

**APPLYING RISK
COMMUNICATION TO
THE TRANSPORTATION
OF RADIOACTIVE
MATERIALS**

National Transportation Stakeholder Forum
Chicago, Illinois
May 2010



May 2010
Page 1



**SPOKESPERSON
TRAINING:**
Applying Risk Communication Principles

Presented by:
Ron Edmond
Oak Ridge Institute for Science and Education



May 2010
Page 2

COURSE OBJECTIVES

- ◉ Participants should expect to gain the following skills:
 - How to recognize how the stakeholders prefer to receive information
 - How to integrate risk communication principles into individual communication
 - How to recognize the importance of earning trust and credibility
 - How to identify stakeholders
 - How to answer questions using a variety of templates designed to keep messages focused



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May 2010
Page 3

WORKING WITH THE MEDIA

危機

The Chinese word for crisis contains two symbols

- ◉ One for danger
- ◉ The other for opportunity

A crisis can go either way. It depends on what you make of it.



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May 2010
Page 4

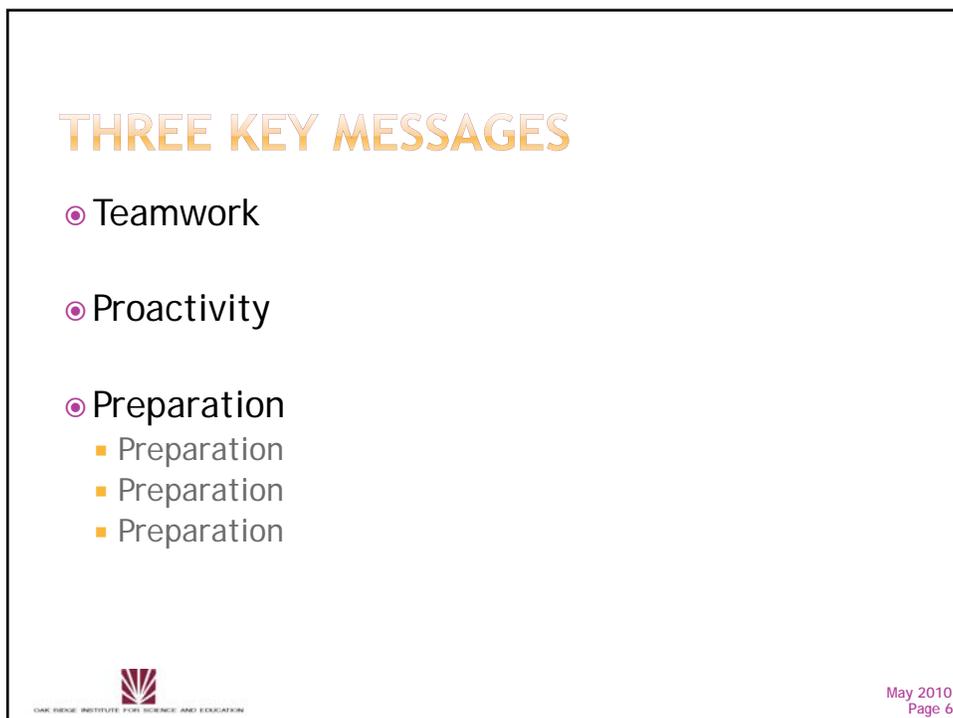


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MODULE 1

Introduction

May 2010
Page 5



The slide has a white background with a black border. The title 'THREE KEY MESSAGES' is in large, bold, yellow letters. Below the title are three bullet points, each with a purple circle icon. The first two are 'Teamwork' and 'Proactivity'. The third is 'Preparation', which has three sub-bullets, each with a yellow square icon and the word 'Preparation'. In the bottom right corner, it says 'May 2010 Page 6'. A small logo for Oak Ridge Institute for Science and Education is visible in the bottom left corner.

THREE KEY MESSAGES

- Teamwork
- Proactivity
- Preparation
 - Preparation
 - Preparation
 - Preparation

May 2010
Page 6

WHAT THE PUBLIC NEEDS TO KNOW

- ◉ Laymen's terms
- ◉ Relevant information
- ◉ Empathy/caring



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May 2010
Page 7

WHAT THE PUBLIC DOES NOT NEED TO HEAR

- ◉ Technical jargon
- ◉ Irrelevant information
- ◉ Arrogance/bad attitude



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May 2010
Page 8

BEING AN EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATOR

- ◉ Perceived threat—negativity is the first reaction
- ◉ Upset people tend to think negatively
- ◉ Repetition of negatives
- ◉ Lack of clear, concise message(s)



