The Psychological Impact of UAP/NHI Disclosure

A framework for understanding public response and psychological preparedness.

This white paper examines how individuals and societies may respond to formal disclosure of unidentified anomalous phenomena and non-human intelligence, and sets out a framework for psychological preparedness, public communication, and societal resilience.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Official disclosure regarding Unidentified Anomalous Phenomena (UAP) is already underway. Government agencies in several countries, including the United States, have acknowledged that UAP exist and that some incidents remain unexplained. Historically, on February 19, 2026, the U.S. President directed federal agencies to begin releasing previously classified records related to UAP and possible non-human intelligence (NHI), moving disclosure from speculation into an active governmental process.

What will ultimately be revealed remains unknown. Given that many people in positions of knowledge and authority (e.g., in the military and intelligence communities) have made public statements indicating they are strongly convinced, based on the evidence they have seen, that NHI are involved, prudence demands that we take seriously the possibility that NHI may be involved.

Yet no U.S. or international public health authority has formally addressed the potential psychological consequences of such a disclosure. In a digitally connected world, any disclosure of such nature by the U.S. government would be a global event. This absence of preparation constitutes an unaddressed vulnerability in national and global preparedness infrastructure and is a central concern of this report.

The findings synthesized in this report are derived from the best resources currently available to us, but the assessment is constrained by two important limitations. First, we have no privileged access to classified or otherwise undisclosed information that governments may possess regarding the nature, origin, or intent of UAP or NHI. Second, governments themselves may not yet possess complete answers and may still be attempting to understand the phenomenon. As a result, the recommendations presented here are designed to support preparedness across a broad range of potential disclosure scenarios rather than any specific outcome. Public responses and corresponding preparedness needs would likely differ substantially depending on the nature of the information ultimately disclosed (e.g., whether confirmed NHI were assessed as benevolent, indifferent, or hostile). This report is therefore intended to provide a foundational preparedness framework that can inform planning under conditions of uncertainty while remaining adaptable to future developments.

Given the uncertainty around the nature of UAP/NHI and that lack of historical context, the report does not predict specific outcomes. Rather, by examining likely psychological responses through psychological science, public health, risk communication, and historical precedent, it identifies factors likely to shape public response and outlines evidence-informed preparedness strategies designed to reduce disruption, support resilience, and protect vulnerable populations.

History shows that populations generally adapt to major shifts in knowledge. Scientific discoveries, technological revolutions, and societal disruptions have ultimately been integrated through education, cultural adaptation, and meaning making. However, disclosure is likely to unfold in stages, and responses at one stage cannot be assumed to predict those at another. Confirmation of NHI would be unprecedented, meaning that historical precedent offers guidance but not certainty.

A central finding is that public response will not be determined by the disclosed information alone, but by how that information is interpreted through complex psychological processes and the dynamic cultural ecosystems into which it arrives. Responses are therefore likely to vary widely. Most individuals will integrate new information without lasting impairment; while others may experience heightened

uncertainty, worldview disruption, or distress. Vulnerability is likely to concentrate within specific subgroups, particularly those with preexisting mental health conditions, prior trauma, or social instability.

Communication quality, institutional trust, and resilience emerge as key factors for how people will respond to information revealed during the disclosure process. Evidence from public health and crisis communication consistently shows that transparent, coordinated, and credible communication supports adaptation, whereas contradictory messaging, perceived concealment, and misinformation can amplify distress and undermine trust.

From a public health perspective, our findings suggest the primary concern is system strain, not mass panic. Ambiguity surrounding disclosure, misinformation, and concentrated reassurance-seeking, could temporarily overwhelm behavioral health, communication, and educational systems. In a simultaneous global event, even a modest proportion experiencing significant difficulty could generate demand that exceeds routine capacity, potentially meeting the threshold of a public health emergency.

Accordingly, the report outlines preparedness measures designed to strengthen resilience rather than manage belief, including public health coordination, scalable behavioral health capacity, workforce preparedness, public psychoeducation, community support systems, crisis intervention infrastructure, communication planning, and ethical safeguards.

The central conclusion is that people can adapt to and integrate disclosure-related information in ways that prove manageable over time, and that this adaptation can be meaningfully facilitated, or impeded, by institutional choices around communication and preparedness.

The window to prepare is now. Public health authorities, policymakers, and clinical, educational, and communication leaders are urged to begin evidence-informed preparedness planning, in order to create the conditions under which individuals, institutions, and society can meet potentially transformative information with resilience, wisdom, and integrity.

I. The Event

As of February 2026, the President of the United States has directed government agencies to release files related to Unidentified Anomalous Phenomena (UAP) and possible Non-Human Intelligence (NHI). This disclosure process is unfolding through the ongoing release of government reports, military footage, congressional testimony, archival records, and related institutional acknowledgments. The totality of what may ultimately be disclosed remains unknown.

While the directive concerns the release of information, that information is entering a global population shaped by diverse cultural, religious, political, and societal belief systems. Disclosure is therefore not occurring in a vacuum. Each stage of released information enters an evolving psychological, anthropological, and social environment influenced by prior disclosure stages and their interaction with cognitive biases, preexisting beliefs, threat perception, uncertainty tolerance, institutional trust, media amplification, personal relevance, and direct experiential proximity.

As a result, the psychological significance of disclosure is unlikely to emerge in a linear or uniform manner. Different forms and stages of disclosure may generate substantially different levels of public engagement, uncertainty, adaptation, and societal response. Assessing the range of possible psychological reactions and identifying proportionate preparedness measures is the primary aim of this report.

Psychological response and preparedness must be evaluated through a structured framework that defines key terms, classifies possible disclosure conditions, examines evidence from analogous events, and models potential outcomes using current standards and scenario-based projections. The central terms in this analysis: UAP, NHI, and disclosure, are now embedded in U.S. statute and congressional testimony, yet remain inconsistently defined across public, clinical, and policy discourse.

This section provides that foundation. Part A defines UAP, NHI, and disclosure as they appear in current legislative and policy frameworks. Part B classifies disclosure itself, including how it may evolve over time, the stages through which it may progress, and the threshold conditions that could alter public interpretation and societal response.

A. Definitions

1. Unidentified Anomalous Phenomena (UAP)

The UAP Disclosure Act of 2023 established in statute that UAP encompasses objects, craft, or phenomena whose characteristics cannot be explained by known human technology, physical or natural phenomena, and that may have a non-human origin (1). The NDAA FY2022 definition expands this further to include submerged, airborne, and trans-medium phenomena (2). The shift from “UFO” to “UAP” marks a formal reclassification of how the U.S. government identifies and treats these observations, and that classification shapes what policy, clinical, and communication frameworks may be required in response.

The phenomena are treated as real events within the U.S. government's own reporting structure. The 2021 Preliminary Assessment issued by the Office of the Director of National Intelligence formally acknowledged that UAP represent a national security concern and that the majority of reported incidents could not be attributed to known U.S. technology (3). Although that acknowledgement was limited, it indicated a significant threshold for the U.S. government to publicly acknowledge that they are real, though unexplained, phenomena. Thus, even while the question of what these phenomena are remains open, the question of whether they are real, observed events does not.

2. Non-Human Intelligence (NHI)

The breadth of the NHI designation was carefully thought-through and is operationally significant. Codified in the NDAA FY2025, NHI encompasses any intelligent entity not originating from human civilization, without specifying origin, substrate, or dimensionality (4). The term avoids the cultural and theological implications carried by "alien" or "extraterrestrial" while remaining operationally precise.

Although NHI ontology is not known, there are several options that have been considered, which include but are not limited to the following: extra-terrestrial, inter-dimensional, and ultra-terrestrial. Until the scientific method can be used to determine which of these possibilities better explain the phenomena, if any, then conclusions about what they are should not be made prematurely.

Preparedness frameworks anchored solely to a narrow extraterrestrial hypothesis may be inadequate if the disclosed entity type is non-biological, non-physical, artificial, or otherwise inconsistent with existing public assumptions regarding intelligent non-human life.

The nature, origin, capabilities, and intentions of any potential NHI remain unknown. Preparedness frameworks must therefore function under conditions of substantial uncertainty.

3. Disclosure

Disclosure, as used in this paper, refers to the release to the public of information previously unavailable to the public and held by governmental institutions regarding UAP and/or possible non-human intelligence. Disclosure of this information is already in progress through the ongoing release of governmental reports, military footage, congressional testimony, archival records, and related institutional acknowledgments.

The information is being released across governmental, scientific, legislative, media, and public domains across the globe, under conditions of uncertainty, incomplete information, contested interpretation, and inconsistent institutional communication.

How the government articulates what is being disclosed and any conclusions or confirmations that the government provides in an official capacity about what the information represents is part of a controlled government disclosure process, which carries significant psychological impact.

It should be noted that disclosure of UAP and NHI information, along with interpretative narratives, can happen in an unofficial and uncontrolled way via ex-government officials, current government officials speaking in an unofficial capacity, other governments, or by other third parties who hold such information. Uncontrolled disclosure will have comparable and, in some cases, potential for more negative psychological impact, than controlled disclosure.

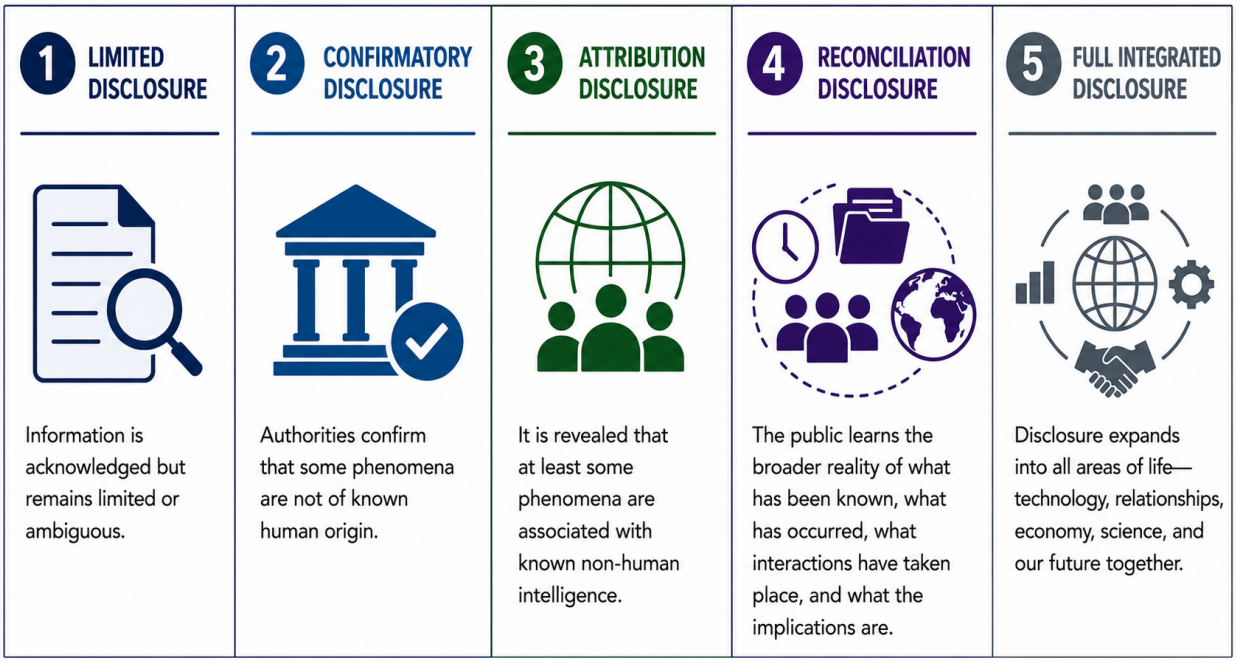
Preparedness planning must therefore account not only for coordinated release scenarios, but also for fragmented, partial, accelerated, disputed, uncontrolled or evolving disclosure conditions (5).

B. Event Classification and Stages of Disclosure

Classifying the disclosure event requires a framework that accounts for how disclosure may evolve as information increases in evidentiary clarity, institutional legitimacy, societal consequence, and perceived significance. Together, these conditions shape both the progression of disclosure and the context in which populations interpret and respond to it.

The stages below are not intended as rigid predictions, but as a conceptual framework for organizing possible disclosure trajectories and associated preparedness considerations.

The scope and significance of what may ultimately be revealed remain unknown.



1. Limited Disclosure

Limited Disclosure refers to a stage in which governments or institutions publicly acknowledge that some UAP phenomena are real yet remain unexplained, without confirming extraordinary attribution.

This stage may involve partial archival releases, military footage, congressional hearings, official reporting mechanisms, leaked or declassified materials, task forces, books approved for public release, or limited scientific acknowledgment of unresolved anomalous observations.

More than a dozen countries have publicly released UAP-related files while maintaining the official position that at least some phenomena are genuine but unexplained (6). The United States is currently in this stage of disclosure and arguably has been since at least 2017, when the New York Times published a seminal article attesting to the existence of government programs investigating UAP (7).

2. Confirmatory Disclosure

Confirmatory Disclosure happens when there is official and scientific consensus and confirmation that at least some observed phenomena cannot be attributed to known human technology or currently accepted scientific models.

This stage represents a ***major disclosure threshold*** because information crosses from unresolved anomaly into institutionally acknowledged and publicly difficult-to-dismiss anomalous reality creating a potentially significant increase in the psychological and ontological impact on the population.

For the purposes of this paper, confirmatory disclosure refers to official institutional positions, statements, findings, or releases communicated through recognized governmental, scientific, legislative, or international channels. This is distinct from personal beliefs, speculation, media commentary, or unofficial statements made by current or former officials acting outside formal institutional authority.

Institutional consensus, evidentiary clarity, and repeated verification become increasingly important at this stage, especially as years of stigma around this topic have raised the evidentiary bar.

It is important to note that even without official government position, some evidence (e.g., extremely clear video or photographic footage) can create strong conclusions that for a segment of the population would represent objects accepted as not known to be of human origin, with resulting psychological impact.

To date, no government has yet engaged in confirmatory disclosure, and no such data has emerged that is accepted on a widescale population level. However, some US. Government officials, have alluded to this stage such as Jon Kosloski, the current director of the All-Domain Anomaly Resolution Office (AARO), said in a briefing at the Pentagon on November 14, 2024, “We’re focusing on the truly anomalous where we don’t understand the activity,” noting that “there are interesting cases that I — with my physics and engineering background and time in the [intelligence community] — I do not understand and I don’t know anybody else who understands” (8).

3. Attribution Disclosure

Attribution Disclosure refers to a stage in which it is officially acknowledged not only that UAP phenomena are real, but that at least some are associated with *known* non-human intelligence. This stage represents a substantially more consequential disclosure threshold because the issue moves beyond unresolved anomaly with no known human origin to definitively being attributed to NHI, and knowledge that non-human agency exists and is interacting with humanity. Such disclosure would likely require biological, technological, observational, communicative, or other forms of evidence sufficient to establish non-human origin or intelligence, including evidence capable of independent scientific inspection and verification.

4. Reconciliation Disclosure

Reconciliation Disclosure refers to a stage in which the broader body of knowledge concerning non-human intelligence becomes publicly available, including information regarding the nature of the phenomenon, historical interactions, institutional knowledge, investigative findings, recovered evidence, and the extent to which relevant information was previously known, withheld, mischaracterized, or concealed.

Where Attribution Disclosure establishes that non-human intelligence exists, Reconciliation Disclosure addresses the deeper reality of what is known about that intelligence and humanity's relationship to it. The central questions of this stage are no longer whether non-human intelligence exists, but rather what has occurred, what is understood, what remains unknown, and how newly disclosed information alters existing assumptions about history, science, government, security, and human identity.

At this stage, information and knowledge emerging from the disclosure process would become increasingly socially consequential.

5. Full Integrated Disclosure

Disclosure would expand beyond awareness and understanding of NHI but into sustained societal relevance through technological implications, geopolitical consequences, direct interaction, public exposure, economic effects, scientific transformation, or ongoing institutional adaptation.

Rather than primarily informational, it would represent transitioning from an extraordinary revelation into an enduring component of ordinary societal reality.

C. Implications of Disclosure Stages

Each stage of disclosure carries different implications. Some cannot yet be known with certainty, though historical precedent may provide partial guidance regarding possible societal responses. Other implications can be assessed with greater confidence because limited forms of disclosure have already occurred.

Disclosure involves substantially more than the release of previously classified information. Its broader significance lies in the potential to challenge assumptions regarding reality, agency, and humanity’s place within a larger cosmos. The degree to which disclosure becomes psychologically or socially consequential will depend on the nature of the information released, the coherence and credibility of institutional communication, and the extent to which populations perceive the information as personally relevant, consequential, or threatening.

