Agenda

1	Welcome
2	Introduction to Crisis and Emergency Risk Communication

- Six Principles
- CERC Rhythm

3	Q&A

Purpose

CERC principles can help you provide the public with information to make the **best decisions** within incredibly **challenging time constraints** and to accept the **imperfect nature of choice**.

The **right message** at the **right time** from the **right person** can save lives.

Introduction to Crisis and Emergency Risk Communication

Types of Hazards

- Infectious disease outbreaks
- Natural disasters and severe weather
- Bioterrorism
- Chemical and radiation exposures

Increased Risks

- Population density in high-risk areas
- Technology
- Aging population
- Emerging infectious diseases
- International travel

Communicating in a Crisis is Different

- In a catastrophic event, communication is different.
- In a serious crisis, all affected people
  - Take in information differently.
  - Process information differently.
  - Act on information differently.

What is CERC?

CDC's Crisis and Emergency Risk Communication (CERC) manual was first published in 2002 to provide an approach to health communications during emergencies based on experience and psychological and communication sciences.

Six Principles of CERC

Fully integrated CERC helps ensure that limited resources are managed well and can do the most good at every phase of an emergency response.

1 Be First:
Crises are time-sensitive. Communicating information quickly is crucial. For members of the public, the first source of information often becomes the preferred source.

2 Be Right:
Accuracy establishes credibility. Information can include what is known, what is not known, and what is being done to fill in the gaps.

3 Be Credible:
Honesty and truthfulness should not be compromised during crises.

4 Express Empathy:
Crises create harm, and the suffering should be acknowledged in words. Addressing what people are feeling, and the challenges they face, builds trust and rapport.

5 Promote Action:
Giving people meaningful things to do calms anxiety, helps restore order, and promotes some sense of control.[3]

6 Show Respect:
Respectful communication is particularly important when people feel vulnerable. Respectful communication promotes cooperation and rapport.

Six Principles of CERC

1. BE FIRST:

   Crises are time-sensitive.

   - If your organization has information, and it is your responsibility to provide it, do so as soon as possible.

   - If you can't provide information, explain how you are working to get it.

Six Principles of CERC

2. BE RIGHT:

- Accuracy establishes credibility.

- Give facts in brief messages.

- Tell people what you know when you know it, tell them what you don't know, and tell them what is being done to find more information.

Six Principles of CERC

3. BE CREDIBLE:

- Honesty should not be compromised.

- Tell the truth.

- Uncertainty is worse than not knowing.

- Rumors are more damaging than hard truths.

Six Principles of CERC

4. EXPRESS EMPATHY:

    - Suffering should be acknowledged in words.

    - Empathy can help build trust.

Example Expressions of Empathy

We are thinking of you during this difficult time.

During times like these, all of us feel a little uncertain.

...or...

Remember that we care about you.

These are difficult circumstances and I understand any fear you are feeling.

Six Principles of CERC

5. PROMOTE ACTION:

- Giving people things to do calms anxiety.

- Promoting action can help restore a sense of control.

Six Principles of CERC

6. SHOW RESPECT:

   - Always treat people the way you want to be treated—the way you want your loved ones treated—even when hard decisions must be communicated.

   - Showing respect to people is important when they feel vulnerable.

   - Recognizing people's value can help promote their cooperation and build rapport.

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CERC Rhythm

The CERC Rhythm

Engage Community • Empower Decision-Making • Evaluate

Preparation
- Draft and test messages
- Develop partnerships
- Create plans
- Determine approval process

Initial
- Express empathy
- Explain risks
- Promote action
- Describe response efforts

Maintenance
- Explain ongoing risks
- Segment audiences
- Provide background information
- Address rumors

Resolution
- Motivate vigilance
- Discuss lessons learned
- Revise plan

Questions?