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May 2010
Page 9

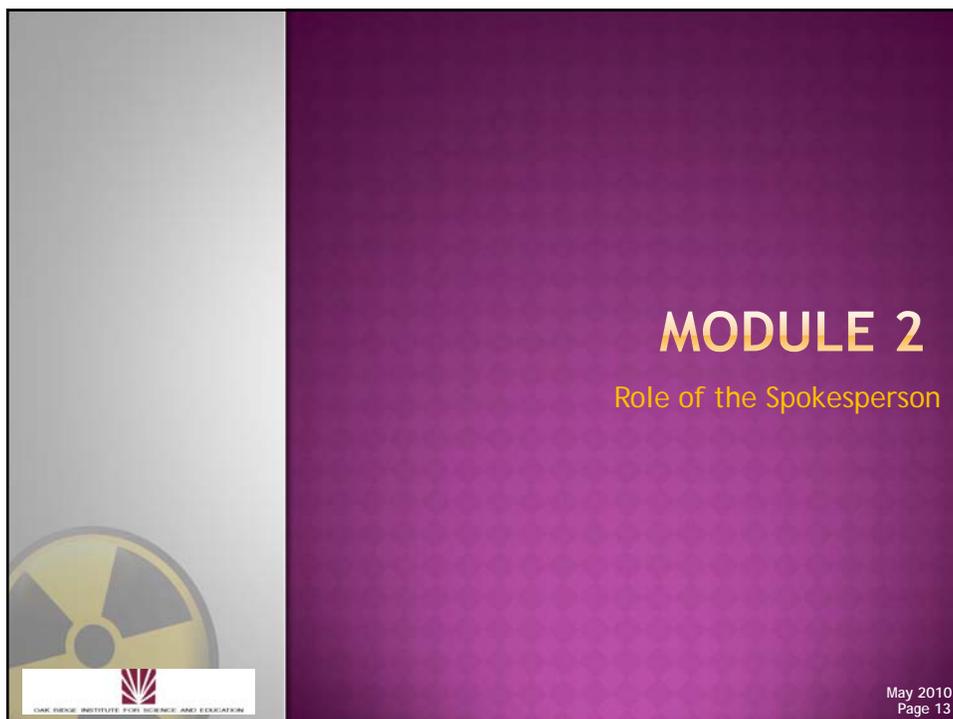
BEING AN EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATOR

- ◉ Non-verbal communication
 - 50-90% of message
 - Overrides verbal communication
 - Interpreted negatively



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May 2010
Page 10



MODULE 2

Role of the Spokesperson

May 2010
Page 13

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PUBLIC INFORMATION RELEASE

Know...

- What
- When
- How
- Where
- Who
- Why

May 2010
Page 14

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SPOKESPERSON-SPECIFIC DUTIES

- ⦿ Gather/analyze information
- ⦿ Know limitations
- ⦿ Brief staff
- ⦿ Develop/deliver messages for media/public
- ⦿ Answer media questions
- ⦿ Evaluate message



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May 2010
Page 15

Themes, Resources, and Responsibilities Worksheet

INFORMATION SOUGHT BY MEDIA

- ◉ Casualty numbers, condition, treatment
- ◉ Property damage
- ◉ Response and relief activities
- ◉ Resulting effects (anxiety, stress)
- ◉ Questions are predictable



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May 2010
Page 17

SPOKESPERSON RECOMMENDATIONS

- ◉ Stay within the scope of your responsibility
- ◉ Tell the truth
- ◉ Follow up on issues
- ◉ Expect criticism



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May 2010
Page 18

YOUR INTERVIEW RIGHTS

- ◉ Know who will do the interview
- ◉ Know and limit the interview to agreed subjects
- ◉ Set limits on time and format
- ◉ Know who else will be or has been interviewed
- ◉ Decline to be interviewed
- ◉ Decline to answer a question



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May 2010
Page 15

MODULE 3

Earning Trust and Credibility



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May 2010
Page 20



WORKSHEET
Where Do You Rate?

May 2010
Page 21

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This slide features a purple gradient background with a grey vertical bar on the left. A radiation symbol is partially visible in the bottom-left corner. The title 'WORKSHEET' is in large yellow letters, and the subtitle 'Where Do You Rate?' is in smaller yellow letters. The date and page number are in the bottom right, and the Oak Ridge logo is in the bottom left.



Worksheet
Rate Yourself

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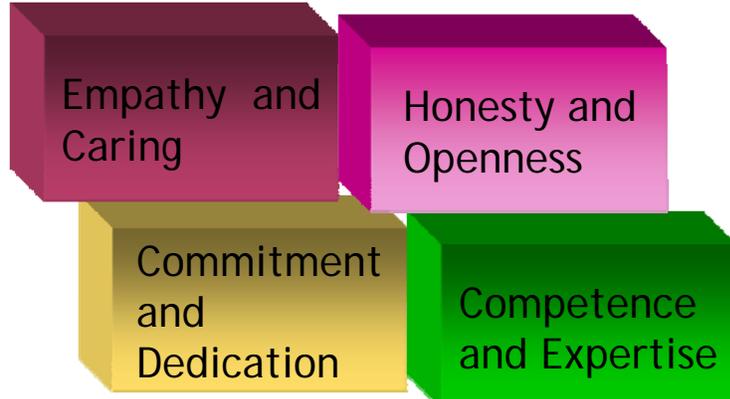


WORKSHEET
Know Your Audience!

May 2010
Page 23

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EARNING TRUST AND CREDIBILITY

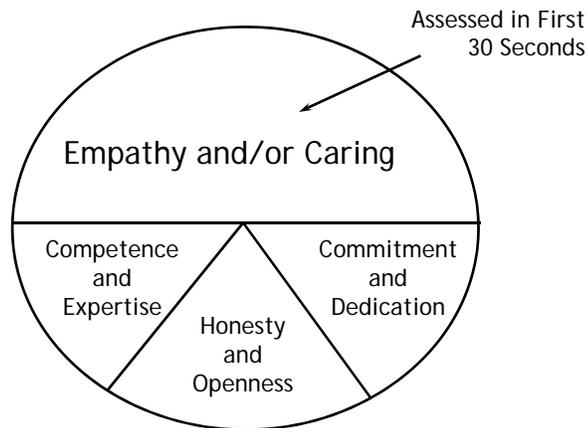


- Empathy and Caring
- Honesty and Openness
- Commitment and Dedication
- Competence and Expertise

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Page 24

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Earning Trust and Credibility