1. Implications of Limited Disclosure

Limited disclosure is the current state of the disclosure process in the United States and has already partially occurred through congressional hearings, military footage releases, official reporting mechanisms, and testimony by government and military personnel.

To date, the broader societal implications of limited disclosure appear relatively contained. Public responses have ranged from skepticism and indifference to curiosity and cautious engagement, but there has been no evidence of widespread social or cultural disruption associated with these events. This is consistent with the limited public response observed across more than a dozen countries that have engaged in limited disclosure (6). This suggests that populations are generally capable of tolerating ambiguous or unresolved information regarding UAP phenomena without significant societal consequences.

For many individuals, concepts related to extraterrestrial life and anomalous phenomena are already culturally familiar and insufficiently consequential to alter day-to-day functioning or worldview (9). Most people remain primarily focused on immediate personal, economic, and societal concerns.

At the same time, limited disclosure has reduced some of the historical stigma surrounding the topic and expanded institutional, scientific, and academic engagement.

2. Implications of Confirmatory Disclosure

Confirmatory disclosure would represent a more consequential threshold because anomalous phenomena would move from unresolved possibility into institutionally acknowledged anomalous reality. Official confirmation that at least some observed phenomena cannot be explained by known human technology or accepted scientific models would likely increase public attention and reduce the ability to dismiss the subject as purely speculative.

However, confirmatory disclosure alone may still not produce lasting psychological consequences for most individuals. Many people may remain skeptical, emotionally detached, uninterested, or psychologically compartmentalized. Confirmation by itself does not necessarily resolve questions regarding intent, threat, meaning, or direct personal consequence.

What would likely change more substantially is the legitimacy of the topic itself. Confirmatory disclosure would likely further reduce historical stigma and expand needed institutional, scientific, governmental, and academic engagement with the subject.

3. Implications of Attribution Disclosure

Attribution disclosure would represent a substantially more psychologically and philosophically consequential threshold because the question would no longer center primarily on anomalous objects, but on the confirmed existence of known NHI.

Once attribution is officially established, disclosure shifts from anomalous phenomena to questions regarding intelligence, agency, capabilities, intentions, origin, communication, and humanity’s relationship to non-human entities. This transition may challenge assumptions regarding human uniqueness, religion, philosophy, science, and civilization itself.

At this stage, public demand for additional information would likely intensify substantially. Pressure would increase regarding what governments know, how long such knowledge has existed, what interactions may have occurred, whether risks exist, and how disclosure had previously been managed.

Psychological responses would likely remain heterogeneous (10). Many individuals may integrate the information with limited consequences, while others may experience significant uncertainty, existential anxiety, ontological disruption, or intensified threat perception depending on personal belief systems, cultural frameworks, prior experiences, and perceived implications.

4. Implications of Reconciliation Disclosure

This stage represents a distinct disclosure threshold because the psychological impact may be driven as much by the content of the information as by the realization that such information was previously unavailable to the public. Depending on the nature of the disclosures, individuals may be required to integrate information with significant implications for their understanding of reality, human origins, technological development, institutional trust, personal autonomy, safety, and the future of humanity.

The psychological consequences of this stage would depend heavily on the specific information disclosed. Some revelations may be experienced as validating, inspiring, or transformative, while others may be perceived as threatening, morally troubling, or difficult to reconcile with existing beliefs and assumptions. As a result, this stage has the potential to generate substantially greater psychological, social, political, and cultural impact than confirmation of non-human intelligence alone.

In addition to questions about the phenomenon itself, public attention is likely to focus on issues of transparency, accountability, and trust as individuals and institutions attempt to reconcile newly disclosed information with prior public narratives and historical understandings. Questions surrounding secrecy, public trust, stigma, and the historical management of information may themselves become major societal issues.

The totality of potentially disclosable information remains unknown. Public response will depend heavily on how future information is framed, communicated, contextualized, and socially integrated.

5. Implications of Full Integrated Disclosure

Full integrated disclosure would extend beyond confirmation into long-term societal integration of knowledge regarding UAP/NHI. At this stage, disclosure would no longer function primarily as an informational event, but as an enduring societal condition requiring ongoing adaptation across scientific, governmental, religious, economic, educational, cultural, and psychological domains. At this stage adaption or resistance are likely to be the central psychological themes.

This level of disclosure may require sustained, focus on scientific investigation, public communication, and institutional adaptation.

Section II examines the psychological factors likely to shape public response under disclosure conditions, drawing on research from large-scale disruptive events, cognitive and social psychology, and emerging UAP-related studies.

II. The Psychological Landscape

A. Historical Response to Transformative Information

While no historical event is directly comparable to the confirmation of NHI, several major discoveries and disruptions reveal consistent patterns in how individuals, institutions, and societies respond to paradigm-shifting information. These events provide lessons for preparedness rather than direct analogues.

1. People can adapt to profound changes in their understanding of reality.

Humanity has repeatedly encountered discoveries that required major revisions to its understanding of itself and its place in the universe. The Copernican revolution displaced Earth from the center of the cosmos. Darwin's theory of evolution challenged beliefs about humanity's unique origins. Twentieth-century cosmology revealed an expanding universe containing billions of galaxies. Each required reconsideration of assumptions that had previously seemed self-evident (11).

Perhaps the closest historical parallel to the possibility of UAP/NHI disclosure is Copernicus's proposal in 1543 that the Earth revolves around the Sun rather than the Sun revolving around the Earth, a model known as heliocentrism, and the subsequent treatment of Galileo Galilei by the Church (12). Church authorities regarded heliocentrism as a threat to established religious understanding, with Cardinal Bellarmine (the Inquisitor called upon to adjudicate Galileo's case) describing it as "a very dangerous thing" that could undermine the Holy Faith (13). The Church ultimately prohibited texts advocating Copernicanism, and Galileo was forced to recant his views and spend the remainder of his life under house arrest.

Despite intense resistance, heliocentrism eventually became accepted. Similar patterns occurred following Darwin's theory of evolution, the discovery that continents drift across the Earth's surface, the realization that the universe contains billions of galaxies beyond our own, and more recent discoveries such as quasicrystals and adult neurogenesis. In each case, ideas that initially appeared to conflict with established knowledge were met with skepticism, resistance, or institutional opposition before eventually being incorporated into mainstream scientific understanding.

History suggests that people are capable of integrating even profound revisions to their understanding of reality, although the process is often gradual.

2. Adaptation usually occurs over years or generations, not immediately.

Scientific and social systems rarely adapt quickly to information that challenges deeply held assumptions. Research on paradigm resistance suggests that cognitive, social, and emotional processes work together to slow acceptance of disruptive discoveries (14)(15). Cognitive dissonance encourages reinterpretation or rejection of conflicting evidence (16). Social identity processes create conformity pressures around established beliefs (17). Existential threats to meaning and significance can trigger defensive responses (18).

Across disciplines, paradigm shifts have shown remarkably similar timelines. Adult neurogenesis required approximately 36 years to gain widespread acceptance, quasicrystals required 29 years, and the

emotion-cognition primacy debate took roughly 20 years to resolve (15). However, paradigm shifts in *society* can sometimes take longer to achieve. For example, it took approximately 80 years for women to achieve the right to vote in the US. These examples suggest that adaptation often depends not only on evidence but also on the development of new conceptual frameworks capable of accommodating it.

UAP/NHI disclosure may compress what has historically been a generational process into a far shorter period of time, creating a mismatch between the pace of disruption and the pace of psychological adaptation.

3. Communication and institutional trust can shape outcomes as strongly as the disruption itself.

COVID-19 provides the clearest recent example. The pandemic demonstrated that mental health demand does not peak only at the onset of crisis. It accumulates as ambiguity persists and institutional messaging fails to keep pace with evolving psychological needs. Transparent and consistent communication was associated with higher levels of public trust and compliance, while contradictory or delayed messaging contributed to confusion, distrust, and psychological strain. One of the central planning failures during the pandemic was the persistent under-preparation of mental health infrastructure, which was repeatedly treated as secondary to acute medical response (20).

A related pattern emerges in events involving institutional concealment. The Pentagon Papers (1971), the Church Committee hearings (1975), and the Snowden disclosures (2013) each revealed significant deception, undisclosed surveillance, or the withholding of information by trusted institutions (21–23). In these cases, much of the lasting psychological impact stemmed not only from the underlying activities themselves, but from the realization that trusted institutions had withheld critical information from the public. Even in cases when the public granted that the government may have had benevolent intent in concealing the information; trust was eroded.

Research describes this phenomenon as institutional betrayal, a measurable form of psychological harm that occurs when institutions violate expectations of honesty, protection, or transparency (24). For UAP/NHI disclosure, which may involve acknowledgment of prolonged concealment, institutional betrayal may become one of the defining psychological dimensions of the event itself.

This dynamic may extend beyond government institutions. Research on paradigm resistance in astronomy found that 91% of U.S. scientists report self-censoring empirical beliefs, with 34% reporting peer pressure to avoid controversial research topics (25). If disclosure reveals that institutional gatekeeping contributed to decades of delayed scientific engagement with the phenomenon, distrust may expand beyond government secrecy to include scientific institutions traditionally relied upon for epistemic authority.

Across these examples, a consistent lesson emerges: trust and communication often matter as much as the underlying information itself. Transparent, coordinated communication tends to preserve credibility and support adaptation, while contradictory messaging, perceived concealment, and institutional betrayal can amplify distress and erode public trust.

4. When trusted guidance is absent, stigma and misinformation fill the gap, and the vulnerable bear the burden.

The early years of the HIV/AIDS epidemic illustrate this pattern clearly. When health authorities were slow to explain a poorly understood new phenomenon, misinformation spread rapidly, affected communities were stigmatized, and the psychological burden fell most heavily on those who were already marginalized and had the least access to support (26). Although UAP/NHI disclosure does not involve biological contagion, the structural dynamic applies directly: when authoritative institutional framing is absent, incomplete, or inconsistent, false or fear-amplifying narratives fill the informational vacuum, and psychologically vulnerable populations bear disproportionate costs.

Distress in these environments spreads through more than misinformation alone. Emotional contagion, the transmission of emotional states through social interaction, operates as an independent amplification pathway. Emotional climates shape collective outcomes, communication patterns, and perceived threat levels, while fear, confusion, and uncertainty can spread rapidly through social and media networks before reliable information becomes established (27).

This dynamic is already visible within the UAP context. Since official scientific dismissal of the subject in the 1960s, credible witnesses, including military personnel, have faced substantial professional and social stigma for reporting anomalous experiences (28)(29). Congressional testimony suggests that only approximately 5% of military UAP encounters were formally reported because of the perceived consequences associated with doing so (28). The psychological burden created by prolonged silence, ridicule, and social invalidation represents a pre-existing vulnerability that preparedness frameworks must account for.

Misinformation is a predictable feature of high-uncertainty environments. Research consistently demonstrates that false information spreads faster and more broadly than accurate information, particularly when emotionally salient and institutionally uncontested (30). When official communication is delayed, contradictory, or untrustworthy, uncertainty accelerates the spread of emotionally compelling false narratives. Communication systems designed to anticipate and counter this dynamic should therefore be treated as a core preparedness requirement rather than an optional supplement.

5. Implications for Preparedness

No historical event provides a direct model for UAP/NHI disclosure. What history does provide is evidence about the conditions under which societies are more likely to adapt successfully to transformative information and the conditions under which unnecessary harm may be amplified.

Several lessons emerge consistently across these diverse historical examples. Human populations are generally capable of adapting to transformative information, but adaptation is rarely immediate. The process is influenced not only by the information itself, but also by the broader social and institutional context in which it is encountered. Across events, clear and credible communication, institutional trust, and access to coherent interpretive frameworks appear to support adaptation, while concealment, contradiction, stigma, and informational vacuums can amplify distress and complicate adjustment. Vulnerable populations may bear disproportionate burdens when guidance and support systems are absent.

B. Current UAP Research and Psychological Response

Research into the psychological dimensions of UAP has remained limited in part because of *structural stigma:* the embedding of doubt and dismissal into social, institutional, and policy systems that shape which questions are considered legitimate long before evidence can fully emerge (96).

For much of the seventy years during which government programs formally investigated the phenomenon, scientific engagement was discouraged and those reporting experiences were frequently discredited. This history is not merely contextual. It shaped the conditions under which generations of witnesses attempted to understand and communicate their experiences, while contributing to a clinical evidence base disproportionately limited relative to the scale of reported encounters.

1. Institutional Stigma and the Suppression of Reporting

The formal investigation history of UAP in the United States, Project Sign (1948), Project Grudge (1949), and Project Blue Book (1952–1969), established an institutional posture widely perceived as more focused on debunking than inquiry (19). This contributed to a durable form of stigma extending beyond individual reports to the subject itself. Engagement with UAP-related topics carried reputational risk within academic and clinical settings, discouraging research, limiting funding, and constraining open inquiry (25)(26)(27).

Over time, this produced a self-reinforcing cycle in which the absence of mainstream research reinforced perceptions of illegitimacy, while stigma simultaneously discouraged the very investigation needed to evaluate the phenomenon (31)(32). In this sense, stigma functioned not merely as a social attitude, but as a structural feature shaping what could be studied, discussed, or institutionally legitimized.

This effect remains measurable. In a national survey of 1,460 faculty across 144 major research universities, documented persistent academic stigma surrounding UAP research despite substantial private interest in the topic. Nearly one-fifth of faculty reported personal or proximate UAP observations, while 64.17% regarded academic evaluation of UAP information as Very Important or Absolutely Essential (33). The authors warned that “silence now due to a stale spectre of stigma may prove imprudent.”

The consequences for witnesses are similarly apparent. In 2024, Stubbings, Ali, and Wong found that only 26% of self-reported witnesses disclosed their experiences anywhere, and only 14% used formal reporting systems. Stigma ranked among the most common reasons for non-reporting (34). Former Navy pilot Ryan Graves similarly testified before Congress in 2023 that fear of professional consequences discouraged military reporting, estimating that fewer than 5% of sightings were formally documented (28). The result is both a substantially underreported evidence base and a witness population frequently isolated from peer validation, institutional acknowledgment, and informed clinical support.

2. Psychological Effects Among UAP Witnesses

For much of the late twentieth century, UAP reports were frequently interpreted through frameworks emphasizing error, fantasy proneness, memory distortion, or psychopathology (35–37). These assumptions often functioned more as default interpretive models than empirically established conclusions. Notably, even early studies did not consistently identify elevated psychopathology among individuals reporting anomalous experiences (35), yet the broader narrative of psychological abnormality persisted.

More recent research has challenged these assumptions directly. De la Torre, in a 2024 survey including 93 direct witnesses, found that UAP witnesses did not significantly differ from the general population on measures of sleep quality, attention and memory, personality traits, or overall psychological functioning. Instead, witnesses demonstrated what De la Torre termed the UAP Deep Psychological Engagement Triad (UAP-DPET): persistent cognitive preoccupation with the phenomenon, intense self-recognized interest, and an ongoing need to discuss the subject with others (38).

Importantly, these patterns were not associated with generalized dysfunction or impaired daily functioning. De la Torre characterized the effect as “transformative but specifically focused on the phenomenon itself” (38). Stubbings, Ali and Wong, further found that qualitative descriptions of UAP objects provided by civilian witnesses closely paralleled those from military witnesses documented in All-domain Anomaly Resolution Office data, providing independent evidence that civilian sighting reports are not merely artifacts of cognitive distortion or suggestibility (34).

3. The Clinical Response Gap

In a 2022 study by Thomas Rabeyron, he found that approximately half of people reporting an anomalous experience had difficulty integrating the experience psychologically. Among those seeking clinical support, the primary barriers were often not the experiences themselves, but fear of pathologization, clinician unfamiliarity, and concern about social or professional consequences associated with disclosure (39).

A study of 640 mental health practitioners in the Netherlands found four out of five practitioners felt inadequately prepared to treat people reporting anomalous phenomenon (39). Similarly, the Institut für Grenzgebiete der Psychologie und Psychohygiene (IGPP) in Freiburg, Germany, reported that approximately 80% of individuals seeking support described their distress as emerging less from the original experience than from its aftermath: isolation, lack of interpretive frameworks, fear of disbelief, and concern about psychiatric labeling (39).

UAP/NHI disclosure may expose this clinical preparation gap at a scale and speed for which existing mental health systems remain largely unprepared.

4. Implications for Disclosure

Several conclusions emerge from the available research. First, and perhaps most importantly, the evidence suggests that most people are capable of adapting to and integrating anomalous experiences without lasting psychological harm. Studies of UAP witnesses consistently find little evidence of widespread psychological dysfunction or pathology, with most individuals remaining psychologically healthy and continuing to function effectively in their daily lives (34,38). The most common response appears not to be impairment, but an ongoing effort to understand and make sense of the experience (38). While witness populations are not identical to the general public, these findings suggest that human beings possess considerable capacity to adapt to information or experiences that challenge existing assumptions about reality.

