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 six basic principles of CERC are

1. Be first.
   - 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.

2. Be right.
   - Accuracy establishes credibility.
   - Give facts in increments.
   - 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.

3. Be credible.
   - Honesty should not be compromised.
   - Tell the truth.
   - Uncertainty is worse than not knowing, and rumors are more damaging than hard truths.

4. Express Empathy.
   - Suffering should be acknowledged in words.
   - Addressing what people are feeling, and the challenges they face, builds trust.

5. Promote Action.
   - Giving people things to do calms anxiety.
   - Helps restore a sense of control.

6. Show Respect.
   - Talk to people the way you want yourself and your loved ones spoken to.
   - Respectful communication is particularly important when people feel vulnerable.

Communicating in a crisis is different
Audiences tend to
- Simplify messages
- Hold onto current beliefs
- Look for additional information and opinions
- Believe the first message they hear

The right message at the right time for the right person can save lives.

Use these principles for all phases of the CERC Lifecycle

**Preparation**
- Build partnerships.
- Test messages.
- Create and evaluate CERC preparedness plans.

**Initial**
- Express empathy.
- Provide simple risk explanations.
- Establish credibility.
- Recommend actions.
- Commit to stakeholders.

**Maintenance**
- Further explain risk by population groups.
- Provide more background.
- Gain support for response.
- Empower decision-making.
- Capture feedback.

**Resolution**
- Educate the community for future crises.
- Examine problems.
- Gain support for policy and resources.
- Promote your organization's role.

**Evaluation**
- Capture and document lessons learned.
- Conduct evaluation and gather feedback from the community.
- Improve CERC preparedness plan.

For more information and to take the online training, request materials, or request an online training, visit [https://emergency.cdc.gov/cerc/index.asp](https://emergency.cdc.gov/cerc/index.asp) or email cercrequest@cdc.gov.