Communication and Crisis Management during public health emergencies in 4 phases

Preparedness
- Determine internal coordination mechanisms and/or protocols for risk communication management
- Create risk communication plans/strategies that include a message guide for the most common threats in the country. Test and adapt plans and strategies. Include a guide to key messages for emergencies in the national strategy or plan.

Emergency start
- Express empathy
- Explain the risks
- Promote preventive actions/behaviors
- Describe response efforts

Control
- Explain ongoing risks
- Target audiences
- Provide basic information
- Addressing / channeling rumors: managing the infodemic.

Recovery
- Encourage vigilance
- Discuss lessons learned
- Review and adapt the plan.

Phase 1

Preparedness

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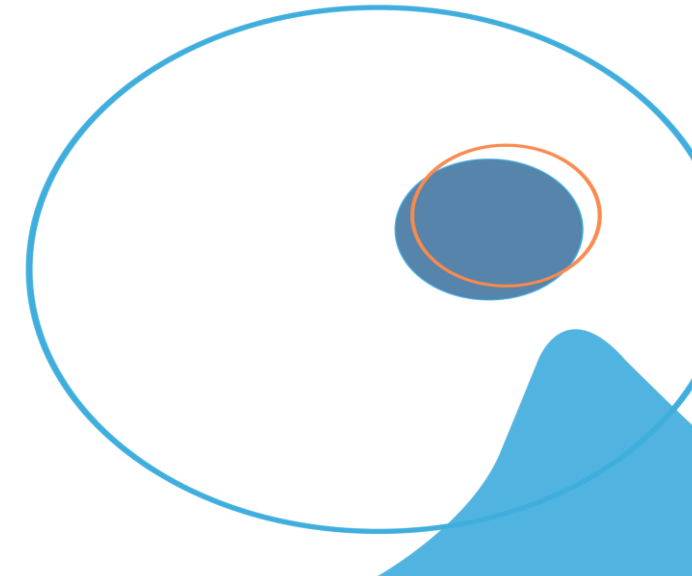
Practical elements for internal communication in the risk communication plan

1. Governance and leadership: Defining actors and responsibilities

2. Information systems and coordination

3. Definition of the information flow
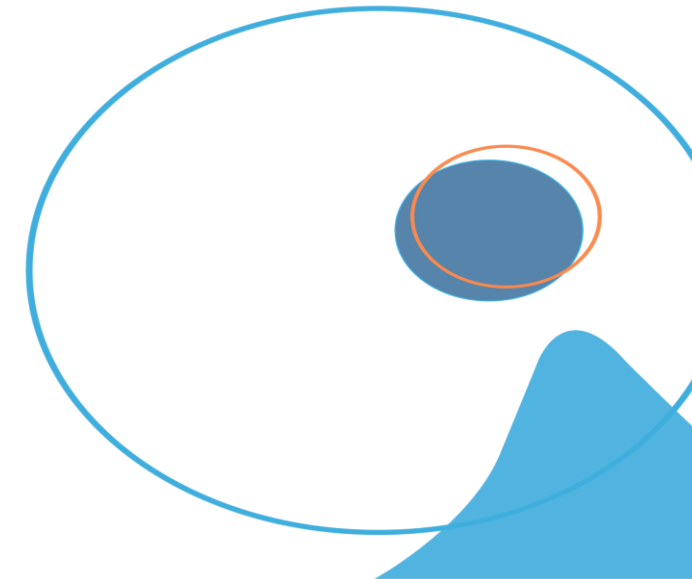
1. Governance and leadership: defining actors and responsibilities

Risk communication should have a strategic role in the teams that lead the preparation and response with well-defined roles and responsibilities for the communication staff.

1. Define operational plans for risk communication aspects in the response.

2. Define who is going to lead the internal communication (it can be a team).

3. Define which areas/institutions are going to make up the coordination team (departments within the health institution)

