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…"*

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

BRIDGING TEMPLATES
Use when you want to return to your key points or redirect the communication

1. "And what's most important to know is…"
2. "However, what is more important to look at is…"
3. "However, the real issue here is…"
4. "And what this all means is…"
5. "And what's most important to remember is …"
6. "With this in mind, if we look at the bigger picture…"
7. "With this in mind, if we take a look back…"
8. "If we take a broader perspective, …"
9. "If we look at the big picture…"
10. "Let me put all this in perspective by saying…"
11. "What all this information tells me is…"
12. "Before we continue, let me take a step back and repeat that…"
13. "Before we continue, let me emphasize that…"
14. "This is an important point because…"
15. "What this all boils down to is…"

1N=3P TEMPLATE
(ONE NEGATIVE EQUALS THREE POSITIVES) /BAD NEWS TEMPLATE
Use when breaking bad news or stating a negative

Recommendation: Balance one bad news or negative message with a least three or more positive, constructive, or solution oriented messages

AGL-4 TEMPLATE (AVERAGE GRADE LEVEL MINUS FOUR TEMPLATE)

Use when responding to any high stress or emotionally charged question

Recommendation: Provide information at four or more grade levels below the average grade level of the audience.

GUARANTEE TEMPLATE
Use when asked to guarantee an event or outcome
Steps
- Indicate that the question is about the future
- Indicate that the past and the present help predict the future
- Bridge to known facts, processes or actions

Example: *(1) "You've asked me for a guarantee, to promise something about the future; (2) The best way I know to talk about the future is to talk about what we know from the past and the present; (3) And what we know is…"* **OR**
"What I can guarantee [assure; promise; tell you] 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

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."*

27/9/3 TEMPLATE
Use when responding to any high stress or emotionally charged question
Recommendation: Be brief and concise in your first response: no more than 27 words, 9 seconds, and 3 messages

PRIMACY/RECENCY TEMPLATE
Use when responding to any high stress or emotionally charged question
Recommendation: Provide the most important items or points first and last

RULE OF 3 TEMPLATE
Use when responding to any high stress or emotionally charged question
Recommendation: Provide no more than three messages, ideas, or points at a time
Example: My three main points are: (1) …; (2)….; and (3)….

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.

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KDG 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 is most important for people to do
- **(G)o** Message: Share where people should go for credible information

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

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..."*

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 or problem. 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.
- **(F)ollow Up** Message: Provide information on where people can obtain timely and credible information.

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."