Communicating about the Event and What to do

PRESENTATION FOR:
NAS – Challenges in Initiating and Conducting Long-Term Health Monitoring of Populations Following Nuclear and Radiological Emergencies in the United States
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Trust takes years to build, seconds to break, and forever to repair.

-unknown
Radiation and emotion
### Perception of risk

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Low Perceived Risk</th>
<th>High Perceived Risk</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Voluntary</td>
<td>Involuntary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Under own control</td>
<td>Under control of others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Familiar</td>
<td>Unfamiliar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Benefit</td>
<td>Unknown/No Benefit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Random</td>
<td>Direct</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Immediate Effects</td>
<td>Delayed Effects (future generations)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Known Risk</td>
<td>Unknown Risk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natural Origin</td>
<td>Human Origin</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Adapted from V. Covello, P. Sandman, 2001
“A brilliant scientific discourse is wasted if no one listens or understands it.”

- Journal of the American Medical Association
Communication is more than information.

- “Just the facts” won’t cut it—feelings count!
- Show you understand people’s health concerns.
- In a high-stress situation, your audience will wonder if they can trust you.
Risk communication principles

- Explain the risk assessment process before presenting the numbers.
- Define and illustrate the routes of exposure.
- Define units and put data in perspective.
- Explain protective approach to risk assessment and standard setting.

www.epa.gov/Japan2011
Lessons learned from Fukushima & testing

- Be careful with comparisons.
- Don’t be too repetitive.
- Check for contradictory statements.
- Provide prioritized or staged instructions.
Pre-scripted Messages

- ~90 questions and answers in each document
- Agreed upon by 14 federal agencies
- Posted publicly on the internet
- A resource for all levels of government
More Pre-scripted Messages

- Communicating Radiation Risks
- Protective Action Area Map Templates
Topics include:

- Nuclear Attack Warning
- Immediate Safety Messages
- Decontamination
- Food and Water Guidance
- Medical Needs/Potassium Iodide
- Family and Children Concerns
- Evacuation
- Plume Maps and Fallout
Infographics: Translated into 12 Languages

WHERE TO GO IN A RADIATION EMERGENCY

- If a radiation emergency happens in your area, you should get inside immediately.
- No matter where you are, the safest action to take is to: GET INSIDE. STAY INSIDE. STAY TUNED.
  - Close and lock all windows and doors.
  - Go to the basement or the middle of the building. Radiactive material settles on the outside of buildings; so the best thing to do is stay as far away from the walls and roof of the building as you can.
  - If possible, turn off fans, air conditioners, and forced-air heating units that bring air in from the outside. Close fireplace dampers.
  - Bring pets inside.
  - Stay tuned for updated instructions from emergency response officials.

IMPROVISED NUCLEAR DEVICE

Decontamination for Yourself and Others

DECONTAMINATION FOR YOURSELF AND OTHERS

- This is a graphic of radiation and fallout information. It provides guidance on how to protect yourself and others from radiation exposure.

HOW POTASSIUM IODIDE (KI) WORKS

- This infographic explains how potassium iodide (KI) works to protect against radiation exposure.

https://emergency.cdc.gov/radiation/resourcelibrary/infographics.asp
Videos

How to Protect Yourself in a Radiation Emergency

https://emergency.cdc.gov/radiation

How to Protect Yourself After a Nuclear Explosion
Q.45 How and why are you tracking people who have been exposed to radiation and radioactive material?

- Your local officials will set up community reception centers to check people for contamination with radioactive material and assist them with needed services and enter them into a registry (if indicated) for tracking and follow-up.
- The registry permits follow-up with people who need immediate health care and enables long-term monitoring for individuals who have been exposed to radiation.

From Communicating During and After a Nuclear Power Plant Incident, page 32
The Tools are Publicly Available

https://www.epa.gov/radiation/public-communication-resources
How to Communicate with Individuals

- Compassion for the individual
- Validation of their feelings
- Commitment to their health