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May 2010
Page 25

EARNING TRUST AND CREDIBILITY

◎ Empathy and Caring

- Focus on being “human” rather than a “talking head”
- Avoid use of jargon/technical language
- Body language
 - Position of hands
 - Eye contact
 - Position in room



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May 2010
Page 26

EARNING TRUST AND CREDIBILITY

◎ **Commitment and Dedication**

- Follow up
 - Add time/date they can expect to hear from you
- Arrive early
- Stay late



EARNING TRUST AND CREDIBILITY

◎ **Competence and Expertise**

- Use more facts/figures/statistics/technical language
- Emphasize credentials
 - Manager
 - Supervisor
 - Experience
 - Education
- Avoid use of negative words/phrases and body language



EARNING TRUST AND CREDIBILITY

○ **Honesty and Openness**

- Body language
 - Eye contact
- Say “I don’t know” without saying “I don’t know”
- Speak in recognizable language
- Tell the truth!



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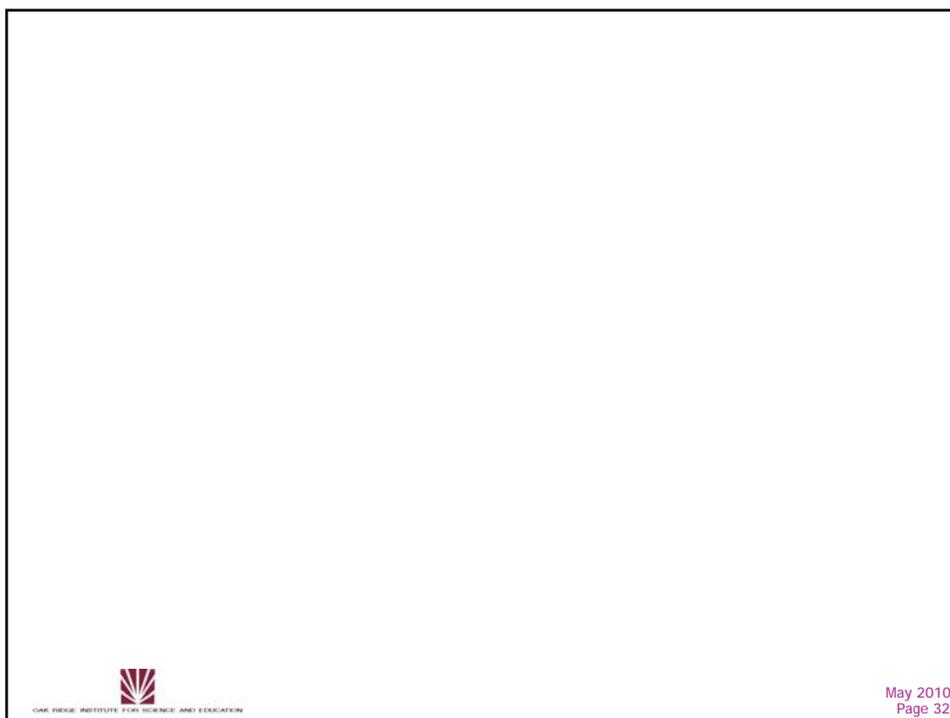
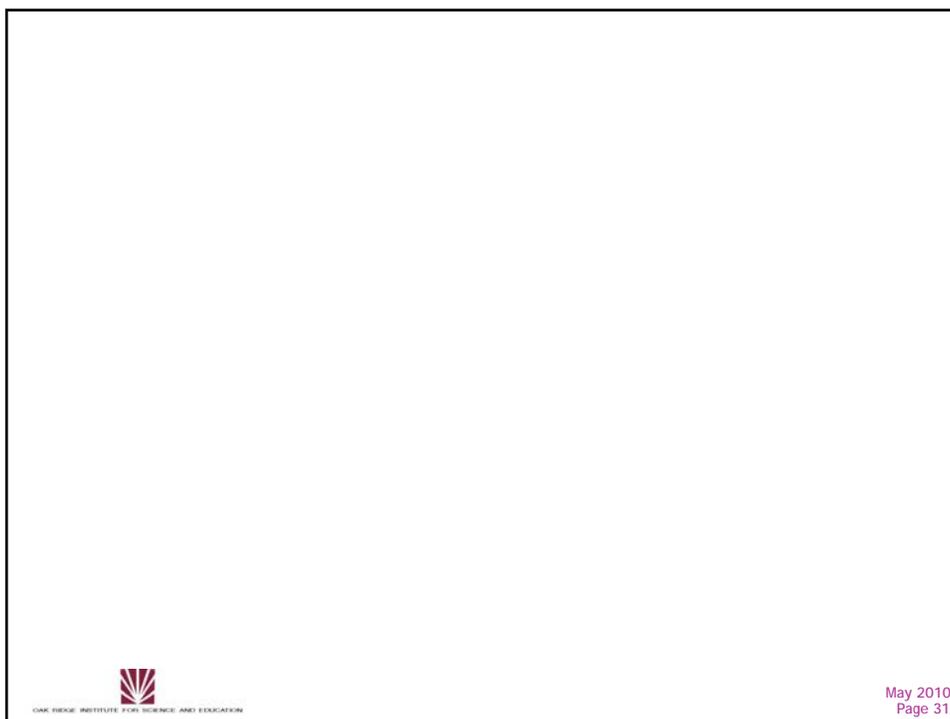
May 2010
Page 29