4. Involve different actors in the response according to each event
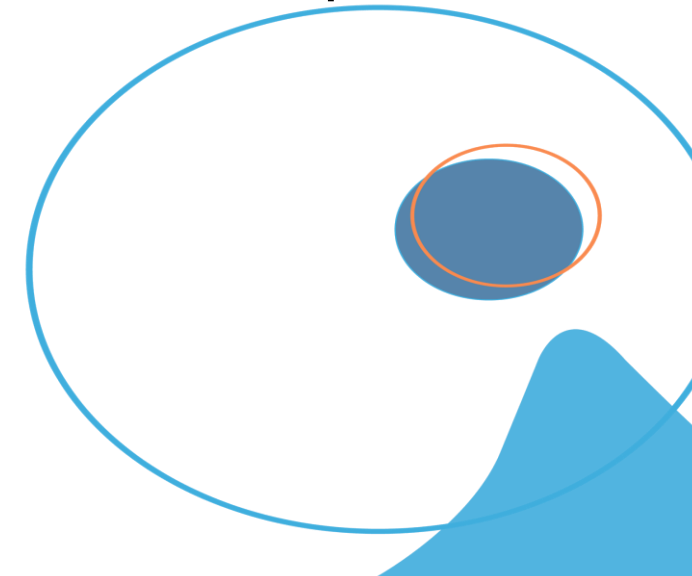
2. Information and coordination systems

1. Responsibilities assigned to the public information team.

2. Procedures developed and approved to verify and disclose the information.

3. Agreements regarding disclosure authorities (who discloses what, when and how).
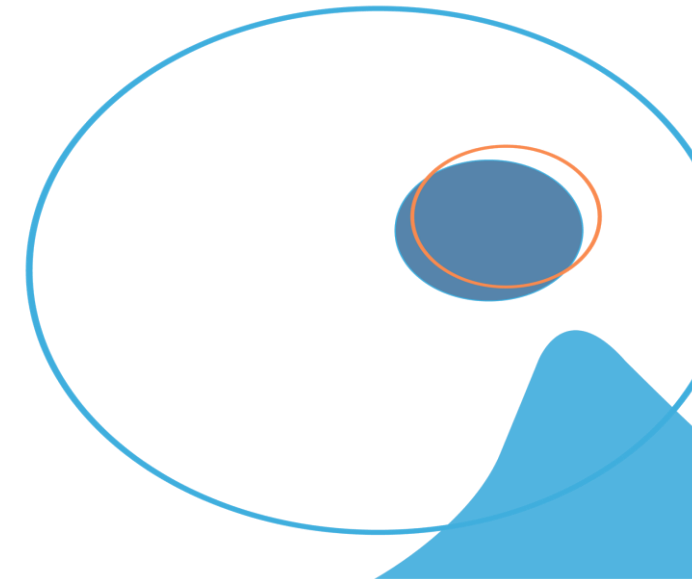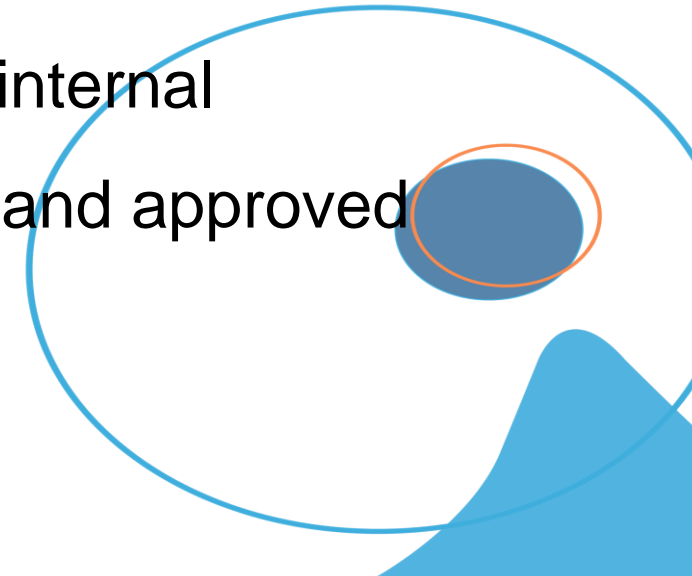
3. Information flow

1. Protocol for conveying messages.

a. Preparation of messages (who prepares them, who reviews them, who publishes them)

a. Spokesperson appointment

b. Information flow between collaborators and different institutions part of the coordination team

3. Information flow

e. Information flow for updating the media and citizens.

f. Information flow for updating health professionals and different hierarchical levels

g. Establishing communication frequency at different moments of the emergency

h. At that point, the discussion is not external, and yes, internal organization is needed so that this element is prepared and approved when necessary.

