

DATA FOR HEALTH INITIATIVE

Risk and Crisis Communication Workshop

As part of the Bloomberg Data for Health Initiative, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the CDC Foundation offer a workshop in risk and crisis communication (RCC).

CONTEXT

Recent public health emergencies—including pandemics, disease outbreaks and natural disasters—have underscored the critical need for clear, timely communication from health authorities.

During a public health emergency, people seek information and guidance. They want to know the magnitude of the issues, what risks they face and what they need to do to protect themselves.

The public, media, community leaders, government officials and other stakeholders rely on health officials to provide timely, honest and actionable information. Messages must be conveyed in plain language that everyone can understand.

WORKSHOP PURPOSE

The RCC workshop trains public health officials to communicate rapidly and effectively during public health emergencies. Attendees learn to use RCC principles to interact with diverse target audiences. They also learn techniques to manage the challenges and opportunities that arise during public health emergencies.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Apply the principles of RCC and behavioral change communication
- Understand how people react under stress
- Conduct audience segmentation for tailored communication in times of crisis
- Learn how to interact with the media in simulated scenarios
- Understand the importance of trust, transparency and empathy to gain the public's trust
- Craft effective public health messages in plain language
- Develop a crisis communication plan

WORKSHOP FORMAT

- The three-day training is interactive and encourages applied learning. Instructor-led sessions are followed by group activities where participants work in small groups and put into practice what they learn.

At the onset of the workshop, each group selects a simulated public health crisis relevant to their country. They will use this scenario to conduct an audience analysis, create public health messages, conduct a mock media interview and develop a communication plan. Each group will present their work to the class for discussion and evaluation.

WHO SHOULD ATTEND

The workshop is designed for public health and other government officials who communicate with the public, media and others during a public health emergency.

PARTICIPANT FEEDBACK AND IMPACT

Participants across multiple workshops have consistently described the training as clear, practical and relevant to their work.

"The training was so practical and fruitful. The case studies were very relevant for my learning."

— Uganda workshop

"This course is important for public health officers and everybody who works in information."

— Thailand workshop

"Risk communication for me was a battle against the media—but now I feel it is a tool to contribute to public health."

— Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)+3 workshop