

Crisis Communication: Guidelines for Action

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Introduction

- I. *How Bad Is It? How Sure Are You?*
 1. Don't over-reassure.
 2. Put reassuring information in subordinate clauses.
 3. Err on the alarming side.
 4. Acknowledge uncertainty.
 5. Share dilemmas.
 6. Acknowledge opinion diversity.
 7. Be willing to speculate.

- II. *Coping with the Emotional Side of the Crisis*
 8. Don't overdiagnose or overplan for panic.
 9. Don't aim for zero fear.
 10. Don't forget emotions other than fear.
 11. Don't ridicule the public's emotions.
 12. Legitimize people's fears.
 13. Tolerate early over-reactions.
 14. Establish your own humanity.

- III. *Involving the Public*
 15. Tell people what to expect.
 16. Offer people things to do.
 17. Let people choose their own actions.
 18. Ask more of people.

- IV. *Errors, Misimpressions, and Half-Truths*
 19. Acknowledge errors, deficiencies, and misbehaviors.
 20. Apologize often for errors, deficiencies, and misbehaviors.
 21. Be explicit about "anchoring frames."
 22. Be explicit about changes in official opinion, prediction, or policy.
 23. Don't lie, and don't tell half-truths.
 24. Aim for total candor and transparency.
 25. Be careful with risk comparisons.