

COVID-19

Risk Communication and Community Engagement (RCCE)

Planning Template

PAHO



Pan American
Health
Organization



World Health
Organization

REGIONAL OFFICE FOR THE Americas

PURPOSE OF THE TEMPLATE

- To support PAHO Country Offices and national/subnational emergency management mechanisms to develop or update their risk communication and community engagement (RCCE) plans related to COVID-19.
- The COVID-19 pandemic is a rapidly evolving situation and takes on different patterns in countries and communities. It is therefore imperative that RCCE plans are adapted to the local context, reviewed frequently, and updated as needed.



KEY CONSIDERATIONS

- Risk communication and community engagement (RCCE) are essential components of a broader health emergency preparedness and response action plan.
- For public health emergencies such as the COVID-19 pandemic, risk communication includes the range of communication actions required through the preparedness, response and recovery phases, in order to encourage informed decision making, positive behavior change, and the maintenance of trust.

DEFINITION OF RISK COMMUNICATION:

The two-way and multi-directional communication and engagement with affected populations so that they can take informed decisions to protect themselves and their loved ones

(World Health Organization)





Key elements of an RCCE Plan

1. STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

2. KEY MESSAGES

3. AUDIENCES

4. CHANNELS & ACTIVITIES

**5. MONITORING AND
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

6. BUDGET



THE ULTIMATE GOAL OF RISK COMMUNICATION IS BEHAVIOR CHANGE.

Most behavior change theories and evidence agree on the following three core elements essential to achieve behavior change:

- **WHAT:** Inform/educate on what the target population should do
- **WHY:** Motivate/convince/compel the target population on the need to do it
- **HOW:** Provide specific guidance/tools/skills to do it

EXAMPLES OF RCCE OBJECTIVES

1. To ensure that people have the life-saving information they need to protect themselves and others from the virus and to reduce its impact on health, social life, and the economy
2. To ensure effective feedback mechanisms are in place and used to ensure two-way communication between health/response authorities and communities, the public and stakeholders
3. To ensure that health workers know how to engage with patients and care givers, detect possible cases, communicate with patients about COVID-19, and report to the relevant health authorities
4. To ensure that health workers know how to protect themselves in the context of their exposure to the disease
5. To position country health officials as the main/first trusted source of information about COVID-19
6. To ensure consistency in information and language from all partners and avoid misinformation
7. To inform the public on how the public health response to COVID-19 is being conducted in monitoring, detecting and preventing the spread of COVID-19
8. To ensure participation of and engagement with relevant communities to increase uptake of public health measures and address barriers to their implementation

SELECT/FORMULATE YOUR RCCE OBJECTIVES

OBJECTIVE	
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	
6.	
7.	
8.	
9.	
10.	

Review your objectives regularly and adapt as needed

KEY MESSAGES

PREVENTION

- Frequent and proper handwashing
- Maintaining social/physical distancing
- Practice respiratory hygiene
- Avoid touching eyes, nose and mouth
- Disinfecting surfaces and objects

EARLY DETECTION AND DIAGNOSIS

- Symptoms of COVID-19 infection: fever, cough, difficulty breathing
- Following local guidance on availability and procedures for COVID-19 testing
- Staying at home if feeling unwell and following local guidance to contact health care providers

MOST OF THE MESSAGES AND INFORMATION NEEDED BY DIFFERENT GROUPS CAN BE FOUND ON WHO AND PAHO'S WEBSITES:

www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019
www.paho.org/coronavirus

The websites also provide a range of communication materials that can be adapted for in-country use.

Make sure to visit the sites often, as they are regularly updated.





AUDIENCES

- Important to keep in mind that for communication purposes, the general public does not exist as a unit, but rather as a combination of sub-groups.
- For effective communication in general, and especially in an emergency situation, it is very important to identify or segment and target the sub-groups.
- Some questions to guide the identification of stakeholder groups:
 - » Which groups are at risk to contract or transmit COVID-19?
 - » Which other groups that may not be at risk have a stake in or may be indirectly impacted by the disease?
 - » Who are the influencers, gatekeepers, decision-makers in the different communities/groups that must be engaged to educate, convince, support the identified groups?



