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# Individual and Community Preparedness Division

## Preparedness Message Framing

**Focus Group Moderator's Guide**  
**April 2013**



**FEMA**

## I. Introduction and Ground Rules (10 minutes)

### A. Ground Rules

- Thank you for taking time out of your schedules; this group will last for approximately 90 minutes.
- There are no right or wrong answers- our goal is to hear a variety of viewpoints, not to reach consensus.
- Your comments are confidential; this session is being audiotaped for transcription and there are listeners present to help capture your responses as well.
- Please speak as loudly as the moderator; speak one at a time. State your first name when you say something so we can keep track of what's said. Your comments will not be associated with your name when they are reported.
- Everyone in the group will have an opportunity to speak, regardless of how quiet/talkative you normally are.
- Please feel free to talk to each other, disagree/agree but always observe common courtesy.
- Again, your comments are confidential; we do not expect you to tell us anything that you would be uncomfortable sharing with the group. We do hope that you will be honest with your responses.
- Please remember, neither myself or anyone else here was responsible for creating what you will be looking at today; you will not hurt my feelings.

### B. Introductions

Please introduce yourself to the group by stating your first name only.

## II. Frame of Reference/Disaster Preparedness Issues (7 minutes)

We've invited you all here today as individuals who indicated that you have thought about preparing for a potential disaster. For the purpose of today's discussion, I want you to think about potential disasters that could happen in or near your city.

- 1) When you hear the word "disaster", what comes to mind? What thoughts or feelings come to mind? Tell me about these? Why do you say that?
  - *Moderator to record words, phrases on white board.*
- 2) When you think about "disaster preparedness," what comes to mind?
  - *Moderator to record words, phrases on white board.*  
*PROBE EXHAUSTIVELY:* What are some other words for be prepared? What kinds of steps would help you handle a disaster situation? Is there information that would be helpful? Stored supplies? Skills? How would you go about starting to prepare?
- 3) Do you think it's important to prepare for disasters? Why?
  - *Moderator to record words, phrases on white board.*  
*PROBE EXHAUSTIVELY FOR BENEFITS:* Would preparing ... Reduce damage to your property? Help you and your family stay safe? Enable you to help other people? Help you know what to do and help you act quickly? Help you get back to normal more quickly?

### III. General Attitudes on Preparing for Specific Disasters (15 minutes)

Today we are going to discuss preparing for [insert one of the six hazards: hurricane, tornado, earthquake, flood, chemical release, terrorism].

- 1) What concerns you about [insert disaster type]?  
*PROBE EXHAUSTIVELY:* What about it is most concerning or worrisome to you? What makes you feel that way?
- 2) Next, I'd like to ask you to write down your top three concerns or worries about this type of disaster and to circle your number one, top concern. [When group has finished.] Now let's talk about what you all wrote down.  
*Moderator:* Ask each respondent what top concern they wrote down (Get an answer from each participant)
- 3) Which of these concerns would motivate you to prepare and why? Would any of these concerns stop you from preparing? Which ones?
- 4) Are there other emotions, other beliefs, or other experiences that would motivate you to prepare? What would make you want to or feel the need to get ready?  
*PROBE ON WHAT IT IS ABOUT THESE CIRCUMSTANCES THAT WOULD PROMPT THEM TO TAKE ACTION. WHAT INFORMATION WOULD BE MOST HELPFUL? (Family, region where they live, severity of disaster, media, friends/neighbors, etc.).*

### IV. Message Framework Concepts (50 minutes)

Now, we'd like to get your reactions to a few possible sample paragraphs and photographs on disaster preparation. Please open the page marked [coded reference]. We need your honest reactions; I didn't create any of these so I won't take your comments personally. I'm going to read each aloud while you follow along.

#### MESSAGE CONCEPT 1

*Text of message concept 1 will go here.*

[AFTER READING]

#### A. First Impressions

I'd first like to hear your overall reactions to this, and then we will go through in more detail.

- 1) What were some of your initial thoughts as you were viewing and reading it?
- 2) Does it capture your attention? What jumps out at you?
- 3) What is the main point?
- 4) Who do you think this message is for?  
*PROBES:* People like you? Others? Describe them. How does it make you feel?

*Moderator:* Listen for emotions; scared? curious? skeptical? ready? prepared? uncertain? empowered?  
*PROBE EXHAUSTIVELY:* Do those emotions feel motivating? Why? What do you think this is trying to get you to do? How does reading this make you want to take action? What is it about the words that makes you want to take action or not? If you completed the actions would you feel better? More prepared?

**B. Problems or Missing Information**

- 1) What would you change?
- 2) Is there a better way to motivate the reader to take action?
- 3) What additional information would you want to know after seeing this message?

**C. Value Assessment**

Now, I'd like you to think about the different aspects of the message I shared. Please take a moment to review and think about the message again. . As you do so, think about the following things:

- 1) What's most important here? What's least important here?  
Put a "plus" sign to the left of any points that you consider important and put a "minus" sign to the left of any point that you consider *not important*.
- 2) Next, look over the points you picked as important, and select the *two most important* points. Put a "star" next to those two points. If you only starred one important point, that's OK.

Let's talk about it. Name *one* of the two most important items you just chose and share what made you choose it.

