

When preparing to present information to a group of stakeholders, it is helpful to consider the Three M's.

Message (*what to say*)

Messenger (*who to say it*)

Media (*how it should be presented*)

Preparing for presentations

The Message

Plan your message

- ❑ Know your audience—Who are you trying to reach? What does your audience want to know?
- ❑ Identify your purpose—Why are you making a presentation? What would you like your audience to know?
- ❑ What are three points your audience is most likely to get wrong unless they are emphasized?

Develop your message—

Maximize the amount of information your audience hears and understands

- ❑ Choose words that convey empathy/caring, honesty/openness, and dedication/commitment.
- ❑ Avoid messages that convey only technical facts and information.
- ❑ Use positive words and body language.
- ❑ Recognize the impact of credible, third party sources (such as USACHPPM experts).

Tips for message retention—

Maximize the amount of information your audience remembers

- ❑ Provide a structured and organized message.
- ❑ Limit your information to a few key messages—keep it as short and simple as possible.
- ❑ Keep your messages short and supplement them with supporting facts.
- ❑ Repeat your key messages.

Traps and pitfalls—

Be careful in high concern, low trust situations

- ❑ Don't use humor.
- ❑ Avoid negative terms (No, Not, Never, Nothing, None, Dangerous, Concern).
- ❑ Steer clear of guarantees or absolute phrases (e.g. always, never, definitely).
- ❑ Don't offer personal beliefs.
- ❑ Don't attack (statements about the credibility of opposing groups/opinions).

There are two common models for organizing your presentation information:

- TTT model—Tell them what you are going to tell them. Tell them. Tell them what you told them.
- Layered model—Start with the simplest information and move to the more complex. Keep the reading level between 6th and 8th grade.

The Messenger

Establishing empathy and caring

- ❑ Select a messenger who has a real connection with your audience (e.g. I live here too, My children attend school in town, etc.).
- ❑ Use opening remarks that indicate active listening about the community's concerns.
- ❑ Select a messenger with a calming voice, and ensure the pace of the presentation does not appear rushed.
- ❑ Use non-verbal communication—make eye contact around the room, keep hands open at about waist level, maintain a comfortable standing posture, without slouching.

Research indicates that the public will judge trust and credibility within the first 30 seconds.

Establishing dedication and commitment

- Come early and stay late.
- Provide a phone number where you can be reached.
- Keep all of your promises and commitments.

Communicating competence and expertise

- Limit the use of notes; avoid written speeches; use checklists or index cards.
- Remember to present the information in an organized, logical manner.
- Dress professionally, but avoid over-dressing.
- Use a lower voice tone.
- Be assertive (e.g. avoid hedging/tentative words or raising your voice at the end of a sentence).

The key to good presentations is to select a presenter who is comfortable in front of a group and has good listening skills.

The Media

Public information channels— How to present your message

- Infolines
- Fact sheets
- Press releases
- Site tours
- Small group meeting
- One on one meetings with influential people
- Information exchange forums (workshops or focus groups)
- Town hall public meetings

Be prepared to answer difficult questions

- Allow ample time for questions from the audience and general discussion.
- Review news coverage
- Review actual citizen calls and interviews
- Review similar situations at your installation, such as reactions to other encroachment issues
- Review interviews with opinion leaders, and notes from focus groups and surveys
- When you don't know the answer, say so, but commit to getting the information.

Putting it all together— A six-part model

1. Express empathy or concern
 - Include personal story for enhancement
2. Present the purpose of the meeting, or the main content/point of the presentation
 - Information that is brief, positive, and addresses underlying concerns
3. Provide first supporting fact or key message
 - Use third party endorsement
 - Story and/or analogy for one fact
4. Provide second supporting fact or key message
5. Repeat or the main content/point
6. Describe future action
 - Describe your commitment to continuous improvement and indicate how to obtain more information

For help with community involvement activities, contact:

*Health Risk Communication Program
U.S. Army Center for Health Promotion
and Preventive Medicine*

5158 Blackhawk Rd.

Bldg. E5158

Aberdeen Proving Ground, MD 21010-5403

<http://chppm-www.apgea.army.mil/risk>

This checklist is part of *Noise Management—A Primer on Facilitating Community Involvement and Communicating with the Public*. This guide, along with its companion CD, can help you educate and engage stakeholders on and off your installation, and generate support for noise management activities.