

# CRISIS+EMERGENCY RISK COMMUNICATION

## The Six Principles of CERC

**Be First:** If the information is yours to provide by organizational authority—do so as soon as possible. If you can't—then explain how you are working to get it.

**Be Right:** Give facts in increments. Tell people what you know when you know it, tell them what you don't know, and tell them *if* you will know relevant information later.

**Be Credible:** Tell the truth. Do not withhold to avoid embarrassment or the possible “panic” that seldom happens. Uncertainty is worse than not knowing—rumors are more damaging than hard truths.

**Express Empathy:** Acknowledge in words what people are feeling—it builds trust. “We understand this is worrisome”

**Promote Action:** Give people things to do. It calms anxiety and helps restore order.

**Show Respect:** Treat people the way you want to be treated—the way you want your loved ones treated—always—even when hard decisions must be communicated.

For more information or to request CERC materials, please contact CDC's Barbara Reynolds, Ph.D. at [CERCrequest@cdc.gov](mailto:CERCrequest@cdc.gov)

