

5 Tips for Communicating in a Crisis:

Inform messaging with reliable data

Before creating messages, gather the most reliable data available. Look only to credible sources. Double-check all facts and figures. Use the data and information collected to develop messages that will be meaningful to your target audience using words and context they will understand. Provide your sources so people can seek out more information.

Prioritize directives

Determine what to include in crisis communication based on what your audience most needs to know. During a crisis, people are overwhelmed and don't need to be inundated with extraneous information. Prioritize what your audience needs to know and how they need to respond for their safety and the safety of their communities. Help them focus on what is most important.

Address fears

Crises are scary. When people are scared they often make poor decisions. Communicate with calm. Address fears and help alleviate them as much as possible. Help people take measures that prevent the worst-case scenario that worries them most. Consider the audience's emotional health and well-being when communicating during a crisis. Don't ignore their fears.

Provide clear action steps

During a crisis, people feel a loss of control. By providing clear action steps, audience members can regain a sense of control over a previously helpless situation. Include in crisis communication steps people can take to help themselves and others get through the crisis and prevent future crises. Make the action steps realistic and easy to remember. Simplicity is key.

Furnish timely updates

Crises are often evolving situations. Communication needs to be ongoing. Circle back to the first tip and continue to gather reliable information and data to share with audiences through timely updates. Continue to prioritize directives, address fears, and provide clear action steps. When the crisis is over, evaluate the response to prepare for future emergencies.