PFAS Risk Communication Workshop

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
with The Environmental Council of the States (ECOS) &
The Association of State and Territorial Health Officials (ASTHO)

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Exercise 1: Setting objectives, knowing your audience, & building trust with them

AUDIENCE	JOURNALIST	COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION	MAYOR	GOVERNOR	RESIDENT
What is the audience's "so what?"	sound bites good on into action something that will draw clicks/ views Want multiple perspectives Who's to blame? What residents need to know What the gov't are going to do	example community association They want to be heard Want information on the issue be prepared for both sides	community safety economic impacts to constituents re-election family legacy, reputation reputation of public safety wants to walk the middle line cost Safety of town/people	example Constituents and opposition politics Public Health Can this bad press get outside of state Ability to respond and not get caught off guard understanding the scope what has been do and what still needs to be done, what still is a barrier to our success setting expectations governors want action plans Where is the money coming from?	integrity (YouTube Channel) identity (YouTube channel) Concerns about city water how does this affect my identity? what does this mean for my family, health, kids' health? Community leader/ channel what will it cost to get clean water? what do these numbers mean? Irrigation of concerns for veggies are veggies going to market?
What audience factors should you consider?	Youthfulness/ inexperience They may have their own bias Not a subject expert Their message isn't the only avenue to the public- verifiable Who his audience is What their medium is - how large/ large/small is their place Want to make sure your official site gets the full info out Limited time to digest the information you give	Not having a solution in place is challenging Association (demographic) Language barriers? Community being tied to right off the bat How are they receiving info Representing rural vs urban areas Employers involved DEI concerns (can use EPA EJ mapping tool)	local history, community history personal bias - family fire-fighter personal bias - identity - big government trust in govt is low image to uphold economic reasons, why spend the money at the problem not convinced that this is an issue literary, web problem - approach overly technical way cultural norms - acceptance, ownership, autonomy (dont tell me what to do)	Economic impact for individuals Governor themself will be well informed what the community wants resistance from community to change from private to municipal water Providing options balancing act govt wants to know if the agency is proactive Needs data to be understandable	time for anything - busy with kids and job open to action (advise them if not municipal water) asking what she knows, offering testing bias against chemicals in any form trust in gov't messenger is probably low Opportunity for education about the coal water as well, if she here? COVID disproportionately impact of being put on city water contamination of substance - PFAS represents cultural messaging municipal water for all one, could cost a lot. is the well all contaminated too?
What are your risk communication objectives? (If possible, label them as "build shared understanding"; "change behavior"; or "change feelings")	Understanding change behavior change feelings Clear concise messaging - no bombardment numbers Water isn't the only source minimize risks between specific to people Think of today - not 5 yrs - act plan message about actions Heard Reassured that gov't is working on it - not necessarily cause for alarm What happened and when Actions that gov't is taking what you can't do anyone what you can do Empowered to act Empowered with information what is risky and what isn't educating and relaying - communicating - provides - how build trust will be with them through the process - building trust Feel they can trust the authorities	Objective: get people to believe they need to be off well water Empower the community - change same of the paradigm Practice transparency Shared understanding of risk - acceptance from sustaining change start with the facts - what are PFAS and are they an issue? Provide technical support Reduce barriers to PFAS by increasing understanding private well owners are most difficult to get ahead of Build partnerships among agencies Have a plan - if we're on the same page it's more believable	shared understanding of what the risk is change behavior - take - life is not overblown Share actionable steps - what the impact will be - for constituents change feelings on the situation tactic: talk to reporter change behavior - change how to think about the problem to the community Building shared understanding - what is the problem - building relationship to reach out change feelings, not about pointing fingers, reassurance	Anticipate questions well clarify around what is known and what is not known reset worries based on science prioritization Supporting legislation having good faith in agencies working together Clear actionable champion increased sampling	Understand where she's coming from, values and beliefs. Express how always in the community here's what we're doing - project is concerning - we're on top of it - we'll get it fixed Shared understanding - feel unlikely risk Change behavior - understanding - what is being able to act on them Shared understanding - options - what don't know - what is being done - what's being done and well and sufficient Change behavior - information - actionable change feelings - needed dude - feel like she has control of her situation Change behavior - go on my water - talk to neighbors - talk a trusted partner change feelings build a network of support
What might you say to build trust and show shared values?	Being upfront with what you can/can't do Be mindful of the different needs of your audience (adults/children) telling some of the story about he process Give reasons why you can't do something.	Lean on kids - great place to start Buy longer-term - information tools, talk about roles and responsibilities CA- transparency Don't just say "I understand" - Show that you understand if you can. Coordinated messaging with other agencies - brainstorm You can take share your well and show some of your humanity Show up- out in the community, use actions Arrive early to have dialogue, be open "I Get more folks talk with high levels in their well water to stop using well water by unsafe uses 2. Share more context on the findings and the process with the municipal water users so that we increase their feelings of safety in the municipal water"	autonomy - community members (dif - Appreciate our firefighters and their work to - We know you are concerned about PFAS - stop where and how we are - we care about the community too does someone in our office have an existing relationship Listening of - Information to share - how they - we care about the community too Healing - relationship - pollutes (from manufacturers - accountable Verify - relevant - community concerns relative to - support well water - to - support well water - concerns/ values	you're all still public servants responsible government positive example Transparency will be take - communicate - have hard methods to deal with this	If trust is built, she could be a great messenger Emphasizing risk and safety of children and families Listening/ empathy validating her experience. Values - stewardship, responsibility, shared good - value, want to work with her her and her children's health Share what we know, what we don't know, what we want to do Build a relationship this person in a - relationship - trust - - -