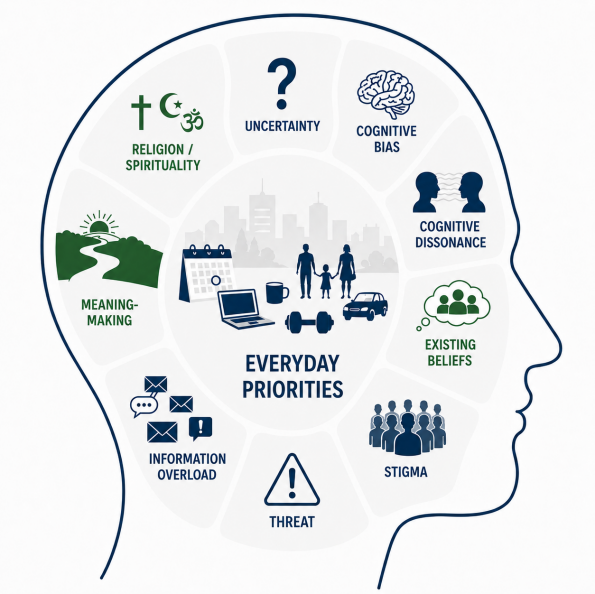
Second, when distress does occur, it often appears to arise less from the observation itself than from the social and institutional environment in which the experience is interpreted. Fear of ridicule, social isolation, dismissal, stigma, and the absence of credible explanatory frameworks consistently emerge as major sources of difficulty for witnesses (39)(40)(41)(28). This suggests that a substantial portion of the psychological burden associated with anomalous experiences may be socially mediated rather than inherent to the experience itself.

Third, decades of stigma and suppressed reporting have limited the development of scientific knowledge, clinical expertise, and evidence-based support systems. As a result, society enters a potential disclosure period with significant gaps in preparedness regarding how individuals, communities, and institutions respond to anomalous phenomena.

Taken together, the available evidence suggests that preparedness efforts should focus not only on disclosure itself, but also on the social, clinical, and institutional systems through which people interpret and respond to disclosure-related information. Reducing stigma, expanding clinical preparedness, and establishing credible pathways for discussion, reporting, and support may help mitigate avoidable distress while supporting adaptive integration of new information.

C. Psychological Processes Activated by Disclosure Events

Disclosure events as they are unfolding are not merely news event. They activate identifiable psychological processes that shape how individuals interpret and respond to paradigm-altering information. These processes operate concurrently and interact with broader social and institutional conditions.



1. Uncertainty as an Activating Condition

Uncertainty is a primary activating condition in psychological responses to large-scale disclosure events. When information is incomplete, evolving, or difficult to interpret, it increases threat appraisal, emotional arousal, and information-seeking behavior (29). For most individuals, distress gradually diminishes as stable interpretive frameworks emerge. In the context of UAP/NHI disclosure, however, uncertainty may persist because fundamental questions regarding origin, intent, risk, and broader societal implications may remain unresolved for extended periods.

Responses to uncertainty vary substantially across individuals. Intolerance of uncertainty (IU), a dispositional tendency to perceive uncertain situations as stressful, aversive, or threatening, is associated with heightened anxiety, worry, and difficulty tolerating unresolved situations (42,43). Research suggests that IU exists along a continuum within the general population and may increase during periods of prolonged collective uncertainty. During the COVID-19 pandemic, average IU levels shifted upward from typical baseline ranges, and a latent profile analysis of more than 86,000 individuals found that 60 percent fell into medium-high or high IU categories, with progressively poorer mental health outcomes observed as IU severity increased (44). Because IU functions as a transdiagnostic risk factor across anxiety disorders, depression, OCD, post-traumatic stress, and eating disorders, its effects are unlikely to be confined to individuals with preexisting clinical vulnerabilities.

When uncertainty involves questions related to safety, meaning, identity, or the nature of reality itself, psychological distress may intensify even in the absence of direct threat. Prolonged uncertainty also increases susceptibility to emotionally compelling misinformation, speculative narratives, and conspiracy beliefs that appear to provide explanatory certainty (45). These effects may be further amplified through emotional contagion, allowing fear, confusion, and distress to spread rapidly through social and digital networks under conditions of ambiguity and heightened attention (46)(47)(48).

For preparedness planning, these findings suggest that communication strategies should prioritize reducing unnecessary ambiguity while providing coherent interpretive frameworks as information evolves. Psychological stabilization does not require complete certainty. It requires sufficient clarity, consistency, and context to help individuals navigate uncertainty without unnecessary distress, particularly among populations already vulnerable to its effects.

2. Cognitive Dissonance and Worldview Defense

Large-scale disclosure that conflicts with existing assumptions about reality activates cognitive dissonance; the psychological tension that arises when new information is inconsistent with established beliefs, values, or prior knowledge (49).

Individuals typically resolve this tension through one of three pathways:

- **Assimilation:** in which new information is interpreted within existing frameworks;
- **Accommodation**: in which beliefs are revised to incorporate the new information;
- **Rejection:** in which the information is dismissed to preserve internal consistency.

When beliefs are tied to identity or group affiliation, individuals are more likely to engage in defensive processing such as, motivated skepticism, identity-protective reframing, and selective attention to confirming evidence, rather than revise core assumptions (50).

As a result of the different pathways that can be taken, the same information about disclosure can produce different reactions and subjective experiences: it may be received as confirmation by those whose prior beliefs are aligned, as a disorienting challenge by those without strong prior commitments, and as implausible or suspect by those for whom it conflicts with identity-linked beliefs.

When these groups simultaneously defend their respective interpretations, the population-level effect is **polarization**, as divergent and increasingly entrenched narratives that resist convergence over time (50,51).

For preparedness planning, this implies that communication strategies cannot assume a uniform audience. Messages that acknowledge variation in prior beliefs are more likely to facilitate integration across groups. When polarization emerges, institutions must move beyond reliance on a single authoritative narrative and instead anticipate divergent interpretations, monitor the evolving information environment, and respond not only to the facts being communicated, but to how those facts are being interpreted.

3. Cognitive Biases

UAP/NHI disclosure will be processed through predictable cognitive biases that shape how individuals evaluate evidence, assign meaning, and form judgments about the information they receive. These biases are normal features of human information processing and operate across populations regardless of education or intelligence.

a. Confirmation Bias and Motivated Reasoning

People tend to seek out, interpret, and remember information in ways that confirm existing beliefs (52). When identity, emotion, or group affiliation are involved, this tendency strengthens through motivated reasoning, in which individuals unconsciously favor conclusions they are already inclined toward (50,51). In the context of UAP/NHI disclosure, believers and skeptics are therefore likely to interpret the same information differently while both perceiving themselves as objective.

b. Biased Assimilation

Existing beliefs also shape how evidence itself is evaluated. Research shows that individuals with opposing views on contested issues often judge the same evidence as credible when it supports their position and flawed when it does not (53). Similar effects have been observed among experts and scientific reviewers evaluating findings that challenge established frameworks (54). As a result, the same disclosure evidence may be regarded as compelling by some and unreliable by others, not because the evidence changes, but because their interpretive frameworks differ.

c. Third-Person Effect

People consistently predict that others will respond irrationally to threatening or disruptive information while believing they themselves will remain comparatively rational (55)(56). This bias has direct relevance for policymakers. Institutional reluctance to support disclosure transparency may partly reflect assumptions that the public cannot psychologically tolerate the information, despite limited evidence supporting that conclusion. Survey data suggesting that most scientifically engaged respondents already believe intelligent extraterrestrial life likely exists (19) indicate the public may be more psychologically prepared than institutions assume.

d. Neurocognitive Constraints

Beyond motivational and evaluative biases, a more fundamental limitation must be considered: the human brain itself. The brain is a constrained information-processing system whose perceptual and attentional architecture may be poorly equipped to detect, recognize, or categorize phenomena that fall outside the conditions for which it evolved (58). A well-established example is inattentional blindness, in which individuals fail to consciously perceive stimuli that are directly present because attention is directed elsewhere (59).

Research in computational neuroscience further suggests that the brain continuously uses existing internal models to predict and interpret incoming sensory information (60). Because perception relies heavily on prior expectations, information that falls outside established cognitive frameworks may be difficult to recognize, interpret, or integrate. The brain's tendency to minimize discrepancies between existing models and new information, a process described by the free-energy principle (61), may further

contribute to confusion, interpretive difficulty, or delayed recognition when confronted with highly anomalous phenomena.

Applied to UAP/NHI disclosure, these constraints suggest that some difficulties in processing disclosure-related information may arise not from denial, skepticism, or motivated reasoning, but from limitations in the perceptual categories and cognitive schemas available within human cognitive architecture itself. As a result, novel information may be challenging to integrate even when individuals are motivated to understand it.

e. Implications for Preparedness Planning

These biases cannot be eliminated, and disclosure is unlikely to be processed neutrally across populations. Communication strategies should therefore anticipate divergent interpretations rather than assume a single message will produce uniform understanding. Information presented through multiple channels and frameworks may reduce defensive processing, while ongoing monitoring of public interpretation may be as important as communicating the underlying facts themselves.

4. Threats to Ontological Security

Large-scale disclosure events may disrupt ontological security, the sense that the world is stable, predictable, and understandable (62). Information that challenges fundamental assumptions about reality can require individuals to reconsider previously stable beliefs about identity, meaning, and how the world works, and the nature of life and existence itself.

For some individuals, this may produce ontological fracturing following an ontological shock (63); a disruption in core assumptions about reality without requiring a complete collapse of worldview (10). In most cases, individuals gradually incorporate new information through meaning-making processes that restore psychological stability. However, disruption may be more pronounced among those whose identity or sense of meaning is strongly tied to the beliefs being challenged (10)(64).

Evidence from scientific paradigm shifts suggests that adaptation to worldview-challenging information is often gradual. Discoveries such as quasicrystals (65)(66)(67) and adult neurogenesis (68) required years of accumulating evidence before achieving broad acceptance. Similarly, in the realm of social change, civil rights involving equality for women or racial minorities took years to achieve impact and indeed are still ongoing. As Kuhn (1962) observed, anomalous information is often integrated through a gradual process of conceptual and institutional adjustment rather than through evidence alone (11). These examples suggest that disclosure-related ontological disruption, where it occurs, is likely to follow a similar process of adaptation rather than immediate resolution.

For preparedness planning, communication strategies should prioritize clear and consistent framing that helps individuals place new information within understandable contexts. Clarifying what is known, unknown, and unchanged, while providing consistent updates and credible informational resources, may help reduce unnecessary distress and support the gradual integration of new information.

5. Meaning Making

As individuals attempt to restore psychological stability, meaning making becomes a central process. People do not passively receive transformative information; they actively interpret and integrate it.

Research distinguishes between global meaning (core beliefs, values, and goals) and the meaning assigned to a specific event (69). When new information conflicts with existing beliefs, individuals are motivated to resolve the discrepancy and they will engage in reinterpretation and narrative reconstruction to restore coherence and psychological stability, particularly when confronted with anomalous or exceptional experiences (39).

Meaning making does not require complete resolution of uncertainty. Stability may be restored through explanation, integration of the information into existing identity frameworks, or identification of broader significance in the event (69). This process is shaped by social support, cultural frameworks, and institutional communication. Clear and consistent messaging may facilitate adaptation, while fragmented or contradictory information may prolong uncertainty, distress, and vulnerability to anxiety and depression (20).

Research further suggests that the structure of communication, not merely its content, influences how groups collectively interpret novel information. Coordinated, anticipatory, and uncertainty-reducing communication is associated with more effective adaptation under demanding conditions (70)(71). Applied to disclosure, communication that is coordinated across institutions and responsive to public concerns may support the development of shared meaning and reduce interpretive confusion.

The cognitive and emotional work of meaning reconstruction can, under supportive conditions, produce more positive and expansive frameworks than those that preceded the challenge (72). This trajectory is not universal or guaranteed, and not a reason to minimize the real distress that accompanies ontological disruption. But its consistent documentation across diverse populations and contexts suggests that preparedness communication should not only focus on harm minimization but can be used to facilitate positive interpretive coping strategies.

6. Cognitive Load and Information Saturation

UAP/NHI disclosure will unfold within environments already saturated with information and competing demands for attention. Most individuals prioritize information that feels immediately relevant to daily concerns such as finances, health, family, and personal safety.

Cognitive load, the amount of information the mind is attempting to process at once, limits the ability to evaluate complex or ambiguous information. As cognitive load increases, deliberate reasoning declines and individuals rely more heavily on simplified narratives, mental shortcuts, and emotionally salient interpretations (73).

Under these conditions, people engage in cognitive triage, prioritizing information perceived as personally relevant while filtering out information that feels abstract, uncertain, or less immediately actionable. Apparent disengagement may therefore reflect limited cognitive bandwidth rather than lack of concern.

For preparedness planning, communication should prioritize clarity, simplicity, and personal relevance. Overly complex or ambiguous messaging is more likely to be ignored, misunderstood, or replaced by simplified and potentially distorted interpretations under conditions of high cognitive load.

At the same time however, authorities must be careful not to *over*-simplify, nor to convey certainty where none exists at present. In the case of Covid-19, for example, while the guidance to keep a social distance of around six feet was probably sensible, the messaging sometimes implied that there was something

special about being *exactly* six feet away (as if the virus could travel no further than that), which was ultimately counter-productive (i.e., as such guidance subsequently became complexified or challenged, and this early messaging was realized to be an over-simplification, this served to degrade trust in public health messages). When the truth is complex, acknowledgement of uncertainty is ultimately generally better received than a simple obfuscation and pretense of certainty (123).

7. Perceived Threat and Risk Appraisal

Whether disclosure is perceived as threatening is a major determinant of public response and is influenced strongly by how information is framed. Research in risk psychology shows that threat perception is driven less by objective danger than by intuitive appraisals of novelty, uncertainty, and lack of personal control (74).

Available government reporting provides an important contextual anchor. Across decades of documented UAP encounters, including U.S. Department of Defense assessments, there has been no consistent characterization of these phenomena as exhibiting hostile intent toward personnel or infrastructure.

Public perception data align with this pattern. A 2021 Pew Research Center survey found that 87% of U.S. adults viewed UAP-related phenomena as either not a threat or only a minor threat to national security, while 74% described them as neither friendly nor unfriendly (75). These findings suggest that, even prior to formal disclosure, most individuals are not operating from a strongly threat-centered framework.

For preparedness planning, communication that directly addresses questions of threat clearly, consistently, and in alignment with available evidence will be important for supporting stable and proportionate public response.

8. Personal Relevance

Not all individuals will respond to disclosure-related information with the same level of attention or emotional engagement. One of the strongest determinants of psychological impact is personal relevance; the degree to which individuals perceive information as having implications for themselves, their values, their relationships, or their future.

Research consistently shows that personally relevant information receives greater cognitive and emotional attention than information perceived as distant or unrelated (76)(77). Individuals devote more attention, thought, and emotional energy to information they view as consequential to their own lives. As a result, the same disclosure-related information may be experienced as largely abstract by one person and deeply consequential by another.

Personal relevance is also likely to interact with threat perception. Information perceived as both personally relevant and potentially threatening is more likely to command sustained attention and emotional engagement than information perceived as low in either relevance or threat (78)(79). Consequently, psychological impact is likely to vary not only according to what is disclosed, but according to how individuals perceive its implications for their own lives.

For some individuals, disclosure may remain primarily an intellectual or scientific issue. Others may perceive implications for personal safety, identity, family, religion, spirituality, career, worldview, or

expectations about the future. These individuals are likely to devote substantially greater attention and emotional resources to disclosure-related information.

From a preparedness perspective, personal relevance and threat perception may be two of the most important determinants of public response. Individuals who perceive disclosure as both highly relevant and highly threatening are likely to experience the greatest psychological impact, while those who perceive it as low in either dimension are likely to experience more limited effects. Understanding how these factors interact may therefore be critical for anticipating variation in public responses to disclosure.

9. Existing Belief Systems as Interpretive Frameworks

Individuals do not encounter transformative information in a neutral state. New information is interpreted through preexisting belief systems shaped by culture, identity, education, politics, and religion (80)(81)(82). As a result, disclosure information may be understood differently across populations, as scientific advancement, institutional correction, existential threat, political manipulation, or spiritual confirmation.

The degree to which beliefs are central to identity, and the flexibility with which they are held, strongly influences response. Information consistent with prior assumptions may be integrated with minimal disruption, while information that conflicts with core beliefs may be resisted, reinterpreted, or rejected.

