Dynamic Listening & Rumour Management

Module B7

World Health Organization
Module objective

By the end of this module, you should be able to:

• Use dynamic listening as a means to get to know the audiences and address their concerns
• Identify rumours that could cause confusion and mistrust among the audiences
• Develop a strategy to address the rumours in order to stop their spread

Image: http://www.carolecgood.com/listen-2.png
Why listen?

- Know what your audiences think and do
- Know what your audiences are concerned about
- Know what to say
- Know what to do
Importance of listening during a health emergency

- Listening to those affected and involved is an integral part of effective outbreak communication.

- Through listening, responders can learn:
  - how affected and involved populations and organizations understand and are reacting to the health emergency.
  - their perception of the management of the response.
  - the level of trust and confidence in the authorities.
  - the potential behavioural, social, cultural, economic, political barriers that might prevent the adoption of the desired health measures.

Image: http://4.bp.blogspot.com/-AxCKPepcJ14/U1GCFnqREDI/AAAAAAAAAIx/x7obKfo2818/s1600/Flu+Headline.jpg
Identifying rumours of concern

- Which rumours do our key stakeholders care about?
- Which rumours do we care about?
- How do we find rumours before it’s too late?
- Rumour found – to react or ignore?
- How do we address a rumour?

Which rumours do we care about?

- Misinformation
- Myths and harmful practices
- Information that harm reputation and diminish trust in your agency
- Information that pose a public health risk

Rumour spread

- Person to person - word of mouth
- Media
- Internet, blogs, social media
- SMS text messages
- Where else?

Monitoring for rumours

- Mainstream media
- Hotlines
- Social media
  - websites,
  - Blogospheres
- SMS messages
- Focus groups
- Intercept interviews
- Feedback from community influencers and community volunteers
- What else?

The two factors that influence a rumour are its importance to the listener and its ambiguity.

Rumours travel when events are important for individuals, and when the news received about the rumours is either lacking information or is ambiguous. The ambiguity may arise from the fact that the news is not clearly reported, or from the fact that conflicting versions of the news have reached the individual, or from the person's lack of understanding.

- Source: Helio Fred Garcia, Adjunct Associate Professor of Management and Communications at New York University
Addressing rumours: the need for speed

- Meeting the demand/needs of the audiences
- Silence increases ambiguity and confusion
- Simply denying a rumour does not eliminate ambiguity; it may even increase it
- Address the rumour directly where needed
- Use credible spokespersons and speakers to address rumours

Addressing rumours: engagement strategy

Rumours fly in the absence of credible and frequent information. Therefore, we must give people the most accurate possible information, promptly and completely.

– Communicate and engage early
– Be transparent
– Listen to their concerns
– Show empathy
– Provide information on what is being done
– Let the community know that they are part of the solution
Addressing rumours: target the source

- Put out the forest fire
  - Target the sources
  - Prevent the spread beyond the original source
  - Stay consistent with strategies and messages
Systematic listening

- Ensure efficient information gathering
- Understand people's concerns and fears as well as their levels of knowledge and practice
- Integrate findings into decision making for the response
Listening during a health emergency

- Assess & review existing information
- Media and social media surveillance
- Community influencers
- Hotline assessment
- Public opinion surveys
- Home visits
- One-on-one dialogues
- Rapid social research such as KAP surveys (knowledge, attitude and practices surveys)

Image: https://transitiontmr.files.wordpress.com/2015/03/mowen-cartoon.jpg
Active listening – face-to-face communication

- Listen between the lines and observe body language
- Listen actively and show concern through reflective listening techniques
- Ask straight-forward questions to show you are truly listening.
- Listen actively to separate message content from feelings (emotions)
- Understand the 'perception cycle' and how to avoid 'tuning out'
- Clarify meaning and verify information to minimize misunderstandings and wasted time
- Foster positive attitudes by providing effective two-way feedback

Effective emergency risk communication involves active "listening" to what your key stakeholders and audiences are concerned about.

It is important to know what they think and whom they trust, in order to know what to do, say and which channels to reach them.

Listening can be done in many ways in a health emergency, including:

- Media and social media surveillance
- Obtaining public opinion through surveys, influencers or home visits
- Rapid social research like KAP surveys (knowledge, attitude and practices surveys)