February is Black History Month
Communicating to African-American Communities During a Public Health Emergency

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Objectives

• Explain why cultural competence matters during an emergency.

• Explain the implications of being/not being culturally competent.

• Provide resources and practices that can assist PIOs in becoming more culturally competent.
Disclaimer

The findings and conclusions in this presentation are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily represent the views of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention/the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry.
Poll Question

What factors in African-American communities might contribute to increased susceptibility to the damaging effects of a disaster?

- Socioeconomic
- Culture
- Language barriers
- Education
- All of the above
Health Disparities and Inequalities

Health disparities among minorities account for higher disability, mortality, and morbidity rates.

Racially and ethnically diverse populations suffer disproportionately throughout each stage of a disaster.
Factors that influenced African Americans’ decision not to evacuate New Orleans, LA, before Hurricane Katrina’s landfall

- Perceived susceptibility, including optimism about the outcome because of riding out past hurricanes at home and religious faith
- Perceived severity of the hurricane because of inconsistent evacuation orders
- Barriers because of financial constraints and neighborhood crime
- Perceived racism and inequities

African American and 2009-2010 H1N1 Outbreak

- From April 15 – August 31, 2009, 35 percent of people hospitalized with 2009 H1N1 in 13 metropolitan areas of 10 states were non-Hispanic black.

- Non-Hispanic blacks were less likely than non-Hispanic whites to receive influenza vaccination.

*Figure 1. Influenza Vaccination Coverage Among Non-Hispanic Whites and African Americans by Age, United States, 2008-09 Influenza Season*
What is Culture?

Culture is the integrated pattern of thoughts, communications, actions, customs, beliefs, values, and institutions associated wholly or partially on racial and ethnic groups, as well as religious, spiritual, linguistic, biological, geographical, or sociological characteristics.
Culture, the Influencer

• People prepare, respond, and recover from an emergency or disaster within the context of their culture.

• Culture offers a protective system that is both comforting and reassuring.

• It defines appropriate behavior, furnishes a support system, and identifies a shared vision for recovery.

• Despite the strengths of culture, responses from some groups may make them more vulnerable than others.
Defining “Cultural & Linguistic Competence”

“Cultural and linguistic competence” is the capacity for individuals and organizations to work and communicate effectively in cross-cultural situations through the adoption and implementation of strategies to ensure appropriate awareness, attitudes, and actions, and through the use of policies, structures, practices, procedures, and dedicated resources that support this capacity.
Audience-centered Messages

Is the emergency preparedness plan appropriate from a cultural and linguistic standpoint?

- Communication
- Preparedness
- Input
Communicate Effectively

• Will information be available in multimedia formats, such as print, web, or telephone? If so, will the access method be linguistically and culturally appropriate?

• Through what channels will the information be communicated? Examples include email, social media, SMS text, and signage on store fronts, places of worship, and other frequently visited sites within the community.
Engage Stakeholders

• Conduct community assessment.

• Engage gatekeepers and trusted community members.

• Collaborate and form partnerships.

• Ensure partnerships are ongoing and sustainable.

• Conduct assessment and evaluation.
Trust and Respect are Key

Know your organization’s reputation in the community.
- Recognize that some populations may have a distrust or fear of government and health institutions.
- Conduct research to better understand your organization’s reputation.
Summary: Cultural Competence

- Responding with cultural competence helps create trust and rapport across all phases of a public health emergency.

- Include cultural competence as a part of your organization’s overall mission and objectives as a component of all services, not just for emergency preparedness.
Resources

- CLAS Standards
- Plain Language
- Crisis and Emergency Risk Communication
- 2014 Preparedness in America Report
- "Protection of Racial/Ethnic Minority Populations During an Influenza Pandemic" (Journal Publication)
- "Protecting Vulnerable Populations From Pandemic Influenza in the United States: A Strategic Imperative" (Journal Publication)
- "Effective Health Risk Communication About Pandemic Influenza for Vulnerable Populations" (Journal Publication)
Thank you!

For more information, please contact CDC’s Emergency Partners.

EmergencyPartners@cdc.gov
Shelf Life Focus Group

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African Americans and Medical experiments

Tuskegee Syphilis Study

- Study began in 1932
- 600 Black men
- Never given adequate treatment (even when it became available)
- NO Informed Consent from participants
- Supposed to last 6 months, continued for 40 years
Henrietta Lacks – Immortal Cells

• Cervical samples were taken during cancer treatment
• Cells were taken without consent
• Cells were used for HeLa Cell Line
• Used in medical research for polio vaccine, HIV and cancer
• Family did not find out until 20 years after death
KCMO Shelf Life Focus Group

African – American Women
Age range from 20’s to 50’s

**Main Discussion**

- Trust

- Life or Death?

- Need Information….maybe even information overload!
Meta Question

Adapting Emergency Messaging for African-American Community

What Are We Doing to Become Trustworthy?
Communicating to African-American Audiences about HIV

An ethnographic approach

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Established in 1946, with headquarters in Washington, D.C., American Institutes for Research (AIR) is an independent, nonpartisan, not-for-profit organization that conducts behavioral and social science research and delivers technical assistance both domestically and internationally.

As one of the largest behavioral and social science research organizations in the world, AIR is committed to empowering communities and institutions with innovative solutions to the most critical challenges in education, health, workforce, and international development.
Why conduct ethnographic research for messaging?

- Culture affects communication.
- Messages contain cues that trigger patterned ways of thinking.
- These “cultural models” are critical to understand in order to message effectively.
HIV is an emergency for Black MSM

- 32% currently HIV+
- By the time they are 40, Black MSM have 60% chance of being HIV+
- Black men far less likely to be in treatment and virally suppressed
- Black men HIV+ dying at a rate of six times White men


Participant observation
Sample research insights

• Men want to be defined as individuals, not labels.
  • “Out and proud” messages have conflicting implications.
• Condoms do not show you care.
  • Lack of condom uses symbolizes trust and caring.
Benefits to this approach

• Can yield surprising results
• Deep cultural research can be used across organizations and across time
• Do not need huge sample sizes
• Additionally, can use qualitative and quantitative methods to test reframed messages
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