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## **Making sense of risk together: a dissertation on the social factors that drive risk talk**

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# Making Sense of Risk Together

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A Dissertation on the  
Social Factors that  
Drive Risk Talk



**This dissertation investigates the drivers of conversations about risk in everyday life, also known as risk talk. By combining statistical analysis and qualitative exploration, it brings together insights from risk communication and social psychology. The research demonstrated that people prefer talking about risk to knowledgeable conversational partners whom they are close to, and about risks that are less socially accepted. Furthermore, while previous risk communication literature often treats risk talk as mainly a way to exchange information, it was found that people have several motivations to talk about risk, many of which are emotional or relational in nature. For instance, people often talk about risk to feel less anxious, or to find common ground with peers. Overall, risk talk is shown to be a complex phenomenon which serves several important functions in people's lives and affects risk perception in subtle ways.**

**Future research on risk talk should use a variety of methods and stay sensitive to the socially embedded nature of the phenomenon. In addition, policy makers and risk communicators are likely to benefit from recognizing that people process risk partly through everyday conversations. By taking an interest in everyday risk talk, both researchers and practitioners may better understand how risk communication is received, interpreted, and used by people in their day to day lives.**