



FOCUS GROUP
Risk Communication and
Environmental Management Consultants



Dr. Susan L. Santos, an internationally recognized expert in risk communication, is founder and principal of FOCUS GROUP, a consultancy specializing in risk communication, community relations, and health and environmental management. Dr. Santos combines her extensive research and hands-on technical experience to aid an impressive list of federal, state and local government agencies, and private sector clients with strategic design, comprehensive implementation, and expert evaluation of health, safety and environmental risk communication and community involvement programs.

Currently, Dr. Santos is implementing public health risk and crisis communication training and planning assistance to state and federal agencies on responding to public health emergencies including bioterrorism, nuclear or chemical emergencies and pandemic flu.

Other projects include:

- Executing intervention strategies for communicating hazardous waste cleanup programs,
- Food safety and risk assessment issues,
- Military deployment related risks,
- Developing and implementing a comprehensive community outreach and risk communication program for the decommissioning of a nuclear reactor facility.

Dr. Santos has extensive experience as a risk communication practitioner participating in hundreds of public meetings, hearings, citizen briefings, and workshops on behalf of government, industry, and citizen groups.

Dr. Santos designs and facilitates a wide variety of risk communication and crisis media training seminars. Program evaluations consistently reveal high marks for Dr. Santos as instructor, and effective communicator whose grasp of technical information and real work experiences creates a comprehensive learning experience. She is also an expert in providing real-time crisis and risk communication support and has been acclaimed for helping companies and agencies weather the demands of the media and internal and external stakeholder groups.

Dr. Santos has served as a National Academy of Sciences Panel committee member. She has also been a NAS invited speaker on the topic of risk communication. Dr. Santos currently serves as a Technical Advisory Committee Member for the Massachusetts Department of Public Health, Center for Environmental Health.

In addition to managing FOCUS GROUP, Dr. Santos is an Assistant Professor in the Health Education and Behavioral Sciences Division of the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey where she is engaged in a number of risk communication research projects. Through her university affiliation, Dr. Santos also serves as Risk Communication Specialist for the VA's War Related Illness and Injury Study Center, located in East Orange, NJ. Dr. Santos' research activities include exploring perceptions of deployment related health risks, communication of vaccine related risks, developing educational materials for veterans on bioterrorism, and other public health emergencies, developing ways to communicate the results of complex health studies to communities and evaluation of public involvement and risk communications programs.

Dr. Santos has an interdisciplinary doctorate degree in risk communication and public policy from Northeastern University's Law, Policy and Society Program. She received her graduate degree in civil engineering and public health from Tufts University, and her undergraduate degree in chemistry and sociology from Boston College. She is listed in Who's Who Among Women in Science, and the recipient of a German Marshall Fund Fellowship Award, two NASA Group Achievement Awards and a Women Owned Business of the Year Award for her consulting assistance to NASA. Dr. Santos has published widely in the areas of risk communication, and management, and is a member of the Society for Risk Analysis, American Public Health Association, Public Relations Society of America and International Association for Public Participation.