



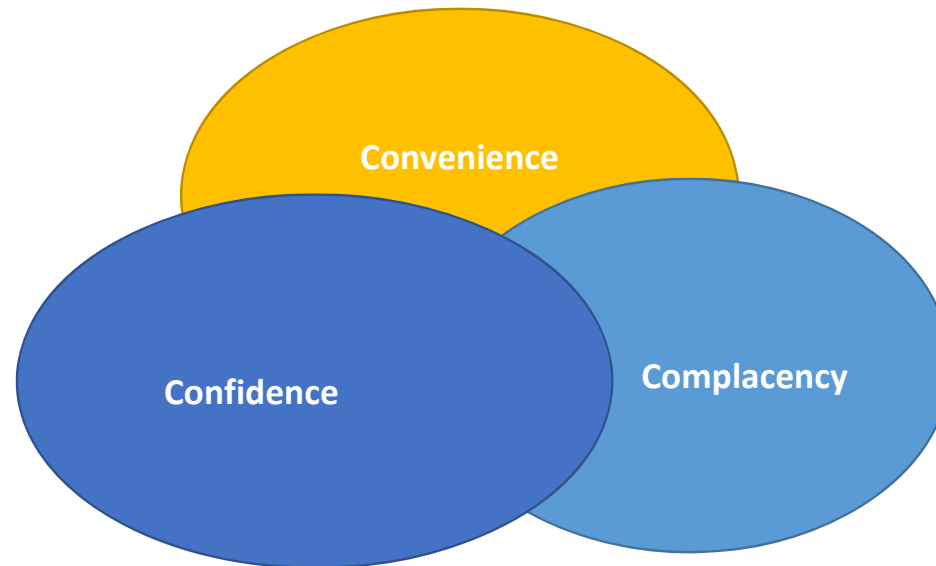
Vaccine Hesitancy

**Dr Alice Quinn, Senior Medical Officer
National Immunisation Office**



Vaccine hesitancy

- World Health Organization (WHO) defines vaccine hesitancy as a delay in acceptance or refusal of vaccinations despite availability of vaccine services
- Is dynamic, complex and context specific varying across time, place and vaccines
- It is influenced by complacency, convenience and confidence (SAGE, 2014).





Vaccine hesitancy- why is it important?

- The WHO identify vaccine hesitancy as one of the top 10 global health threats
- As vaccine hesitancy increases, vaccine uptake can decrease and this can impact on the re-emergence of infectious diseases that had been kept at bay by vaccination
- This is a threat at an individual level and at a population level for herd immunity
- **A recent paper from Japan** demonstrates the potentially tragic effects of vaccine hesitancy
 - HPV vaccination began in 2010 in Japan for girls aged between 12 and 16
 - Initial coverage was 70%
 - This dropped to 1% due to hesitancy related to now disproven concerns regarding the vaccine's side effects.
 - The rates have not recovered
 - This paper used modelling to estimate rates of cancer and deaths
 - “The vaccine crisis from 2013 to 2019 is predicted to result in an additional 24 600–27 300 cases and 5000–5700 deaths over the lifetime of cohorts born between 1994 and 2007, compared with if coverage had remained at around 70% since 2013”³



Complacency

- This is when people are not particularly worried about the risks or are not aware of the level of risk
- They perceive the risk to be low
- They are complacent about it

“It won’t affect me, we live in a safe part of the World”

“My children don’t need a measles vaccine, sure there’s no measles here”

- Vaccination is not seen as a high priority compared to life’s other competing interests



Convenience

- This is when the logistics of getting the vaccine outweigh the perceived benefit for the person
- They see it as difficult to access
- It might involve time off work, travelling to a clinic, language barriers
- The person believes that it is just too inconvenient to get the vaccine, not weighing up how inconvenient it might be to get the disease



Confidence

- Perhaps the most complex of the factors and most relevant following the COVID-19 pandemic
- A person may lack confidence that the vaccine is safe, effective or necessary
- Getting a vaccine involves a big leap of faith in some ways
- It involves trusting in many different people, institutions and factors



Confidence

Getting a vaccine involves trust/confidence in:

- ✓ Policy makers , politicians and government
- ✓ Your health system
- ✓ Your health care worker, doctor, nurse, or pharmacist
- ✓ Scientists and experts
- ✓ Health professionals in general
- ✓ The mainstream media (sometimes)
- ✓ YOURSELF- Do I know who to trust? Do I know what sources are reliable? Do I know how to make sense of all of the information available?