Importantly, the possibility of NHI is already familiar to many individuals. Survey data suggest that belief in extraterrestrial life is widespread within the United States. Polling in 2021 found that up to 75% of Americans believe life exists elsewhere in the universe, approximately 50% believe aliens have visited Earth, and as many as 41% believe at least some unidentified aerial phenomena are alien spacecraft (75)(9)(83). A 2025 international survey of 6,114 participants across 112 countries similarly found that 95.01% endorsed belief in intelligent extraterrestrial life, with 62.59% expressing definitive conviction (19).

Taken together, these findings suggest that for much of the population, confirmation of non-human intelligence may represent a significant shift in understanding, but not a complete departure from existing belief frameworks.

a. Religious Beliefs

Religious worldviews represent one important subset of belief systems that may shape interpretation of disclosure involving non-human intelligence. These frameworks often provide broader explanations of human origins, meaning, and the nature of reality.

Religion remains a major interpretive influence within the United States. Approximately 62% of U.S. adults identify as Christian, including 33–41% identifying as Protestant and 19–22% as Catholic, while 6–7% identify with non-Christian religions, and 22–29% identify as religiously unaffiliated (84).

Survey research suggests that religious belief influences interpretation more than distress response itself. Individuals with higher levels of religious commitment are less likely to interpret UAP sightings as evidence of extraterrestrial life, indicating that belief systems function as interpretive filters shaping attribution and meaning (85). At the same time, most religious individuals do not view the discovery of extraterrestrial life as threatening to their faith. In the Peters ETI Religious Crisis Survey, approximately 83%–94% of respondents across multiple religious traditions reported that confirmation of extraterrestrial intelligence would not undermine their beliefs (86).

Religious responses are therefore unlikely to be uniform. Some individuals may interpret non-human intelligence as part of the natural created order, while others may understand it through spiritual, prophetic, or apocalyptic frameworks (87). Within Catholicism, for example, there is no definitive doctrinal position regarding non-human intelligence, allowing interpretation to remain flexible rather than fixed (88)(89)(90).

Religious systems are often capable of incorporating new information without requiring complete revision of core identity structures (91). However, some groups may integrate disclosure through existing end-times or prophetic narratives. Survey data indicate that approximately 39% of Americans believe humanity is currently living in the end times, with higher endorsement among evangelical Christians (92).

Taken together, these findings suggest that religious belief systems primarily shape how disclosure is interpreted rather than whether it produces distress. For preparedness planning, communication strategies should anticipate interpretive diversity, reinforce continuity where possible, and engage trusted community and religious leaders as part of broader public communication efforts.

b. Stigma: A Structural Barrier to UAP Disclosure

UAP stigma is best understood as a socially reinforced belief system that frames the topic as unserious, unscientific, or unworthy of legitimate investigation. For decades, this perception has been reinforced through ridicule, professional risk, and the marginalization of researchers and witnesses (93)(94)(95). The resulting "giggle factor" and dismissive cultural framing have made engagement with the topic socially and professionally costly, discouraging open discussion, reporting, and scientific exploration (96)(97).

As a result, many people, including scientists, avoid engaging with UAP-related topics because they anticipate negative social or professional consequences. This contributes to self-censorship, underreporting, pluralistic ignorance, and social conformity, where individuals privately question prevailing assumptions but publicly align with perceived norms to avoid criticism or reputational harm (98,99). In this sense, stigma functions as a form of social risk management. People avoid the topic not because they find it unimportant, but because the perceived cost of taking it seriously has historically been high.

The effects extend beyond individual behavior and into the scientific community. Stigma has influenced funding priorities, publication norms, and the development of scientific expertise. Consistent with this pattern, 91% of U.S. scientists report self-censorship and 34% report peer pressure to avoid controversial topics (25).

At the population level, stigma has left many people without well-developed frameworks for thinking about UAP. Because the topic has long been treated as a source of humor, entertainment (e.g., Hollywood movies), ridicule, or dismissal, many individuals have had little opportunity to engage with it seriously. As a result, public reactions may be shaped more by social cues, media framing, and group dynamics than by prior knowledge or careful evaluation; a pattern consistent with pluralistic ignorance and social conformity, in which people often take their cues from the reactions of others rather than evaluating the information independently (98,100)(101). This can contribute to rapid opinion shifts, polarization, and increased susceptibility to both over-acceptance and reflexive rejection of disclosure-related information.

These dynamics are likely to create challenges for disclosure, including distorted baseline data due to suppressed reporting, distrust of institutions perceived to have minimized or concealed information, and uneven psychological responses shaped by decades of ridicule or dismissal (102)(12). Also, the possibility that a long-dismissed phenomenon may prove to have a legitimate basis could also lead some individuals to become more receptive to unrelated extraordinary claims without sufficient critical scrutiny.

For preparedness planning, stigma should be treated as a central variable rather than a peripheral concern. Reducing reputational risk, normalizing reporting, acknowledging the historical role of stigma, and establishing visible norms of serious engagement may improve data quality, public trust, and psychological adaptation. In order for disclosure to be successful it will be important to proactively shift the topic from one associated with ridicule to one that can be discussed openly, critically, and constructively.

D. Implications of the Psychological Landscape

Taken together, the psychological processes reviewed in this section suggest that public responses to disclosure are unlikely to be determined by the information itself. They will emerge from the interaction between disclosure-related information and the psychological landscape into which that information arrives; a landscape already shaped by prior beliefs, identity commitments, meaning-making systems, cultural narratives, and vulnerabilities that vary substantially across the population.

Several implications follow directly from this.

Public responses will not be uniform. The same disclosure event may generate curiosity in some individuals, indifference in others, profound worldview disruption in others, and acute psychological distress in others still. It will be important for preparedness frameworks to not assume that a one-size fits all approach to communication will be adequate to meet the needs of the whole population.

Many of the psychological processes that shape responses operate automatically and outside conscious awareness. Individuals may experience strong emotional or behavioral reactions while attributing those reactions solely to the information itself. They will likely not recognize that their response reflects the filters through which information is being interpreted (prior beliefs, identity protection, threat appraisal). Providing information does not override these processes, but if these processes are considered when forming official communications, then information can be communicated in a way that is less likely to trigger negative response patterns, and more likely to support adaptive coping.

Intolerance of uncertainty is broadly distributed in the population and rises during sustained uncertainty events. A disclosure process in which fundamental questions about origin, intent, and implication remain unresolved will activate intolerance of uncertainty at the population scale. The portion of the population vulnerable to anxiety, worry, and maladaptive information-seeking under these conditions is large enough to constitute a public health planning variable in its own right.

Cognitive biases will actively shape what information is accepted, what is rejected, and from whom. These are normal processes operating under conditions of uncertainty and identity threat. What this means is that populations already committed to specific interpretive frameworks will not readily update their beliefs in response to new information. Communication strategies premised only on rational information updating may not adequately reach people who are committed to alternative perspectives.

Meaning-making will occur whether or not institutions support it. If credible, contextualizing frameworks are not available through official channels, they will be sought elsewhere, in communities, media ecosystems, and pre-existing alternative narratives that may be less accurate but more immediately satisfying. Meaning-making support must be treated as an active function of preparedness, not a passive outcome.

Finally, the evidence does not support an exclusively harm-minimization framework. Post-traumatic growth is a documented outcome of successfully supported worldview disruption. A preparedness framework that plans only for distress management may fail to create the conditions under which more adaptive outcomes become possible.

Effective preparedness requires recognition that disclosure does not occur in a psychological void, but within a population already differentiated by belief, identity, vulnerability, and interpretive frameworks, and that differentiation will shape response as much as the content of disclosure itself.

III. Mediating Factors

The psychological processes described in Section II influence how individuals internally respond to disclosure. However, those responses do not occur in isolation. They are also shaped by *mediating factors*, external conditions that influence how an event affects people. As has been established, among the factors that are most important and, relevant to disclosure, are the quality of institutional communication and the level of public trust in the institutions providing that communication. These factors are closely connected. Communication helps build or erode trust over time, while existing levels of trust influence how new information is interpreted. Together, they serve as primary mediators between disclosure events and psychological outcomes.

Psychological resilience is another important mediating factor. Resilience refers to the ability to adapt and recover in the face of stress, uncertainty, or adversity. Although resilience is partly shaped by preexisting characteristics and life experiences, it can also be strengthened through effective communication, social support, and access to reliable resources. Collectively, these factors help shape how people interpret and respond to disclosure and may influence where individuals fall along the broader spectrum of psychological responses discussed later in this paper.

A. Communication as a Mediator of Psychological Outcome

Recently declassified documents, show that concerns regarding the societal management of anomalous information are not new. In 1953, a CIA-sponsored Scientific Advisory Panel reviewing reports of what were then referred to as unidentified flying objects (UFOs), concluded that the principal risks associated with the phenomenon were not necessarily the reported objects themselves, but the potential effects of uncertainty, false alarms, public anxiety, rumor propagation, and vulnerability to misinformation. The panel recommended public education and communication efforts designed to reduce confusion, strengthen public understanding, and improve the ability to distinguish credible threats from misidentifications (103).

We know today that how information is disclosed may be as important as what is disclosed. The source of information, how it is framed, when it is released, and whether messaging remains consistent over time will all influence how people understand and respond to disclosure. Communication will serve as the bridge between disclosure and public response. It provides the framework through which individuals and communities interpret potentially threatening information (104).

1. Evidence-Based Communication Practices

Research across crisis contexts has identified a consistent set of best communication practices that reduce psychological harm and improve public outcomes (20)(104)(105).

- **Communicate early.** Initial exposure strongly influences how information is interpreted. Populations that first encounter information through unofficial channels are often more difficult to reach later with clarifications or corrections.
- **Acknowledge uncertainty.** Clearly distinguishing between what is known, what is unknown, and what remains under investigation builds trust more effectively than projecting certainty that later requires revision.
- **Use percentage framing.** Risks and uncertainty should be communicated through the careful use of percentages and probabilities. Numerical estimates can be supplemented with analogies or familiar examples. For example, a probability can be explained as a “1 in X” chance and compared to another commonly understood event with similar odds.
- **Coordinate across agencies.** Consistent messaging requires clear leadership, shared communication frameworks, and established coordination protocols.
- **Use plain language.** Information should be developed for different literacy levels, communication platforms, and languages. Clear language reduces misunderstanding and increases accessibility.
- **Use trusted messengers.** In low-trust environments, credibility often depends as much on who delivers the message as on the content of the message itself.
- **Maintain a communication schedule.** Predictable updates reduce anxiety and help prevent information gaps from being filled by rumor or speculation.

- **Be transparent.** Well-intentioned misinformation or oversimplifications are often eventually discovered and can seriously undermine public trust. Transparent communication is more likely to preserve credibility over time. People are generally better able to adapt to difficult information when communication is accurate, timely, and honest

2. Communication Failures That Amplify Risk

Communication failures consistently increase distress, erode trust, and increase the likelihood people will rely on alternative narratives (20,104)(106)(49)(105).

- **Delayed or withheld information** can reinforce perceptions of concealment and dishonesty, particularly in a domain already shaped by decades of stigma and dismissal.

- **Contradictory messaging** can create perceptions of disorganization or deception. It may also trigger *identity-protective processing*, which is the tendency to interpret information in ways that protect existing beliefs, values, or group identities, and increase reliance on alternative information sources.

- **Overconfidence followed by revision** can create perceptions of incompetence or dishonesty, even when revisions are justified by new evidence.

- **Politicized framing** can activate identity-based interpretation, increasing polarization and reducing the likelihood that information will be evaluated on its own merits.

- **One-way communication** limits adaptive response by eliminating feedback mechanisms that help identify emerging concerns, misunderstandings, and information needs.

- **Avoid “conspiracy” language.** In many public crises, multiple explanations may initially remain possible. Even if some hypotheses are ultimately unlikely to be correct, it is not helpful to characterize people's openness to those possibilities as “conspiracy thinking.” Prematurely dismissing alternative explanations in this way can undermine trust and encourage some individuals to seek information from less reliable sources.

3. Communication Under Conditions of Uncertainty

Disclosure will likely unfold under conditions of sustained uncertainty. Evidence does not support the assumption that acknowledging uncertainty necessarily undermines trust. Adam van der Bles et al. (2020) found that communicating uncertainty produced no significant decrease in trust in either the information itself or the source providing it (107).

A critical distinction should be maintained:

“We do not yet know X” invites patience.

“We will never know X” invites adjustment.

“We are not telling you X” invites distrust.

The most destabilizing factor is often not uncertainty itself, but the perception that important information is being intentionally withheld or obscured, a phenomenon sometimes described as *managed ambiguity*

(104)(105). In a context shaped by prior stigma and official dismissal, that perception may already be present.

As noted above, uncertainty and risk should be communicated through the careful use of percentages and probabilities. Numerical estimates can be supplemented with analogies and familiar examples to help people understand the likelihood of a particular outcome or interpretation.

4. Audience-Specific Communication Considerations

Disclosure is unlikely to be interpreted in the same way by all populations. A communication strategy designed for the general public will not adequately serve the full range of affected groups.

- **Children and adolescents** will rely heavily on parents, educators, and caregivers to help them interpret new information (108).

- **Vulnerable populations**, including individuals with preexisting mental health conditions or acute *psychosocial stress* (stress arising from psychological, social, or environmental pressures), may require additional support and stabilization resources (64)(109).

- **Culturally and religiously diverse populations** may place greater trust in community leaders, faith leaders, or other local intermediaries than in governmental institutions (110).

Preparedness planning should therefore include age-appropriate materials, culturally aligned communication strategies, multilingual resources, and active engagement with trusted community leaders.

5. The Role of Media in Communication and Breaking Stigma

Public understanding of UAP has been shaped for decades by ridicule, sensationalism, and dismissive framing rather than sustained serious discourse. That history has created the interpretive environment into which disclosure communication is emerging. Media framing is not peripheral in this context. It strongly influences what people perceive as credible, serious, threatening, or socially acceptable to discuss.

Research across multiple domains demonstrates that stereotyped or trivializing portrayals increase stigma and shape public interpretation, while accurate and contextualized reporting improves understanding and reduces negative attitudes (111)(112)(113)(114). In the UAP context, repeated humor framing, ridicule, and caricatured imagery have reinforced the perception that the topic is unserious, socially risky, or unworthy of legitimate attention. These dynamics contribute not only to stigma, but also to suppressed reporting, self-censorship, and uneven public engagement with the subject.

When established media institutions repeatedly treat a topic through ridicule or trivialization, they may unintentionally reduce public confidence in mainstream reporting on that subject. Individuals seeking serious engagement may then turn to alternative information sources with uneven standards of evidence, contributing to information environments in which misinformation and conspiracy-based narratives spread more easily.

Similarly, treating marginal hypotheses as “conspiracy theories,” rather than as hypotheses that may be unlikely but still potentially true, can drive some people toward less reliable information sources that take those possibilities seriously.

The COVID-19 lab-leak debate provides an example of this dynamic. Early official messaging in many countries treated the lab-leak hypothesis as a conspiracy theory, even though many credible and knowledgeable people viewed it as a plausible explanation that warranted consideration. As a result, individuals who remained open to that possibility often sought information from alternative sources, including podcasters and commentators who treated the hypothesis more seriously. Unfortunately, some of those same sources also promoted claims for which there was little or no evidence, including misinformation about vaccines and alleged hidden motives behind public health measures. In some cases, those claims contributed to harmful outcomes, including reduced vaccine uptake (115).

These fragmented information environments create conditions in which misinformation spreads more easily and authoritative guidance becomes more difficult to identify. False information spreads farther and faster than accurate information, largely because of emotional salience and predictable patterns of human behavior (30). Across health, disaster, and political contexts, misinformation has been identified as a public health threat (116). High exposure to crisis-related media has also been associated with poorer mental health outcomes (117).

The World Health Organization describes this broader condition as an *infodemic*, an environment in which such a large volume of competing information exists that trustworthy guidance becomes difficult to identify (118). In the UAP context, official communication will enter an information ecosystem already shaped by decades of competing narratives, skepticism, sensationalism, misinformation, and uneven credibility.

Importantly, these dynamics are modifiable. Experimental studies and systematic reviews indicate that accurate and contextualized reporting, responsible language, avoidance of stereotypes, journalist training, and evidence-informed reporting standards can reduce stigma and improve public understanding (111–114). Breaking entrenched stigma in the UAP context will therefore require deliberate engagement with the media ecosystem, including replacing ridicule-based framing with standards that emphasize accuracy, proportionality, and responsible communication under conditions of uncertainty.

- **Engage broadcasting and journalism organizations directly.** Work with professional organizations to establish shared expectations for responsible UAP coverage, emphasizing accuracy, proportionality, and avoidance of trivializing tropes.

