

Crisis Communication Tips From New York Counties

In times of heightened public anxiety and intense media scrutiny, it's crucial to communicate accurately and effectively. Here are some crisis communication tips to assist you and your team with communicating with your community.

Preparing your Team

1. Meet with your team. Include at least one person from:

- legal team
- PR staff
- expert on subject of the crisis

2. If you're an appointed official, alert at least one of your elected officials. If you're an elected official, brief your colleagues. Beware that anything you tell someone outside your crisis team may leak.

3. Have someone monitor social media and news coverage and give you updates.

Preparing the Message

1. Determine three major points. Avoid jargon. Each point must:

- be true
- show your compassion
- show that you're gathering information and want a solution

2. If you have little or conflicting information, use "general responses" until facts are clear.

Begin Communicating

1. Write a short statement (100 words or less) and have the crisis team review it. Post it on social media and send it to local news media, noting who the statement is from.

2. Tell reporters to follow your social media feed for updated information. Update the feed accordingly.

3. If media are gathering, prepare a briefing area. Plan for visuals. Use the expertise of your public health director, who should be taking the lead in communicating the facts. If you take questions, limit answers to what is known and promise to provide more information as it is confirmed.