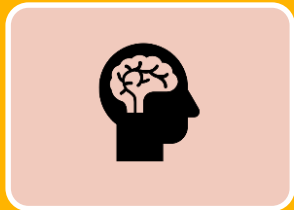
The Cs of Emergency Communication



Context



Cognition



Comprehension

Context: The environment in which information is taken in



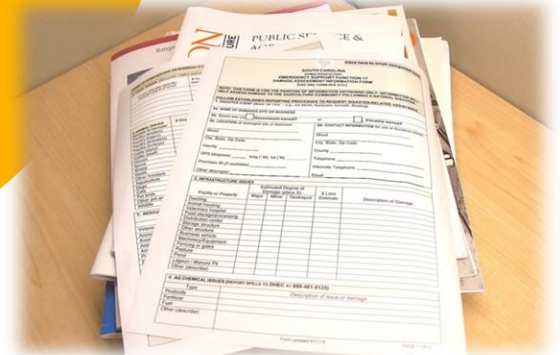
Physical
Environment



Accessibility

Urgency

Available
Channels



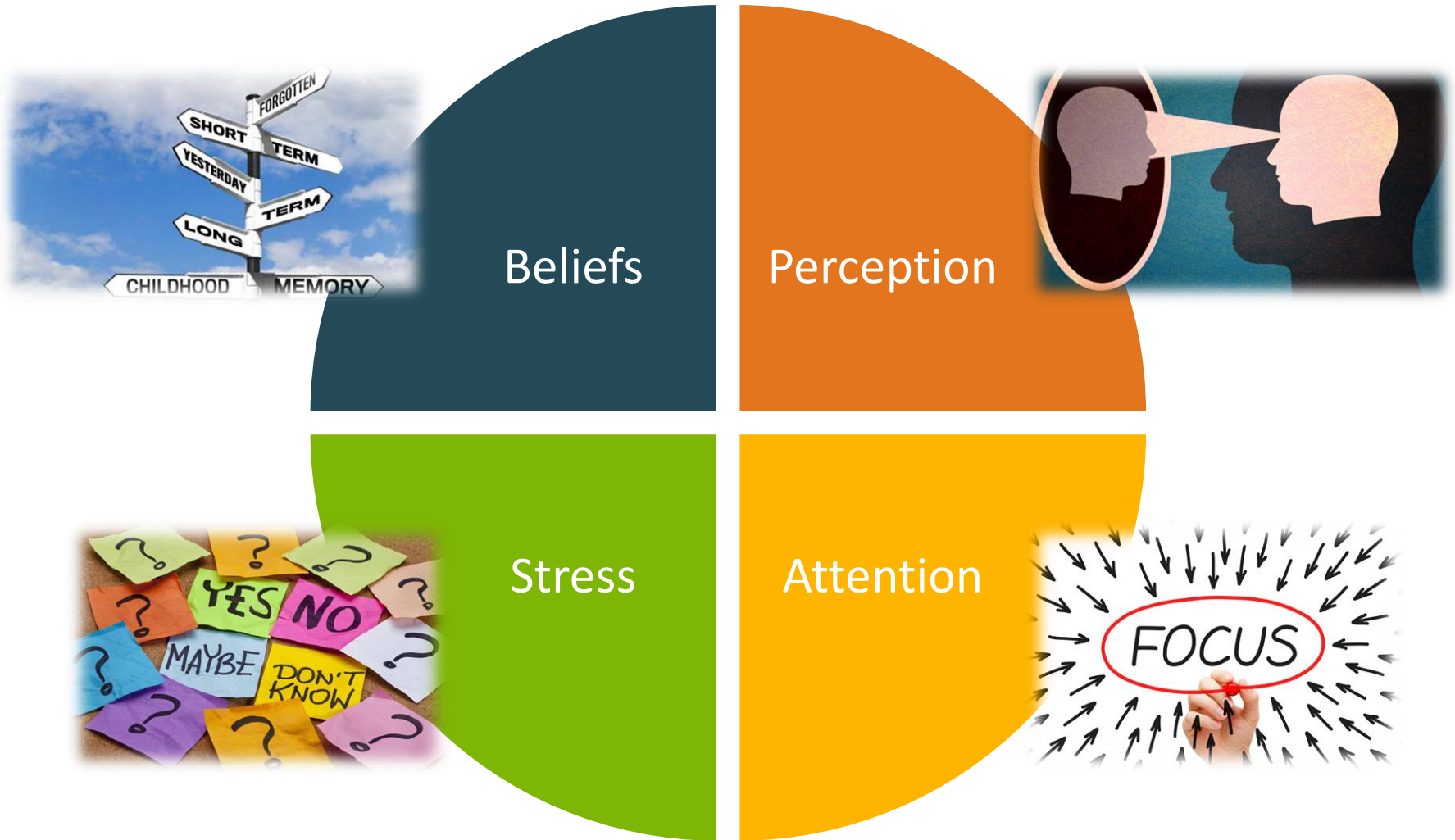
Takeaways

- Identify who you are trying to reach
- Identify barriers in physical environment
- Choose the channel that best meets audience needs at that moment in time
- Make urgent information available at all times – refresh the message often