...to name but a few!



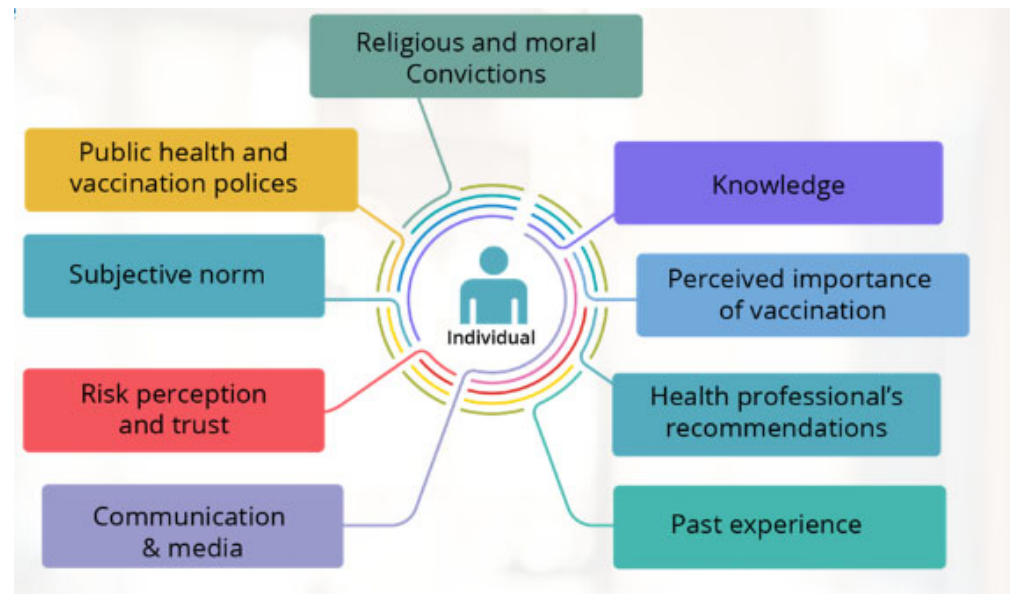
Confidence

- When you think about it this way it is understandable that some people are vaccine hesitant, and that it is becoming more prevalent now in the age of mass media, the internet and social media
- Navigating the online world and scientific evidence is difficult – Most education systems do not teach critical thinking skills and scientific reasoning! (Perhaps they should!)



What influences a person's decision to vaccinate?

- As mentioned above it is very complex
- Multiple influences act on a person to make them to decide to get vaccinated or not
- These include:





What influences a person's decision to vaccinate?

- Data, evidence and science play a part
- But in reality people are influenced by other factors too such as anecdotal evidence, lived experiences and emotions
- None of us are completely rational beings
- We tend to see what we believe, rather than believing what we see
- Taking all this into account, **HOW** we deliver our messages is just as important as what these messages are



Where do people get information from?

GENERAL PRACTITIONERS
AND PRACTICE NURSES



FAMILY, FRIENDS AND
SPOUSE/PARTNER



HSE INFORMATION PACKS
AND LEAFLETS



HEALTHCARE WORKERS:
OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH, LINE
MANAGERS AND CHAMPIONS



WORK COLLEAGUES



BROADCASTS/INTRANET/
INTERNAL EMAIL



NATIONAL
IMMUNISATION OFFICE



OTHER MEDIA: TV,
INTERNET, SOCIAL MEDIA





Is vaccine hesitancy increasing? Why?

