



PREPARE & PUSH BACK!

Proactive Steps to Win at Crisis Communications

Island Foundation Cohort - May 2025
Presentation Two



ABOUT FULL COURT PRESS COMMUNICATIONS

- Strategic communications for social change
- Public relations, crisis communications, communications strategy development, social media
- Bay Area, California, and throughout the United States
- Foundations, non-profits, public sector, advocacy organizations
- Team of seven based in Oakland





OUR PHILOSOPHY

Our communications philosophy rests on the reality that the current media landscape is ever-evolving.

People find their news in many different places – from the local paper, on the TV or radio, through blogs and social media, or from a friend or family member.

In this environment, the key to success is to identify a target audience, develop tactics to reach them, and surround them consistently with effective messaging.

TAKEAWAYS - RAPID RESPONSE

- **Crises can happen at any time:** Funding cuts, policy changes, and negative press require immediate, organized response.
- **Leadership is crucial:** Leaders must be visible, calm, and clear in messaging.
- **Preparation enables speed:** Pre-approved messages and a designated crisis team save time and reduce chaos.
- **Local media and partners amplify your voice:** Engaging local journalists, officials, and allies can make your response more effective.
- **Personal stories matter:** Humanizing the impact of federal threats builds empathy and support.





A TEMPERATURE CHECK

1. Since our last conversation, what is one takeaway that stayed with you?
2. What is one step you've taken?

(Please RAISE your hand or TYPE comments into Q&A)



SECOND WEBINAR: PROACTIVE CRISIS COMMUNICATIONS - HOW WE PUSH BACK

- Building organizational resilience
- Understanding our risks
- Drafting a written plan & creating a library
- Building trust year-round
- Practice makes perfect



CRISIS COMMUNICATIONS PLANNING

- No surprises - Planning is essential
- Shaping the narrative 365 days/year
>> Rapid response
- Long-term organizational resilience
now demands preparation for worst
cases
- Saying it out loud makes it less scary



- Roles, responsibilities, & processes
- What does “winning” look like in each potential scenario?
- What are approval processes?
- Which audiences are our priorities at all times? At certain times?
- Who are our likely supporters / detractors?





BUILDING A LIBRARY

- **Your messaging matters most**
- Develop key messages and talking points for ongoing and one-off scenarios
- Create standard graphics and templates - what does your press release look like? What does your e-newsletter look like?
- Create contact list for all key staff and stakeholders





A TEMPERATURE CHECK

1. Quickly name a likely or potential crisis?
2. Now think of one concrete thing you could do to prepare?

(Please RAISE your hand or TYPE comments into Q&A)



