

LESSON PLAN

Course: Crisis Communications
Professor Carrie Braun

Subject: Effective Messaging

Date: February 13, 2022

Topic: Recognizing and creating effective messages

Lesson #2/16, 90 minutes

Overview: There is a difference between communication output and effective messaging. Facts alone are not communication, but messages based on facts are. Effective messaging can change the way we think, act, or feel. This lesson will highlight the importance of effective messaging during a crisis, and how to go beyond "just the facts, ma'am" to develop messages that instill confidence and inspire action.

Materials Needed:

- PowerPoint: Effective Messaging
- Factual or Actionable slideshow
- Effective Messaging six-point worksheet

Learning Objectives: At the conclusion of this lesson, students should be:

- Familiar with the concept of effective messaging,
- Know the difference between factual messages and actionable messages, and
- Be able to synthesize basic details about a crisis incident into a succinct and effective message.

Out of class work:

1. Complete assigned readings
2. Watch the Ted Talk "The Art of Effective Messaging"
3. Find and bring a copy (either physically or digitally) an example of a social media post by a law enforcement agency at the start of a crisis situation

Activity:

- Start with "lecturette" on the difference between information output and effective messaging- this will be presented while using the Effective Messaging slideshow. (5-10 minutes)
- Play in-class game "Factual or Actionable" where students are presented a slideshow with social media posts and need to identify whether the information is straight facts or employs some of the tactics for effective messaging. (20-25 minutes with discussion)
- Have students break into small groups to share the social media post they brought and identify if it is factual or actionable. For factual posts, the group will discuss what information is needed to transition the message from factual to actionable. (15-20 minutes)
- Have students individually use a fact-based message and workshop it through the Effective Messaging six-point framework to turn it into an actionable message. (10-15 minutes)
- Have 4-7 students share their original statement and their effective messaging statement. (10-20 minutes)
- Close: Announcements for next class, reminders on upcoming assignments (5 minutes)

Preview next lesson: Building on the concept of effective messaging, students will learn about messaging on the fly in the midst of a crisis situation and how bridging can be an effective technique at the outset of a crisis.