

CERTIFIED COMMUNICATOR IN PUBLIC HEALTH (CCPH) PORTFOLIO PREPARATION RESOURCE GUIDE

As you begin thinking about preparing your portfolio for CCPH evaluation take some time to carefully consider each core competency and skillset area. Core competencies will be an “Executive Summary” of the accomplishments you have demonstrated in all of your skillset areas. When it comes time to write your Job Analysis narrative you may wish to leave these sections for last.

The five Core Competencies are:

- 1. Communicate with a range of stakeholders and populations by using resources, techniques and technologies**
- 2. Apply interpersonal skills in communication with public health colleagues, partners and the public**
- 3. Influence individuals and communities by using media, community resources and social marketing techniques**
- 4. Provide communication advice to public health leadership**
- 5. Demonstrate proficiency in written communication**

These should be self-evident once you have completed your skillsets narrative, and also might encompass descriptions of accomplishments mentioned in your letters of endorsement. They need not be different from what you describe in your skills narratives, and you may find that you will refer to several different skillsets to illustrate each competency in completing this summary.

Now let’s examine each of the skillset areas, and what you will be expected to know about them, or how you will demonstrate expertise. Be sure to think about all of the subset areas within a particular skillset (e.g., A-1, A-2...) and determine how you can demonstrate proficiency in each of them, because they will all be scored.

I. MEDIA RELATIONS SKILLS

A-1 Analyze media issues that have potential to affect public health or your organization

A-2 Prioritize issues that need to be brought to the immediate attention of top-level public health management

A-3 Advise top-level administration on media issues

A-4 Maintain surveillance of the environment (e.g., stay abreast of current public health news trends and anticipate future ones)

A-5 Prepare public health leadership and Subject Matter Experts for media interviews

B-1 Understand data that can help you decide how to communicate public health issues to the media

B-2 Present data in terms that the media will understand

C-1 Develop a media plan

C-2 Implement a media plan

C-3 Strategically utilize messages, messengers and means

D Act as a spokesperson

D-1 Speak in a way that can be understood by the intended audience, avoiding jargon

D-2 Present the public health perspective to journalists (e.g., make the science understandable)

D-3 Determine when you should be the spokesperson for your organization

D-4 Determine when public health leadership or program representatives should speak for your organization instead of you

E Possess publicity skills

E-1 Demonstrate ability to write media releases, articles, brochures, speeches, testimony, scripts, etc. tailored to different audiences

E-2 Determine which media can help you to reach your intended audiences

E-3 Tailor a story to the medium or specific media that can help you reach your intended audiences

E-4 Distinguish between local and national news interest

If your primary job responsibility is media relations, or you came to the field of health communication from a position in the media, you probably will chose this skillset as an area of expertise.

If your job in health communication does not involve media relations, and you have had few or no opportunities to interact with the media, you may still be able to demonstrate a working knowledge of this discipline. **For example:**

- Do you ever collaborate with anyone in your organization who works in media relations, e.g., prepare talking points as a Subject Matter Expert; draft a news release about an issue you are working on; or consult with your Public Information office to try to get media coverage for one of your projects?
- Do you prepare briefing papers or talking points that would help to advise your leadership about important issues?
- If your expertise is in health communication, you probably have demonstrated all of most of the skills outlined in sections “B, “D” and “E.”
- The same applies to individuals who are experts in social marketing. Think about how you can extrapolate the skills you already use to demonstrate a working knowledge of the media relations skillset.

Many **risk communication** skills also will underscore a working knowledge of media relations. If you believe knowledge of media relations is a weak area for you, you are encouraged to take the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) online Crisis and Emergency Communication (CERC) course: <http://emergency.cdc.gov/cerc/training/basic/index.asp> There is a companion manual that is a terrific resource: http://emergency.cdc.gov/cerc/resources/pdf/cerc_2012edition.pdf

The CERC materials contain an extensive discussion of media relations, including how to work with the media, how to work with a hostile audience, and who and what makes a good spokesperson, as well as how to prepare a media plan. A certificate is awarded upon completion of the course which could be supplied as a work product or supporting material.

The Public Relations Society of America (PRSA) offers online courses in many aspects of media relations. These may be very helpful; however, there is a fee for taking these courses.