Practical elements for internal coordination aspects

1. Responsibilities assigned to the public information team and other response actors

2. Procedures developed and approved to verify and disclose information.

3. Agreements on disclosure authorities (who discloses what, when and how).
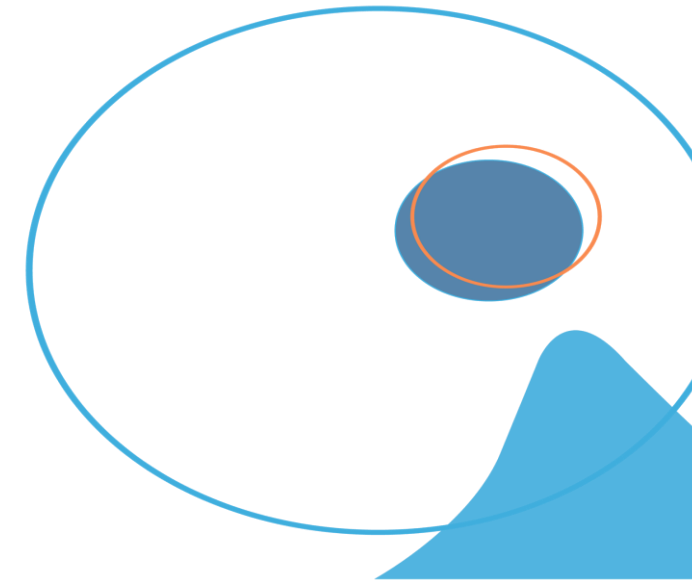
Practical elements for preparation

4. Agreements and procedures to make up the emergency operations center, if activated, or the incident management team.

5. Procedures to guarantee the necessary resources, such as space, equipment and staff, for operating public information during a public health emergency 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, if necessary.

6. Identified methods for disseminating information to the public, stakeholders, and partners, such as websites, social media, email lists, print materials, and press releases, during an emergency.
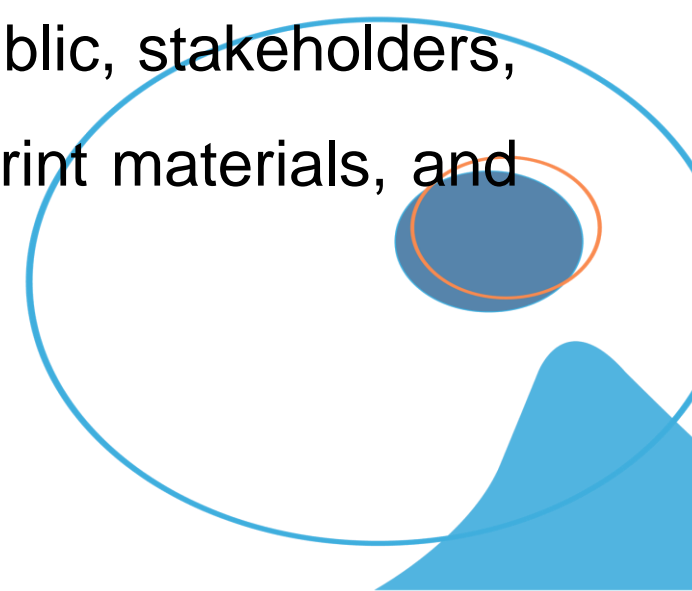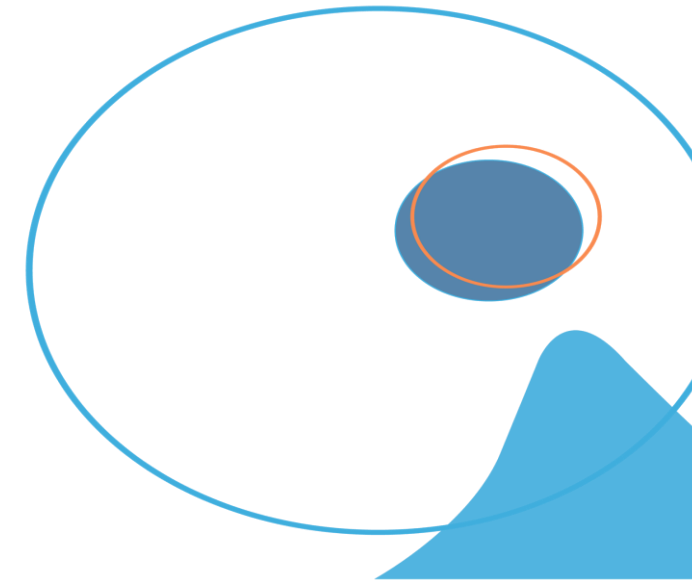
It is essential to apply the plan in the first 24 hours!
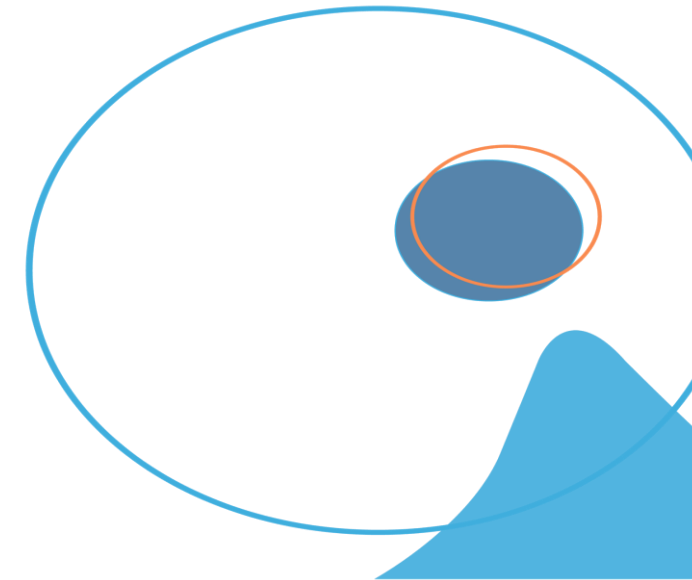
An important recommendation for the response moment

