

**Risk Perception and Self-Regulation  
in the Communication of  
Behavior Change**  
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Behavior change is an important area of research relevant for various fields of psychology. In light of the evidence showing that perceived risk is an important factor in the motivation of behavior change, the first part of the talk will focus on the role of negative affect in changing risk perceptions. Contrary to the findings of previous research showing that being worried about a disease leads to a lesser change of prior risk perception for that disease, our research with unaffected members of families with an inherited cancer syndrome known as Lynch syndrome showed that when relatively more worried, those who thought that their risk for Lynch Syndrome was relatively lower than what it actually was (i.e., under-estimators) changed their prior risk perception in line with the healthcare provider's feedback to a greater extent. In the second part of the talk, the role of language in the motivation of behavior change will be explored. We conducted a series of studies testing whether talking about a behavior in a question (e.g., Will I do X) as opposed to a statement format (e.g., I will do X) increases the motivation for that behavior. The findings revealed that participants were more likely to solve anagrams if they prepared for an anagram-solving task by asking themselves whether they would work on anagrams as opposed to declaring that they would. They also showed better anagram-solving performance, and reported stronger intentions to exercise and eat a healthier diet as well as intrinsic motivation to exercise after merely writing *Will I* as opposed to *I will* as part of an ostensibly unrelated handwriting task. These results are important for designing better communicational practices of behavior change by taking into account the occasionally positive role of negative affect in changing risk perceptions and the motivational role of language.