- Meet the communication needs of the most vulnerable



Get the right
information to the
right people
at the right time

Cognition: How users sense and acquire information



Takeaways

- Overcome natural inertia and optimism
- Make proximity of event and potential outcomes clear and focused
- Use credible sources to convey information
- Make warnings short, clear, imperative, and in plain language
- Create specific “calls to action”



Seek to educate
and inform as well
as change
behaviors and
attitudes

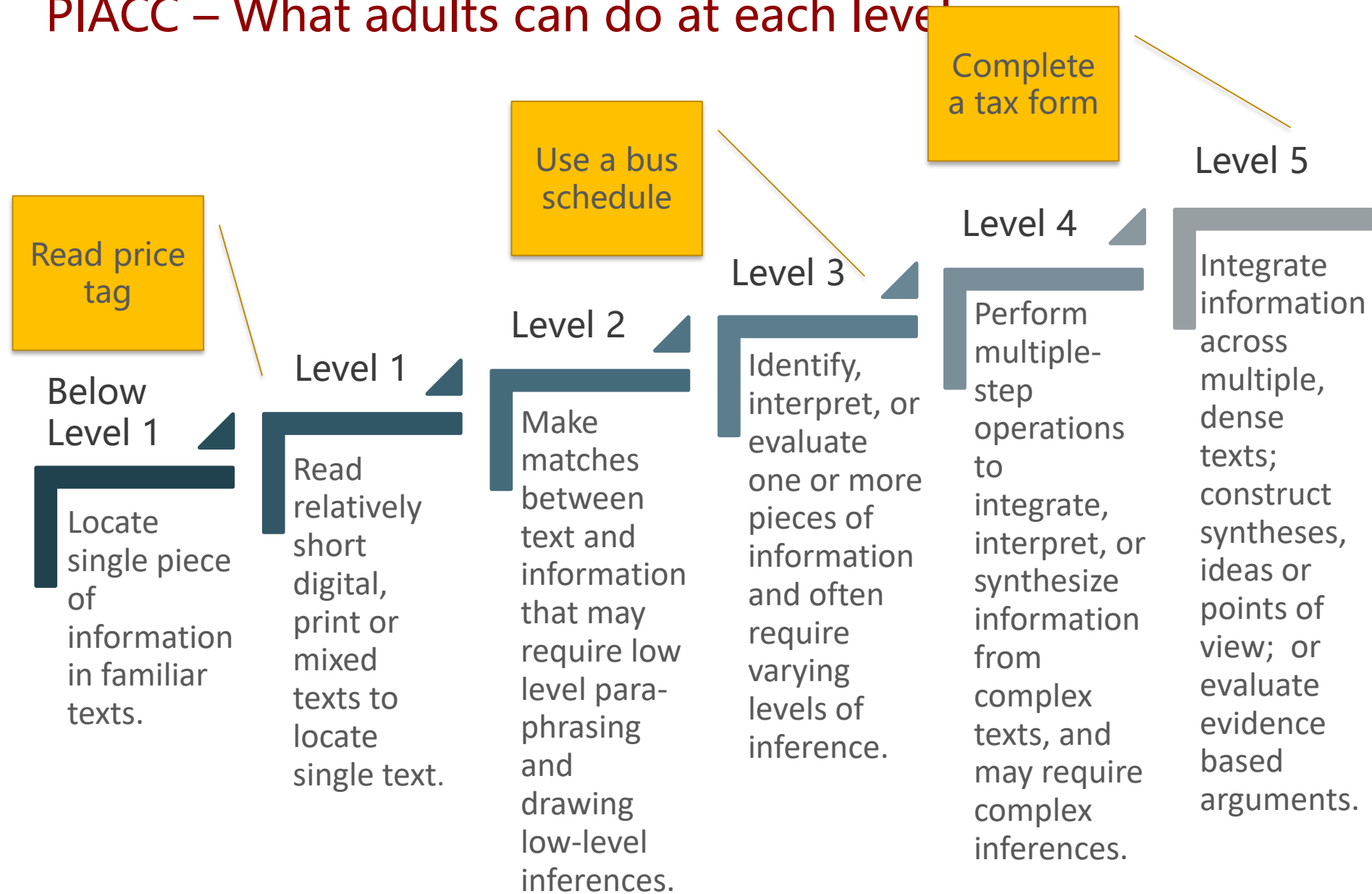
Comprehension: How users understand information