BUILDING RESILIENCY

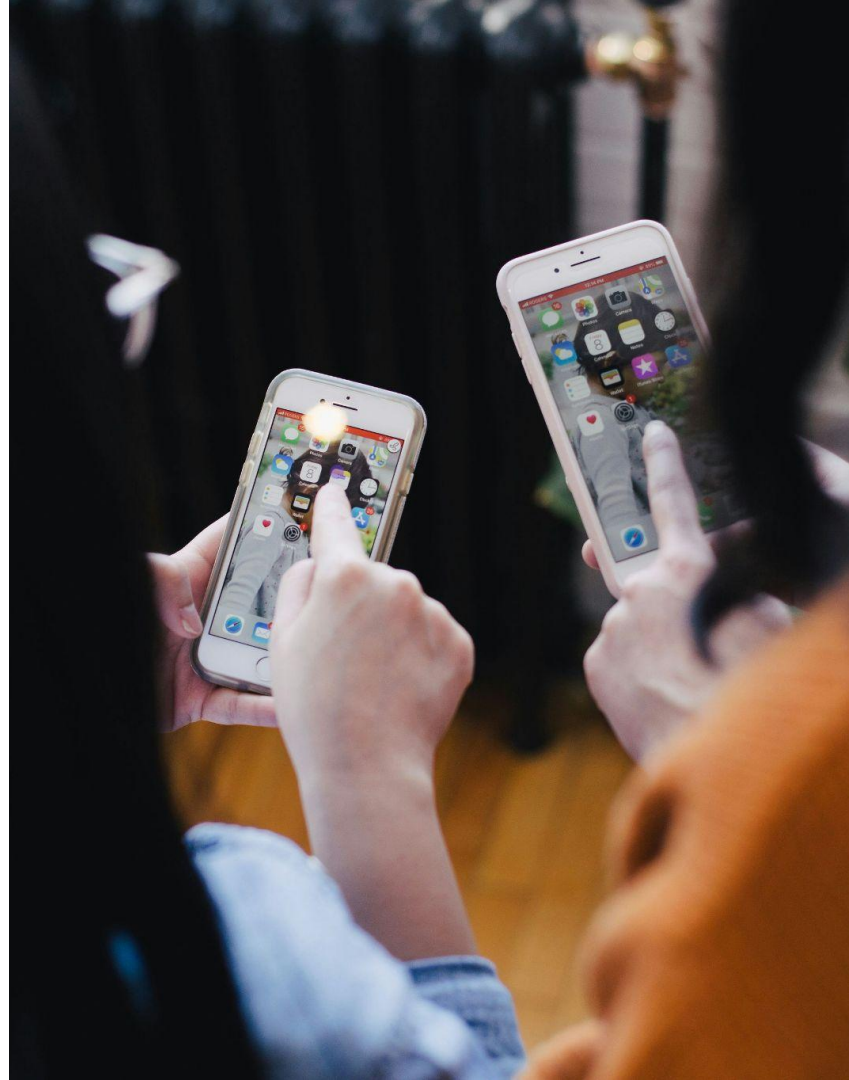


BUILDING COMMUNITY TRUST

- Building Relationships & Trust Everyday
- Consistently communicate about your impact - prove it!
- Be transparent with your target audiences about successes (and challenges)
- Always be a teacher - empower the community
- Remain visible as a partner

MEDIA ENGAGEMENT

- Stay ahead of crises - communicate in the good times
- Share success stories and make them personal
- Build relationships beyond transactions
 - Offer expertise, answer questions, become a resource.
 - “Hey, did you see this?”
- Share visuals, photos, videos, and fun facts





TELL SOMEBODY - DON'T BE SHY

- Relentlessly share your impact
- Tell powerful stories of your successes on every possible communications channel
- Highlight the tangible impact of your work
- Use data to demonstrate effectiveness
- Focus and communicate to reach your target audiences all year long

TRAINING INTERNAL CHAMPIONS

- Empower your team to tell stories 365 days/year
- Educate staff/board on crisis responsibility and roles
- Provide guidance on who/how to interact during crises and everyday
- Ensure team understands crisis plan



BUILDING AMBASSADORS

- Every conversation matters
- Practice sharing stories that echo your mission during quiet times
- Encourage positive communication on their own networks
- Enforce media / public outreach protocol





