Module Summary

- How people evaluate messages in a crisis
- Identifying audiences in a crisis and their specific concerns
- Ways to build trust through your messages
- Tips for crafting your initial messages

Messages

The public will judge your message by its content, messenger, and method of delivery.

Audiences

Name possible distinct audiences

- Based on their demographics
- Based on their relationship to the incident
- Based on their psychographics

Match Audiences and Concerns

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Audiences</th>
<th>Concerns</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Victims and their families</td>
<td>Opportunity to express concern</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Politicians</td>
<td>Personal safety</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First responders</td>
<td>Resources for response</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trade and industry</td>
<td>Loss of revenue/liability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community far outside disaster</td>
<td>Speed of information flow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Media</td>
<td>Anticipatory guidance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Family's safety</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Judging the Message
- Speed counts – marker for preparedness
- Facts – consistency is vital
- Trusted source – can’t fake these

Key Elements To Build Trust
- Expressed empathy
- Competence
- Honesty
- Commitment
- Accountability

CREDIBILITY
\[ \text{Accuracy of Information} + \text{Speed of Release} + \text{Empathy} + \text{Openness} \]
= Successful Communication
\[ = \text{TRUST} \]

Initial Message
**Must**
- Be short
- Be relevant
- Give positive action steps
- Be repeated

**Must Not**
- Use jargon
- Be judgmental
- Make promises that can’t be kept
- Include humor

Dealing With Rumors
- Rebut it without really repeating it.
- Limit rebuttal to places where the rumor exists.
Sources of Social Pressure

- What will I gain?
- What will it cost me?
- What do those important to me want me to do?
- Can I actually carry it out?

Building Consensus for Action

- Increase expected gains
- Decrease expected costs
- Increase social pressure
- Improve ease of action
- Decrease value of competitive alternatives

Messages and Audiences: Summary

- Understand audience concerns when forming messages
- No substitute for speed, accuracy, and credibility
- Crisis communication demands expressions of empathy
- Plan to get audience feedback fast

Crisis Communication Plan

Module Summary

- In-depth discussion of the phases of a crisis
- Gaining acceptance for the role of communication
- Elements of your plan
- Nine steps of crisis response
- Surviving the first 48 hours
- Exercise: Consequences of an incomplete plan

Precrisis Phase

- Be prepared – Needs assessment checklist
- Foster alliances
- Develop consensus recommendations
- Test messages

All the planning, most of the work
Getting a Seat at the Decisionmaking Table

- Have a solid communication plan (linear thinkers want to see it on paper)
- Have that signed endorsement from the director at the front of your plan
- Enlist third-party validators to make your case

Seat at the Table

In the precrisis phase (don’t wait for an event to make your case):
- Explain the benefits and risks of not including communicators
- Show your expertise by training leadership
- Ensure partners and stakeholders have an expectation of your involvement

Seat at the Table

- While developing your communication plan, meet with other parts of your emergency response team in the organization and appeal for their help.
- Get agreements on paper.

When Training Leadership About Communication

- Teach the organizational focus
- Teach the mistakes and successes of past events
- Teach emergency risk principles

Developing Your Plan

- Start with a needs assessment
- Human resources
- Technological support
- Training
- Space
- Supplies
- Travel
- Funding mechanisms

Your Plan Should Be

- The “go to” place for the “must have” information during a crisis
- The bones of your work—not a step-by-step “how to”
- Dynamic
**Elements of a Complete Crisis Communication Plan**

- Signed endorsement from director
- Designated staff responsibilities
- Information verification and clearance/release procedures
- Agreements on information release authorities
- Media contact list
- Procedures to coordinate with public health organization response teams
- Designated spokespersons
- Emergency response team after-hours contact numbers
- Emergency response information partner contact numbers
- Partner agreements (like joining the local EOC’s JIC)
- Procedures/plans on how to get resources you’ll need
- Pre-identified vehicles of information dissemination

**Signed Endorsement From Director**

- A must—signed and dated
- Provides accountability
- Integrates plan into overall EOC plans

**Communication Staff Responsibilities**

- Command and control – need a leader with clout
- Media response
- Public information
- Partner/stakeholder relations
- Content/message development

**Designate Staff Responsibilities**

**Command and control**

- Directs release of public information
- Coordinates with partners
- Advises the director
- Knows incident-specific policy, science, and situation

**Direct media response**

- Triage response
- Support spokesperson
- Produces and distributes materials
- Media monitoring
- JIC member

**Designate Staff Responsibilities**

**Direct public information**

- Manages public information delivery
- Manages Web site and links to others
### Designate Staff Responsibilities

**Direct partner/stakeholder information**
- Manages prearranged information agreements
- Solicits feedback and monitors systems
- organizes official meetings
- Maintains response contact list