- **Develop and publish reporting guidelines.** Provide clear, evidence-informed standards for reporting on UAP, including appropriate language, communication of uncertainty, and avoidance of ridicule-based framing.

- **Frame stigma as a communication harm.** Explicitly recognize that media practices that trivialize this topic can contribute to suppressed reporting, distorted public understanding, and increased susceptibility to misinformation.

- **Invest in pre-disclosure media literacy.** *Inoculation-based interventions*, (i.e., educational approaches that help people recognize misleading information before they encounter it) can improve the public's ability to evaluate sources and identify manipulation techniques before disclosure occurs (119).

- **Engage credible communicators early.** Journalists, scientists, clinicians, and aviation professionals who model serious, evidence-based discussion can help establish new norms for how the topic is publicly discussed.

- **Monitor the information environment in real time.** Tracking emerging narratives can enable early intervention before misinformation and stigmatizing frames become entrenched.

B. Institutional Trust as a Mediator of Communication

Any discussion of disclosure communication must begin with the existing trust environment. Public trust in the U.S. federal government is historically low and has been declining for decades. A national survey by the Partnership for Public Service found that only 40 percent of Americans trusted the federal government "a lot" or "somewhat". Only 23 percent agreed that the government is transparent, and just 27 percent believed it listens to the public. Three-quarters described the government as too bureaucratic, 69 percent as corrupt, and 59 percent as incompetent (120). These figures define the environment into which disclosure communication is arriving.

Trust is not distributed evenly across the population. Confidence in government varies substantially by political affiliation and worldview. As a result, the same information may be interpreted by some groups as transparent and credible, while others may view it as a managed narrative or attempt at persuasion (121). In this environment, bipartisan and cross-institutional messengers are not simply politically advantageous, they are functionally important for maintaining credibility across different audiences.

The effects of trust extend beyond perception and influence measurable behavioral outcomes. During the COVID-19 pandemic, trust in the federal government was significantly higher among vaccinated Americans than among those who remained unvaccinated. A *Lancet* analysis of 177 countries similarly found that higher levels of trust in government were associated with lower infection and fatality rates (122). Institutional trust is therefore not merely a communication variable. It is also a public health variable that influences compliance, coordination, and collective response.

Low-trust environments also change how information is processed. When trusted guidance is absent, perceived threat tends to increase, official sources are more likely to be discounted before their content is evaluated, and information-seeking shifts toward alternative media environments where exposure to misinformation may be greater (20)(123). In the UAP context, these effects may be amplified by decades of stigma, dismissal, and perceived institutional concealment.

Institutional trust should therefore be understood as an infrastructure condition rather than a communication tactic. It cannot be created quickly at the moment of disclosure. Instead, communication strategies should be designed around the characteristics known to support and build trust over time. The World Health Organization identifies six core determinants of trusted communication: accessible, actionable, credible, relevant, timely, and understandable (124).

C. Psychological Resilience

Communication quality and institutional trust primarily influence how disclosure information is received and interpreted. Psychological resilience functions differently. It reflects the preexisting capacities within individuals and communities that support stability, adaptation, and recovery, particularly when communication is fragmented or trust in institutions is limited.

Resilience is not a fixed personality trait. In a 2001 paper, Masten famously described it as “ordinary magic”—the widely distributed human capacities that emerge during adversity and are shaped by social and environmental conditions (125). While large-scale efforts to create resilience through disclosure planning are unlikely to be feasible, resilience can be strengthened indirectly through communication, guidance, social support, and the broader information environment.

Historical examples illustrate how resilience can emerge and be reinforced at the population level. During World War II, the United Kingdom demonstrated what later became known as the “Blitz spirit,” reflected in slogans such as “Keep Calm and Carry On.” Although aspects of this narrative have been somewhat mythologized over time, it nonetheless reflected a genuine collective response to prolonged adversity and was actively encouraged through public communication whereby government agencies and the press consistently portrayed civilians as disciplined, courageous, and resilient despite widespread destruction. Public messaging encouraged self-control, patience, cooperation, and the maintenance of daily routines. Streets were cleared, businesses reopened, and people continued their everyday activities despite ongoing disruption. The narrative engendered a cluster of adaptive behaviors, including self-sacrifice, humor under pressure, cooperation, and a commitment to maintaining normal life under extraordinary circumstances.

Several resilience factors are consistently associated with better psychological adaptation.

- **Social connection and perceived support** are among the strongest protective factors. Relationships provide the context in which distress is processed, meaning is constructed, and practical assistance is mobilized (126).

- **Meaning-making capacity**—the ability to integrate difficult or disorienting information into a coherent understanding of the world. This process is often facilitated when communication provides broader scientific, philosophical, social, or spiritual context (69)(127).

- **Community cohesion and collective efficacy**—a community's shared belief in its ability to work together effectively, can further strengthen adaptation and recovery following large-scale stressors by increasing mutual support and coordinated responses (123)(125).

- **Information and media literacy** also function as resilience factors. The ability to evaluate sources, tolerate uncertainty, and identify misinformation reduces vulnerability to catastrophizing and conspiracy-based narratives.

- **Access to mental health support** represents another important boundary condition. When support systems are available and accessible, distress is more likely to be managed before escalating into significant impairment. When access is limited, even moderate stressors may overwhelm existing coping resources. Modeling by Priestland et al. (2025) suggests that without some degree of surge planning, demand for services may exceed available mental health resources (64).

In this context, preparedness should not be viewed as a mechanism for creating resilience at scale. Rather, its role is to avoid unnecessarily disrupting the resilience that already exists within individuals and communities. Communication that strengthens social connection, supports meaning-making, encourages adaptive coping, and directs people toward existing resources may reinforce natural resilience processes without requiring entirely new systems of support.

D. Implications of Interdependent Factors

Taken together, communication quality, institutional trust, and psychological resilience form the core conditions through which disclosure is likely to be experienced and interpreted. Communication shapes understanding, trust shapes credibility, and resilience shapes adaptation. These factors do not operate independently. Communication, institutional trust, and psychological resilience influence one another in important ways. Effective communication can strengthen trust and support resilience, while poor communication may undermine both. Because these factors are highly interdependent, preparedness efforts should focus not only on what information is disclosed, but also on how it is communicated, who communicates it, and whether existing social and psychological resources are sufficient to support public adaptation. While these factors cannot determine outcomes, they can substantially influence the range and distribution of psychological responses across the population.

IV. Psychological Response

The psychological processes described in Section II interact with the mediating factors outlined in Section III to produce a range of possible responses. Any effort to characterize those responses is necessarily approximate. No historical event provides a precise model for UAP/NHI disclosure, and the available evidence supports probabilistic assessment rather than deterministic prediction.

Current evidence does not support assumptions of widespread societal destabilization. Instead, responses are likely to vary considerably depending on the circumstances of disclosure and the psychological characteristics of each individual, including personality traits, identity commitments, prior beliefs, internal conflicts, and openness to new information. In turn, these characteristics are also shaped by the cultural context in which people live (e.g., societies may differ in how they react to disclosure based on factors such as their level of religiosity or secularization, or the extent to which they are individualistic versus collectivistic). Many people may integrate the information through curiosity, compartmentalization, or gradual meaning-making. Others may experience temporary distress as they attempt to reconcile disclosure with existing assumptions and belief systems. A smaller subgroup may experience clinically significant exacerbation or high-intensity interpretive reactions, particularly under conditions of uncertainty, contested information, or poor communication.

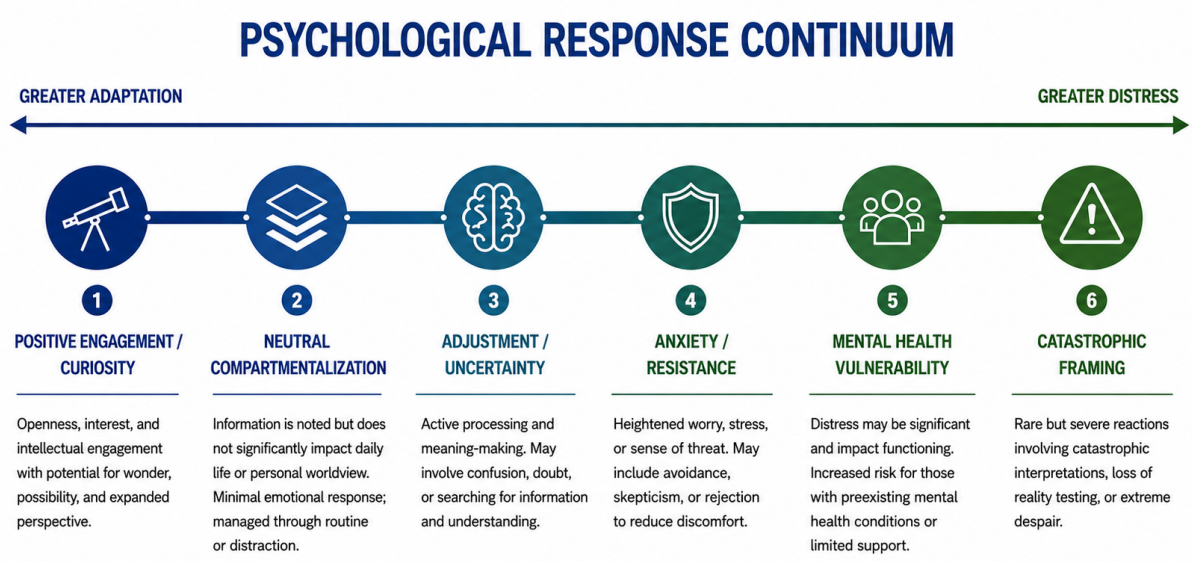
From a public health perspective, the central concern is not only the proportion of individuals affected, but also the timing, intensity, and concentration of psychological demand. A psychological event becomes a public health concern when the volume or clustering of need exceeds the capacity of existing systems to respond (20). Disaster mental health research similarly shows that large-scale events often produce delayed and uneven patterns of distress, with support needs concentrated among vulnerable, highly exposed, or socially connected populations rather than distributed uniformly across society (128,129)(130)(131). Applied to UAP/NHI disclosure, even modest increases in help-seeking behavior could create meaningful strain if they emerge within a compressed period of time.

This section outlines the likely spectrum of psychological responses, the distributional patterns through which those responses may emerge, and the developmental, social, and cultural factors likely to shape interpretation and adaptation.

A. The Response Spectrum

The response categories described below should not be understood as discrete types, but as approximate regions within a broader psychological spectrum.

Individuals may move between response patterns over time as uncertainty evolves, new information emerges, or more stable interpretive frameworks become available. The same person may initially respond with curiosity, later experience distress driven by uncertainty, and eventually arrive at a more stable meaning-making position. The purpose of this spectrum is therefore not to place individuals into fixed categories, but to identify where different forms of psychological adaptation, distress, and support needs are most likely to emerge.



1. Positive Engagement

For many individuals, disclosure involving confirmation of NHI may evoke curiosity, intellectual engagement, and an expanded sense of perspective rather than fear. Research on awe suggests that exposure to paradigm-expanding information can broaden perspective, reduce self-focus, increase openness to new ideas, and support a willingness to revise existing assumptions (132).

In an analysis of approximately 5,000 social media posts following the July 26, 2023 Congressional UAP hearing, Lomas (2025) identified several dominant response patterns, including concern, skepticism, positive engagement, and open-minded inquiry (10). Reflective engagement and positive reactions were among the most commonly observed responses.

One reason positive engagement may occur is that disclosure has the potential to reshape how people understand humanity's place within a larger reality. Scientific discoveries about the universe over the past century have created an impression of a cosmos that is infinitely vast and complex yet also “purposeless” and lacking in life elsewhere, which some scholars argue contributed to experiences of disenchantment, meaninglessness, and existential uncertainty in modern secular society (133) (134)(135). In that context, confirmation that intelligent life exists beyond Earth could have the opposite effect for some individuals, fostering a renewed sense of wonder, connection, meaning, and participation in a larger cosmic story, a form of re-enchantment rather than further diminishment.

Positive engagement may be especially likely among individuals whose scientific, philosophical, spiritual, or cosmological frameworks can accommodate the possibility of NHI without requiring a wholesale revision of identity. For these individuals, disclosure may deepen curiosity, expand perspective, and stimulate reflection on humanity, meaning, science, religion, and the future. While emotionally significant, the response is more likely to be organized around inquiry, exploration, and integration than around threat.

Alternative interpretive frameworks may also support positive engagement with disclosure. Rabeyron (2026), for example, has proposed that UAP and NHI phenomena may be understood not solely as material entities, but as expressions of broader psychological or consciousness-related processes (136). Likewise, many Indigenous traditions and non-Western cosmologies already incorporate concepts of non-human intelligences, interconnected realities, or spiritual dimensions that can accommodate anomalous experiences within existing systems of meaning and practice (137). Although these frameworks differ substantially, they illustrate that disclosure need not be experienced primarily as a threat or contradiction. For some individuals and communities, it may instead reinforce existing understandings of reality, encourage broader reflection on consciousness and existence, and contribute to a renewed sense of meaning, wonder, and connection.

2. Neutral Compartmentalization

A substantial portion of the population may respond with limited emotional activation, particularly if disclosure does not appear personally consequential (e.g., confirmation of life elsewhere in the galaxy, as opposed to NHI actively engaging with or threatening Earth). Disclosure may be recognized as significant without being experienced as immediately personal, urgent, or destabilizing. In today's information-saturated environment, information with potentially paradigm-shifting implications must compete with everyday concerns such as finances, work, health, and family responsibilities. As discussed in Section II, research on cognitive load suggests that this response pattern may reflect normal attentional filtering and adaptive prioritization rather than denial, avoidance, or indifference.

For many individuals, disclosure information may become integrated gradually as its implications become clearer. However, limited emotional activation should not necessarily be interpreted as a lack of psychological impact. Individuals may continue reflecting on and incorporating disclosure-related information over time even when it does not produce visible distress or immediate behavioral change.

This response pattern may also change as new information emerges. Increases in perceived threat, personal relevance, or concerns about institutional concealment may move some individuals from compartmentalization toward anxiety, resistance, or more active meaning-making. Neutral compartmentalization should therefore be understood not as a fixed endpoint, but as an adaptive holding pattern under conditions of uncertainty.

3. Interpretive Resistance and Identity Framing

Disclosure of information that conflicts with established political, scientific, religious, or cultural belief systems may generate skepticism, reinterpretation, or active resistance. As discussed in Section II, when beliefs are closely tied to identity, new information may trigger defensive psychological processes, including selective attention, motivated skepticism, and *identity-protective reframing*, which is the tendency to reinterpret information in ways that preserve existing beliefs and worldviews (49)(80). This response reflects identity regulation rather than psychological dysfunction. People interpret disruptive information through the lens of their existing beliefs, trusted sources, and the implications that accepting the information would have for their worldview.

As a result, the same information may generate validation in one group, disbelief in another, and political suspicion in a third. Individuals who have long believed that UAP are real and have been institutionally suppressed may experience disclosure as confirmation and relief, although some may also experience fear, particularly if they have previously reported "abduction experiences." Others whose identity is organized around skepticism or dismissal of the topic may respond through reinterpretation, doubt, or

outright rejection. In populations with longstanding distrust of government institutions, disclosure may be interpreted less as an act of transparency and more as evidence of narrative management or institutional control.

The intensity of interpretive resistance is also likely to depend on institutional credibility. When institutions are viewed as trustworthy and communication is coherent, defensive processing may be moderated. When distrust is already high, particularly in a context shaped by decades of UAP stigma and perceived concealment, resistance may become more entrenched and socially reinforced.

Importantly, these responses do not occur only at the individual level. Identity-linked interpretations are often reinforced within communities, media ecosystems, political groups, and religious networks. Under these conditions, the psychological challenge is not simply whether individuals accept the information being disclosed, but how competing interpretive communities form around different explanations and narratives.

4. Heightened Anxiety and Intolerance of Uncertainty

As discussed in Section II, intolerance of uncertainty refers to a tendency to find uncertainty especially distressing and difficult to tolerate. Research demonstrates that higher intolerance of uncertainty is associated with greater experiences of fear, anger, sadness, and frustration, and lower experiences of positive emotional states such as joy and excitement (138).

For many affected individuals, distress is likely to arise not only from the content of disclosure, but from the disclosure process itself. Conditions commonly associated with UAP/NHI disclosure, including information that is ambiguous, incomplete, evolving, or contested, are likely to activate intolerance of uncertainty. Because intolerance of uncertainty contributes to multiple forms of psychological distress, including anxiety, depression, insomnia, and suicidal ideation, these conditions may intensify existing difficulties or contribute to new symptoms in vulnerable individuals (44)(42).

