

RSA[®]Conference2020

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HUMAN
ELEMENT

SESSION ID: KEY-T08S

Fear and Loathing in Cyber Security Analysis of the Psychology of Fear

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Fear and Loathing

- What is fear?
- The psychology of fear appeals
- How to talk about something scary
- Moving beyond fear



**“PEOPLE SHOW A DISPROPORTIONATE
FEAR OF RISKS THAT SEEM
UNFAMILIAR AND HARD TO CONTROL”**

SUNSTEIN, 2014

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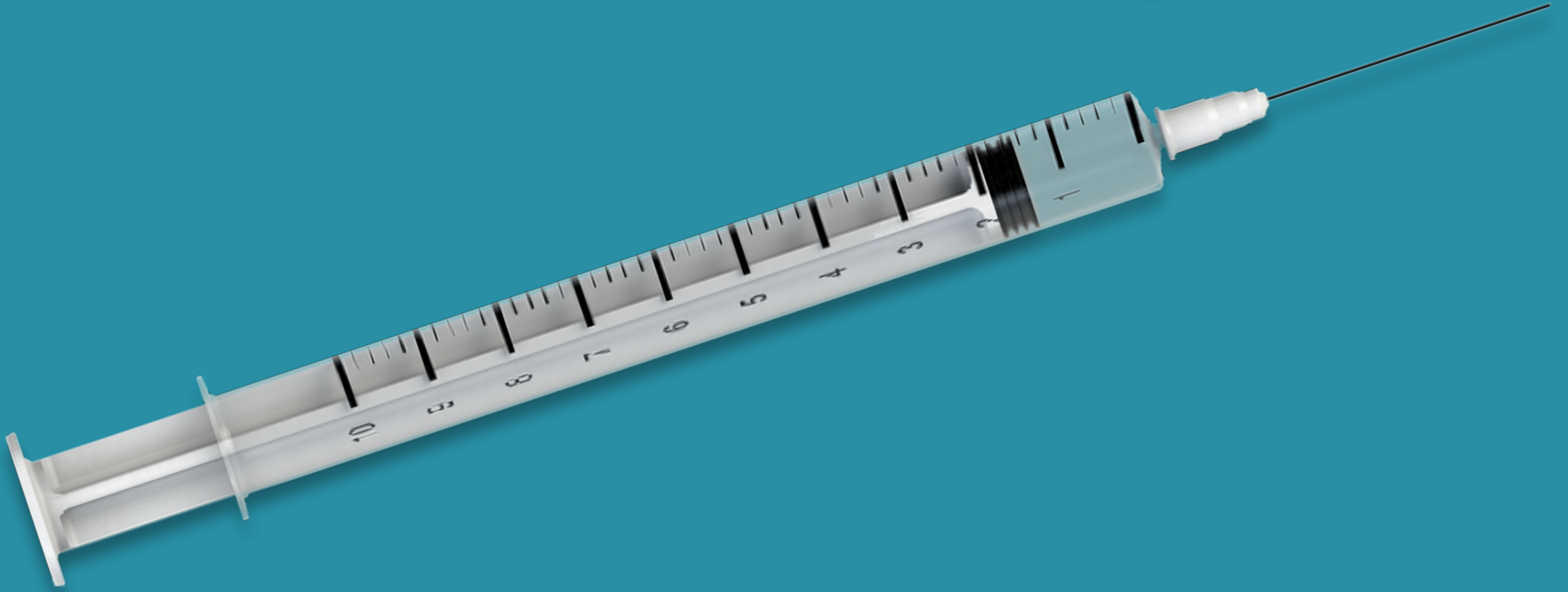


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**But social engineers
use fear all the time?**



Extended Parallel Process Model



Appraise threat



Appraise efficacy

Control danger
Or
Control fear



Controlling the fear means...



Efficacy issue 1 - signal vs noise



ATTENTION

Efficacy issue 2 - a tool for the job



Efficacy issue 3 - empowerment





The Optimism Bias



FULL
EMPTY

OPTIMISM
IS MORE POWERFUL
THAN
FACTS

W 90th Ave



OPTIMISM
MAKES PEOPLE
TRY
HARDER







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MUNCHIES
FOOD BY VICE

I Made My Shed the Top-Rated Restaurant on TripAdvisor

And then served customers frozen dinners on its opening night.





got milk?[®]

IT'S NOT JUST ABOUT

AWAWARENESS

IT'S ALSO ABOUT

USABILITY

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CULTURE

Fear and Loathing Takeaways

- Scary messages need strong efficacy
- Reduce the noise so people can engage with the signal
- Build engagement with optimistic messages & social proof
- Provide the tools so people can change their behaviours
- Harness a positive cyber security culture

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