

LARAS
LATIN AMERICAN
RISK ASSESSMENT
SYMPOSIUM



7 Dos and Don'ts in Crisis Communication

Dr Frederic Müller

Unit BfR Academy

Department Risk Communication



don't #1

..... think it's impossible to happen

» There cannot be a crisis next week.
My schedule is already full. «

Henry Kissinger



do!

- develop a crisis management plan with clear objectives that's regularly updated
- top executives must be readily available
- make sure everyone is briefed
- carry out crisis exercises
- develop documents on critical issues
- maybe: establish a crisis management team



don't #2

----- ignore it



if you are not talking about it, it won't go away



do!

- start working on a potential crisis situation before it becomes public



you still may discuss and test key messages



don't #3

..... think that you have to know everything before you go out and talk



Silence is never a good option!



do!

- communicate quickly to protect human health
- in the early stages of an emerging incident:
 - **say** what you know
 - **acknowledge** what you do not know
 - **indicate** what you are going to do

What information
should be released?

What information should be released?

Decision making tool



1. Is the information needed by at-risk parties to avoid illness, reduce the spread of a disease, and/or help cope with the impact of an event?
2. Is the information relevant to decisions made by public health authorities or about the emergency management decision-making process itself?
3. Is there a compelling reason to withhold or modify the way of giving information, such as:
 - Could the release of the information compromise national security or an ongoing police investigation?
 - Will release of the information violate privacy laws and/or existing confidentiality policies or unnecessarily violate personal privacy?
 - Could the release of the information result in stigmatisation of specific ethnic groups or people in specific geographical regions?



don't #4

----- be complicate

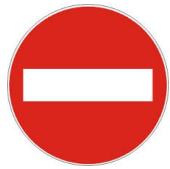


Don't be afraid that you will sound too simple!



do!

- keep the message short and clear
(3 or 4 consistent key messages)
- keep the language simple and practical
- use analogies or day-to-day comparisons
- use infographics
- publish frequently asked questions



don't #5

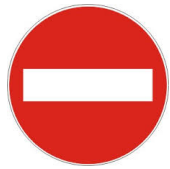
----- hold back to take responsibility



do!

➤ **be sincere**





don't #6

-----address only issues and ignore feelings

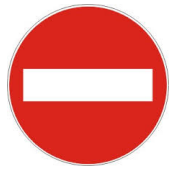


do!

- people want honesty and transparency
- show sympathy... but stay authentic!
- take the audience seriously: relate to their fears, emotions and doubts

» Nobody cares how much you know,
until they know how much you care. «

Theodore Roosevelt



don't #7

----- treat media/bloggers like an enemy



No comment is never the right answer!



do!

- keep your promises to media/bloggers

transparency
reliability
openness
timeliness

» By the time you hear the thunder,
it's too late to build the Ark. «

Unknown



Thanks

Leonie Dendler
Linda Há
Torsten Herold
Deniz Kocak
Annett Schulze
**Unit Crisis
Prevention and
Coordination**

Roman Beele
Nele Boehme
Suzan Fiack
Anna Kaiser
Mike Kortsch
Jürgen Thier-Kundke
Hartmut Wewetzer
Sandra Wittig
**Unit Press and
Public Relations**

Emilia Böhm
Dan Borzekowski
Mark Lohmann
Teresa Mylord
**Unit Risk Research,
Perception, Early
Detection and Impact
Assessment**

Sebastian Frese
Sara Graetz
Kim Hachmann
Anne-Katrin Hermann
Yvonne Mensching
Solveig Schreiber
Unit BfR Academy

Natalie Berger
Gaby-Fleur Böl
Severine Koch
Miriam Lehmann
Ann-Kathrin Lindemann
**Department Risk
Communication**



LARAS
LATIN AMERICAN
RISK ASSESSMENT
SYMPOSIUM



Thank you for your attention

Dr Frederic Müller

German Federal Institute for Risk Assessment

Max-Dohrn-Str. 8–10 • 10589 Berlin, GERMANY

Phone +49 30 - 184 12 - 22401

frederic.mueller@bfr.bund.de • www.bfr.bund.de/en