This is due to a number of factors, including:⁴

- A culture of decreased trust in experts
- The rise of the internet and of social media
- A rise in belief-based extremism/wider dissemination of belief-based extremism
- Political polarisation
- Libertarian views
- Alternative health care advocacy
- Bad science: The MMR vaccine and Autism
- Many new vaccines coming on stream- parents concerned about “overloading” their infants
- The focus on vaccines and their safety during the COVID-19 pandemic (Good and bad)

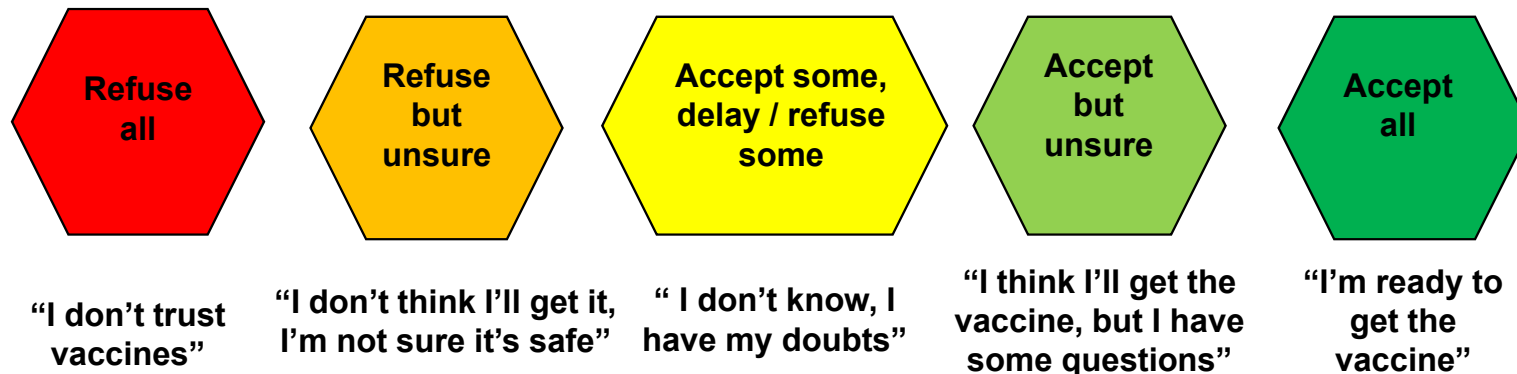
(Reference: The Vaccine Hesitant Moment, NEJM- see references slide)



What is the objective for the healthcare worker?

To move the person who is hesitant to accept vaccination

“Vaccine Hesitancy”





What can I do?

- People trust healthcare workers
- Vaccine decisions are based on many factors, including emotional
- The way we talk to patients matters
- The messages we deliver matter
- How you say it matters as much as what you say
- Clear concise easy to understand information
- No jargon
- Address genuine concerns
- Motivational interviewing





What can I do?

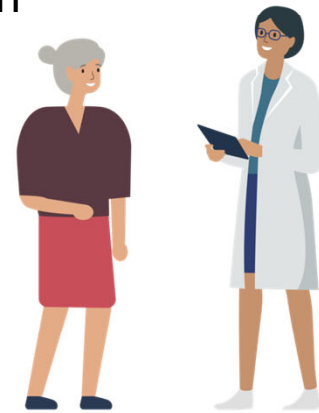
- Methods proven to help increase uptake include:
 - ✓ Reminding people about vaccination
 - ✓ Make appointment times convenient
 - ✓ Make the location as accessible to the person as you can
 - ✓ Take opportunities to recommend vaccines – e.g. at a pregnancy visit