**(EACH PARTICIPANT SHOULD SHARE MOST IMPORTANT POINTS.)**

*PROBE: Why do you say that?*

*Moderator: Listen for motivate to take action or learn something important, or give me information to help keep my family safe.*

Next, look over the points you selected as not important, and choose the *two least important* points. Circle these two points. Let's hear *ONE* of the two least important and share what made you choose it.

**(EACH PARTICIPANT SHOULD SHARE LEAST IMPORTANT POINTS.)**

*PROBE: Why do you say that?*

*Moderator: Listen for matches with discussion on barriers.*

**D. Messenger**

Now I'd like you to think about this message being delivered by different kinds of spokespeople [archetypes of a celebrity, a first responder, and a disaster survivor]. For each representative:

- 1) How does the believability change?
- 2) How does your motivation change?
- 3) How does your emotion change?

*PROBE: Why do you say that?*

*Moderator: Listen for creditability, authority, authenticity.*

**MESSAGE CONCEPT 2**

*Text of message concept 2 will go here.*

[AFTER READING]

**A. First Impressions**

I'd first like to hear your overall reactions to this, and then we will go through in more detail.

- 1) What were some of your initial thoughts as you were viewing and reading it?
- 2) Does it capture your attention? What jumps out at you?
- 3) What is the main point?
- 4) Who do you think this message is for?

*PROBES:* People like you? Others? Describe them. How does it make you feel?

*Moderator: Listen for emotions; scared? curious? skeptical? ready? prepared? uncertain? empowered? PROBE EXHAUSTIVELY: Do those emotions feel motivating? Why? What do you think this is trying to get you to do? How does reading this make you want to take action? What is it about the words that makes you want to take action or not? If you completed the actions would you feel better? More prepared?*

**B. Problems or Missing Information**

- 1) What would you change?
- 2) Is there a better way to motivate the reader to take action?
- 3) What additional information would you want to know after seeing this message?

**C. Value Assessment**

Now, I'd like you to think about the different aspects of the message I shared. Please take a moment to review and think about the message again. . As you do so, think about the following things:

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**(EACH PARTICIPANT SHOULD SHARE MOST IMPORTANT POINTS.)**

*PROBE: Why do you say that?*

*Moderator: Listen for motivate to take action or learn something important, or give me information to help keep my family safe.*

Next, look over the points you selected as not important, and choose the *two least important* points. Circle these two points. Let's hear ONE of the two least important and share what made you choose it.

**(EACH PARTICIPANT SHOULD SHARE LEAST IMPORTANT POINTS.)**

*PROBE: Why do you say that?*

*Moderator: Listen for matches with discussion on barriers.*

**D. Messenger**

Now I'd like you to think about this message being delivered by different kinds of spokespeople [archetypes of a celebrity, a first responder, and a disaster survivor]. For each representative:

- 1) How does the believability change?
- 2) How does your motivation change?
- 3) How does your emotion change?

*PROBE: Why do you say that?*

*Moderator: Listen for credibility, authority, authenticity.*

**MESSAGE CONCEPT 3**

*Text of message concept 3 will go here.*

*[AFTER READING]*

**A. First Impressions**

I'd first like to hear your overall reactions to this, and then we will go through in more detail.

- 1) What were some of your initial thoughts as you were viewing and reading it?
- 2) Does it capture your attention? What jumps out at you?
- 3) What is the main point?
- 4) Who do you think this message is for?

*PROBES: People like you? Others? Describe them. How does it make you feel?*

*Moderator: Listen for emotions; scared? curious? skeptical? ready? prepared? uncertain? empowered?*  
*PROBE EXHAUSTIVELY: Do those emotions feel motivating? Why? What do you think this is trying to get you to do? How does reading this make you want to take action? What is it about the words that makes you want to take action or not? If you completed the actions would you feel better? More prepared?*

**B. Problems or Missing Information**

- 1) What would you change?
- 2) Is there a better way to motivate the reader to take action?
- 3) What additional information would you want to know after seeing this message?

**C. Value Assessment**

Now, I'd like you to think about the different aspects of the message I shared. Please take a moment to review and think about the message again. . As you do so, think about the following things:

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*PROBE: Why do you say that?*

*Moderator: Listen for motivate to take action or learn something important, or give me information to help keep my family safe.*

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*PROBE: Why do you say that?*

*Moderator: Listen for matches with discussion on barriers.*

#### **D. Messenger**

Now I’d like you to think about this message being delivered by different kinds of spokespeople [archetypes of a celebrity, a first responder, and a disaster survivor]. For each representative:

- 1) How does the believability change?
- 2) How does your motivation change?
- 3) How does your emotion change?

*PROBE: Why do you say that?*

*Moderator: Listen for credibility, authority, authenticity.*

#### **V. Wrap-up and Final Thoughts (8 minutes)**

As a final exercise, I’ll like you to take a few minutes and think about what would be a good message to motivate people like you to prepare. Use the markers and paper provided to you to write down 1 message. You do not need to write your name on your paper. While you do this I’m going to step out for a moment to check in with our observers to see if there is anything that they want me to follow up on or that I forgot to ask you. I will be right back.

After all of the things you’ve seen and heard today, is there anything I shared that appeals to you the most and makes you want to prepare for a disaster in your city? If yes, what is it that most appealed to you and, briefly, share why?

Thank you for your time. Your thoughts and input are extremely valuable as we continue to explore ways to help people across the country prepare for disasters.