Sending the right message

Applying message framing to persuasive ocean change communication

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Climate

People

Oceans

Credit: Carolina Rogers/USGS

LET'S GO SHOPPING
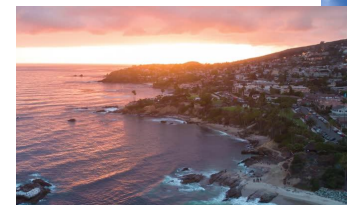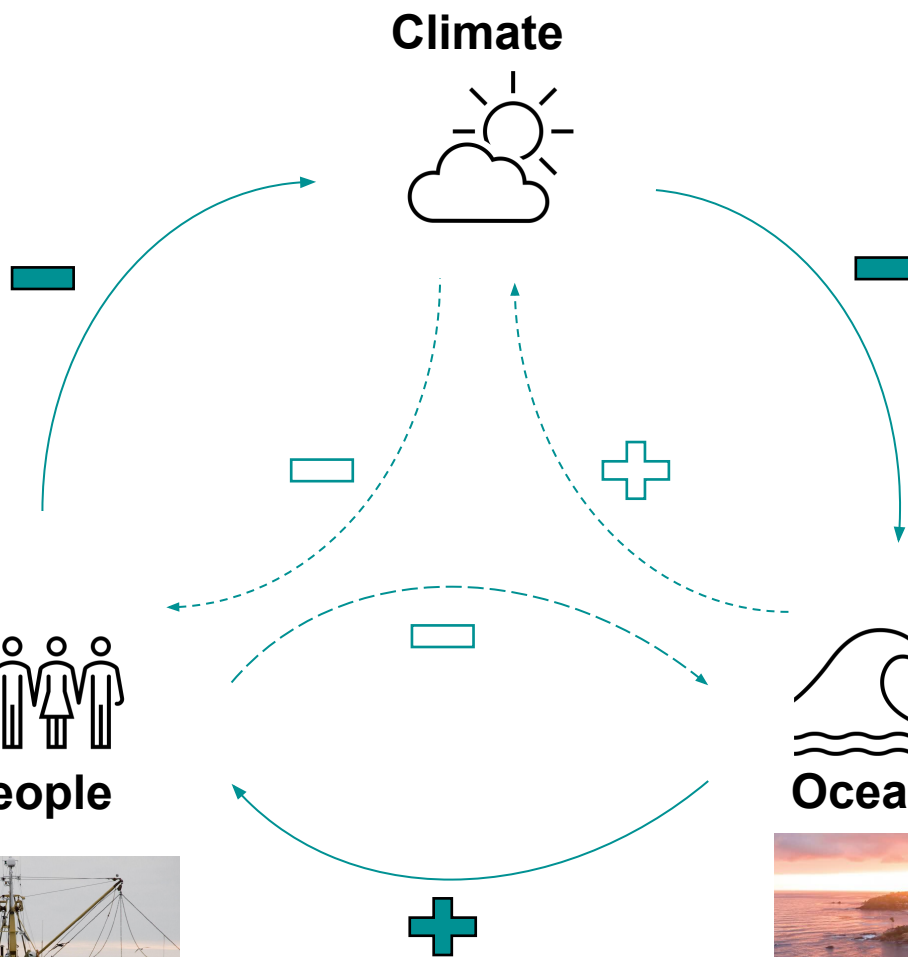
Credit: Britannica
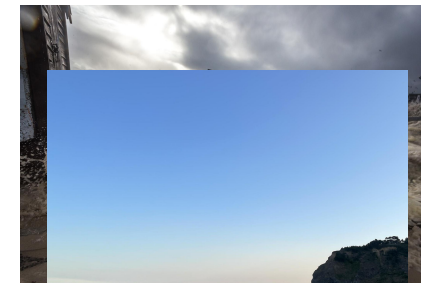
Credit: Tom Kleindinst, Woods Hole Oceanographic Institute