To participate in the society, to achieve one's goals, and to develop one's knowledge and potential

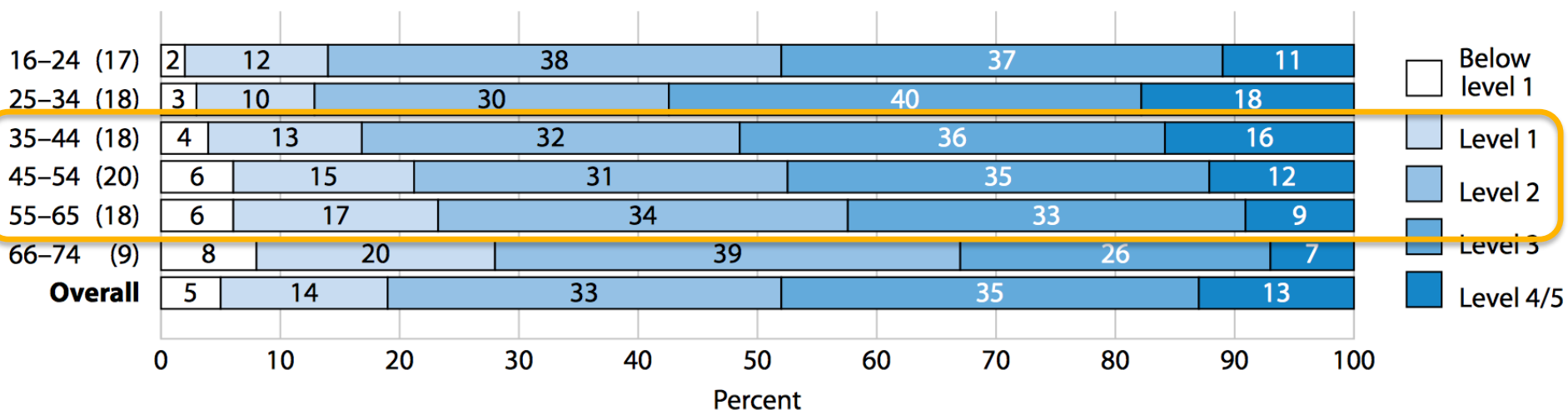
- Program for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies
- Surveyed 150,000 adults between the ages of 16-65 in 24 countries
- Measured competency in:
 - Literacy
 - Numeracy
 - Problem solving in technology-rich environments

PIACC – What adults can do at each level



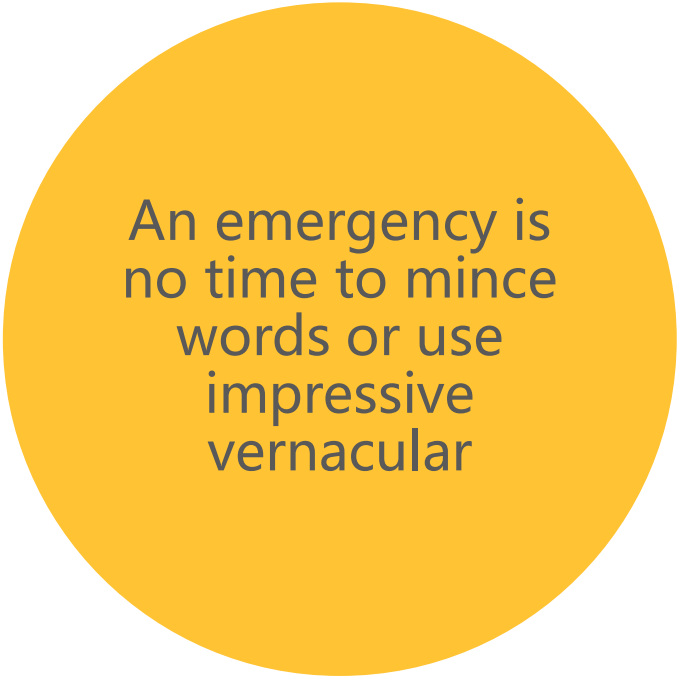
Literacy: Percentage performing each level