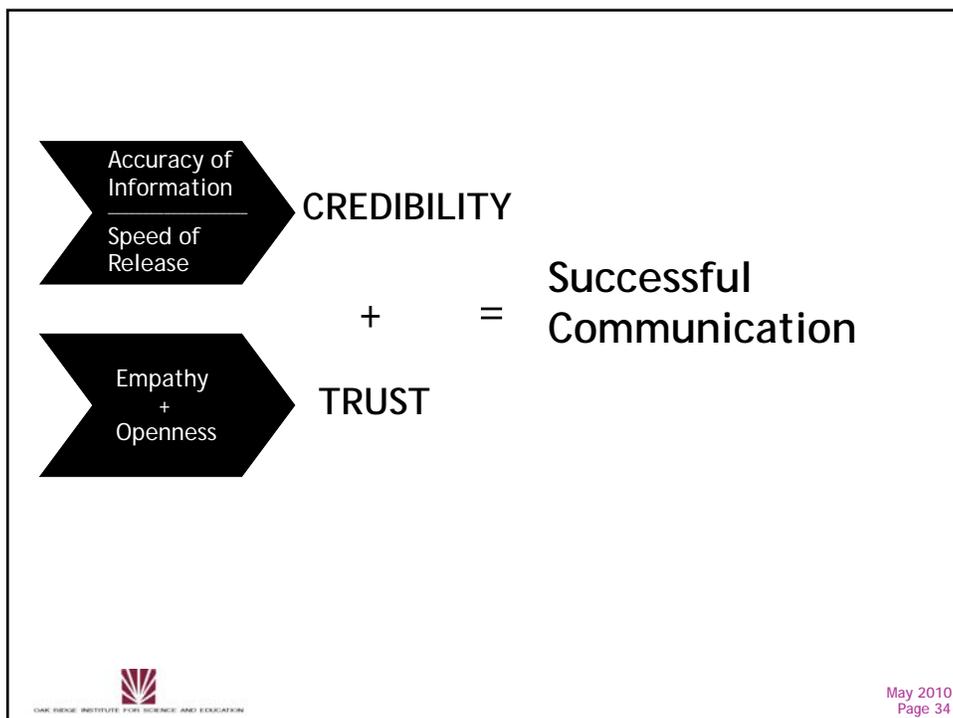
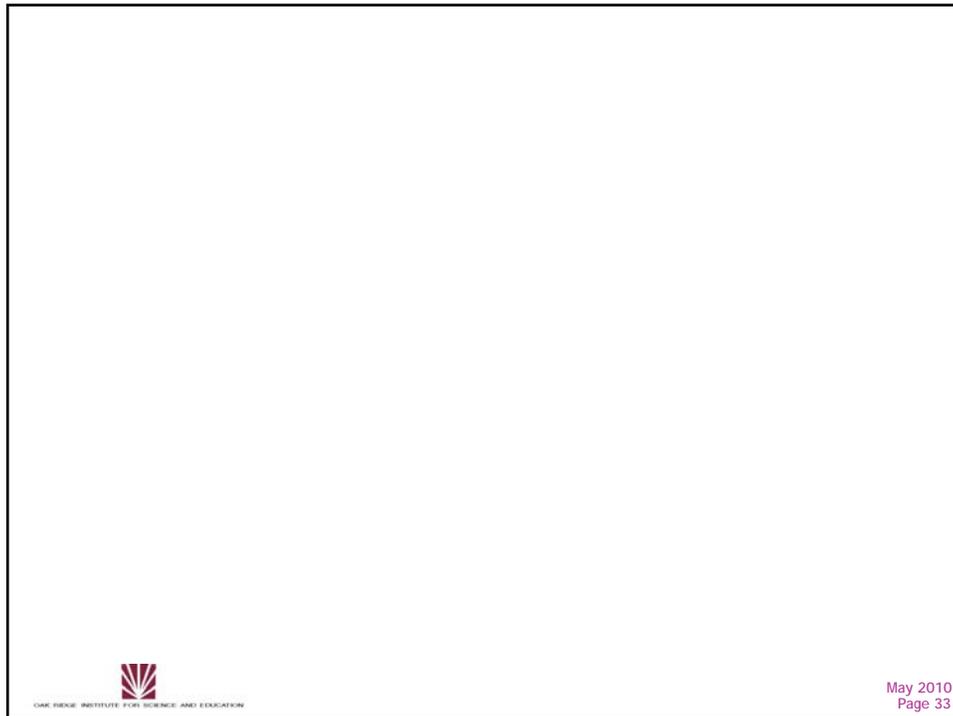
OPTIMIZING NONVERBAL COMMUNICATION