In the context of COVID-19, all persons are potentially at risk in the absence of preventive practices

CHANNELS AND TOOLS

- Communication messages and channels must be tailored to the target population, even when the message content is essentially the same.
- Communication channels must be trusted by the target population.
- Channels and tools can include:

CHANNELS

- Broadcast media (TV, radio)
- Social media (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, blogs)
- Websites (from trusted organizations/sources)
- Community health boards
- Mobile phones
- Influencers & community leaders

TOOLS/MATERIALS

- PSAs, videos, audio messages
- Social media cards with messages, videos, infographics, etc.
- Manuals, infographics, videos, etc.
- Posters, folders, flyers
- Text messages
- Talks & presentations, video & audio messages

SELECT/FORMULATE YOUR RCCE OBJECTIVES

	AUDIENCE	INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE NEEDED	CHANNELS	TOOLS & MATERIALS
1.				
2.				
3.				
4.				
5.				
6.				
7.				
8.				
9.				
10.				

MONITORING

PURPOSE:

To assess whether:

- You are reaching the intended target audiences
- The messages are understood
- The intended behavior change is taking place

STRATEGIES FOR RCCE MONITORING IN THE CONTEXT OF COVID-19, TAKING INTO ACCOUNT THE NEED FOR LIMITED INTERPERSONAL CONTACT TO REDUCE RISK AND EXPOSURE:

- Monitoring of epidemiological trends
- Monitoring of care-seeking behaviors (testing, medical consultations, hospitals, etc.)
- Media monitoring
- Social media monitoring
- Key informant interviews and (virtual) focus groups
- Telephone surveys





COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

PURPOSE

- Understanding risk perception and behaviors
- Understanding local understandings of information provided
- Understanding and responding to specific needs and knowledge gaps
- Tailoring information to the circumstances of specific groups

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT IN THE CONTEXT OF COVID-19:

- Establish a network of key informants representing key groups and consult periodically with the network by phone
- Conduct virtual community meetings
- Engage the media to organize call-in programs
- Establish COVID-19 hotline



BUDGET

CHANNELS	TOOLS/MATERIALS	EST. COST
Broadcast media (TV, radio)	PSAs, videos, audio messages	
Social media (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, blogs)	Social media cards with messages, videos, infographics, etc.	
Websites (from trusted organizations/sources)	Manuals, infographics, videos, etc.	
Community health boards	Posters, folders, flyers	
Mobile phones	Text messages	
Influencers & community leaders	Talks & presentations, video & audio messages	

- A proper budget is important for resource allocation and mobilization
- In the context of COVID-19—and given the degree of uncertainty regarding the duration of the pandemic—it will be critical to periodically review and update the plan and budget as needed.
- If financial resources are tight, plan on implementing the communication strategy in phases, addressing the highest priority objectives and audiences first.

OPERATIONAL PLAN FOR [INSERT TIME PERIOD]

	RESPONSIBLE PERSON/FOCAL POINT	TARGET AUDIENCE	ACTIVITY
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			
5.			
6.			
7.			
8.			
9.			
10.			

MONITORING AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

	RESPONSIBLE PERSON/FOCAL POINT	ACTIVITY	DATES	EXPECTED RESULTS
1.				
2.				
3.				
4.				
5.				
6.				
7.				
8.				
9.				
10.				

Notes

Notes

RESOURCES

- WHO Risk Communication and Community Engagement (RCCE) Action Plan Guidance COVID-19 Preparedness and Response: [www.who.int/publications-detail/risk-communication-and-community-engagement-\(rcce\)-action-plan-guidance](http://www.who.int/publications-detail/risk-communication-and-community-engagement-(rcce)-action-plan-guidance)
- WHO COVID-19 website: www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019
- PAHO COVID-19 website: www.paho.org/coronavirus
- PAHO social media: Facebook: @PAHO-WHO; Twitter: @PAHOWHO; INSTAGRAM: @OPSPAHO







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