**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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