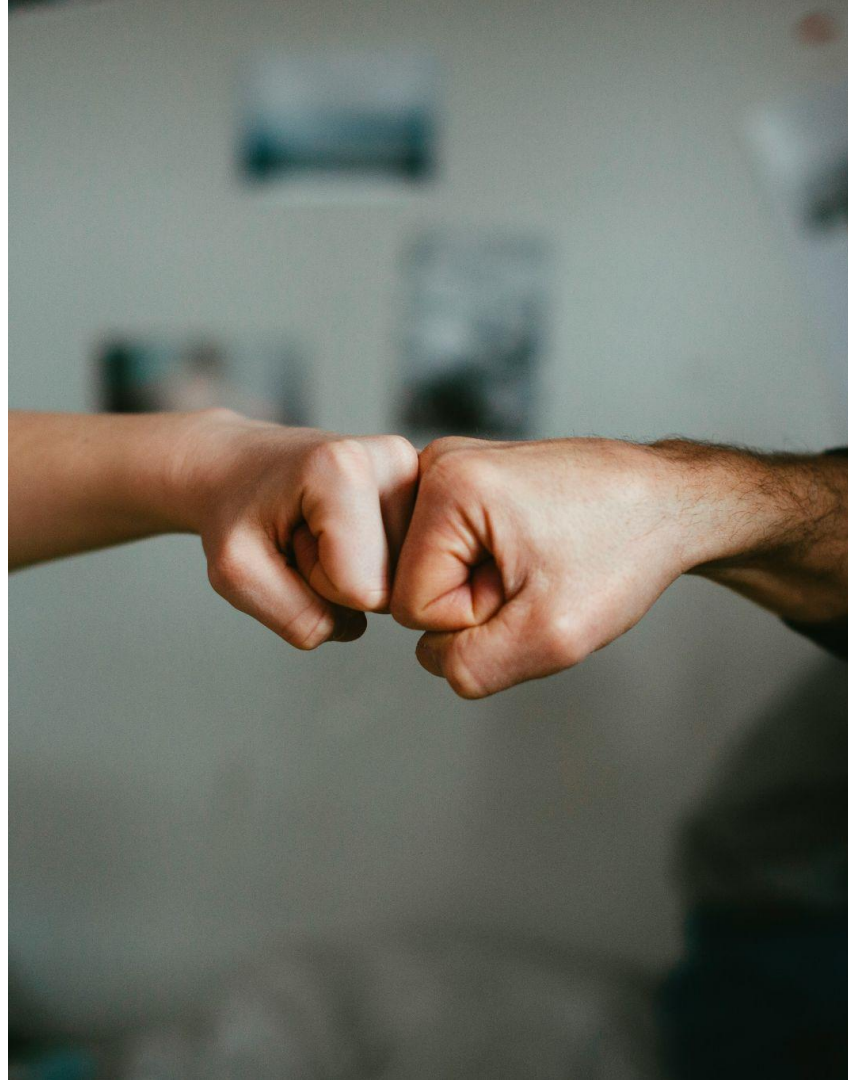
PRACTICE, PRACTICE

- Are you really ready? How will you know?
- Use 10 mins in a team meeting to discuss and practice a response to likely scenario
- Simulate media inquiries and social media outrage
- Identify areas of improvement - in real-time and apply to written plan and messaging



BUILDING ALLIANCES

- Who will amplify your voice?
- Identify 10-20 fellow leaders who can amplify your voice
- Engage philanthropic partners to prepare and build resilience - and share success stories
- Collaborate with local elected officials to share stories of impact (and build goodwill for later)





GRASSROOTS POWER

- You are a trusted voice
- Inform supporters about threats
- Issue clear calls to action (What do you want or need them to do)
- Share stories and collect stories to share
- Make the collective voice real in the community



KNOW YOUR RIGHTS & LIMITS

- 501c3 Limits - Advocating for your agency without fear
- Legal support - who is your go-to for legal matters
- Educate team on opportunities and limits of advocacy



RAPID RESPONSE IMPROVEMENT

- Monitor the media and social media
- Gather feedback from staff, community, clients and donors
- Review current reality against crisis planning tools - is something missing? Has something changed?
- Who is your “truth-teller” to help you get beyond your bubble?



RAPID RESPONSE - NEXT STEPS

- Use your team to build a risk assessment list & assets list
- Review your media, social media and staff contact lists
- Identify one key story to promote proactively each quarter (4x/year) to build your reputation and resiliency





WHAT'S NEXT?

TODAY'S TAKEAWAYS

- **Proactive planning builds resilience:** Anticipate threats and prepare before a crisis hits.
- **Relationships matter:** Build trust with media, officials, and partners year-round.
- **Empower your team:** Regular training and scenario planning prepare everyone to act.
- **Advocacy is ongoing:** Coalitions and grassroots efforts amplify your voice.
- **Continuous improvement:** Regularly review and update your plans.





HOMework

1-Page Checklist for Rapid Response

- **Team:** Roles & Responsibilities
- **Key Targets:** Media, Donors & Staff
- **Allies:** Who can I count on?
- Key Messages for Right Now



A MOMENT OF REFLECTION

1. What is one item you will share with or teach your staff?
2. Name one ally in the community you can engage in a new way?
3. What are three ways to share your stories during the quiet times?

(Please RAISE your hand or TYPE comments into Q&A)



THANK YOU!

ANY QUESTIONS OR COMMENTS?



FULL COURT PRESS
COMMUNICATIONS

