Zika Crisis and Emergency Risk Communication (CERC) Discussion:
Causes of Stigma and A Path To Community Hardiness

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The **right** message at the **right** time from the **right** person can save lives…

Stigmatization

Stigmatization

- Can affect product, industry, animal, place, people
- Four characteristics to stigmatization
  - Problem stigmatizer believes he can control
  - Must be distinguishable
  - Stigma associated with the party
  - Reaction that distances

Examples of Stigma

- 1997 strawberries and hepatitis A in U.S.
- 1997 H5N1 outbreak in Hong Kong
- 1999 West Nile virus outbreak in New York
- 2003 SARS outbreak in China and Canada
- 2009 H1N1 Pandemic

Why people stigmatize

- Shortcut when uncertainty and threat are both present to protect against physical and emotional harm

- Occurs in a social context

- Expect it early in a severe influenza pandemic unless dominant group first to become ill

The toll of stigmatization

- Emotional pain (e.g., stress & anxiety)
- Limited access to health care, education, housing, and employment
- Physical violence
- Affects minority groups differently
- Potential for group conflict (i.e., a group-level ethnocentric worldview)

Role for communication—Countering stigma

- Communication must balance the real risk with needless association of an identifiable group

- Take an active role in dispelling misperceptions

- Correct faulty assumptions (behavior not people)

Steps before, during & after

- Avoid geographic links if not necessary (e.g., Spanish pandemic versus 1918 pandemic)

- Avoid visuals that link group to threat--watch out for subconscious links: *Avian Influenza H5N1*

- Teach response professionals about stigma

- Share with media the concern

- Scan for stigma and confront quickly

- Watch out when creating historical products

Community Hardiness

Community hardiness: Defined

- Existing protective qualities and vulnerabilities that will determine the community's ability to take deliberate, meaningful, and collective action against a public health threat

  - Protective qualities: robustness, redundancy, resourcefulness, & rapidity

  - Vulnerabilities: susceptibility related to sense of community, shelter, sustenance, security, and growth from adversity

Community hardiness: Factors

- Socioeconomic status

- Community-based organizations

- Health care capacity

- Social stressors (racial, economic, political strife)

- Political and civic perspectives

- Community cohesion and group self-efficacy

Resilience, Hardiness, Coping

- Ability to bounce back or not take an expected decline in functioning because of a harmful event

- Most research now shows that resilience is the result of individuals being able to interact with their environments and the processes that either promote well-being or protect them against the overwhelming influence of risk factors

- Some indication that there's a cultural component—not personality trait (indigenous people)

Community hardiness

- Overcome helplessness: strengthen group-efficacy
- Overcome fear of risk by promoting protective actions
- Overcome dread and uncertainty by sharing honest information early
- Overcome despair by engaging people in the response
- Overcome isolation by reconnecting people

Trust and Mistrust

- Stakeholders judge the response to an issue or crisis based on trust

- Trust is the natural consequence of promises fulfilled

- Mistrust is an outgrowth of the perception that promises were broken and values violated

- CDC fulfills trust by combining our best science with strong ethics and values

Acting Trustworthy

- Share information early
- Acknowledge the concerns of others
- Under promise and over deliver
- Select a spokesperson who is never condescending
- Engage third-party validators and advocates

Six Principles of CERC

- **Be First:** If the information is yours to provide by organizational authority—do so as soon as possible. If you can't—then explain how you are working to get it.

- **Be Right:** Give facts in increments. Tell people what you know when you know it, tell them what you don't know, and tell them if you will know relevant information later.

- **Be Credible:** Tell the truth. Do not withhold to avoid embarrassment or the possible "panic" that seldom happens. Uncertainty is worse than not knowing—rumors are more damaging than hard truths.

Six Principles of CERC

- **Express Empathy:** Acknowledge in words what people are feeling—it builds trust.

- **Promote Action:** Give people things to do. It calms anxiety and helps restore order.

- **Show Respect:** Treat people the way you want to be treated—the way you want your loved ones treated—always—even when hard decisions must be communicated.

Risk Communication Resources

- CDC Zika website: http://www.cdc.gov/zika/
- Zika communications resources: http://www.cdc.gov/zika/comm-resources/index.html
- CERC resources: http://emergency.cdc.gov/cerc/index.asp
- Emergency Risk Communication Training: Atlanta, August 10-12, 2016
- To sign up for the Emergency Partners newsletter to receive Zika and other updates from the CDC, please click here
- Contact cercrequest@cdc.gov for questions

For more information, contact CDC
1-800-CDC-INFO (232-4636)
TTY: 1-888-232-6348   www.cdc.gov

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