For individuals with elevated intolerance of uncertainty, unanswered questions may generate persistent reassurance-seeking, heightened vigilance, and difficulty disengaging from disclosure-related information. Importantly, this response pattern is not limited to those with diagnosed anxiety disorders. Intolerance of uncertainty exists along a continuum throughout the population (44), and prolonged periods of ambiguity may temporarily increase distress even among otherwise psychologically healthy individuals.

The trajectory of these responses is likely to be strongly influenced by the information environment. Clear, coherent, and iterative communication that helps people navigate unresolved questions may shorten periods of elevated distress and reduce vulnerability to misinformation and catastrophizing narratives. In contrast, contradictory communication, prolonged ambiguity, or perceived concealment may intensify anxiety by increasing the drive for certainty while reducing confidence in authoritative sources.

A primary preparedness goal should therefore be to reduce unnecessary ambiguity, communicate clearly and consistently, and provide regular updates as information evolves.

5. Vulnerability Activation in Predisposed Individuals

National data indicate that approximately 23.1% of U.S. adults (roughly 60 million people) experience mental illness in a given year (139). Individuals with pre-existing anxiety disorders, PTSD, psychotic

spectrum conditions, severe mood disorders, or impaired reality testing may be at elevated risk for clinically significant exacerbation during disclosure.

In most cases, disclosure is unlikely to produce entirely new psychological disturbance. More often, it may intensify processes already described throughout this report, including intolerance of uncertainty, cognitive dissonance, threats to ontological security, and disruptions in meaning-making. For some individuals, these reactions may contribute to worsening symptoms or increased psychological distress.

Strong reactions may also occur among individuals with psychotic disorders such as schizophrenia. Research has consistently shown that delusional content tends to incorporate the dominant cultural, technological, and scientific themes of a given era (140,141). UAP and NHI narratives would likely be incorporated in a similar manner.

This does not imply that individuals with mental health histories are uniformly fragile or incapable of adaptation. Many possess substantial resilience and coping capacity. The relevant issue is distributional rather than categorical. Even modest increases in distress within a large pre-existing vulnerable population may generate substantial increases in demand for reassurance, crisis intervention, clinical care, or community-based support.

The Unhidden Foundation modeled this dynamic in the United Kingdom, estimating that high-risk groups, including individuals with pre-existing mental health conditions, strong identity-linked belief systems, and prior anomalous experiences, may collectively represent approximately 35% of the adult population. Using conservative disaster mental health assumptions, projected psychological support needs ranged from 1.9 to 5.7 million UK adults, potentially increasing NHS demand by 37% to 110% above baseline within weeks to months of disclosure (130). While these figures are modeling estimates rather than predictions, they illustrate how even relatively low activation rates within large populations can generate operationally significant demand.

A similar dynamic may apply in the United States. If only a small percentage of psychologically vulnerable or otherwise high-risk individuals seek support within a compressed period following disclosure, the resulting demand could involve millions of people. The central public health concern is therefore not whether most individuals will experience severe destabilization, they likely will not, but whether a relatively small percentage of a very large population seeks support at the same time.

6. Catastrophic Disclosure

At the far end of the response spectrum, disclosure may occur in ways that are very difficult for people and societies to process. If such disclosure happens in ways that are particularly, (a) challenging, (b) unpredictable, (c) uncontrolled, and (d) quick, this has been described by Retired Colonel Karl Nell (who served as a member of the UAP Task Force) as “catastrophic”. In such instances, disclosure may be less likely to be interpreted not as information to integrate, but instead as confirmation of apocalyptic, theological, or civilizational threat narratives. Within some interpretive frameworks, non-human intelligence may be understood as evidence of divine judgment, spiritual deception, demonic influence, or broader end-times prophecy (142).

This pathway should not be overstated. As discussed in Section II, most religious belief systems are diverse, flexible, and capable of incorporating new information without crisis. Catastrophic framing is therefore likely to represent a minority response (although that depends on how catastrophic the nature of

disclosure, and relatedly the nature of NHI themselves, actually is). Its importance lies less in overall prevalence than in the potential intensity and social organization of affected subgroups.

Even low-prevalence reactions may become operationally significant at population scale. Approximately 49 million Evangelical Christians in the United States report some form of end-times belief (92). If only a small percentage interpret disclosure catastrophically, the resulting population could still involve hundreds of thousands to more than a million individuals engaging with disclosure through a lens of existential crisis, spiritual threat, or organized resistance.

These responses may become amplified within cohesive interpretive communities and digitally connected media environments. Catastrophizing narratives, distrust of secular institutions, and resistance to corrective information may become socially reinforced, making such interpretations increasingly resistant to disconfirmation.

This category therefore represents the high-intensity tail of the response distribution. Its significance lies in illustrating how psychologically intense and socially organized minority responses may exert disproportionate influence on broader public sentiment despite relatively low prevalence overall.

There could however be secondary shocks that are more widespread in their impacts. While outside the scope of our ability to provide an analysis, if enough people perceive themselves or society to be under threat, along with high uncertainty, low trust, and uncertainty about future economic consequences, one could imagine catastrophic disclosure being a possible “black swan” event for the financial markets, causing panic within the economic system (e.g., quick and widespread selling of stocks, runs on banks, etc.) that has the potential to translate into more widespread societal panic (e.g., panic buying of gas and goods).

A related concern involves the potential exploitation of disclosure by high-control groups, cults, or sectarian movements that incorporate NHI into their belief systems. Periods of uncertainty often increase demand for explanatory frameworks, certainty, and meaning. Individuals struggling to make sense of disclosure may therefore be particularly vulnerable to groups offering simple, absolute, or highly organized interpretations of complex events.

This dynamic may be further complicated by issues of institutional credibility. To the extent that governments are perceived as having minimized, dismissed, or concealed information about UAPs for decades, some alternative groups may gain credibility simply because they addressed the topic before official institutions did. In some cases, these groups may claim that disclosure validates their broader belief systems or prior predictions. Preparedness planning should therefore consider strategies for public education, media literacy, and community support that reduce vulnerability to manipulation while preserving freedom of belief and inquiry.

B. Distribution

The response categories described above are unlikely to be equally represented across the population, and individuals may move between them over time. Research on disasters and other large-scale societal stressors consistently finds that most people demonstrate resilience or experience minimal impairment, a meaningful minority experience temporary distress that resolves over time, and a smaller subgroup develops sustained impairment requiring clinical support. Widespread panic, the scenario often invoked in

arguments against disclosure, is not the typical population-level response to large-scale events. When information is available and social systems remain functional, adaptive coordination, information-seeking, and mutual support are generally far more common (143).

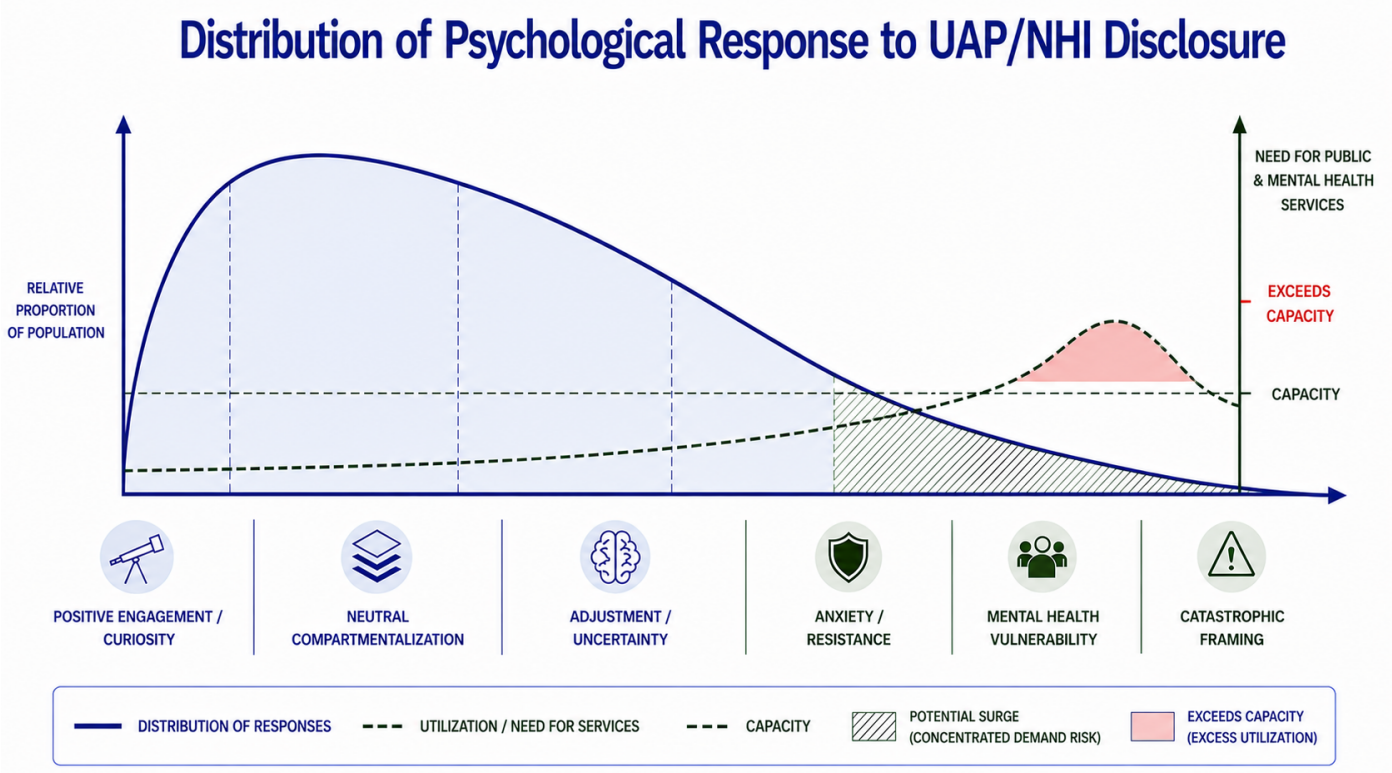
Preliminary empirical work by Stubbings (2024) supports this heterogeneity. Even controlled exposure to Congressional testimony and declassified U.S. Navy footage appears to produce widely variable psychological responses across individuals (34). Lomas's (2025) analysis of public reactions to the July 2023 Congressional UAP hearing supports this broader pattern. Rather than evidence of mass psychological destabilization, responses reflected heterogeneous and partial disruptions across different belief systems, assumptions, and worldviews. Lomas characterized this process as one of *ontological fracturing* rather than *ontological shock* (10).

The more relevant public health question is therefore not whether disclosure affects everyone equally, but whether smaller high-need groups generate concentrated demand within the same period of time. This reflects a form of the prevention paradox: even when individual risk is relatively low or moderate, the total number of people requiring support can become substantial when that risk is distributed across a very large population (144).

The timing and concentration of demand are particularly important. Mental health systems frequently operate near baseline capacity prior to large-scale events. Research on surge capacity demonstrates that systems become strained not only by the number of individuals requiring support, but also by how quickly and how simultaneously that demand emerges (143)(145). Disaster mental health research similarly shows that psychological effects often unfold unevenly and in waves, with delayed and secondary support needs emerging after the initial event (146)(131).

Several populations may be particularly relevant to this distributional pattern. Individuals with elevated intolerance of uncertainty, pre-existing mental health conditions, prior anomalous experiences, or highly rigid identity-linked belief systems may be more likely to seek reassurance, interpretive guidance, crisis support, or clinical care. Religious worldview may also function as a concentration variable, particularly within geographically or socially clustered communities organized around apocalyptic or end-times interpretations.

From a public health perspective, disclosure is therefore better conceptualized as a potential surge-capacity event than as a uniform mass-trauma event. The central operational concern is the possibility that several psychologically vulnerable or high-intensity subgroups may seek support simultaneously within a compressed period of time.



C. Children and Adolescents

Children and adolescents represent a distinct population whose developmental characteristics are likely to shape both vulnerability and response in ways that differ meaningfully from adults. Their cognitive abilities, emotional regulation skills, identity development, and reliance on adults for guidance create a different psychological profile.

For younger children, the most important mediating factor is likely to be the response of trusted adults rather than the disclosure itself. Children's understanding of safety, human identity, and the broader nature of reality is still developing. Research conducted during the COVID-19 pandemic found that children's anxiety and distress were influenced more strongly by parental anxiety and the quality and consistency of adult communication than by direct exposure to threatening information (147). In the context of disclosure, children are therefore likely to absorb not only information, but also the emotional tone and interpretive frameworks modeled by parents, educators, and caregivers.

When adults communicate with calm, consistent, and developmentally appropriate explanations, children are more likely to integrate new information without significant distress. Conversely, fear-based, contradictory, secretive, or catastrophic responses from adults may increase vulnerability by transmitting emotional intensity without providing a stable framework for understanding what is happening.

Adolescents may present a different response profile. Identity formation and peer affiliation are central developmental tasks during adolescence. As a result, paradigm-challenging information may become incorporated into emerging social, ideological, or personal identities (148)(149). As discussed in Section II, identity-protective processing may be particularly salient during this developmental period. Adolescents are also likely to process disclosure collectively through peer networks and digital media environments,

which can either support healthy meaning-making or amplify rumor, fear, ridicule, and conspiratorial narratives.

Schools may therefore function as important sites of psychological mediation. School counselors, psychoeducational resources, and structured opportunities for discussion may help support emotional regulation, critical thinking, and adaptive interpretation. Young people are unlikely to encounter disclosure primarily through official channels alone. Their responses will instead be shaped through interconnected social networks involving parents, peers, educators, traditional media, and online information environments.

D. Cultural Variables

A U.S. government disclosure of UAP/NHI would immediately become a global event. Information would spread rapidly across diverse cultural, religious, political, and cosmological contexts and traditions, shaping psychological responses in ways that are unlikely to be fully captured by Western or U.S.-centered models alone. The same disclosure could be interpreted as a scientific discovery, spiritual confirmation, political deception, existential threat, or a continuation of existing cosmological beliefs, depending on the lens through which it is viewed.

Prior beliefs about NHI vary substantially across cultures. Many non-Western traditions, including Buddhist, Hindu, Jain, and numerous Indigenous cosmologies, already incorporate concepts of multiple worlds, non-human intelligences, or expansive cosmic timescales (87). For some populations, confirmation of non-human intelligence may therefore require less conceptual adjustment than in societies organized around more anthropocentric assumptions secular, and/or scientific-materialism-oriented. The degree of disruption produced by disclosure is likely to depend, in part, on the distance between what is disclosed and what was already considered possible.

Cultural orientation may also shape how responses are processed and expressed. In predominantly individualistic societies, disclosure may be interpreted more through personal meaning-making and individual psychological response. In more collectivistic or communal cultures, interpretation may occur more through family, community, religious, or social systems, with collective sensemaking serving as a primary mechanism of adaptation (150).

Institutional trust, already identified as a major mediating factor, also varies substantially across national and historical contexts. Histories of colonization, authoritarian governance, institutional corruption, scientific exploitation, or conflict with religious authorities may influence how disclosure originating from U.S. institutions is interpreted. In some populations, disclosure may reinforce existing distrust of Western institutions or become incorporated into broader geopolitical narratives.

The global nature of disclosure further complicates the information environment. Official statements would likely be translated, reframed, politicized, and redistributed across diverse media ecosystems almost immediately. In many contexts, public understanding may become increasingly shaped by local cultural, political, or religious narratives rather than by the original disclosure itself.

The central implication is that psychological responses to disclosure are unlikely to be culturally uniform. Disclosure would be interpreted simultaneously through multiple religious, historical, political, and civilizational perspectives, producing a globally heterogeneous response from the outset. As a result,

effective communication will require more than a one-size-fits-all approach. Authorities in different countries will need to adapt communication strategies to the characteristics, values, and concerns of their own populations.

The same principle applies within countries. No nation is culturally homogeneous, and this is especially true of the United States, which contains a wide range of cultural, religious, ethnic, and immigrant communities. Communication strategies that resonate with one group may be less effective with another. Preparedness planning should therefore include culturally tailored communication approaches that recognize the diversity of populations both across and within national boundaries.

E. Implications of the Response Spectrum

Psychological responses to UAP/NHI disclosure are likely to be heterogeneous rather than uniform. Positive engagement, neutral compartmentalization, interpretive resistance, uncertainty-driven anxiety, vulnerability activation, and catastrophic framing may all emerge simultaneously across different segments of the population. The existence of high-intensity minority responses does not imply mass destabilization. At the same time, broad population resilience does not eliminate the possibility of meaningful demands on existing support systems.

From a public health perspective, the central concern is concentrated demand. Even relatively small increases in help-seeking within large higher-risk populations may generate operationally significant strain if those needs emerge within a compressed period of time. Modeling is therefore valuable because it anticipates issues around scale, timing, and concentration, which are the factors most likely to determine whether disclosure remains psychologically manageable or becomes a surge-capacity event.

