



NAVY AND MARINE CORPS FORCE HEALTH PROTECTION COMMAND

IMPROVING READINESS THROUGH PUBLIC HEALTH ACTION

Media Communication Process Building Bridges

- **Knowing how to bridge from their story to your message is critical.**
- **“When you come to a fork in the road, take it.” Which way will they go?**

Examples of Bridging Statements

- “...and let me add...”
- “...what you should...”
- “...and the important thing is...”
- “...what I can tell you is...”
- “What’s good about this situation is...”
- “I believe what’s been accomplished here is...”
- “What I’m most satisfied with is...”
- “Our number one priority is...”

Examples of Bridging

Q: What do you know about X?

A: I don’t know about X, but I can tell you about Y. Y is...

Q: Critics say X about your organization

A: I can’t speak for them, but I do know that...

Q: Your (top person in your organization) has said... Do you agree?

A: I can’t speak for X. What I can tell you is...

Cast-Iron Guarantee/ 100% Assurance

Q: “Can you guarantee this will never happen again?”

A: “What I can guarantee is... Let me give you one (or two) examples.

A. We have conducted extensive...

B. We will do everything it takes to investigate...”

The Set Up

Q: “If it is determined that...will you pay for...?”

A: “I can’t speculate. Now, what I can tell you is...”

Q: “What if your employees are found negligent?”

A: “A thorough review is underway right now. I can’t speculate on any causes right now.”

False Choice

Q: “What do you put first, profits or people?”

A: “We’ve found that you can’t have one without the other. For example,...”

Q: “Isn’t it better to be safe than sorry?”

A: “We take safety very seriously. For example...”

Visit the Navy and Marine Corps Force Health Protection Command at:

<https://www.med.navy.mil/Navy-and-Marine-Corps-Force-Health-Protection-Command/Environmental-Health/Environmental-Programs/Risk-Communication/>



NAVY AND MARINE CORPS FORCE HEALTH PROTECTION COMMAND

IMPROVING READINESS THROUGH PUBLIC HEALTH ACTION

Hypothetical/ Rumor/ Speculation

Q: "What if..."

A: "I can't speculate, but I can tell you that..."

"That's a hypothetical question, but what we do know is..."

"Unfortunately, we don't have a crystal ball. What I can say is..."

Q: "Isn't it possible that this could have been caused by..."

A: "Here's what we know right now..."

Q: "We've heard that there's a possibility that this was caused by..."

A: "What we know right now is..."



Multiple Choice (Pick Your Poison)

Q: "So, what is your track record? Have you in fact dealt with this problem before and do you accept responsibility for this?"

A: "Well, to answer your first or second or third question..."

Foot-in-Mouth

Q: "So you would say (your organization) has a far better reputation than..."

A: "What I AM saying is..."

A: "What we are proud about is..."

A: "Our organization has accomplished..."



False Premise/ Negative Allegation

Q: "There's clearly been a cover-up. Isn't it time you came clean with the local community?"

A: "We've been very open about our operations. In fact, we have..."

Q: "Didn't your organization lie about ...?"

A: "We've been truthful about... For example..."

Q: "What if it is determined that..."

A: "What we are doing is..."

Speculate Based on Past Events

Q: "Didn't this happen before and was it due to operator error?"

A: "We learned a lot from the past incident and made improvements. At this point, we don't know what caused this incident."

How to Defer to the Correct Person

A: "I know you want updated information. The person who can give that to you is..."

A: "I don't have the information you want. 'X' can give that to you. Here is the phone number."

A: "I'm 'x' and my job is to 'y'. The person who can help you is..."

Visit the Navy and Marine Corps Force Health Protection Command at:

<https://www.med.navy.mil/Navy-and-Marine-Corps-Force-Health-Protection-Command/Environmental-Health/Environmental-Programs/Risk-Communication/>