Document meetings, even if they are virtual!

The Risk Communication and Community Participation System for Emergencies

	Indicators	
Level	**C10.1. RCCE system for emergencies**	
Level 1	Mechanisms[66] for coordination of RCCE functions[67] and resources[68] are under development, or coordination of RCCE functions and resources is conducted on an ad hoc basis	❑
Level 2	Mechanisms for coordination of RCCE functions and resources, including plans, SOPs and formal government arrangements are developed	❑
Level 3	Mechanisms for coordination of RCCE functions and resources, including plans, SOPs and formal government arrangements are developed and being implemented at the national level[69]	❑
Level 4	Mechanisms for coordination of RCCE functions and resources, including plans, SOPs and formal government arrangements are developed and being implemented at the national and intermediate levels[70]	❑
Level 5	Mechanisms for coordination of RCCE functions and resources are implemented at the national, intermediate and local levels; are fully integrated into emergency response systems; and are exercised, reviewed, evaluated and updated on a regular basis[71]	❑

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Organización Mundial de la Salud
Oficina Regional para las Américas

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Support tool for developing basic IHR capacities

- Identify the individuals or units responsible for risk communication within each relevant ministry and sector, with defined terms of reference for working together during a public health emergency.
- Identify and assign spokespersons (who hold a certain job position) for the public health emergency.
- Establish a list of key stakeholders in government ministries and among implementing partners. Identify contact points
- for communication, including different means for internal exchange of information (such as email, SMS or telephone or closed group social media platforms).
- Establish a dedicated risk communication unit or team that works on two-way communication with the public (including affected communities at risk) using standard operating procedures, priority tasks, and specific responsibilities for communication and decision-making during a public health event at the national level.
- Develop a national multi-sector and multi-threat emergency risk communication plan.
- Assess existing capacities and needs in government ministries and key partner agencies, and develop training plans to
- identify priority skills for effective risk communication.
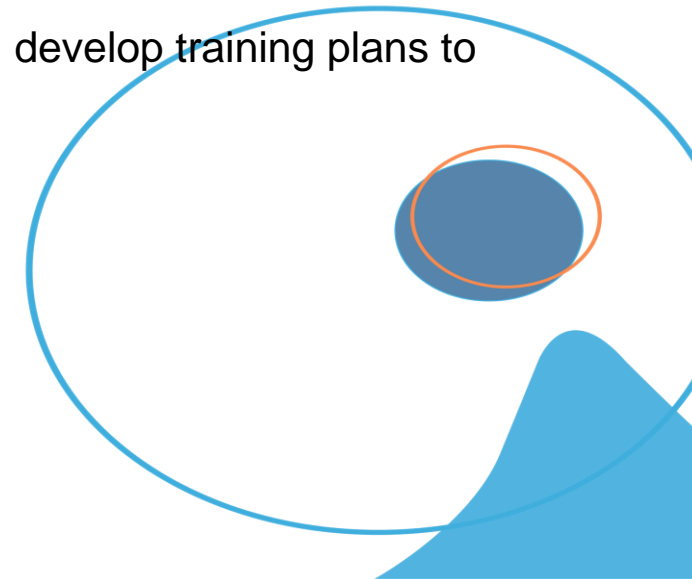
GRACIAS!
THANKS!
OBRIGADA!

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