The challenge of disclosure lies in the uneven distribution of psychological impacts, the speed with which support needs may emerge, and the absence of historical precedent for how populations integrate confirmation of NHI within modern global information environments.

Section V. Recommendations for Preparation and Response

The evidence reviewed throughout this report suggests that psychological responses to UAP/NHI disclosure are likely to vary considerably across individuals, communities, and stages of disclosure. While existing research provides little support for assumptions of widespread psychological destabilization, responses observed during the current period of Limited Disclosure cannot automatically be assumed to generalize to more consequential forms of disclosure involving increased personal relevance, perceived threat, technological asymmetry, broader societal consequences, or direct evidence of NHI.

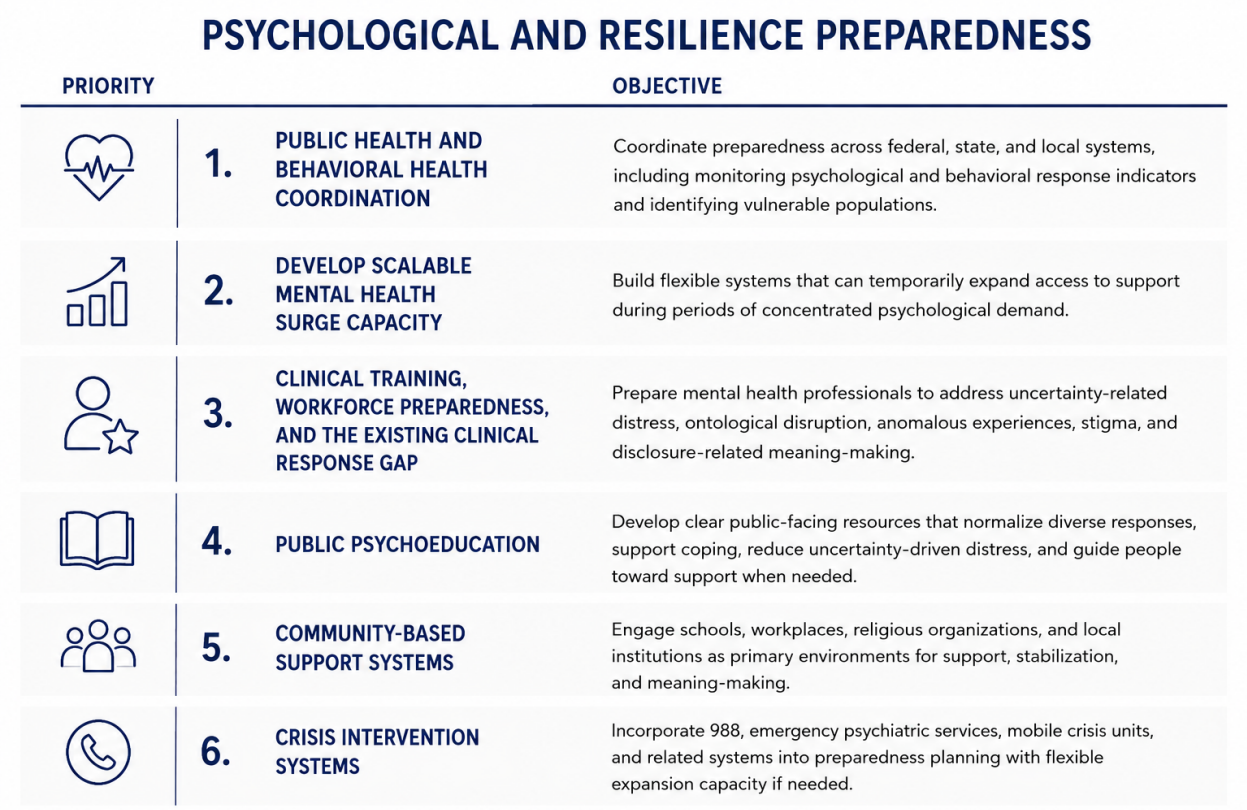
At present, no government has established a psychological, educational, public health, or societal preparedness plan to support populations in processing information involving the possible existence of non-human intelligence. For too long structural stigma has prevented the psychological needs surrounding UAPs from being addressed. Recent positive developments, such as the U.S. government establishing the UAP Science Advisory Council (151), and The Unhidden Foundation in the U.K. publishing a preparedness framework (130), are promising starts, and foundations on which to build, but considerable further work in this area is urgently needed.

The objective is not to prepare for a presumed public health crisis, nor to manage public belief. Rather, it is to ensure that governments, institutions, healthcare systems, educators, community leaders, and the public have access to the resources necessary to support adaptive coping, informed decision-making, and societal stability as disclosure evolves.

Consistent with research from disaster psychology, risk communication, public health preparedness, and complex systems science (104,105,152–154), we recommend the development of a coordinated framework for psychological preparedness and resilience capable of monitoring emerging conditions, supporting public adaptation, and scaling response efforts if needed.

A. National Psychological Preparedness and Resilience Task Force

Given the unprecedented nature of potential disclosure involving NHI, preparedness efforts may benefit from the establishment of a multidisciplinary National Psychological Preparedness and Resilience Task Force. The task force could function as a centralized coordinating body bringing together expertise from psychology, psychiatry, public health, disaster response, risk communication, sociology, anthropology, education, religious studies, and related disciplines. The purpose of such a body would be to coordinate evidence-informed planning, monitor emerging psychological and behavioral response patterns, support public adaptation, and facilitate communication across governmental, scientific, educational, healthcare, and community institutions.



1. Public Health and Behavioral Health Coordination

One of the primary responsibilities of a National Psychological Preparedness and Resilience Task Force would be coordinating public health and behavioral health preparedness efforts across federal, state, and local systems.

Mental health infrastructure in the United States already operates under substantial strain (155). Provider shortages, long wait times, uneven access to care, and limited psychiatric availability in many regions mean that even modest increases in demand for psychological support could create significant system stress. For this reason, disclosure-related behavioral health planning should be integrated into broader emergency preparedness and national resilience efforts rather than treated as a stand-alone mental health issue.

Federal agencies including the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), National Institutes of Health (NIH), and National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) may play important roles in preparedness planning. Potential responsibilities could include modeling psychological impacts, identifying vulnerable populations, monitoring behavioral health indicators, developing public-facing coping resources, and coordinating surge-planning efforts.

Preparedness efforts should not focus solely on severe psychiatric presentations. Disclosure-related impacts may also include increased anxiety, sleep disruption, uncertainty-related distress, reassurance-seeking, elevated information-seeking behavior, and increased demand for psychological support services among individuals without psychiatric impairment. While many of these responses would be

expected and adaptive, concentrated increases in help-seeking could nevertheless strain existing systems.

Particular attention may be warranted for rural, underserved, and resource-limited communities where behavioral health services are already scarce. Early identification of emerging system strain may allow resources to be deployed proactively before localized pressures develop into broader service disruptions.

2. Develop Scalable Mental Health Surge Capacity

Preparedness planning should include scalable behavioral health systems capable of temporary expansion during periods of elevated demand. Because the United States already faces significant shortages in mental health services and workforce capacity (156)(157), even modest increases in help-seeking behavior could place additional strain on existing systems. Building flexibility into behavioral health infrastructure before such demand emerges may improve system resilience and reduce service disruptions.

Preparedness efforts should extend beyond traditional one-to-one clinical care and include scalable service models such as group-based interventions, structured psychoeducational programs, and video-based resources that can be deployed efficiently when demand exceeds available provider capacity.

Telehealth should be considered a central component of surge planning. Remote service delivery can rapidly expand access to care, increase workforce flexibility, and help address geographic disparities in service availability, particularly in rural and underserved communities where behavioral health resources are already limited (158)(159).

Existing interstate practice agreements, including PSYPACT and comparable licensing compacts, provide partial frameworks for cross-state participation among behavioral health professionals. However, participation remains uneven, and licensing restrictions may limit the rapid redistribution of mental health resources during periods of concentrated demand. Preparedness planning may therefore benefit from consideration of temporary emergency mechanisms allowing expedited interstate telehealth practice for licensed psychologists, counselors, social workers, marriage and family therapists, and psychiatrists during federally declared emergencies.

Surge planning should account not only for acute psychiatric presentations, but also for broader support needs that may emerge during periods of heightened public concern, including increased demand for counseling, psychoeducation, crisis consultation, and reassurance-seeking services (160)(152).

Priority planning areas may include:

- crisis hotline utilization
- group-based interventions and support programs
- adaptation of existing online and video-based treatments for anxiety
- outpatient behavioral health services
- emergency psychiatric consultation
- school and university counseling systems

The objective of surge planning is to ensure that behavioral health systems retain sufficient flexibility to absorb temporary increases in demand while continuing to provide effective services to both disclosure-related and ongoing mental health needs.

3. Clinical Training, Workforce Preparedness, and the Existing Clinical Response Gap

As discussed in Section II, existing research suggests that many mental health professionals feel inadequately prepared to address anomalous experiences, ontological disruption, uncertainty-related distress, and disclosure-related meaning-making processes. This clinical response gap represents a preparedness vulnerability because the behavioral health workforce itself would not be psychologically isolated from disclosure-related effects (39).

Mental health professionals may be called upon to support individuals experiencing disclosure-related uncertainty, anxiety, existential questioning, or worldview disruption while simultaneously processing their own reactions and uncertainties regarding the nature and implications of the information being disclosed. Preparedness planning should therefore recognize clinicians not only as responders, but also as participants within the broader psychological environment shaped by disclosure.

Training and workforce preparedness efforts may benefit from education in areas such as ontological disruption, uncertainty management, anomalous experience integration, differentiating adaptive meaning-making from clinically impairing psychopathology, stigma reduction, culturally and spiritually diverse interpretive frameworks, psychological first aid, disclosure-related anxiety and existential distress, and approaches to discussing anomalous experiences without reflexive pathologization.

Professional organizations including the American Psychological Association, American Psychiatric Association, American Counseling Association, National Association of Social Workers, and related bodies may represent important preparedness partners due to their existing infrastructure for disseminating guidance, coordinating continuing education, mobilizing provider networks, and distributing evidence-informed training materials at scale.

Early collaboration with such organizations and the development of formal guidelines could improve workforce readiness by promoting consistent assessment practice, supporting ethical treatment by helping clinicians distinguish disclosure-related distress and anomalous experiences from conditions requiring psychiatric intervention while supporting respectful, evidence-informed, and non-stigmatizing responses to individuals seeking assistance

4. Public Psychoeducation

One of the most effective preparedness strategies may be the development of public-facing psychoeducational resources designed to support adaptive coping, normalize a broad range of emotional and cognitive responses, and reduce unnecessary distress. Research from disaster psychology, risk communication, and public health consistently demonstrates that clear, accessible information can improve coping, reduce confusion, and support psychological adaptation during disruptive events (104,105,161).

Many psychoeducational principles relevant to disclosure are not unique to UAP/NHI and reflect established public health practices used during periods of societal disruption. Public-facing resources may:

- explain common psychological reactions to uncertainty and change
- normalize diverse emotional, cognitive, and behavioral responses
- encourage balanced and responsible media consumption
- provide practical coping and stress-management strategies
- reinforce the importance of social support and community connection
- provide guidance for discussing disclosure-related information with children and adolescents
- inform individuals when and where to seek professional support if needed

More specialized guidance may be required as disclosure evolves. However, because the nature and implications of any potential non-human intelligence remain unknown, future psychoeducational efforts will necessarily need to adapt to the information available at the time.

Several principles are nevertheless likely to remain relevant regardless of the ultimate nature of the phenomenon. Psychoeducational efforts should prioritize transparency regarding what is known, what remains unknown, and the current state of scientific understanding. Communication should neither minimize legitimate concerns nor exaggerate them. Attempts to downplay uncertainty may undermine credibility, while exaggerated threat narratives may unnecessarily increase fear, misinformation, and psychological amplification of distress (107).

When implemented effectively, psychoeducational communication may function as a preventive mental health intervention by supporting adaptive meaning-making, strengthening tolerance for uncertainty, and promoting informed engagement with evolving information.

5. Community-Based Support Systems

Most psychological adaptation occurs within existing social and community networks rather than formal mental health systems alone. Research consistently demonstrates that social support, trusted relationships, community cohesion, and opportunities for collective meaning-making are among the strongest predictors of resilience following disruptive or uncertain events (162)(163). Schools, workplaces, religious organizations, and other community institutions should therefore be incorporated into preparedness planning as important environments for psychological adaptation and social support.

For many individuals, these institutions will serve as the first source of emotional support and guidance following disclosure-related developments. When feasible, representatives from educational, religious, community, and workplace organizations should be included in preparedness planning to help ensure that communication materials and support resources are developmentally appropriate, culturally relevant, and responsive to community needs.

Resources may include:

- educator guidance materials
- discussion facilitation tools
- psychological first-aid frameworks

• guidance for parents and caregivers
• culturally adaptable support resources

Strengthening community-based support systems may reduce unnecessary demand on higher-acuity mental health services while promoting resilience, adaptive coping, and social stability at the local level.

6. Crisis Intervention Systems

Existing crisis-response infrastructure, including 988 systems, emergency psychiatric services, mobile crisis units, and related behavioral health resources, can be incorporated into preparedness planning with contingency expansion capacity if needed. Although most individuals are unlikely to require crisis intervention, preparedness planning should account for the possibility of localized increases in service utilization among vulnerable populations, particularly during periods of heightened uncertainty, perceived threat, or rapidly evolving disclosure conditions.

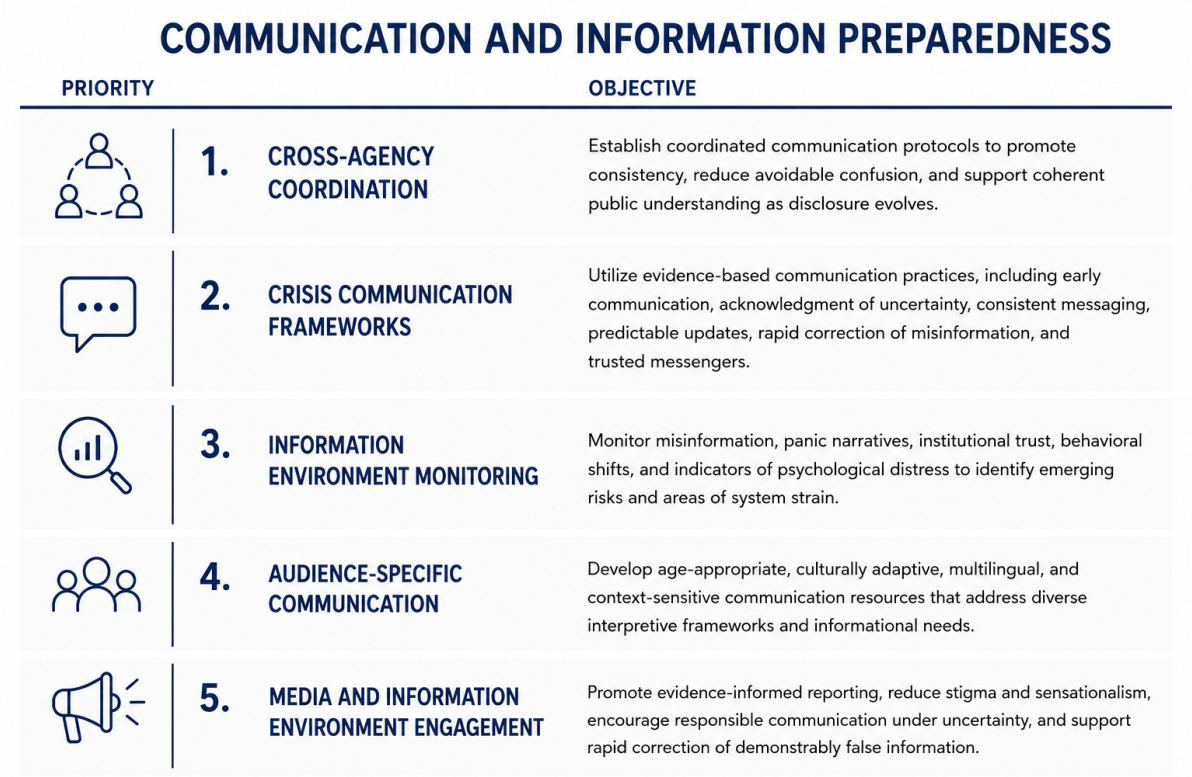
Preparedness efforts will be most successful if emphasis is placed on early identification, rapid response, and flexible resource deployment rather than assumptions of widespread psychiatric crisis. The objective is to ensure that existing crisis systems maintain sufficient capacity to respond effectively to localized increases in demand while continuing to serve individuals experiencing unrelated behavioral health emergencies (164).