Climate

People's actions have
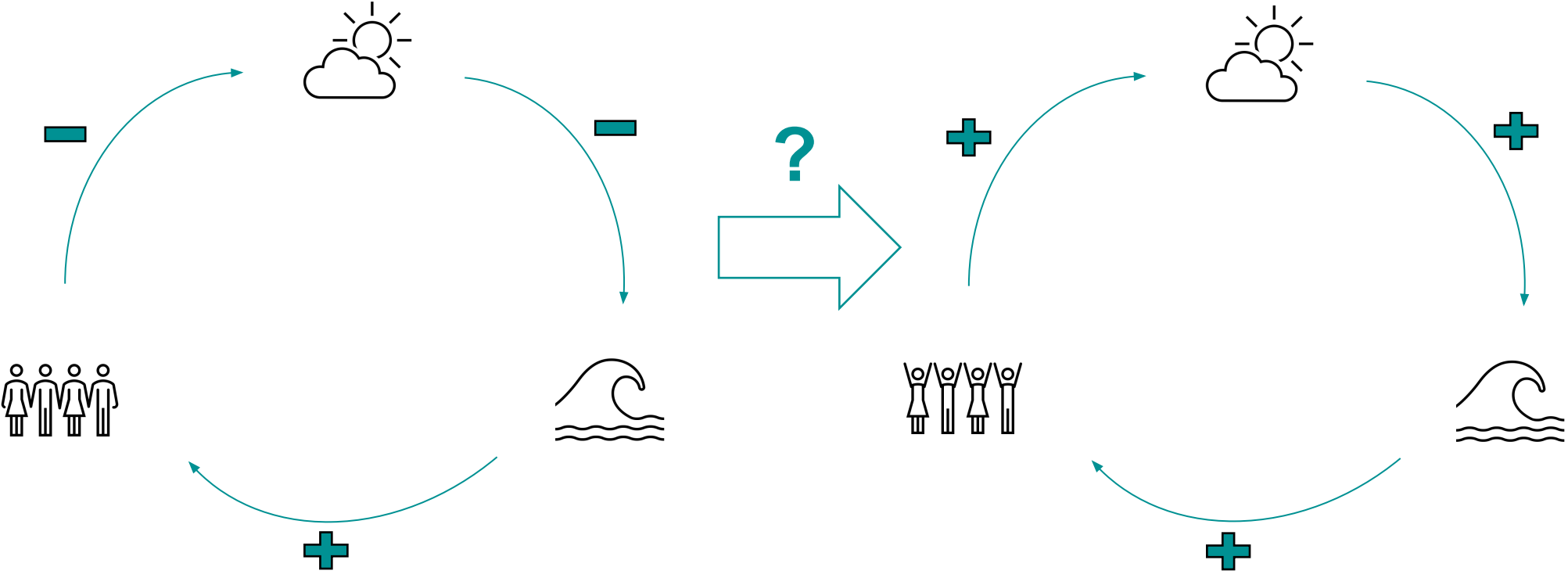the