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

Free resources that can be used for communication:

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

For more information: CDC.gov/coronavirus
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