



South Central Public Health Partnership

TRAINING PROFESSIONALS TO PROTECT THE PUBLIC

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Health Risk Communication & Media Relations Course Series Understanding Emergency Public Health Risk Communication: Working With & Through the Mass Media to Reach the People

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Upon completion of this course, the learner will be able to describe the communication role(s) in emergency response; identify limits to his or her own knowledge, skill, and/or authority and identify key system resources for referring matters that exceed those limits; recognize unusual events that might indicate a crisis and describe appropriate action; apply creative problem solving to unusual health risk communication challenges within functional responsibilities; and evaluate effectiveness of all health risk communication actions taken. The topics covered in this course include:

Learning Objectives

Module 1: Describe your role in the emergency health risk communication plan and identify key system resources for referring matters that exceed those limits; specifically identify authorized spokespersons for particular issues.

- Learners, referring to their own organization's protocol for risk communication and health information dissemination (The Emergency Health Risk Communication Plan) will be able to identify the plan's goal statement and describe their functional assignment(s) related to message development and release of information to specific audiences
- Learners will be able to describe the steps of crisis response
- Learners will list resources for in-depth information on effective media relations
- Learners will list characteristics a spokesperson should possess, particularly during an emergency health risk situation.
- Learners will describe the process a spokesperson should use to prepare for a media interview, news conference, or story pitch about a particular issue or situation.

Module 2: Explain the recognition of "news" and describe how the public health system can work with and through news media to reach the people.

- Learners will be able to define news, identify unusual events that might indicate a crisis, and describe appropriate health risk communication action
- Learners will explain the importance of the first hours of an emergency health risk situation in relation to working with the mass media
- Learners will identify audiences that can be reached through the mass media
- Learners will describe the process for crafting messages for specific audiences' preparedness
- Learners will select communication channels and explain why particular channels would provide the "match" advantage for specific audiences and messages.

Module 4: Explain how to work with and through the mass media to communicate health risk communication messages to consumers; describe the importance of knowing about laws related to mass media and public health and list some challenges in that regard; and describe evaluation of public health risk communication outcomes.

- Learners will list public health communication objectives compared to those of the mass media in “getting the word out”
- Learners will explain the advantage and list components of having a written media relations policies and procedures document
- Learners will list and be able to explain at least five “best practices” for mass media relations specific to health risk communication
- Learners will identify the source for United States’ citizens rights and privileges related to freedom of speech and the press
- Learners will be able describe U.S. laws that affect public health and mass media relations
- Learners will be able to describe evaluation of the health risk communication process and outcome

Competencies

- Recognize unusual events that might indicate an emergency and describe appropriate action (e.g., communicate clearly within the chain of command.)
- Apply creative problem solving and flexible thinking to unusual challenges within his/her functional responsibilities and evaluate effectiveness of all actions taken.

* *Bioterrorism and Emergency Readiness*

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