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May 2010
Page 30

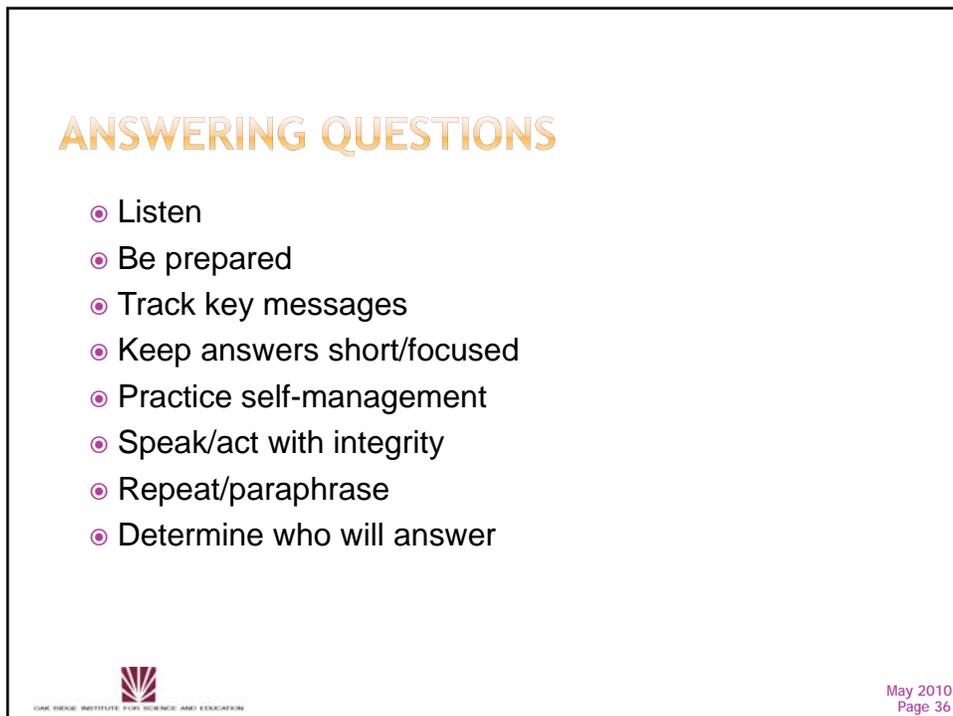






MODULE 3
Answering Questions

May 2010
Page 35



ANSWERING QUESTIONS

- Listen
- Be prepared
- Track key messages
- Keep answers short/focused
- Practice self-management
- Speak/act with integrity
- Repeat/paraphrase
- Determine who will answer

May 2010
Page 36

CATEGORIES OF QUESTIONS

- Bait
- Personal opinion
- Speaking for others
- Hostile
- Persistent
- Open-ended/vague
- Hypothetical
- Rumor
- Multipart
- Giving advice
- Don't know



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Page 37

MODULE 4

Developing Talking Points



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May 2010
Page 38

IDENTIFYING STAKEHOLDERS

◉ Who is

- Affected
- Interested
- Influential



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May 2010
Page 39

COOPERATION

◉ BEFORE delivering/using the talking points, answer these questions:

- Are the talking points approved by the appropriate people?
- Has management signed off on them?
- What is the appropriate channel for delivery? small group setting, newsletter, hotline, etc.
- Is the "Deliverer" trained and comfortable with the material?



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May 2010
Page 40

RISK COMMUNICATION PRINCIPLES

◉ **Mental noise factors**

- People who are upset have difficulty hearing and processing information
- Mental noise reduces ability to process communication by as much as 80 percent
- Sources for mental noise
 - ◉ Denial of issue
 - ◉ Trauma from issue
 - ◉ Competing agenda
 - ◉ Emotional arousal



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May 2010
Page 41

COMMUNICATION INTERFERENCE FACTORS

Negative dominance...

- ◉ People who are upset tend to think negatively
- ◉ One negative = three positives
- ◉ Repetition of a negative reinforces and reaffirms the negative
- ◉ Avoid using negatives such as: **No, Not, Can't, Don't, Never, Nothing, None**



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May 2010
Page 42

RISK COMMUNICATION PRINCIPLES

Risk Communication Summary

Theory

Mental noise

Trust determination

Risk perception

Negative dominance

Effect

Blocks communication

Enhances or detracts from message

Frustration and outrage

Distorts communication

Solution

Use clear, concise messages and active listening

Show that you care

Recognize and respond to RP factors

Develop positive messages



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May 2010
Page 43

INITIAL MESSAGE

Must...

- ◉ Be short
- ◉ Be relevant
- ◉ Be positive with action
- ◉ Be repeated



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May 2010
Page 44

INITIAL MESSAGE

Must Not...

- ◉ Use jargon
- ◉ Be judgmental
- ◉ Make promises that can't be kept
- ◉ Include humor



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May 2010
Page 45

DEVELOPING TALKING POINTS

- ◉ **The value of developing talking points**
 - Talking points allow multiple speakers to deliver coordinated messages, but in one's own voice
 - The use of talking points is a way of standardizing what will be said



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May 2010
Page 46

DEVELOPING TALKING POINTS

What might be some talking points in your community?

1. Safety
2. Health
3. Environment



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May 2010
Page 47

DEVELOPING TALKING POINTS

◉ Be proactive

- Provide recommendations and information to your employees as early as possible
- Establish a point-of-contact for information who is accurate and credible



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May 2010
Page 48



WORKSHEET
Talking Points Template

May 2010
Page 51

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MODULE 5
Working with the Media

May 2010
Page 52

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CATEGORIES OF QUESTIONS

- Bait
- Personal opinion
- Speaking for others
- Hostile
- Persistent
- Open-ended/vague
- Hypothetical
- Rumor
- Multipart
- Giving advice
- Don't know



