

# Guidance for Health Communications

## Importance of Frequent, Factual Communication to the Whole Community

- Provides information and guidance on a regular basis
- Decreases fear and panic
- Promotes positive (and necessary) behavior change
- Helps slow the spread of disease
- Creates opportunities to discuss concerns and problem solve

## Importance of Frequent Meetings with Leaders and Partners

- Make sure that messages are consistent across various sources
- Ensure that there is broader distribution of the messages
- Distribute the burden and learn from the expertise of different community leaders

## The Stages of the Communication Cycle

### 1. Establish a team and system to receive community feedback (i.e. Community Advisory Board or Emergency Response Team)

- Meet regularly with leaders from various divisions in the community to discuss community concern and support
- Identify needs for messaging or communication
- Receive expert content in a variety of areas
- Identify challenges in how the information will be received and used in the community
- Review materials before final distribution

### 2. Identify the needs and information requests

- Identify gaps in existing materials
- Provide opportunities for open feedback or questions from community members, such as Town Halls with Indigenous leadership, online question forum, listening sessions for questions and concerns from community

### 3. Understand the audience

- Who in the community needs to hear the message?
- What do they need to know? (Is it new information, dispelling myths, a change in guidance, etc.?)
- Where and how do the audience most often receive their knowledge?

### 4. Conduct research and enlist experts

- Have trusted sources created materials already? If yes, adapt and tailor those messages if needed and cite existing resources
- Make sure all messages are scientifically sound and current/updated
- Some trusted sources: Centers for Disease Control (CDC), World Health Organization (WHO)
- Consult with experts, if possible, for feedback on documents to ensure messages are accurate before distributing

### 5. Creating a “Finished” product

- Stick to facts that are presented consistently, clearly, and concisely; Use short and simple messaging when possible
- Use common language and provide resources in the local language(s) if possible
- Focus on giving the audience steps they can take or things they can do rather than things not to do
- Outline actions that are easy to take
- Acknowledge challenges and difficulties that the guidance may pose and provide resources for community members who experience those challenges

- Provide regular updates as more is learned and remove old messages and guidance to avoid confusion
- Include illustrations where possible

## 6. Distribution

- Design distribution around the identified target audience and how that audience receives information and knowledge
- Recommended distribution channels:
  - Social media channels
  - Email listservs
  - Website
  - Give to local leaders
  - Direct community distribution in combination with wellness boxes, food or resource boxes, community health worker home visits, etc.
  - Provide handouts or paper materials at testing sites or healthcare facilities
  - Post materials in central locations within the community (i.e. grocery stores, gas stations, chapter houses, etc.)
  - Radio spots for Public Service Announcements

## Free resources that can be used for communication:

- Canva
- Zoom
- YouTube
- Social Media platforms (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter)