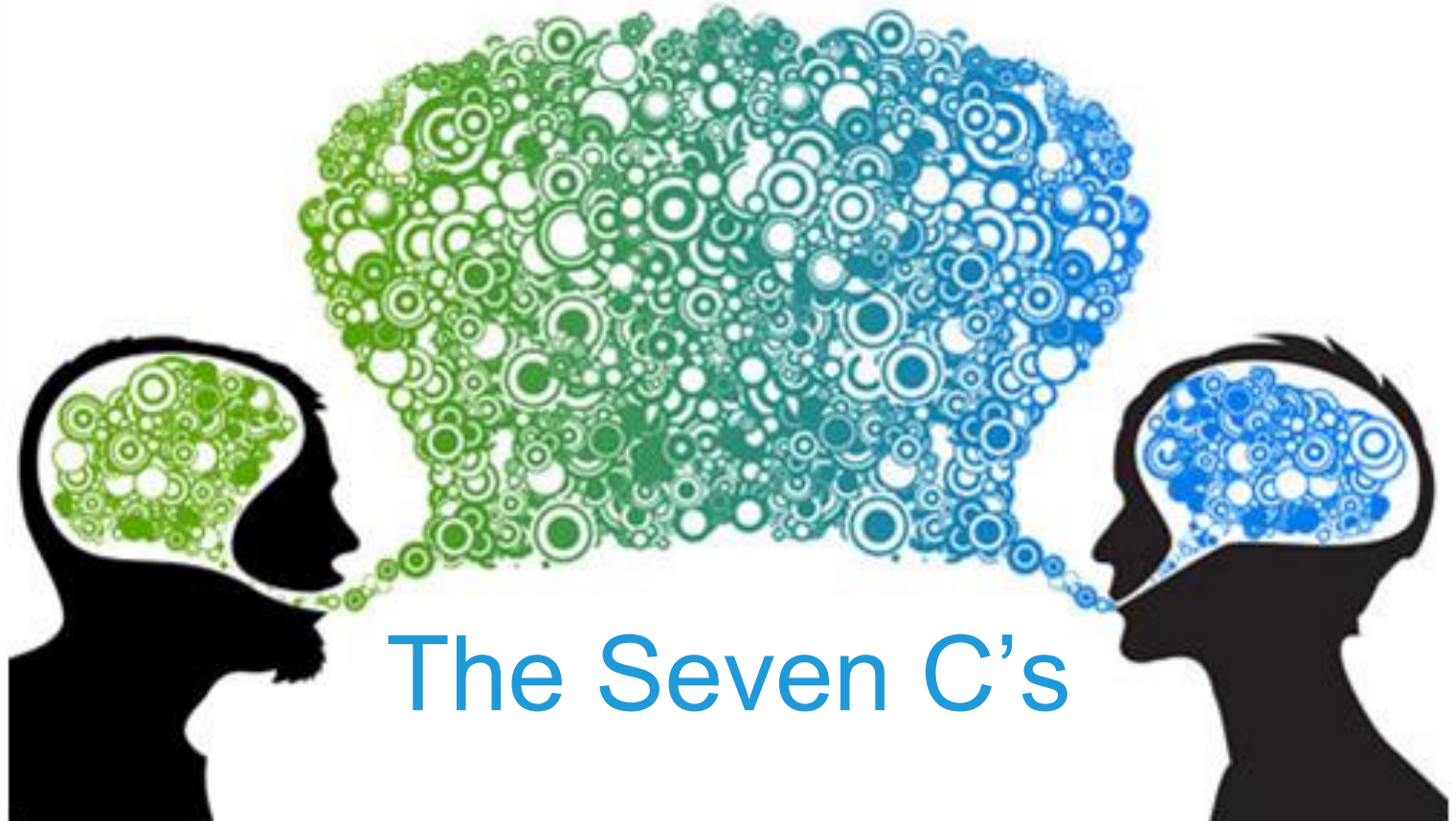


# Making health communication more effective:



The Seven C's



**USAID**  
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

**Breakthrough**  
**ACTION**  
FOR SOCIAL & BEHAVIOR CHANGE



# The seven C's

When key messages and materials are combined, they must reflect seven important characteristics that increase their effectiveness.

**These are known as the “7 Cs” of Communication.**

# Questions to answer



# Do's of Message Development

- Provide simple, doable actions that the public can perform to reduce risk.
- Acknowledge the emotions (fear, anxiety and sadness) that people may be experiencing as a result of the emergency.
- Keep key messages short and concise, only state relevant information that the audience needs and wants to know.
- Ensure that messages instill confidence.
- Use simple language that can be understood by the intended audiences.
- Develop messages taking into consideration the communication channels used to disseminate them.
- Use evidence-based data to inform messages.
- Link messages to available services and resources when appropriate.

# Don'ts of Message Development

- Fuel fear and anxiety
- Providing background information as this may distract audiences from the key messages.
- Develop long messages addressing more than one issue at once.
- Deny uncertainty if it exists, as this affects credibility.
- Provide information that is dishonest or factually incorrect.
- Use technical jargon and complex words.
- Blame individuals, organizations or institutions for the emergency.
- Use language that can be interpreted as judgmental or discriminatory.
- Offer promises that cannot be guaranteed.
- Use humor

# Seven C's of Effective Communication

- **Command attention:** Attract and capture the audience's attention. Make it memorable!
- **Clarify the message :** Ensure the message is clear and easily understood.
- **Communicate the benefit:** State the advantages (key benefit) of adopting the desired behavior.
- **Consistency counts:** Repeat the same message consistently and across communication channels to avoid confusion and enhance the impact of the message.

# Seven C's of Effective Communication

- **Create trust:** Ensure you use factual information and credible channels. Credibility of the message is essential, as without it, the message will go unheeded.
- **Cater for the heart and head:** People are persuaded by both facts and emotions. Use both to maximize the appeal and persuasiveness of the message.
- **Call to action:** Include a clear call to action stating exactly what the audience should do.

It is recommended that you review key messages against the 7 C's of communication before pre-testing them.

# REVIEWING KEY MESSAGES AGAINST THE 7 Cs OF COMMUNICATION

## Purpose:

The worksheet is a checklist that outlines key questions to assess whether your key messages reflect the 7 Cs of Communication.

## Directions:

Review each individual key messages (and accompanying materials if available) against the checklist below:

- Identify if there are areas of improvement.
- reformulate content/messages if necessary.

Please note that this worksheet is followed by a completed. Use the example below as a reference if necessary.

**Key Message:** \_\_\_\_\_



7 Cs of Communication	Message Check	Yes	No	Suggestions for improving the message (if necessary)
<b>Command Attention</b>	Does the message stand out/capture the audience's attention?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<b>Clarify the Message</b>	Is the message simple, direct and easy to understand by the audience?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<b>Communicate a Benefit</b>	Is it clear what benefit the audience will reap by engaging in the desired action?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<b>Consistency Counts</b>	Are all messages consistent?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	Can they be conveyed across different communication channels?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<b>Create Trust</b>	Is the message credible?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	Is the channel used credible?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<b>Cater for Head and Heart</b>	Does the message contain logical and factual information?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	Does the message use emotion?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<b>Call to Action</b>	Does the message clearly communicate what the audience should do?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

This presentation is made possible by the generous support of the American people through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). The contents are the responsibility of Johns Hopkins Center for Communication Programs and do not necessarily reflect the views of USAID or the United States Government.