potential to
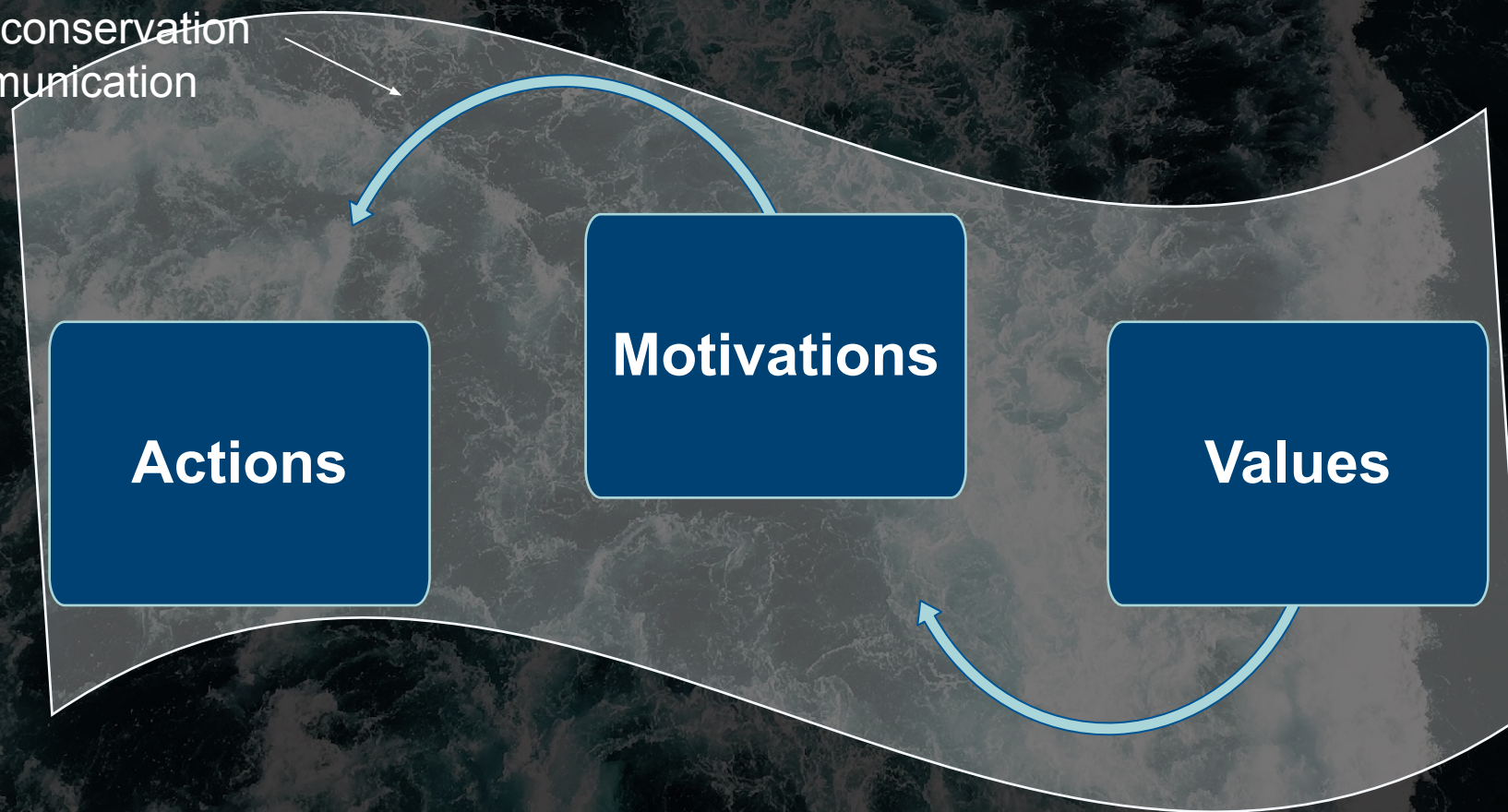influence ocean change

