

THE IMPORTANCE OF COMMUNICATION ON IMMUNISATION SAFETY

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For every child
Health, Education, Equality, Protection
ADVANCE HUMANITY



THE PROBLEM

- Vaccines are one of public health's greatest successes - and one of its least heralded
- Appreciated within the field
- Taken for granted by a complacent majority
- Attacked and questioned by a vocal minority
- Needs new champions

ISSUES

- New antigens, new technology, new costs
- Less visible threats of some diseases
- New threats, new competing priorities
- Increasing portfolio of vaccine options
- Stronger rights-based, “right to know” environment - growing civil society demands on access to information

ISSUES ctd...

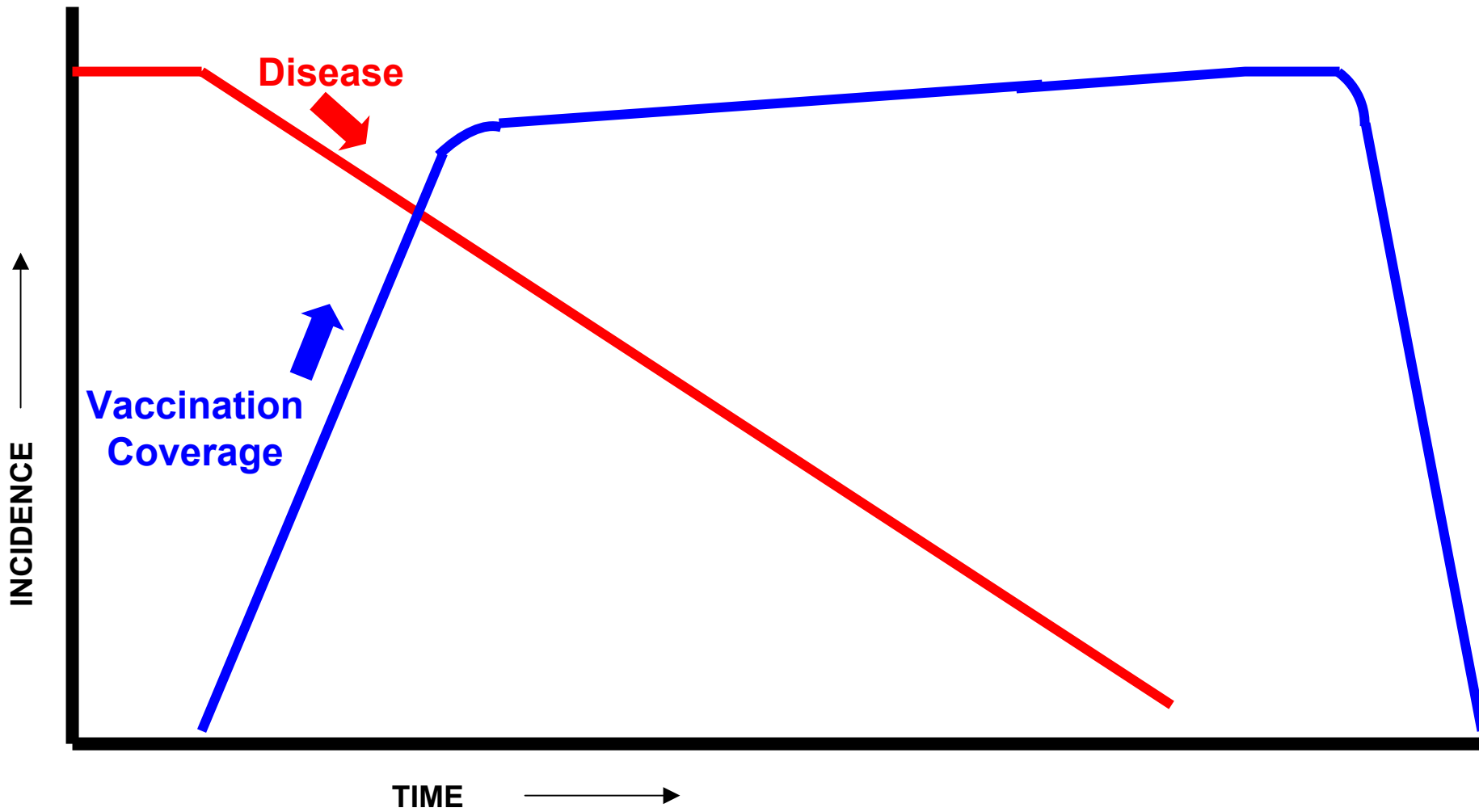
- Increased and more rapid communication channels
- Previously locally isolated adverse events now national/international media events
- More frequent global travel, more exposure/understanding of different languages
- Less-government controlled and more global and commercially driven media

