



# **Crisis Communication Overview**

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# Why is it so important?

- People may remember how the crisis was handled longer than the details of a crisis.
- Proactive crisis communication helps minimize damage, improve morale, and encourages healing
- Need for communication grows the longer the crisis is prominent
- News media has significant long-term impact on public perception and organizational reputation



# Today's Focus

1. Creating a communication plan
2. Crisis communication and media training
3. Interview preparation
4. What we've learned

# Creating a Communication Plan

- Your plan should be the “go to” place for the “must have” information during a crisis.
- Horizon Health Care utilized the CDPH Crisis and Emergency Risk Communications Toolkit and the New York (Columbia University) Emergency Preparedness Toolkit for Community Health Centers & Community Practice Sites.

# Elements of a Communication Plan

1. Identify a crisis communication team and designate staff responsibilities
2. Establish information release authorities
3. Create a media contact list and determine stakeholders/partners
4. Identify spokespersons for specific situations
5. Create template media materials and framework
6. Identify preferred avenues for information dissemination

# Identifying a Crisis Communication Team

- Executive Team
- Communications Manager
  - Who will direct media response?
  - Who will coordinate messages and content?
  - Who will communicate with partners/stakeholders?
- Internal Liaison
- HR

# Establish Information Release Authorities

- Who MUST review for final approval
- Try to stick to three people or less – subject matter expert, communication officer, and CEO
- Agreement on who will authorize approvals should be done before a crisis happens

# Media Contact List and Stakeholders

## Media Contacts

- State and local
- Newspapers
- Radio
- TV

## Stakeholders

- Emergency Management
- Employees/Families
- City/State Leaders & Elected Officials
- Legal Advocates
- Board Members
- Business Partners
- School Districts
- Special Populations



# Identify Spokespersons

- Identify spokesperson for potential crisis areas, who would be considered the subject matter experts.

## *Examples:*

- Security Breach: Chief Information Officer
- Personnel-related: Chief Executive Officer
- Natural Disaster (fire, tornado, etc.): Chief Executive Officer
- Medical (COVID): Chief Medical Officer, Medical Director

# Create Template Materials

- Sample key messages
- Communication response checklist
- Media Contact Log for staff
- Sample press release
- Define a procedure for responding to media errors

# Information Dissemination

- Where will updates be made?
  - Will all new updates be posted to social media?
  - Will there be a crisis update page on your website?
  - Will you utilize a local media outlet as your main source for information? If so, how will you direct your audience to that outlet?
- Who is getting the information out?

# Crisis Communication/Media Training

- What has Horizon Health Care done?
  - Worked with media agency to conduct training
  - Mock media scenarios/interviews and group critique
  - Review of media dos and don'ts
- How do we prepare leaders for interviews?

# Interview Preparation

- Review our media interview tips
- Make a plan for the interview
  - What do we want the audience to know?
  - What are some potential “gotcha” questions?
  - Provide talking points based on the subject

# What have we learned?

- We implemented a public relations policy to ensure all staff communicate with the marketing and communications department prior to conducting a media interview.
- You never know what will spark media attention and go wild.
- Be aware of what is currently trending in the media and how it could be pulled into your media interview (i.e. political issues)