What can I do?- Motivational Interviewing

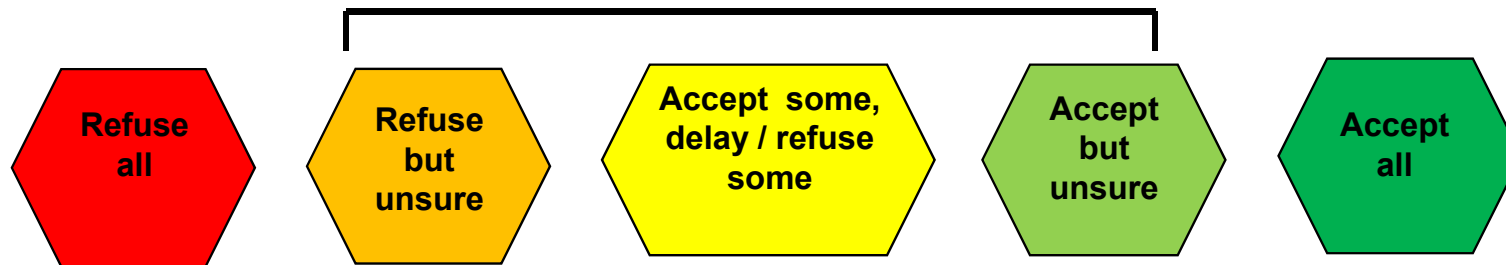
- The WHO recommend motivational interviewing techniques
- Motivational interviewing is covered in a HSE Land course ('Talking About Immunisation') that we will direct you to but briefly, it involves:
 - ✓ Ask open-ended questions
 - ✓ Reflect information back to the person what they have said/what you think they mean
 - ✓ Respond to any concerns raised
 - ✓ Affirm strengths and validate concerns- "it is great you are thinking about vaccines".
"It is natural to worry about doing the right thing for your baby"
 - ✓ Ask, provide, verify- ask what they understand, provide information, verify what their understanding is now
 - ✓ Summarise and describe action- At the end, summarise the discussion and describe the next action





If undecided – how to proceed?

Refuse all	Hesitant/undecided	Accept all
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Non-judgmental• Ask permission to discuss• Do not enter into a debate -focus on their concerns• Leave space for any future discussion• Maintain professional relationship	<p>A skilled conversation that is collaborative and person-centred</p> <p>A participatory approach- Motivational interviewing</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Offer positive encouragement• Proceed to vaccination





If undecided – how to proceed?

**Hesitant /
undecided**

Be respectful and open

Ask open ended questions

“Can I ask what you are worried about?”

Affirm strengths

“It’s good that you are looking for information about the vaccine.

Acknowledge and validate concerns

It can be worrying when you read things like that online”

Reflect and respond

“I understand that you want to do your best for your son/daughter but that you have some concerns about x.....”

Ask

Provide

Verify

Can I ask what you know about x

Can I share some information with you?

Now we’ve had a chance to talk, how do you feel about the vaccine?

Address the specific concern

Don’t bring up new concerns

Summarise and Describe action

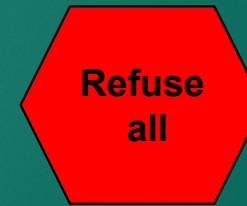
You’ve decided to get it and you are going to register on the online portal

Point to other sources of information and leave the door open to come back

Share your experience if relevant



Refuse – how to proceed?



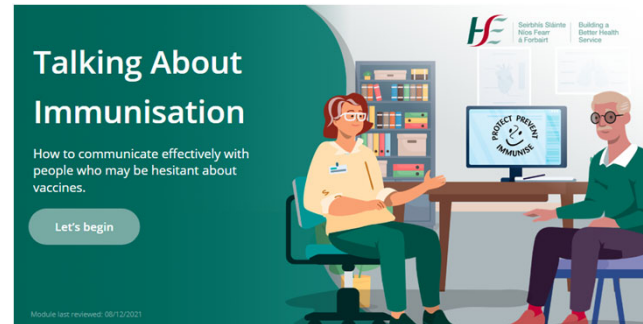
Non-judgemental	"I can see that you feel strongly about this and that you want to do the best for your health"
Ask permission to discuss	"Would it be ok with you to talk about vaccination against Covid-19 ?"
If agree, offer information and if agree focus on their specific concerns	" Can I ask what are your concerns about the vaccine?"
Do not enter into a debate/argument	"I can see that you feel strongly about this"
Leave space for any future discussion	"Please know that if you ever want to talk about vaccination, you are welcome to come back."
Maintain the relationship with the patient so the door remains open	



Resources

1) NIO HSELand Module: Talking About Immunisation

www.Hseland.ie



2) NIO Lunch & Learn : Addressing vaccine hesitancy and communicating about vaccines - 25 April 2023

<https://www.hse.ie/eng/health/immunisation/hcpinfo/conference/>



3) World Health Organization

Conversations to build trust in vaccination. A training module for health workers. World Health Organization. 2017

http://awareness.who.int/entity/immunization/programmes_systems/TrainingModule_ConversationGuide_final.pptx