Another excellent media relations resource is *Media Relations and You*, by NPHIC founding member and nationally renowned media relations consultant Norm Hartman, available on Amazon Kindle or the NPHIC website: <https://www.nphic.org/join/buy-our-media-relations-guide>

II. SOCIAL MEDIA SKILLS

A-1 Understand best practices for social media tools

A-2 Use social media tools to benefit public health

A-3 Have working knowledge of: buttons and badges, image sharing, content syndication, RSS feeds, Podcasts, online video sharing, widgets, eCards, Twitter, blogs, Facebook, and other social networking sites

A-4 Help establish structure and policies to manage the organization's use of social media

B-1 Use knowledge of social media technologies to segment online audiences

B-2 Prioritize online audiences

C-1 Design a social media strategy that will reach its intended audience

C-2 Implement a social media strategy that will reach its intended audiences

C-3 Help optimize social media content by "listening" and evaluating

Probably everyone who has a health communications job has at least some familiarity with social media. If you do not use social media on the job, you likely do so in your personal life. It is appropriate to describe your personal use of social media in describing your working knowledge of social media best practices and tools.

Some of the other social media skills subsets might require more focus:

An excellent resource is CDC's Social Media page which discusses tools, guidelines and best practices: <http://www.cdc.gov/socialmedia/tools/guidelines/>

In addition, many free online courses exploring how social media can be used to advance public health communication are available through the American Public Health Association's TRAIN Learning Management System: www.TRAIN.org Registration is free, as are most of the courses.

III. HEALTH MARKETING SKILLS

A-1 Identify public health priorities

A-2 Define problems in achieving public health priorities

A-3 Recommend solutions to problems that prevent achievement of public health priorities

B Implement social marketing strategies

B-1 Identify the health information needs of the community

B-2 Meet the health information needs of the community

B-3 Identify community partners to help you reach your intended audiences

B-4 Recruit community partners to help you reach your intended audiences

B-5 Implement community action strategies

B-6 Implement health promotion programs

C Evaluate social marketing strategies

Even if health marketing is not your primary field, you probably have a working knowledge of this skill based on your related work. For instance, if your job is media relations you no doubt have worked with “program” staff to garner publicity for their health marketing campaigns and initiatives. To do so successfully, you would need to have some familiarity with the campaigns’ target audiences, goals and objectives. This would provide insight into how the target audiences were identified, community partners who will help in implementation of your efforts and how results will be evaluated. Ditto if you work in social media,* risk communication, cross cultural communication or health research and evaluation. Remember, if it is a working knowledge area you just have to demonstrate that you understand the skills that are necessary, and how they are put into practice. You need not have extensive first-hand “boots on the ground” experience with the skill.

Here are some helpful online resources:

<http://phpartners.org/hpro.html>

<http://www.healthypeople.gov/2020/tools-and-resources/Tools-for-Professionals>

<http://health.gov/communication/resources/>

* Note: Health marketing is part of the broader field of “social marketing.” When you write your narrative for the health marketing skillset, be mindful that social marketing and “social media” are not synonymous. Social media is one of many tools that are used in social marketing. If you believe you lack a working knowledge of social/health marketing, consider taking one or more online courses. Here is a good resource: <http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/DNPAO/socialmarketing/>

The TRAIN website www.TRAIN.org also offers many course selections to bolster health marketing skills.

IV. CROSS-CULTURAL COMMUNICATION SKILLS

A-1 Respect a wide range of differences among intended audiences

A-2 Research cultural preferences of intended audiences

A-3 Develop communication strategies that will reach diverse audiences

A-4 Craft messages that will help achieve public health objectives specific to intended audiences

A-5 Use health literacy best practices including reading grade level, word choice, graphics, and “messengers” to reach intended audiences

B-1 Identify opinion leaders within intended audiences

B-2 Recruit opinion leaders within intended audiences

C-1 Develop a community engagement program to reach intended audiences

C-2 Carry out a community engagement program to reach intended audiences

D-1 Recognize the communication needs of individuals within the intended audiences who have special needs (e.g. physical, mental health, lack economic resources, etc.)

D-2 Address the communication needs of individuals within the intended audiences who have special needs (e.g. physical, mental health, lack economic resources, etc.)

If your expertise is in health marketing, you no doubt already have a good working knowledge of cross-cultural communication, since there are few, if any, “one size fits all” health campaigns. Identifying primary and secondary audiences, partners and stakeholders, finding and recruiting community opinion leaders to help lend credibility to your efforts, engaging the community you are trying to reach with health messages, and making sure that your target audience(s) can **receive, understand and act upon** your messages is *pro forma* for both skillsets. Some things to consider:

- Effective cross-cultural communication entails more than just translating English-language materials into other languages, although you certainly can submit translated materials as supporting documents for this skillset.
- “Community engagement” is a two-way flow. It may take many forms: public meeting, online engagement, focus group, key informant interviews, etc. It is not just standing in front of a room and taking a “parental” DAD (Decide, Announce and Defend) role. Your working knowledge of community engagement should comprise a strong understanding of active listening and acting upon what you have learned from your informants.