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May 2010
Page 53

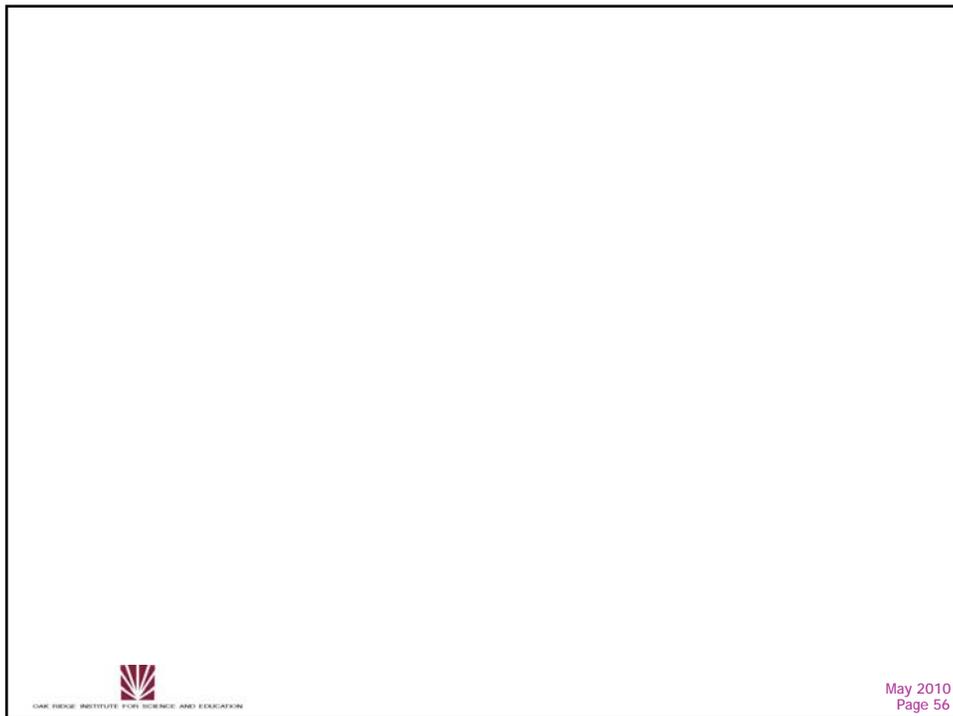
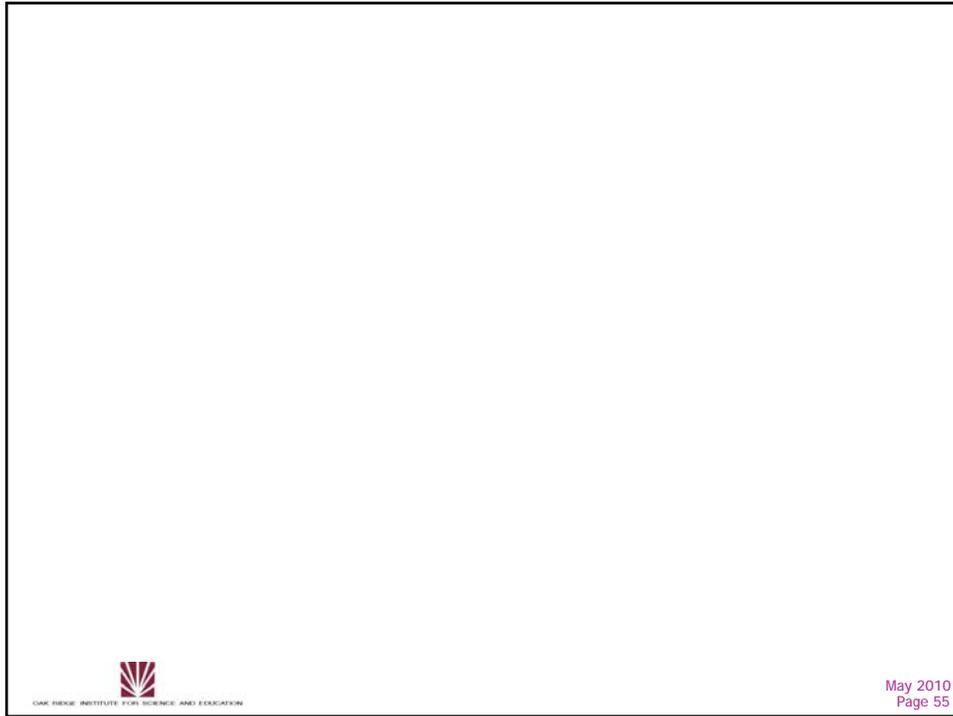
ANSWERING QUESTIONS

