**Basic Risk Communication/Message Mapping Templates**
*Use these templates to create effective messages in high concern situations*

| CCO TEMPLATE | Use when asked a question with high-emotion
|--------------|-------------------------------------------|
| **Steps:**  | - Compassion  
- Conviction  
- Optimism  |
| **Example:**  | (1) "I am very sorry to hear about..."; (2) I believe that...; (3) In the future, I believe that.... |

| "WHAT IF" TEMPLATE | Use when asked a low probability "what if, what might happen" question
|---------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------|
| **Steps:**  | - Repeat the question (without negatives)  
- Bridge to "what is"  
- State what you know factually  |
| **Example:**  | (1) "You've asked me what might happen if..."; (2) I believe there is value to talk about what is, what we know now; (3) And what we know is..." |

| IDK (I DON'T KNOW) TEMPLATE | Use when you don't know, can't answer, or aren't best source
|-----------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------|
| **Steps:**  | - Repeat the question (without negatives)  
- Say "I wish I could answer that"; or "My ability to answer is limited by ..." or "I don't know"  
- Say why you can't answer  
- Provide a follow up with a deadline  
- Bridge to what you can say  |
| **Example:**  | (1) "You've asked me about..."; (2) I wish I could answer...; (3) We're still looking into it; (4) I expect to be able to tell you more by...; (5) What I can tell you is..." |

| FALSE ALLEGATION TEMPLATE | Use when responding to a hostile question, false allegation, or criticism
|---------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------|
| **Steps:**  | - Repeat/paraphrase the question without repeating the negative; repeat instead the opposite; the underlying value or concern, or use more neutral language  
- Indicate the issue is important  
- Indicate what you have done, are doing, or will do to address the issue  |
| **Example:**  | (1) "You've raised a serious question about "x"; (2) "x" is important to me; (3) We are doing the following to address"x." |

| BRIDGING TEMPLATES | Use when you want to return to your key points or redirect the communication
|-------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------|
| **Steps:**  | - "And what's most important to know is..."  
- "However, what is more important to look at is..."  
- "However, the real issue here is..."  
- "And what this all means is..."  
- "And what's most important to remember is..."  
- "With this in mind, if we look at the bigger picture..."  
- "With this in mind, if we take a look back..."  
- "If we take a broader perspective, ..."  
- "If we look at the big picture..."  
- "Let me put all this in perspective by saying..."  
- "What all this information tells me is..."  
- "Before we continue, let me emphasize that..."  
- "Before we continue, let me take a step back and repeat that..."  
- "This is an important point because..."  
- "What this all boils down to is..." |

| YES/NO TEMPLATE | Use when asked a yes/no question that cannot be answered yes or no
|----------------|---------------------------------------------------------------|
| **Steps:**  | - Indicate you have been asked a yes/no question  
- Indicate it would be difficult to answer the question yes or no  
- Indicate why it would be difficult to answer the question yes or no  
- Respond to the underlying concern  |

| 1N=3P TEMPLATE | Use when breaking bad news or stating a negative
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Steps:</strong></td>
<td>- Recommendation: Balance one bad news or negative message with a least three or more positive, constructive, or solution oriented messages</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| 1N=3P TEMPLATE | Use when breaking bad news or stating a negative
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Steps:</strong></td>
<td>- Recommendation: Balance one bad news or negative message with a least three or more positive, constructive, or solution oriented messages</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| 27/9/3 TEMPLATE | Use when responding to any high stress or emotionally charged question
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Steps:</strong></td>
<td>- Recommendation: Be brief and concise in your first response: no more than 27 words, 9 seconds, and 3 messages</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| PRIMACY/RECENCY TEMPLATE | Use when responding to any high stress or emotionally charged question
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Steps:</strong></td>
<td>- Recommendation: Provide information at four or more grade levels below the average grade level of the audience</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| RULE OF 3 TEMPLATE | Use when responding to any high stress or emotionally charged question
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Steps:</strong></td>
<td>- Recommendation: Provide information at four or more grade levels below the average grade level of the audience</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

*Source: Dr. Vincent T. Covello, Center for Risk Communication, Copyright 2009*
Advanced Risk Communication/Message Mapping Templates*

Use these advanced templates to create effective messages in high concern, high stress situations

**TBC TEMPLATE**

when responding to questions or concerns indicating high perceived risks or outrage.

- **(T)rust** Message (For example, messages communicating listening, caring, honesty, transparency, or competence)
- **(B)enefit** Message (For example, messages communicating benefits to the individual, organization, or society)
- **(C)ontrol** Message (For example, messages that give people things to do or that increase their sense of hope or self-efficacy).

*Source: Dr. Vincent T. Covello, Center for Risk Communication, Copyright 2009

**KDD TEMPLATE**

Use to give upset people a greater sense of control.

- **(K)now** Message: Share what is most important for people to know.
- **(D)o** Message: Share what you are doing to address the concern
- **(D)o** Message: Share what people can do to address the concern

**CAP TEMPLATE**

Use when responding to a high concern question or statement

- **(C)aring** Message: Provide a message indicating caring, concern, empathy, or compassion. The message should communicate the seriousness of the situation.
- **(A)ction** Message: State actions you have, are, or will take to address the issue. For example, the message might indicate you are cooperating with other organizations or conducting an investigation.
- **(P)erspective** Message: Provide information that puts the issue in perspective or context.

**AAF Template**

Use when the immediate goal is build, maintain, or restore trust

- **(A)knowledge Uncertainty** Message: Identify knowledge gaps and challenges.
- **(A)ction** Message: State actions you have, are, or will take to address the issue. For example, the message might indicate you are cooperating with other organizations or conducting an investigation.
- **(P)ollow Up** Message: Provide information on where people can obtain timely and credible information.

**CARING/SHARING TEMPLATE**

Use when responding to a question or statement containing incorrect information.

- **Caring** Message: State what you and the person holding incorrect information have in common.
- **Sharing (1)** Message: Invite the person holding incorrect information to share their information with you
- **Sharing (2)** Message: Re-share your information

**Example:** (1) “I assume you asked this question because you care about …, which I also care about; (2) I would greatly appreciate your sharing with me all the information you have so I can review it; (3) In the meantime, the information I have indicates…”

**Acknowledging Uncertainty: Sample Statements**

- “I wish we knew more.”
- “There are still many uncertainties.”
- “I wish our answers were more definite.”
- “It must be difficult to hear how uncertain we are.”
- “There is still much that we do not know…”
- “The evidence is still mixed and very confusing.”
- “Some of what we now think may turn out later to be wrong.”
- “There are many unanswered questions and there may be exceptions.”
- “There is a range of expert opinion on this issue.”

---

* TBC: Trust, Benefit, Control
* KDD: Knowledge, Do, Do
* CARING: Caring
* SHARING: Sharing (1), Sharing (2)
* AAF: Action, Follow Up
* AAF: Action
* Perspective

---

* Source: Dr. Vincent T. Covello, Center for Risk Communication, Copyright 2009