Figure 10-A. Percentage of U.S. adults age 16 to 74 at each level of proficiency on the PIAAC literacy scale, by 10-year age intervals: 2012 and 2014

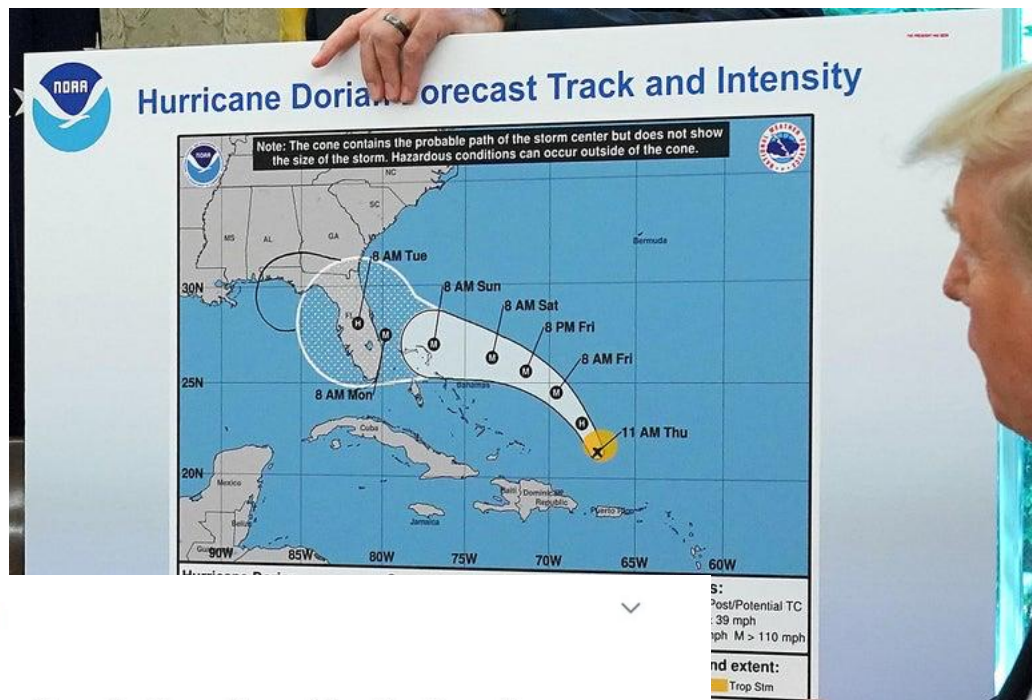


Takeaways

- Write in a way that a typical person of below average literacy can understand
- Use clear, specific words
- Use active sentences
- Be directive about what people need to do
- Use visuals to reinforce words
- Make sure translations are accurate and effective



An emergency is
no time to mince
words or use
impressive
vernacular



In addition to Florida - South Carolina, North Carolina, Georgia, and Alabama, will most likely be hit (much) harder than anticipated. Looking like one of the largest hurricanes ever. Already category 5. BE CAREFUL! GOD BLESS EVERYONE!

8:51 AM · Sep 1, 2019 · Twitter for iPhone

17.2K Retweets 68.5K Likes



NWS Birmingham
@NWSBirmingham

Alabama will NOT see any impacts from [#Dorian](#). We repeat, no impacts from Hurricane [#Dorian](#) will be felt across Alabama. The system will remain too far east. [#alwx](#)