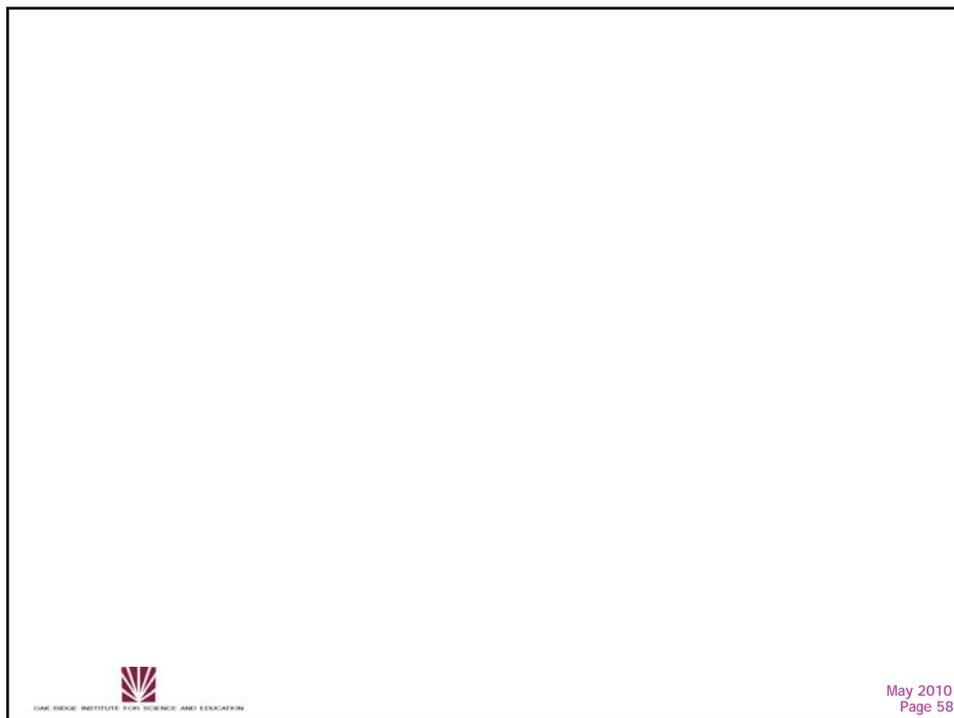
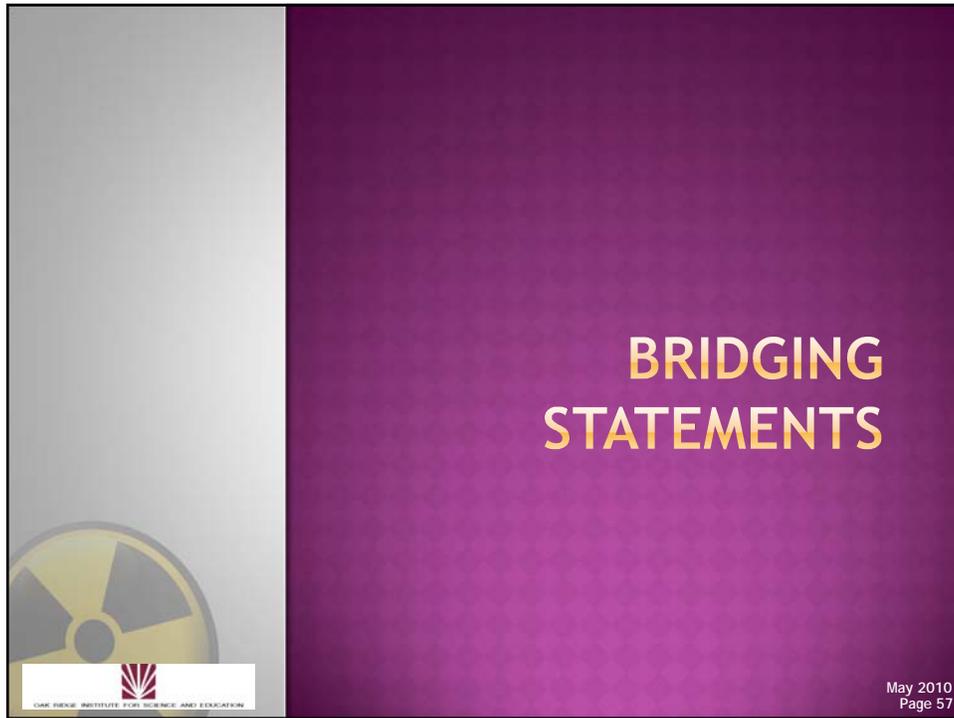
"Risk and Crisis Communication:
77 Questions Commonly Asked by
Journalists during a Crisis"



