



## **Illusion of control: the tendency to overestimate the amount control they have over events**

Related to the optimism bias is the illusion of control which manifests in the tendency for people to overestimate the control they have over events, even over those that are governed by chance (Langer, 1975). This tendency leads to the perception of risk as being smaller, due to the belief that one's skill can prevent negative outcomes (Keh, Foo, & Lim, 2002; McKenna, 1993). On the other hand, having a feeling of control can motivate protective behaviour; hence illusion of control bias in the context of environmental challenges can, in fact, be adaptive (Milfont, 2012; Whitmarsh & O'Neill, 2010).

Note: See source document for full reference.

### **Applicable to:**

Stakeholders: [Worldviews](#)

Disaster Phases: [Prevention](#), [Preparedness](#)

Types of Actors Concerned: [Non-active citizens](#)

Hazards: [Natural hazards](#), [Man-made non-intentional hazards or emergency situations](#), [Man-made intentional hazards](#)

### **Recommendations:**

- [Develop risk assessments methodologies, which consider cultural factors, the manner in which people cognitively process information and which employ a gender perspective](#)

### **Source**

[Deliverable D4.1 "Mapping risk perception concepts in the context of disasters" \(page 47\)](#)

*This file was generated automatically on: 12.02.2019.*

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