People

Oceans

What causes people to engage in climate actions/behaviors?

People engage in a certain action because they are motivated by a salient idea or belief

Traditional focus of climate/conservation communication

Actions

Motivations

Values

Personal

Socio-cultural

Politico-economic

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We need to _effectively_ communicate about ocean change
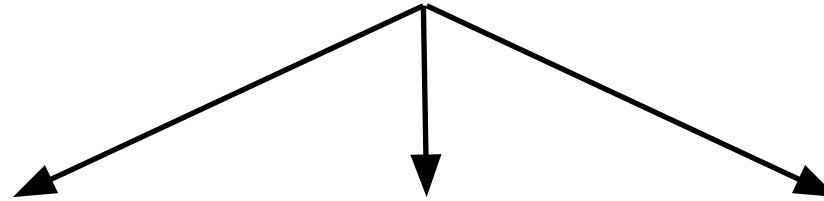
Tailoring to context

What is the topic?

Who is the audience?

What is the medium?

Tailoring to actions

What is the goal?
- Stopping a behavior
- Adopting a new behavior
- Promoting an existing behavior

Tailoring to values & motivations

Can the action be influenced?

What are the current attitudes/opinions towards the action?

How do we effectively communicate about ocean change?
Investigating message framing as a strategy

Strategic Message Framing
A process of selecting *"some aspects of a **perceived reality** and [making] them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way as to **promote** a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation for the item described."*

Entman, (1993), p. 52
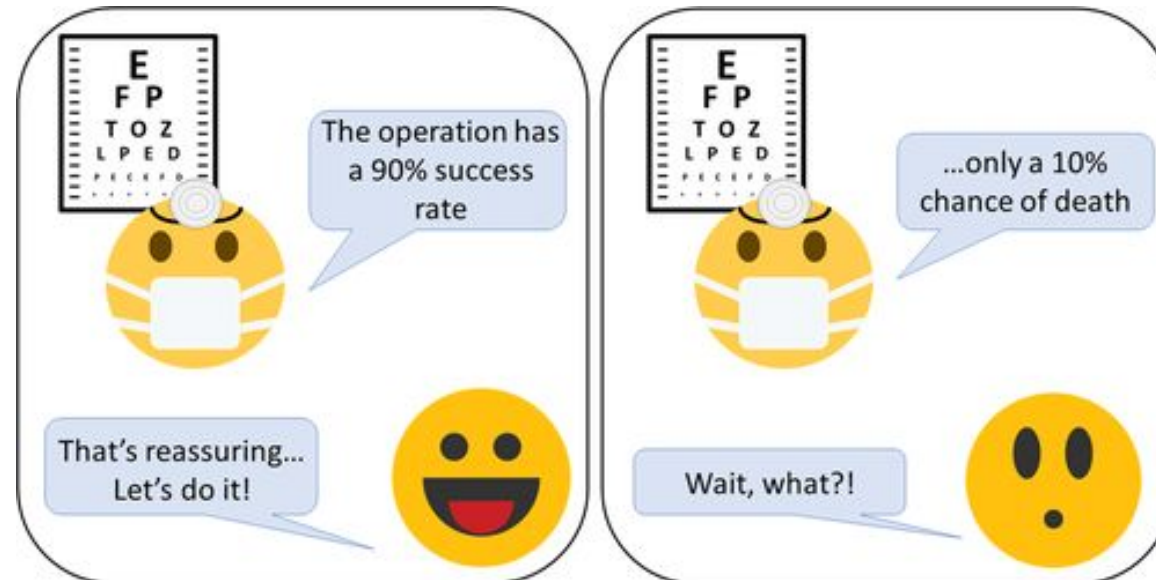
Kusmanoff et al. (2020)

Message framing case study:
Motivating climate action amongst visitors to the Oregon coast

Investigating message framing as a strategy
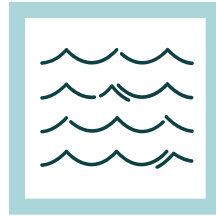## *Case study: Visitors to the Oregon coast*

1. Knowledge of OA as a proximal threat

If we frame an informational message about ocean acidification in a simplified and easily-understandable way, will it lead to higher intentions to take action?

2. Connectedness to the coast

If we frame a message about ocean change that reminds people of their attachment to the coast, will it lead to higher intentions to take action?

3. Efficacy beliefs of climate action

If we frame a message about ocean change to reassure people that their actions can make a difference, will it lead to higher intentions to take action?