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May 2010
Page 54





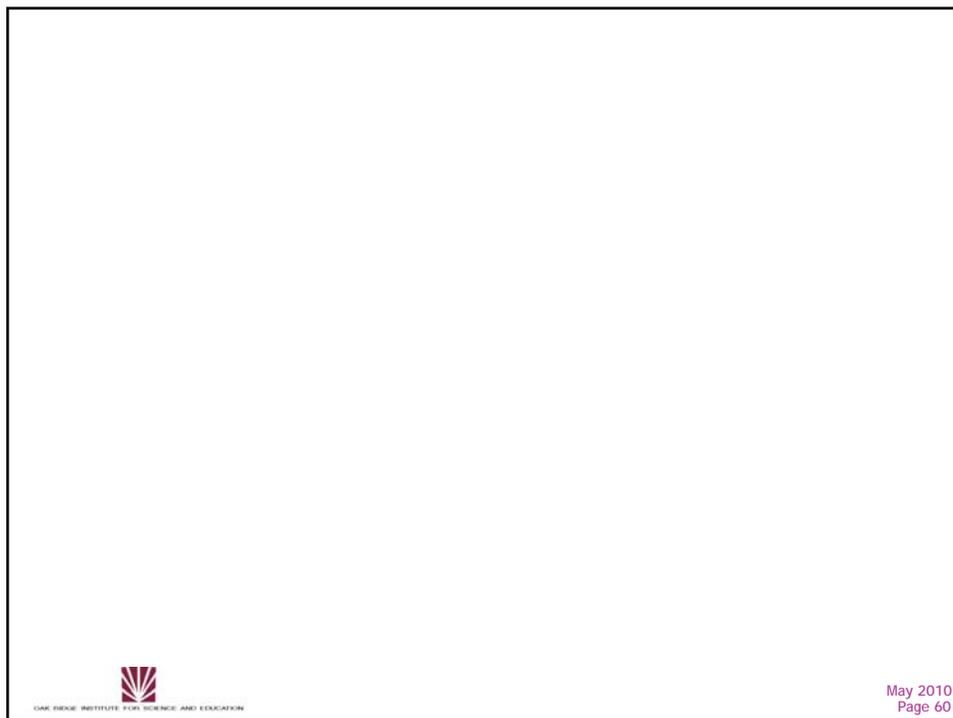


QUESTIONS
FOR
REPORTERS

May 2010
Page 59

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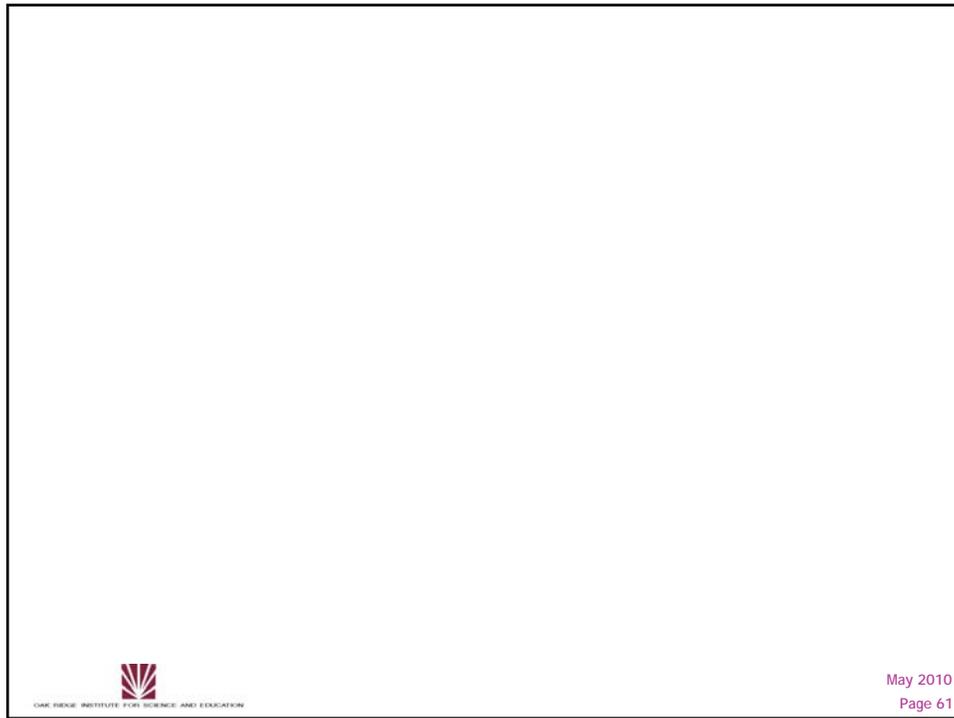
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May 2010
Page 60

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THE CCO STATEMENT

- Compassion
- Conviction
- Optimism



The number of casualties is more than any of us can bear. But from this great tragedy, I believe that we the city, we the nation will become stronger. Stronger economically, politically and most importantly, emotionally.

Former NYC Mayor Rudolph Giuliani
September 11, 2001



CRCR: CENTER FOR RISK COMMUNICATION

Compassion, Conviction and Optimism (CCO) Template

Developed by Dr. Vincent Covello, Center for Risk Communication

Question:

Empathy:

Compassion:

Example: "Health and safety are important to all of us."

Conviction:

Example: "We are committed to providing you a safe and healthy place in which to work."

Optimism:

Example: "Working together, we can continue to make this a safe place in which to work."

Bridge to known facts:

SPECULATION MESSAGE TEMPLATE

- Applies to when reporters or stakeholders ask “What if” and “Worst Case Scenario” questions
- There are some templates available to help with developing talking points that will keep you “on message” to your stakeholders
- Bridge to known facts or re-emphasize your key message



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Worst Case/Speculation Template

Developed by Dr. Vincent Covello, Center for Risk Communication

Question:

Empathy:

Indicate the question is a “what if” question:

Indicate there it is more useful to discuss “what is”:

Bridge to known facts:

I DON'T KNOW TEMPLATE

- Reporters will ask questions for which you have no answers, particularly during the first 24 hours of a disaster or emergency
- It's best to be up front and say "I don't know"



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I Don't Know Template

Developed by Dr. Vincent Covello, Center for Risk Communication

Question:

Empathy:

State "I don't know" or "I wish I could answer that":

Provide a reason why the question can't be answered:

Follow-up with a deadline for providing an answer:

Bridge to known facts:

GUARANTEE MESSAGE TEMPLATE

- Guarantee: Sometimes you may be asked to guarantee an outcome...
- Bridge to outcomes that have happened or are happening
- Bridge to return to your key messages

UP-FRONT



HONEST



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Guarantee Template

Developed by Dr. Vincent Covello, Center for Risk Communication

Question:

Empathy:

State what you know:

"You've asked me about the future. The best way to talk about the future is to talk about what we know from the past, and what we are doing now."

Guarantee ONLY what YOU can deliver:

" I can guarantee that that I will answer your questions to the best of my ability."

Bridge to known facts:

"What is important to know is..."

VALIDATION MESSAGE TEMPLATE

- Sometimes, despite your best efforts, there may be some hostile questions
- In an emergency, tempers may be short because reporters are on deadline
- Reporters are competing to be the first with the news, angle, or best footage
- The best way to defuse the situation is to acknowledge the underlying value of the question



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Validation Template

Developed by Dr. Vincent Covello, Center for Risk Communication

Question:

Empathy:

Identify and state the underlying value:

Example: "I recognize your desire to have a safe working environment."

Validate the value:

Example: "As a (manager, industrial hygienist, supervisor) I too am interested in working in a safe and healthy environment."

Indicate what you are doing or will do to maximize/achieve the value:

Example: "We will continue to focus on our two main goals: 1) maintaining a safe and healthy workplace and 2) striving to improve/research/work with you/others to ensure that we employ the best practices possible."

Bridge to known facts:

**BE SINCERE;
BE BRIEF;
BE SEATED.**

FDR

May 2010
Page 73

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