B. Communication and Information Environment Preparedness

As discussed in Section III, communication is not merely a mechanism for transmitting information during disclosure. It is also one of the primary factors shaping how disclosure is interpreted and experienced by the public. The quality, consistency, timing, and credibility of institutional communication may influence whether disclosure is experienced as manageable uncertainty, a challenge to institutional trust, or an escalating source of perceived threat.

Research across crisis communication, disaster response, and public health contexts consistently demonstrates that communication failures, including contradictory messaging, delayed disclosure, perceived concealment, and fragmented institutional response, can amplify psychological distress, increase distrust, accelerate misinformation, and contribute to social fragmentation. Conversely, transparent, coordinated, and psychologically informed communication can promote interpretive stability, reduce uncertainty amplification, and support adaptive coping during periods of rapid change (104,105).

For these reasons, communication preparedness should be considered a central component of disclosure planning. Systems that support transparency, consistency, adaptability, and public trust may strengthen resilience and help communities navigate evolving disclosure conditions.



1. Cross-Agency Coordination

Priority consideration should be given to establishing coordinated communication protocols among relevant government agencies prior to advanced disclosure stages. Because inconsistent or contradictory messaging can amplify uncertainty, undermine trust, and contribute to fragmented public interpretation, early coordination may help promote greater consistency, reduce avoidable confusion, and support a more coherent public response as disclosure conditions evolve.

2. Crisis Communication Frameworks

Preparedness efforts may benefit from incorporating established principles from crisis and risk communication research, such as the World Health Organization's guidelines, which identify transparency, timeliness, clarity, acknowledgment of uncertainty, and multi-platform dissemination among the characteristics that build trust in emergency communication(105) (165).

Importantly, research suggests that acknowledging uncertainty does not necessarily reduce public trust (107). In many circumstances, transparent communication regarding what is known, unknown, and still under investigation may preserve credibility more effectively than overconfidence, contradiction, or perceived concealment. Communication efforts may therefore benefit from clearly distinguishing between confirmed information, unresolved questions, evolving assessments, and speculation. Reducing unnecessary ambiguity may help limit misinformation amplification and concentrated reassurance-seeking behavior during periods of uncertainty.

3. Information Environment Monitoring

Preparedness planning may benefit from systems capable of monitoring emerging conditions within the broader information environment. Relevant indicators could include misinformation amplification, panic narratives, institutional trust measures, behavioral shifts, and emerging patterns of psychological distress.

The purpose of such monitoring would not be surveillance of belief, but identification of potential system strain, destabilizing information dynamics, and areas where proportionate intervention may be beneficial. Because false and emotionally salient information often spreads more rapidly than accurate information during high-uncertainty events (30), early identification of misleading or destabilizing narratives may help reduce avoidable psychological amplification and support social stability.

4. Audience-Specific Communication

Disclosure is unlikely to be interpreted uniformly across populations. Individuals may understand and respond to disclosure through scientific, political, religious, cultural, philosophical, or existential frameworks that influence emotional and behavioral outcomes. Communication strategies may therefore benefit from interpretive flexibility while maintaining clear, reality-based guidance.

Potential communication resources could include age-appropriate educational materials, multilingual resources, culturally adaptive communication approaches, and collaboration with trusted educational, religious, scientific, and community leaders. Because disclosure conditions may evolve over time, communication systems may benefit from remaining adaptable and responsive to changing public concerns, threat perceptions, and informational needs.

5. Support Meaning-Making and Adaptive Response Frameworks

Human beings are not primarily information processors. They are story processors. Cognitive neuroscience and narrative psychology converge on a consistent finding: the brain does not process consequential information through logical analysis alone. It processes it through story, extracting meaning, causality, and behavioral guidance from narrative structure rather than from raw data (166) (167). As a result, public responses to disclosure are likely to be shaped not only by the information released, but also by the frameworks available for understanding what that information means.

Historical examples illustrate this dynamic. During World War II, the British government's "Keep Calm and Carry On" campaign did not reduce uncertainty by providing additional information about the war. Instead, it offered a psychologically coherent framework for living with uncertainty, emphasizing resilience, collective efficacy, and adaptive coping. Similarly, NASA's Apollo program became meaningful to the broader public not through technical information alone, but through a larger narrative of exploration, aspiration, and collective achievement. In both cases, the facts remained unchanged; what changed was the framework through which people related to them.

For UAP/NHI disclosure, decades of uncertainty, stigma, fiction, media portrayals, conspiracy narratives, religious interpretations, personal experiences, and informal communities have already shaped many of the frameworks through which NHI is understood. Those frameworks will influence how future disclosure is interpreted regardless of the quality of the evidence presented.

Disclosure communication may therefore benefit from providing not only accurate information, but also sufficient context to help people understand what is known, what remains uncertain, how new information

relates to existing knowledge, and what implications it does or does not have for everyday life. The goal is not to direct belief, but to support the development of adaptive frameworks that promote resilience, perspective, collective efficacy, and constructive engagement while reducing the likelihood that uncertainty is filled primarily by fear, helplessness, misinformation, or catastrophic assumptions.

6. Media and Information Environment Engagement

Consideration may also be given to proactive engagement with media organizations, journalism institutions, digital platforms, and other public communicators. As discussed in Section III, media framing can significantly influence the extent to which populations perceive information as credible, threatening, socially acceptable, and/or worthy of serious attention (168)(169).

Historically, ridicule-based framing and sensationalized portrayals of UAP-related topics contributed to stigma, suppressed reporting, and diminished public trust surrounding the subject. Under disclosure conditions, sensationalism, catastrophic framing, contradictory reporting, and ridicule-based messaging may further amplify misinformation, distrust, polarization, and psychological distress.

Engagement efforts may therefore benefit from encouraging evidence-informed reporting standards, avoidance of sensationalized threat narratives, reduction of stigma, responsible communication under conditions of uncertainty, and rapid correction of demonstrably false information.

C. Ethical Considerations

Disclosure preparedness raises important ethical considerations for psychology, psychiatry, public health, government, scientific institutions, and other organizations involved in disclosure-related planning and response. Because disclosure may involve substantial uncertainty, diverse interpretations, and potentially significant psychological and societal implications, preparedness efforts may benefit from careful attention to principles of autonomy, transparency, equity, professional competence, and avoidance of harm.

1. Avoid Premature Pathologization

Historically, UAP-related experiences were often interpreted through stigmatizing or psychopathology-based frameworks despite there being limited empirical evidence indicating much (or even any) generalized psychological abnormality among experiencers (38)(34). Efforts to support individuals affected by disclosure may benefit from avoiding the assumption that unusual beliefs, heightened curiosity, existential questioning, increased information-seeking, or temporary periods of uncertainty necessarily reflect psychopathology.

Preparedness frameworks may benefit from distinguishing between adaptive stress responses, temporary disorientation, and clinically impairing psychological conditions requiring intervention. Such distinctions may help reduce stigma while ensuring that individuals experiencing significant distress receive appropriate support.

2. Preserve Transparency and Institutional Integrity

Research on institutional betrayal suggests that perceived deception, concealment, or violations of trust may themselves become sources of psychological harm (24). Consequently, disclosure-related communication may benefit from prioritizing honesty regarding what is known, unknown, and still under investigation, particularly under conditions where uncertainty itself may be psychologically challenging.

Transparency may not eliminate uncertainty, but it may help preserve institutional credibility, support informed decision-making, and reduce the risk of additional harm associated with perceived withholding of information.

3. Protect Psychological Autonomy

Individuals are likely to interpret disclosure through diverse scientific, philosophical, cultural, religious, and personal frameworks. Ethical preparedness may therefore benefit from respecting a plurality of interpretations while maintaining a commitment to evidence-based information and preserving individual freedom of belief.

But psychological autonomy begins earlier than interpretation. It begins with access. Individuals cannot engage freely and authentically with information they are not given.

The evidence reviewed in this paper suggests that populations are more psychologically harmed by the perception of managed ambiguity than by uncertainty itself, and that the credibility costs of perceived withholding are substantially greater than those associated with acknowledged incompleteness.

The objective of preparedness is to support informed understanding, adaptive functioning, and constructive engagement with evolving information in a population that has been given honest and complete access to what is known.

4. Promote Equity in Access to Support

Periods of uncertainty often create disproportionate burdens for individuals and communities that already experience reduced access to healthcare, education, communication resources, or social support. Preparedness efforts will benefit from considering the needs of vulnerable and underserved populations and promoting equitable access to information, educational resources, and psychological support services (110). Attention to equity may help reduce disparities in both psychological outcomes and access to assistance during evolving disclosure conditions.

5. Develop Professional Competence

Mental health and healthcare professionals may encounter disclosure-related concerns without prior training in ontological disruption, uncertainty management, anomalous experience integration, or disclosure-related meaning-making processes. Medical and mental health professional are prohibited from practicing outside the boundaries of their competence. Ethical preparedness therefore requires targeted education, evidence-informed guidance, and workforce development to ensure professionals are equipped to respond competently to these challenges (170).

D. Future Directions and Research Opportunities

This report was developed using the best available evidence from psychology, public health, risk communication, disaster response, sociology, and related disciplines. The response analysis is limited in that it addresses earlier stages of disclosure including, Limited Disclosure, Confirmatory Disclosure, and Attribution Disclosure (confirming the existence of known NHI). Existing research provides a sufficient foundation to identify psychological processes, likely areas of vulnerability, and evidence-informed preparedness considerations at these stages. The response analysis does not extend to Reconciliation or Full Integrated Disclosure. The nature, scope, and implications of information that could emerge during those stages are unknown, and their psychological, social, cultural, and institutional consequences may differ not only in degree but in kind from what this report addresses. However, the basic psychological processes by which people integrate and adapt new information remain constant as do the established principles of effective crisis communication, allowing for some extrapolation to more advanced stages.

The evidence base for all stages remains limited. Relatively little empirical research has examined public response to scenarios involving unexplained phenomena or NHI, which is a direct reflection of the decades of scientific and institutional stigma we've repeatedly discussed in this report. As such, many conclusions and recommendations in this report therefore draw on adjacent bodies of research rather than evidence specific to UAP/NHI scenarios.

Each evolving stage of the disclosure process is likely to generate new questions, new forms of uncertainty, and new demands on mental health, public health, educational, and governmental systems. The available evidence is sufficient to support preparedness efforts now. It is not sufficient to replace the ongoing research, monitoring, and adaptation that future stages will require.

Expanding the empirical foundation for disclosure preparedness would strengthen future planning efforts, improve risk assessment, and support the development of evidence-informed communication, mental health, educational, and public policy responses. Several areas warrant particular attention.

1. Population-Level and Longitudinal Research on Disclosure Response

One of the most significant gaps in the current literature is the absence of prospective empirical research examining how populations respond to UAP/NHI disclosure specifically. Most existing preparedness recommendations must therefore rely on indirect evidence drawn from analogous events, psychological theory, and related public health research. Strengthening the evidence base will require both population-level studies of anticipated responses and longitudinal investigations of how responses evolve throughout the disclosure process.

Large-scale survey research, experimental vignette studies, structured focus groups, and Big Data analytics (e.g., of social media content and reactions) could help assess anticipated psychological responses across diverse populations, demographic groups, cultural backgrounds, and belief systems. Such research would improve understanding of factors likely to influence disclosure-related reactions, including threat perception, uncertainty tolerance, institutional trust, worldview flexibility, and personal relevance.

Equally important are longitudinal studies capable of examining how psychological responses change over time. Disclosure is unlikely to occur as a single event and may instead unfold through successive stages, each carrying different psychological dynamics and implications. Longitudinal research could

therefore examine changes in distress, belief updating, meaning-making, institutional trust, help-seeking behavior, information processing, and social attitudes across evolving disclosure conditions. Such work would improve understanding of both short-term adjustment and longer-term outcomes, including sustained impairment, resilience, post-traumatic growth, and successful integration of disclosure-related information.

A unique opportunity for this type of research may already be emerging through the Department of War's PURSUE (171) transparency initiative. Unlike hypothetical disclosure scenarios, the PURSUE process consists of sequential, timestamped public releases occurring within a documented information environment. Because individual releases vary in content, evidentiary significance, and media attention, they create a naturalistic observational framework through which researchers may begin examining real-world psychological responses to disclosure-related information.

Future research could pair individual releases with contemporaneous measures of public response, including survey data, social media discourse, search-trend activity, information-seeking behavior, institutional trust indicators, and mental health service utilization. Such analyses may help identify how populations respond to successive stages of disclosure, how uncertainty and threat perception evolve over time, and which communication strategies are associated with more adaptive outcomes.

The public availability of the PURSUE archive creates opportunities for independent replication, cross-disciplinary collaboration, and prospective longitudinal investigation. As disclosure-related releases continue, systematic monitoring of psychological and behavioral responses may help establish the first direct empirical evidence base for understanding public adaptation to disclosure, while simultaneously informing preparedness planning and evidence-based communication strategies.

2. Mental Health System Surge Capacity Modeling

More refined modeling of potential demand surges under different disclosure scenarios would improve preparedness planning. Such modeling could incorporate varying levels of disclosure intensity, perceived threat, personal relevance, communication quality, and institutional trust to better estimate potential impacts on mental health systems and identify the role that telehealth, crisis services, and community-based support systems could play in absorbing increased demand.

3. UAP Witness Population Mental Health Studies

The psychological needs and outcomes of individuals who report direct UAP-related experiences remain substantially understudied. Systematic research examining psychological outcomes, barriers to help-seeking, stigma-related effects, and common clinical presentations within this population would inform both clinical training and targeted support services. The findings that only between 5-26 percent of witnesses reported their experiences through any formal channel illustrates both the extent of underreporting and the degree to which stigma may have limited understanding of this population’s needs (26)(34).

4. Cross-Cultural and Cross-Religious Response Studies

Psychological responses to disclosure are likely to vary according to cultural, religious, philosophical, and cosmological belief systems. The degree to which disclosed information aligns with or challenges existing worldviews may influence how individuals interpret and respond to new information. Comparative

research examining anticipated responses across diverse populations would support the development of communication and support strategies tailored to the specific communities they are intended to serve.

5. Communication Strategy Testing

Many of the communication principles discussed throughout this report have been validated in public health, disaster response, and crisis communication contexts. However, they have not been evaluated specifically in relation to UAP/NHI disclosure. Pre-disclosure development and empirical testing of communication materials, message framing approaches, spokesperson selection, and audience-specific communication strategies would strengthen preparedness and reduce the risk of communication failures during future disclosure events.

6. Clinical Training and Competency Development

As previously noted in other sections, mental health professionals currently receive little or no formal training related to UAP-related experiences, anomalous experiences, ontological disruption, or disclosure-related distress. Research examining common clinical presentations, practitioner knowledge gaps, and effective therapeutic approaches would inform the development of training curricula, professional education programs, and competency standards. The finding that approximately four out of five practitioners who had encountered patients reporting anomalous experiences felt inadequately prepared to respond highlights the importance of this work (39).

Closing Summary

Throughout history, humanity has repeatedly encountered discoveries that challenged its most basic assumptions about the world. Over and over, ideas that once seemed impossible or threatening eventually became integrated into our understanding of the world and part of our daily lives, leading to a more accurate and complete view of reality. Adapting to transformative information is a recurring feature of human history.

Confirmation that some UAP are not of known human origin, or that NHI exists, would be unprecedented. But there is little reason to assume it would exceed our capacity to eventually adapt.

What matters most is communicating the information with integrity. Psychological research consistently shows that people cope better with difficult truths than with prolonged uncertainty, contradiction, and perceived deception. Uncertainty becomes far more manageable when met with honesty, context, and trustworthy leadership, and far more destabilizing when information is fragmented, withheld, or delivered in ways that erode public trust. Importantly, even when prior concealment has damaged trust, that trust can be restored through transparency, consistency, and genuine engagement.

Preparation is more than crisis planning. It is an expression of confidence in the public's right and ability to face reality, even when the truth is complex. A society cannot navigate what it cannot clearly perceive, nor grow beyond the limits of what it is allowed to understand.

Preparation is also a moral imperative. Most people will adapt in time, but a minority of individuals, (e.g., those already living with mental illness, trauma, isolation or fixed identity-based beliefs) are more likely to be destabilized by information that significantly disrupts their view of the world and their perceived safety within it. The measure of any society's response to extraordinary change is how well it protects those least equipped to absorb the impact. Safeguarding the vulnerable is a central ethical responsibility, not a secondary logistical concern.

The advancement of knowledge has always depended on a willingness to question old assumptions and revise them in light of new evidence and humanity has risen to that challenge time and time again. While it is unknown what will be revealed, the UAP/NHI disclosure process is an opportunity to demonstrate, once again, who we have always proven ourselves capable of being.

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