Investigating message framing as a strategy
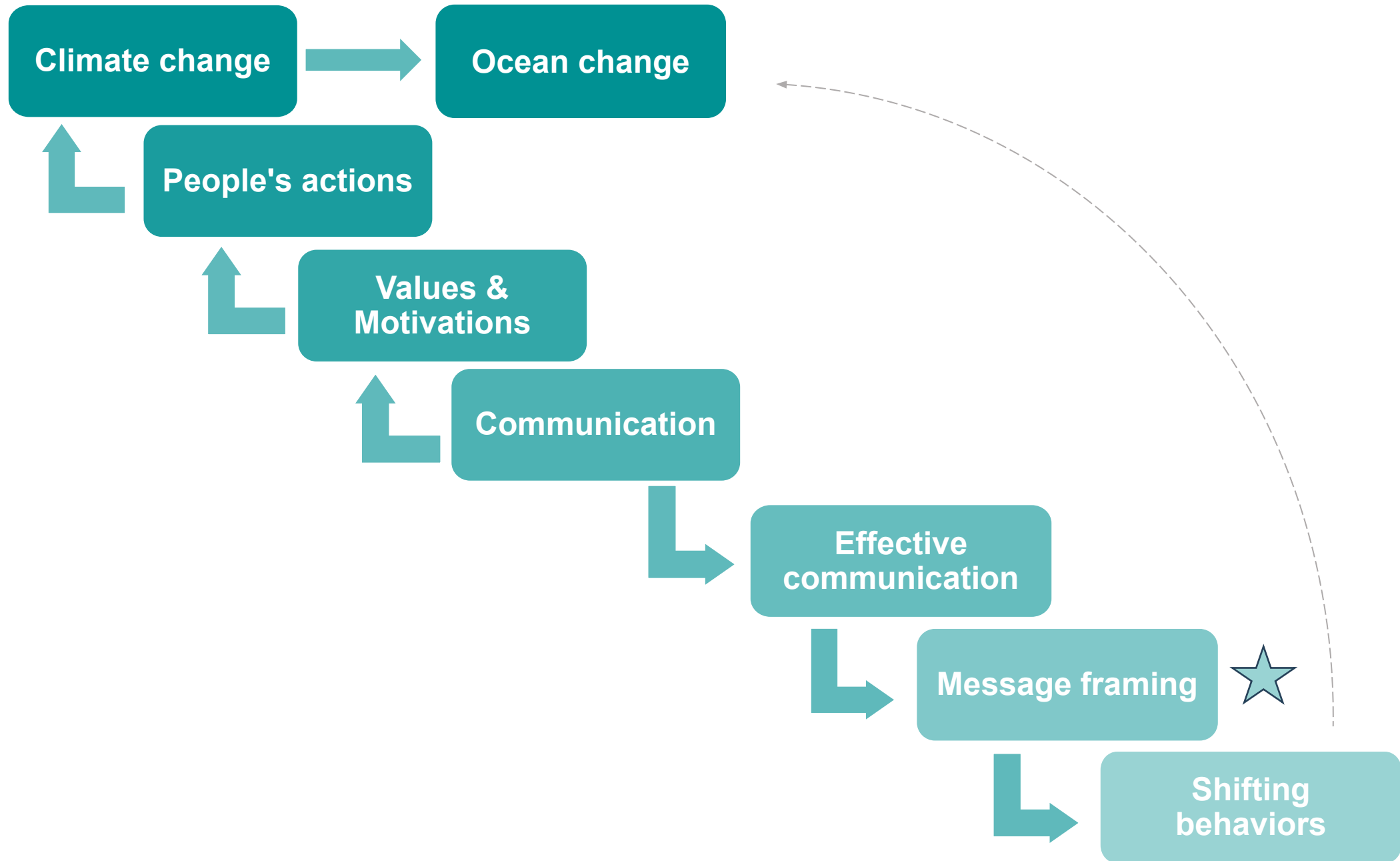*Case study: Visitors to the Oregon coast*

What do we want to know?

Effectiveness of message framing grounded in psychological theory

Why are some messages more effective than others?

For whom are different messages effective?

Projected project completion: Summer 2024

How do we motivate the public to engage in climate action?
Implications of Message Framing

Strategic Message Framing

"I needed to read this message... I am inspired to do much more."

A process of selecting *"some aspects of a perceived reality and [making] them more salient* in a communicating text, in such a way as to **promote** a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation for the item described."* [7]

...It inspires me to take more action, share this message with others.

"...I/we have an opportunity to do more -- and will."

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