

# TIPS FOR BREAKING BAD NEWS

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- Be first, accurate, and credible
- Anticipate questions and prepare talking points, e.g.,
  - *What happened?*
  - *What caused the event?*
  - *What are you doing in response?*
- Be empathetic
- Acknowledge uncertainty
- Do not speculate or over reassure
- State your key messages:
  - *27 words/9 seconds/3 messages*
- Use 6th/8th grade language
- Bridge back to your messages:
  - *"The key points are . . ."*

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From: *Effective Media Communication during Public Health Emergencies: A WHO Handbook*. Hyer RN and Covello VT. Geneva, World Health Organization, 2007