### Designate Staff Responsibilities

**Content and material development**
- Translates EOC situation reports into public/media materials
- Works with experts to create situation-specific materials
- Tests messages and materials for cultural appropriateness

### Information Verification and Clearance/Release Procedures (In-house)

- Who MUST review for final approval (include higher authority)
- Need to know vs. want to know
- Three people—director, communication officer, subject matter expert
- Clear simultaneously and in person
- Get agreement from key staff before the crisis
- Coordination and courtesy copies should not slow down clearance
- Preventing the clearance headache: *No release is worse than an incomplete release*

### Agreements on Information Release Authorities

- Who “owns” the information—scope of responsibility
- Get agreements on paper
- Remain flexible and work collaboratively
- Reality check: Preagreements may be thrown out the window, but they are a place to start

### Media Contact List

- Critically important
- Nonduty contacts too
- No scraps of paper, please
- E-mails, fax numbers, and backdoor entries
- Fail rate, if not tested, can be astronomical

### Designate Spokespersons

- Name them in an annex of the plan and designate backups
- Ensure that your organization agrees and plans for their absence from other duties
- Teach them emergency risk principles
- Practice media and public meetings
Partner Agreements (Like Joining the Local EOC’s JIC)

- Who will be involved in what emergencies?
- What will your organization give back to partners?
- How many people from your organization will be committed to partner support?

Plan What You’ll Need and How To Get More

- Include procedures to secure emergency resources
- Explore and set up contracts
- JICs may provide much of the support
- Work with savvy parts of organization for resources NOW
- Use results from needs assessment for justification

Nine Steps of Crisis Response

Verify Situation

- Get the facts.
- Judge validity based on source of information.
- Clarify plausibility through subject matter expert.
- Attempt to discern the magnitude of the event.

Notification and Coordination

- Notification is the official chain of command
- Coordination is with response peers and partners
- Procedures will vary at State, local, Federal levels and by event

Conduct Crisis Assessment and Activate Communication Plan

- Assess impact on communication operations and staffing
- Determine your organization’s role in the event
- Activate media and Internet monitoring
- Identify affected populations and their initial communication needs
Organize Assignments
(Constantly Reassess These Steps)

- Who’s in charge of overall EOC response?
- Make assignments for communication teams.
- Assess resource needs and hours of operations.
- Ask ongoing organizational issues questions.
- Initiate partner involvement.

Prepare Information and Obtain Approvals

- Develop message.
- Identify audiences.
- What do media want to know?
- Show empathy.
- What is the organization’s response?
- Identify action steps for public.
- Execute the approval process from the plan.

Public Information Release

Select the appropriate channels of communication and apply them:
- Simply
- Timely
- Accurately
- Repeatedly
- Credibly
- Consistently

Public Information Release

- Continue to monitor for feedback
- Execute planned steps with stakeholders
- Reassess these elements throughout the event

Obtain Feedback and Conduct Crisis Evaluation

- Conduct response evaluation
- Analyze feedback from customers
- Analyze media coverage
- Conduct a hot wash
- Develop a SWOT
- Share with leadership
- Revise crisis plans

Conduct Public Education (Post-event)

- Highlight related public health issues
- Consider audiences not directly involved in the crisis
- Institutionalize crisis materials
Monitor Events (Ongoing Throughout the Crisis)
- Conduct media and Internet monitoring
- Exchange information with response partners
- Monitor public opinions

Surviving the First 48 Hours
- Requires quick assessment
- Collection of facts
- Actions to secure resources
- Media and public response
- Rehearsal
- Alert key partners, as appropriate

What the Public Will Ask First
- Are my family and I safe?
- What have you found that may affect me?
- What can I do to protect myself and my family?
- Who caused this?
- Can you fix it?

What the Media Will Ask First
- What happened?
- Who is in charge?
- Has this been contained?
- Are victims being helped?
- What can we expect?
- What should we do?
- Why did this happen?
- Did you have forewarning?

Assessing the Response
- Doing enough? Doing too much?
- Are we, should we be, involved?
- Is the department that should respond, able to respond?
- Who is managing the technical/scientific side?
- Risk matrix analysis helps with this assessment.

Assessment Helps Answer
- Hours of operations for public/media information
- Days of operation
- Staff expected to travel
- Release jurisdiction shared
First 48 Hours - Tools

- Critical first steps checklist
- Message template for news release
- Press availability at site template
- Public call tracking sheet
- Media call triage sheet
- Risk assessment for communication

How Would You Triage Media Response?

Crisis Communication Plan: Summary

- Short, dynamic plan
- Director must endorse
- Plan will help get you a “seat at the table”
- Train the plan
- Plan for all phases of a crisis
- Share successes and best practices

Crisis and Emergency Risk Communication

Satellite Conference Series
November 26, 2002
December 3, 2002
December 10, 2002
December 17, 2002

1:00-3:00 p.m., Central Time