Behavioral Health Guidelines for Risk Communication

BE FIRST. BE RIGHT. BE CREDIBLE.
BE EMPATHETIC.

Building trust and conveying messages of hope and recovery is critical to the emotional well-being of persons affected by the disaster and the general public. The public's emotional well-being is affected by the messages you deliver.

Your messages should:
  o Begin with a statement of empathy.
  o Provide reassurance through fact-based information.
  o Counter rumors.
  o Encourage safe, adaptive and cooperative behavior.
  o Promote self-care strategies for stress management.
  o Emphasize resilience.

During a period of uncertainty and unconfirmed threat, communication should:
  o Reassure
  o Foster Confidence & Coping
  o Promote Preparedness

During an event communication should:
  o Reassure
  o Foster Confidence & Coping
  o Empower
  o Encourage People to Reconnect

During recovery communication should:
  o Foster Resilience
  o Empower
  o Encourage Community Cohesion
  o Commemorate

Reference:
Missouri Department of Mental Health Office of Disaster Readiness. (2006) Disaster Communications Guidebook - Communicating in a crisis: Promoting trust, cooperation, & emotional well-being through risk communication. U.S.