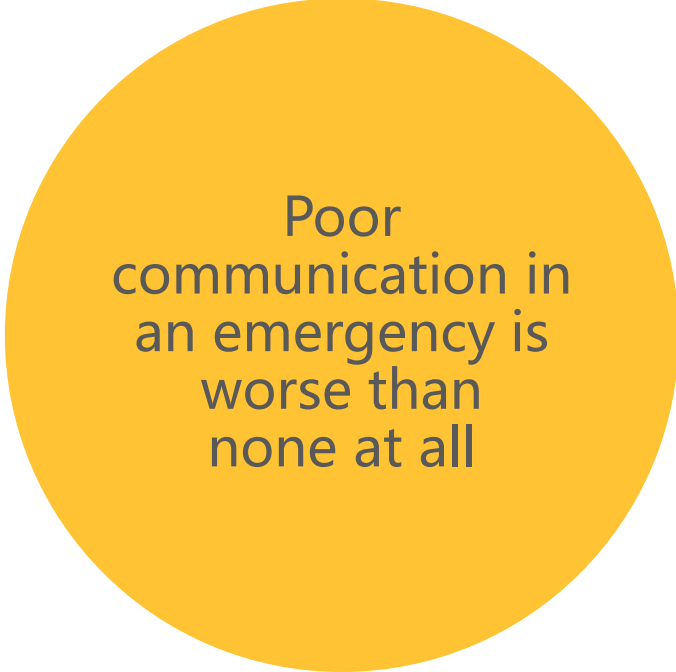
♡ 11.3K 10:11 AM - Sep 1, 2019

💬 3,902 people are talking about this



What Went Wrong?

- Wrong state identified
- Proximity of event and outcome unclear
- Credibility in question
- Additional warning needed to overcome original poor execution
- Affects future belief and attention



Poor
communication in
an emergency is
worse than
none at all



City of Charlotte Government posted a ⚠️ local alert.



September 15 at 10:09 PM · 🌐

Road conditions are beginning to **turn treacherous.** We **highly urge** you to stay off the roads **unless it's absolutely necessary.** Road conditions will **worsen as the storm intensifies overnight.** Text CHARMECK to 888777 or go to charlottenc.gov for emergency updates. **Charlotte Department of Transportation**

NOTE: The video is a clip from the 10:30 a.m. press briefing held on Sept. 15, 2018. Follow our page for the latest updates on city services and public safety information.

The road conditions are dangerous. Please stay off the roads unless you absolutely have to be on them. The roads will get worse overnight as the storm gets more intense.

What are Mass Attacks?

Assailant(s): _____

- Use weapons to attack crowds
- Target less protected indoor or outdoor spaces
- Intend to harm multiple victims
- Use the attack(s) to intimidate
- Can use makeshift or modern weapons

Is this word familiar enough?

What does this mean?

Makeshift or modern?

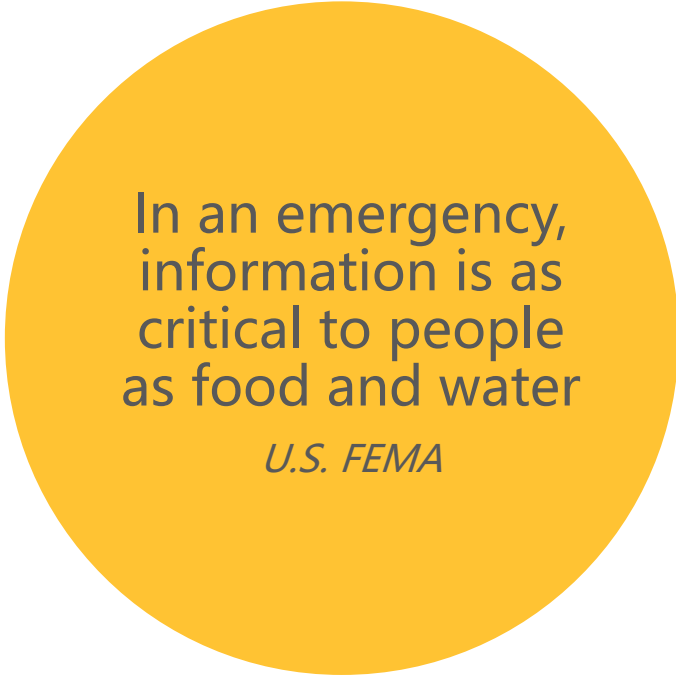
Types of Mass Attacks

- Active shooter: Individuals using firearms to cause mass casualties.
- Intentional Vehicular Assault (IVA): Individuals using a vehicle to cause mass casualties.
- Improvised Explosive Device (IED): Individuals using homemade bombs to cause mass casualties.
- Other methods of mass attacks may include knives, fires, drones, or other weapons.

Are these necessary?

Summary

- Focus on the people first!
- Address the three C's
 - Context
 - Cognition
 - Comprehension
- Use plain language tools to clarify messages and make them widely accessible
- Test messages
- Plan for emergency communication



In an emergency,
information is as
critical to people
as food and water

U.S. FEMA