TRACC
TRAINING IN RISK AND CRISIS COMMUNICATION

Training in Risk and Crisis Communication (TRACC) is a social science-based curriculum developed and presented by The National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism (START) and funded by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security. Through four training modules, TRACC helps organizations plan effective communication before, during and after a crisis. TRACC a unique curriculum that is research-based and covers the entire life-cycle of a crisis including preparation, response and recovery.

Module 1: Risk and Crisis Planning

Time: 1.5 hours*

Learn about the risk and crisis planning process and how to evaluate a crisis communication program. This online or in-person training includes selected readings, quizzes, and content that will cover:

- Diagnosing vulnerabilities
- Selecting and training a crisis team
- Developing a crisis management plan
- Measuring effectiveness

"Only 56% of companies with crisis management plans also selected a crisis management team."

—*American Management Association*

Diagnosing Vulnerabilities

Identifying risks in advance enables organizations to make better decisions before, during and after a crisis. Effective crisis communication also helps minimize damage and lessen negative outcomes.

Different organizations face different risks. In this section, participants learn the differences between risk and crisis communication, why they are important and how to diagnose their organizations' unique vulnerabilities.

Selecting and Training a Crisis Team

Risk and crisis communication is only as successful as an organization's crisis management team. These individuals, identified in advance, must have necessary expertise to engage immediately in the event of a crisis. They also must make decisions together quickly and effectively. This section will help organizations ensure they have effective crisis management teams in place and ready to act.

* Times can be adjusted to meet organizational needs. Training is offered online, in person or in a blended format.

Developing a Crisis Management Plan

In this section, participants learn the 15 elements every crisis management plan should include. They also learn how to consider all phases of risk and crisis communication in developing a plan. Participants will identify how to set guiding principles for response strategies, including communication guidelines. They will learn how to spot a "fantasy" crisis management plan and make the necessary changes to make their plan more effective.

Measuring Effectiveness

Many organizations do not take the time to measure the effectiveness of their crisis plans before a major event strikes. This section covers how to effectively evaluate new or existing risk and crisis communications plans. It also will discuss top techniques for measuring effectiveness before a major event occurs.

Call 301.405.6600 or e-mail infostart@start.umd.edu for more information and to schedule TRACC today.

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Four TRACC Training Modules

1. Risk and Crisis Planning

2. Audience Analysis and Engagement

3. Media Relations

4. Crisis Communication Simulation

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"TRACC provides communication practitioners and government agencies with the tools and knowledge to make informed decisions based on a greater understanding of their audience, communication objectives, and deliberate message development."

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Director, Risk Communication Staff at the
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Module 2: Audience Analysis and Engagement

Time: 4-6 hours*

Risk and crisis messages are delivered best when communicators consider the diverse needs of their audiences. When audiences feel they are valued and respected, organizations can simultaneously build trust and increase stakeholder efficacy. This module discusses how to conduct an audience analysis as well as the benefits of effective audience engagement. Specifically, this training will cover:

- Identifying audience(s) during all crisis life-cycle phases of preparedness, response and recovery
- Conducting audience analysis and engagement
- Analyzing and engaging audiences online

Identifying Audiences

Participants will learn how audience analysis can help achieve communication goals during the crisis life-cycle phases of preparedness, response and recovery. Content specifically discusses several ways to conduct audience analysis with limited budgets and resources. Participants will describe and identify special-needs populations and how to effectively communicate with these unique populations.

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Why Analyze Your Audience?
- *Reassess current assumptions*
- *Create a foundation for accurate planning*
- *Build trust among stakeholders*
- *Empower communities*

Conducting Audience Analysis and Engagement

Conducting an effective audience analysis through stakeholder engagement is essential to risk and crisis communication planning. Communicators will learn ways to recruit, conduct, and analyze key informant interviews and focus groups. Participants will also discuss START's Communities Advancing Resilience Toolkit (CART), highlighting best research practices.

Analyzing and Engaging Audiences Online

Social media play a significant role in today's crisis communications. Participants will discuss the importance of conducting online audience analysis. In addition, they will gain a basic understanding of the various free and low-cost tools available to analyze and engage audiences online, such as Hootsuite, tweetreach, boardreader, and more.

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"Thank you again for including me in this training. It was very well done and the material was both interesting and beneficial to the nonprofit community."

—Pascalis Papouras
Special Assistant to the Executive Office at the
International Orthodox Christian Charities

"I enjoyed learning how to raise awareness on emerging crisis communication needs with linguistically diverse populations."

—Dr. Joseph O. Prewitt Diaz
Humanitarian Psychologist at the
Recipient APA International Humanitarian Award

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Module 3: Media Relations

Time: 4-6 hours*

Developing meaningful relationships with the media and staying up-to-date with new technologies are constant challenges for communicators. These challenges are compounded during a crisis, when media consumption increases, journalists are poised for interviewing and reporting, and the social media realm becomes a hub for discussion and potential rumors. TRACC media training helps participants leverage both new and traditional media to reach key audiences. The training will cover:

- Evaluating the media landscape and implications for risk communication
- Analyzing media tools for risk communication
- Creating messages for and leveraging traditional and social media

Evaluating the Media Landscape and Implications for Risk Communication

Participants begin the training by discussing current trends in traditional and social media. They will describe key features of popular media and discuss examples of each. They will also cover shifting demographic trends in media and learn several reasons why audiences do and do not use traditional and social media. Finally, they will identify how to select media channels for communicating risk and crisis messages initiatives to audiences.

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Why Media Relations Training?

< one hour: *time you have to respond in a crisis*

10 seconds: *the time it takes for a social media user to forward a message, whether true or false*

Analyzing Media Tools for Risk Communication

This section examines message objectives, creating clear and concise statements, and disseminating messages. It also provides examples of how an organization can conduct real-time analysis during a crisis to realign communication to meet present demand.

Creating Messages For and Leveraging Traditional and Social Media

Participants will learn the 77 most asked questions by the media in a crisis and the 33 most often used bridging statements by spokespersons. They will discuss how to interact with journalists and social media content creators including how to build effective relationships and pitch news story ideas. In addition, participants will learn how and why to use a technique called "message mapping". Finally, they will construct a message map and adapt it to traditional and social media channels.

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Module 4: Crisis Communication Simulation

Time: 4-6 hours*

Put your crisis communication skills to the test by participating in a multi-party simulated crisis scenario. Using an online platform, the crisis simulation allows participants to apply knowledge from earlier TRACC modules in risk and crisis communication planning, audience analysis and engagement, and media relations during a realistic crisis scenario.

This simulation involves both following organizational protocol and adapting to a specific crisis situation. Additionally, this simulation is an opportunity to try new communication approaches in a safe environment.

During the simulation, participants will work in teams of two to six, with each team representing one of six organizations responding to a public safety incident in the fictional city of Bookerville, Va. The simulation asks participants to create and deliver communications through several media outlets. It requires them to analyze situations, identify audiences and deliver communications materials (press releases, social media posts, etc.) within time limits that could occur in the event of a real emergency.

Participants will receive feedback during the simulation based on the choices they make. In addition, the simulation includes a debriefing session to pinpoint what went right and what went wrong.

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The crisis communication simulation enables participants to practice their skills in an environment that simulates some of the complexity, pressure, and confusion of a real crisis. The simulation will reinforce the following concepts from other TRACC modules:

- Sending clear and concise messages
- Communicating with a variety of audiences
- Overcoming communication barriers such as mistrust and mixed signals caused by incomplete or inaccurate social and traditional media reporting
- Preparing and executing an effective press conference

TRACC's crisis simulation puts you in charge of responding to a realistic threat. Are you ready?

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