LESS PUBLIC TRUST

- Publicly available information on vaccines is confusing
- Confusing information creates more public questioning
- Politically, economically, ethnically and socially marginalised groups have less trust in government provided commodities/services - increasing rumors due to lack of trust in the provider

WHY DOES PUBLIC TRUST MATTER TODAY?

- Routine immunization is routinely at risk!
- Campaigns, introduction of new antigens/technologies are highly visible and increase possibility of adverse events and rumors
- Controversial stories have clear ability to attract attention
- Rumors and distrust can hamper our efforts



Disease

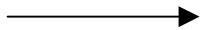


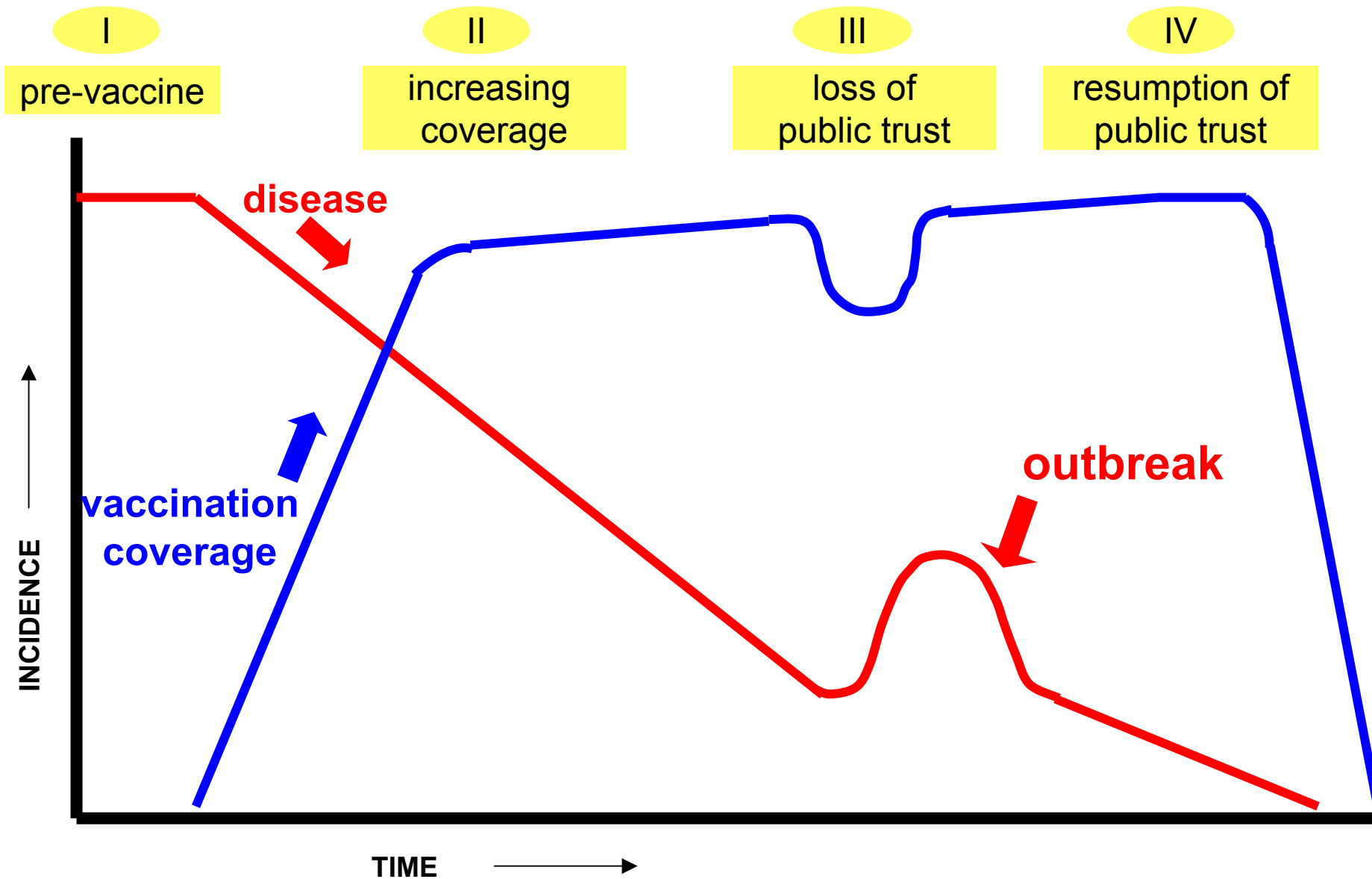
Vaccination Coverage

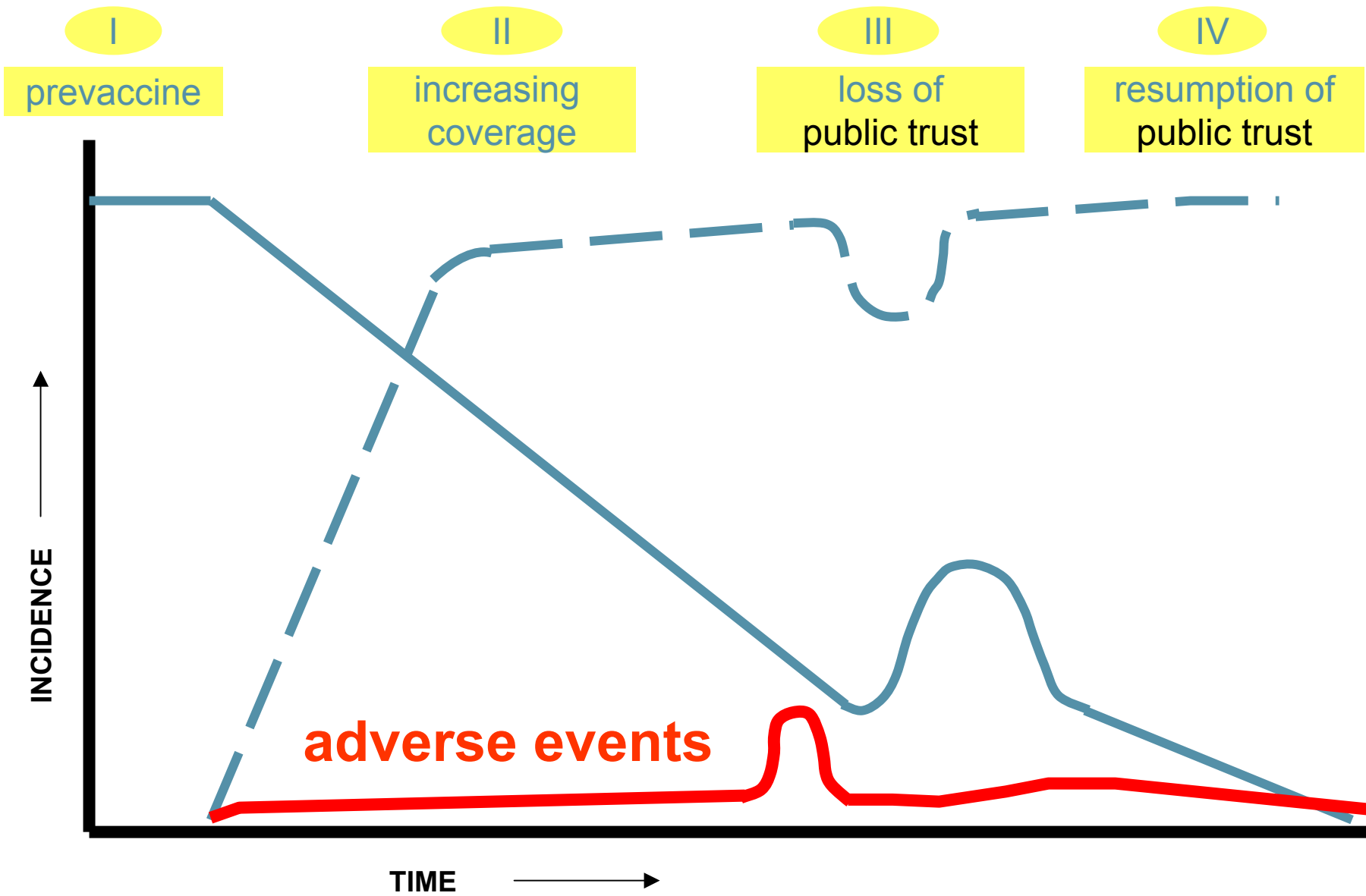


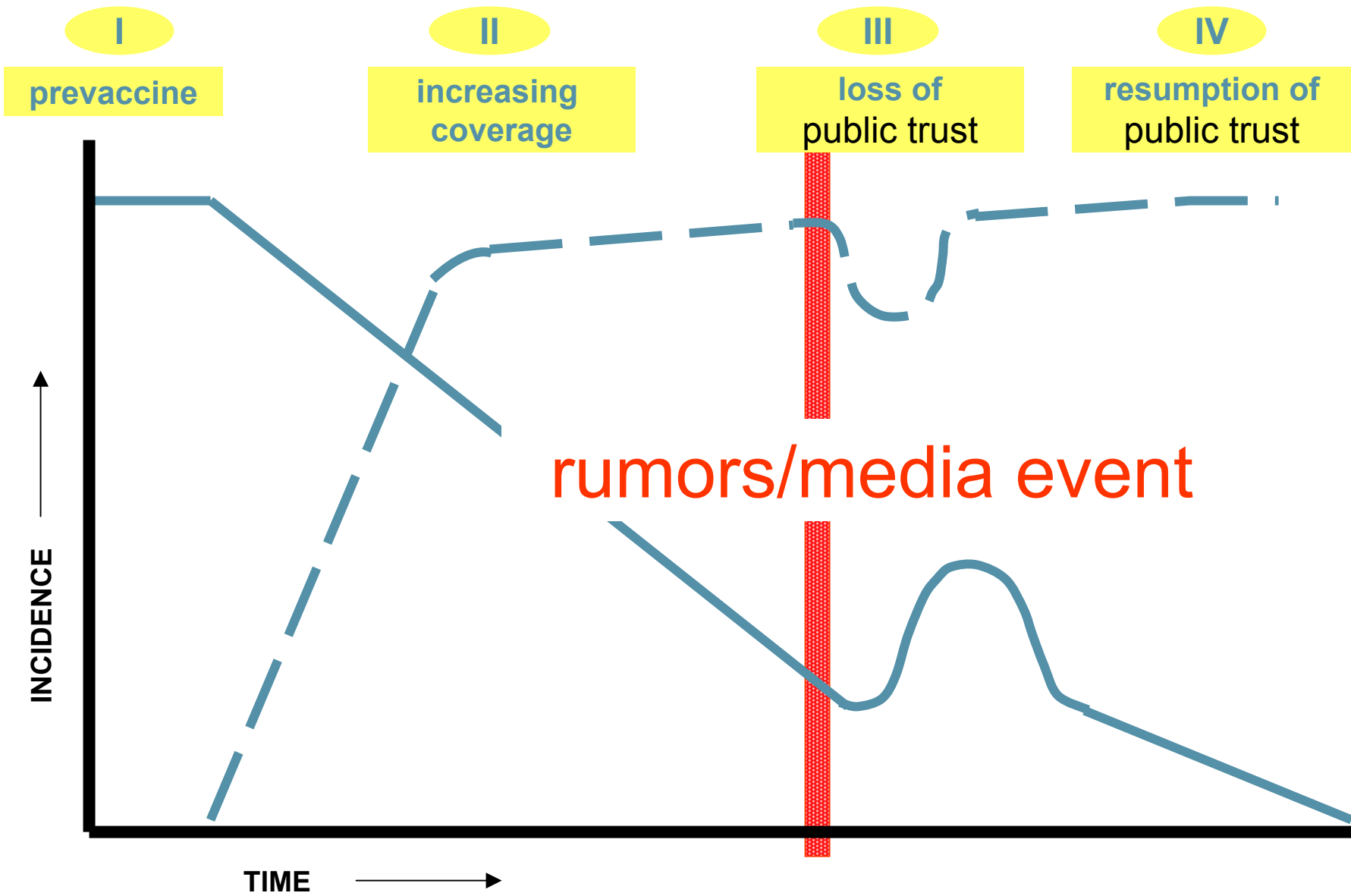
INCIDENCE

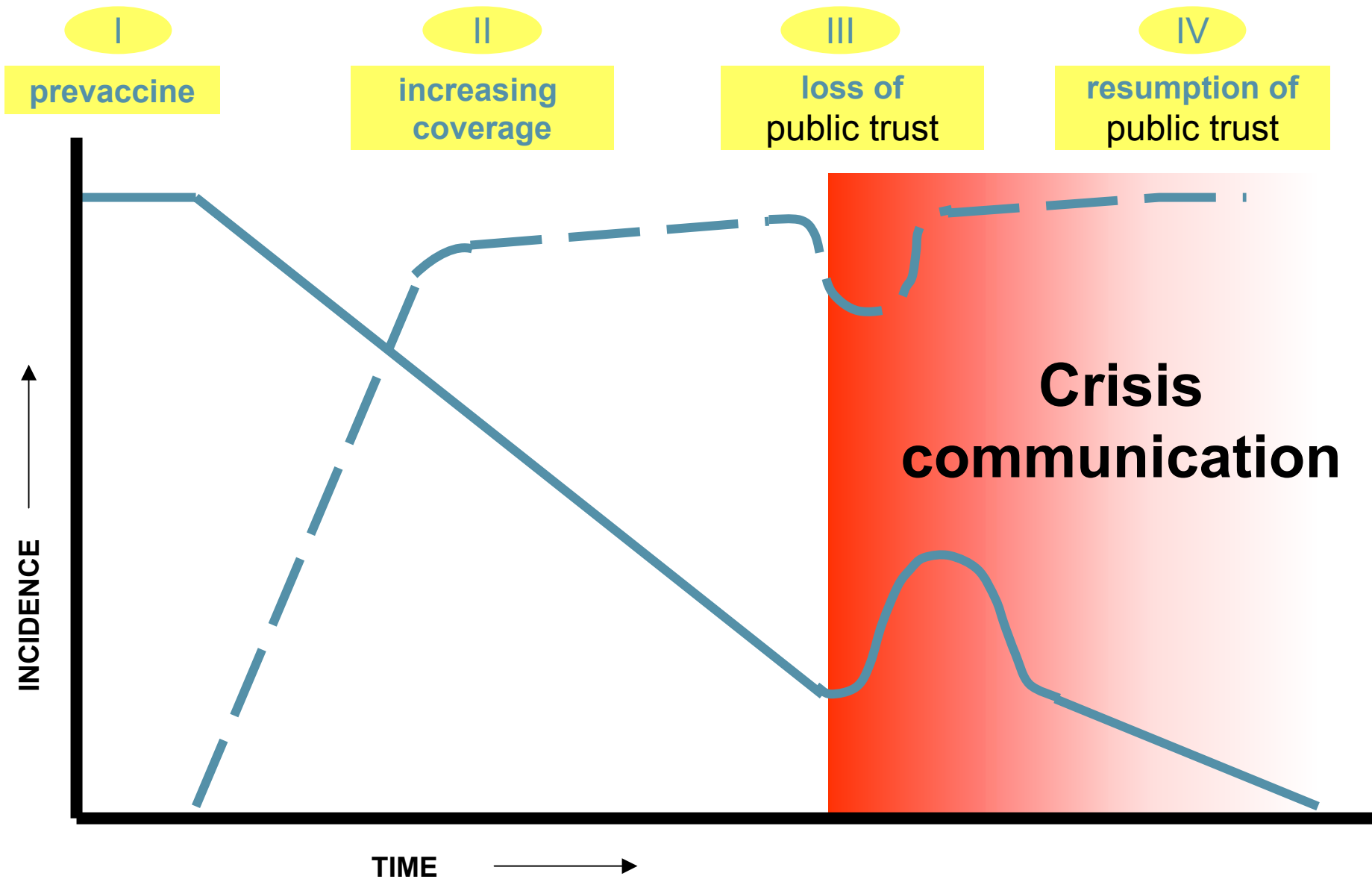
TIME

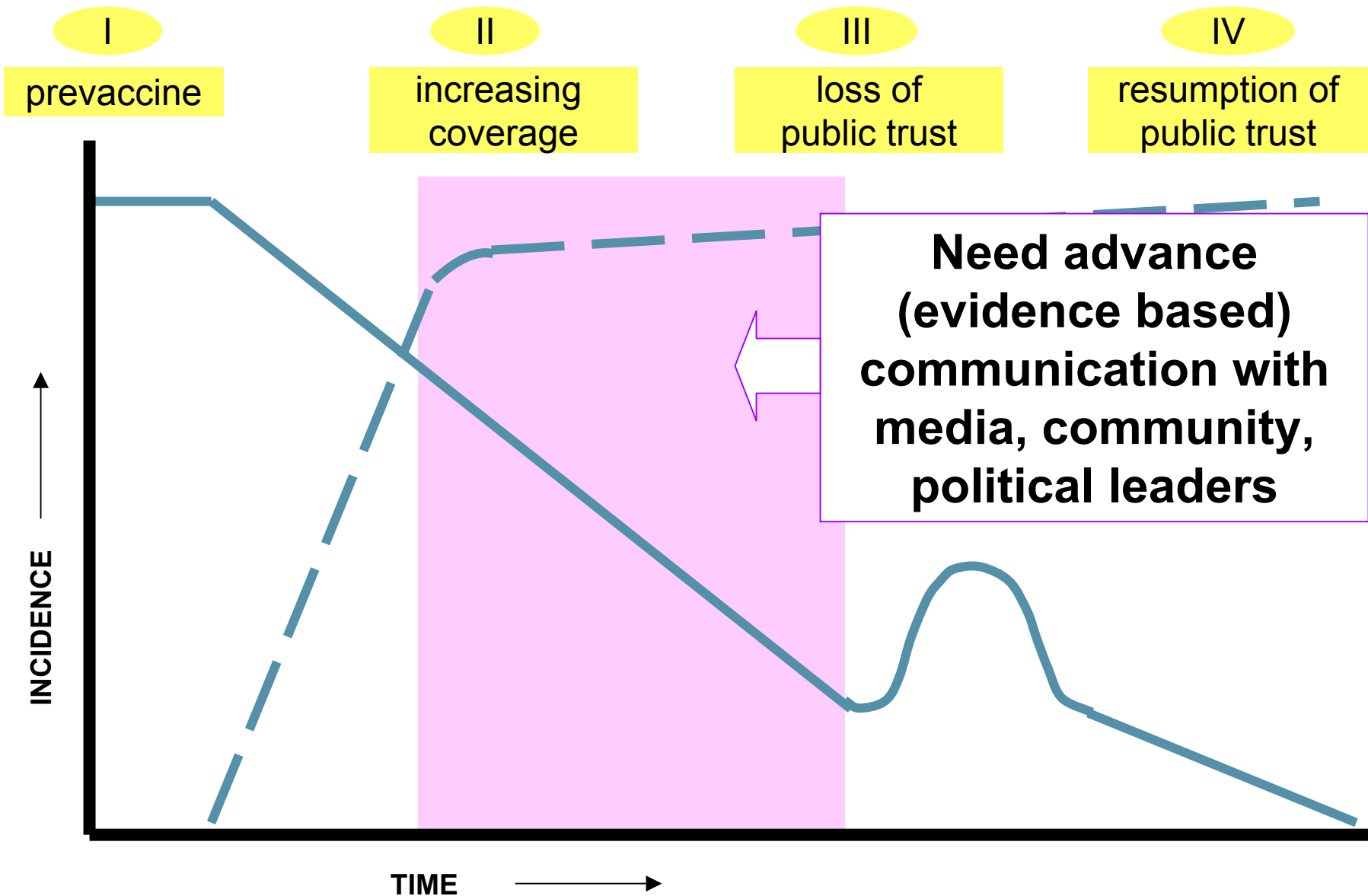












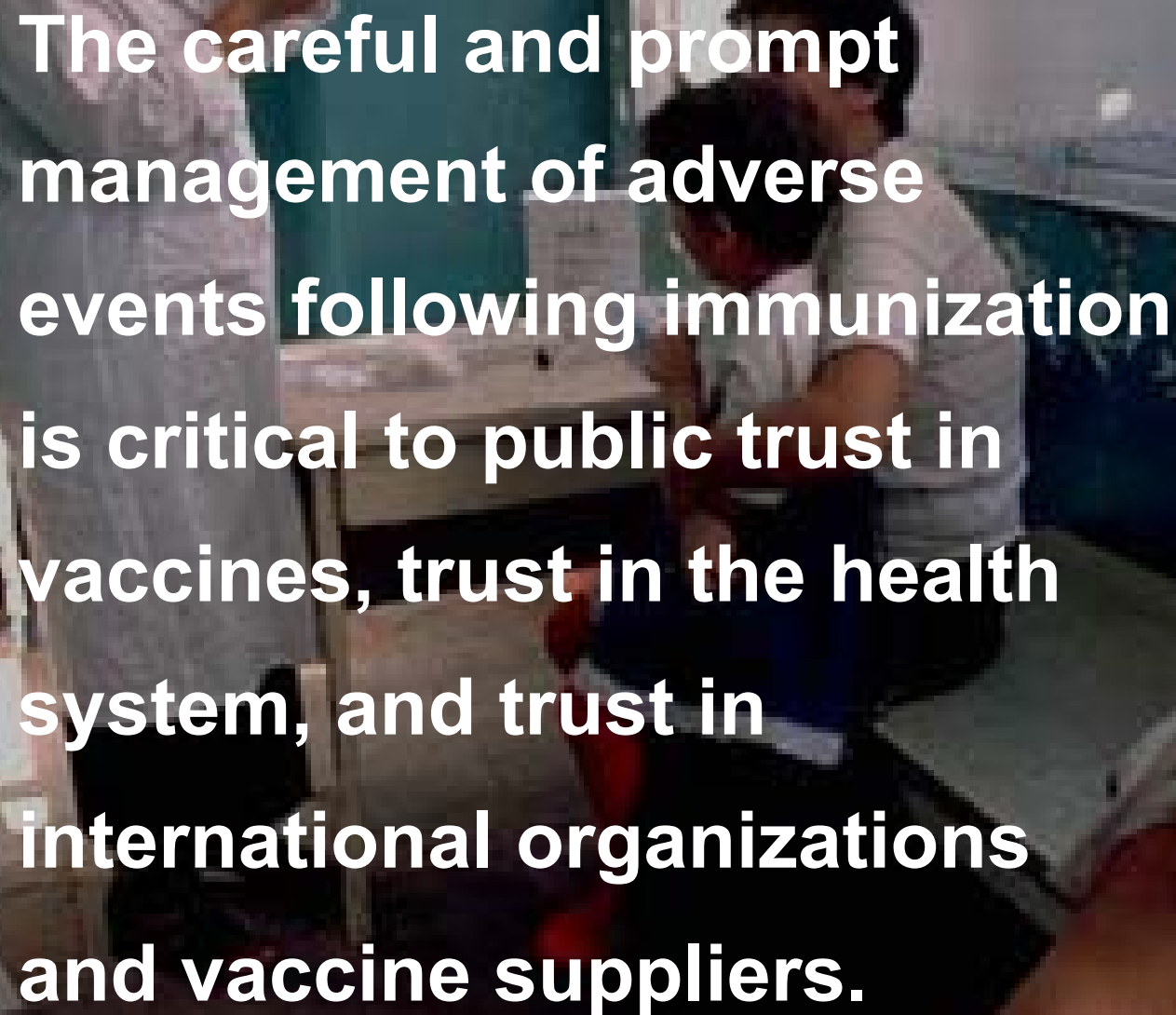
“MINIMUM RESPONSE”

- Addressing rumors and misinformation (understand and address source of distrust)
- Managing AEFI promptly to minimize possible negative media reports (even before an investigation is complete a holding statement is important)

If there is silence, the public will come to their own conclusion!

Scientists must take care not to treat fear and reservation as ignorance and then try to destroy them with a blunt “rational” instrument.

Pattison – BMJ 2001;323:838-840

A photograph of a classroom. A teacher in a white lab coat stands on the left, gesturing towards a chalkboard. In the center, a student is writing at a desk. In the foreground on the right, a young boy in a school uniform looks towards the camera with a thoughtful expression, his hand near his chin. The text is overlaid on the left side of the image.

The careful and prompt management of adverse events following immunization is critical to public trust in vaccines, trust in the health system, and trust in international organizations and vaccine suppliers.