



# **Zika Crisis and Emergency Risk Communication (CERC) Discussion: Social Pressure, Travel, and Sexual Transmission**

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

# What the public seeks from your communication

Five public desires

1. Gain wanted facts.
2. Empower decision making.
3. Be involved as a participant, not spectator.
4. Provide watch guard over resource allocation.
5. Recover or preserve well-being and normalcy.

# Audience Relationship to Event



# Response during scenario

- Eager to take actions to protect themselves and loved ones
  - Seeking information
  - Determining location of family and friends
  - Leaving the area (radiation)
  - Take action (Botulism—boil water and food)

# Risk is Risky

- Risk is in the eye of the beholder
- Probability of harm x Impact of harm=Risk
- Differing assumptions
- Selective omission, inclusion (bias)
- Unknown latent effects

# Risk Perceptions

- Research versus real life
- Exposure versus harm
- Allocation of benefits and costs (shared risk)
- Trust, access, confusing language

# What Is Vicarious Rehearsal?

- The communication age gives national audiences the experience of local crises.
- These “armchair victims” mentally rehearse recommended courses of actions.
- Recommendations are easier to reject the farther removed the audience is from real threat.



# 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?

# Six Principles of CERC

- **Be First:** If the information is yours to provide by organizational authority—do so as soon as possible. If you can't—then explain how you are working to get it.
- **Be Right:** Give facts in increments. Tell people what you know when you know it, tell them what you don't know, and tell them if you will know relevant information later.
- **Be Credible:** Tell the truth. Do not withhold to avoid embarrassment or the possible “panic” that seldom happens. Uncertainty is worse than not knowing—rumors are more damaging than hard truths.

# Six Principles of CERC

- **Express Empathy:** Acknowledge in words what people are feeling—it builds trust.
- **Promote Action:** Give people things to do. It calms anxiety and helps restore order.
- **Show Respect:** Treat people the way you want to be treated—the way you want your loved ones treated—always—even when hard decisions must be communicated.

# Trust and Mistrust

- Stakeholders judge the response to an issue or crisis based on trust.
- Trust is the natural consequence of promises fulfilled.
- Mistrust is an outgrowth of the perception that promises were broken and values violated.
- CDC fulfills trust by combining our best science with strong ethics and values.

# Acting Trustworthy

- Share information early.
- Acknowledge the concerns of others.
- Under promise and over deliver.
- Select a spokesperson who is never condescending.
- Engage third-party validators and advocates.

# Risk Communication Resources

- CDC Zika website: <http://www.cdc.gov/zika/>
- Zika communications resources: <http://www.cdc.gov/zika/comm-resources/index.html>
- CERC resources: <http://emergency.cdc.gov/cerc/index.asp>
- Emergency Risk Communication Training: Atlanta, August 10-12, 2016
- To sign up for the Emergency Partners newsletter to receive Zika and other updates from the CDC, please click [here](#)
- Contact [cercrequest@cdc.gov](mailto:cercrequest@cdc.gov) for questions

For more information, contact CDC  
1-800-CDC-INFO (232-4636)  
TTY: 1-888-232-6348 [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)

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