- “Community” does not necessarily mean a population in a defined geographic area. It can also refer to a specific sector such as the business community, faith community, tobacco-prevention community, etc.
- This skillset also encompasses health communication targeted to special needs populations, so your narrative can and should describe your understanding of the challenges and strategies for reaching these groups.
- Be sure to demonstrate your understanding of the importance of evaluation and effective strategies to gauge whether cross-cultural communication goals and objectives have been effective.

If you feel that this is a weak area for you, online resources are available:

<http://www.phtc-online.org/learning/pages/catalog/cc/>

<http://content.govdelivery.com/accounts/USCDC/bulletins/1169fe7>

<http://www.cdc.gov/healthliteracy/culture.html>

The TRAIN website www.TRAIN.org also offers many course selections relating to cross-cultural communication.

V. RISK/CRISIS/EMERGENCY COMMUNICATION SKILLS

A-1 Understand the difference between risk communication, emergency (incident) communication, crisis communication (reputation management) and precaution advocacy (prevention messaging)

A-2 Put risk communication theory into practice

B-1 Communicate before a hostile audience

B-2 Facilitate two-way communication when interacting with a hostile audience **B-3** Know the difference between risk communication and public relations

C Advise leadership on crisis communication issues

C-1 Craft a crisis communication plan

C-2 Identify issues that have the potential to negatively reflect on the organization

C-3 Apprise public health leadership of potential pitfalls and planned communication strategies

D Advise leadership on emergency communication

D-1 Reflect Crisis and Emergency Risk Communication principles in all strategies

D-2 Identify primary and secondary/tertiary audience

D-3 Develop an emergency communication plan

D-4 Operationalize an emergency communication plan in real time

E-1 Communicate in a manner that enhances the ability of affected public to receive, understand and act upon messages to promote health and safety

E-2 Influence opinion leaders within both external and internal audiences

F-1 Be familiar with Incident Command System, Incident Management System and JIC operations

F-2 Develop a plan for media monitoring in public health emergencies

F-3 Implement a plan for media monitoring in public health emergencies

A critical component to passing this skillset is to understand that “risk communication” encompasses far more than Crisis and Emergency Risk Communication (also known as incident communication and often referred to as CERC). It includes “traditional” risk communication that addresses low hazard/high outrage communication such as often occurs with environmental health risks (think living near a nuclear power plant). It also includes crisis communication, which for the purposes of this certification is defined as reputation management (think BP’s task after the Gulf of Mexico oil spill.) Additionally, it includes precaution advocacy which refers to communication about low outrage/high risk threats (think radon).

You will have to discuss your expertise or working knowledge in all of these areas. Fortunately there are a number of resources for you to consult.

http://emergency.cdc.gov/cerc/resources/pdf/cerc_2012edition.pdf (This is also an invaluable resource for media relations)

<http://emergency.cdc.gov/cerc/training/basic/index.asp>

“Traditional” risk communication

<http://www.psandman.com/col/4kind-1.htm>

Crisis communication (reputation management)

https://books.google.com/books?id=K0mbBAAAQBAJ&pg=PA88&lpg=PA88&dq=Reputation+management+%2B+CDC&source=bl&ots=7_Ac06FcUI&sig=ICmJJ7VaTidNZs_EM7tjVboRMKM&hl=en&sa=X&ei=QC9nVcbNJInZtQXQ_oCwDg&ved=0CFoQ6AEwBg#v=onepage&q=Reputation%20management%20%2B%20CDC&f=false

While this skillset asks you to demonstrate your familiarity with developing and implementing both emergency (CERC, incident communication) and crisis communication (reputation management) plans, keep in mind that both of these may be part of a broader media relations plan which would count toward expertise or working knowledge, depending on what role you have played. Also consider that participation in drills and exercises may be considered in addition to your real world experience. The CDC's online CERC course addresses development of risk communication plans.

VI. COMMUNICATIONS RESEARCH AND EVALUATION SKILLS

A-1 Identify accurate public health information that meets the needs of intended audiences

A-2 Determine whether data can help to meet the public health communication needs of intended audiences

B-1 Be familiar with theory and research that should inform health communication planning

B-2 Be familiar with fundamental social science research that affects communication practice such as cognitive dissonance, optimism bias, hindsight bias, anchoring, Trust Determination Theory, Mental Noise Theory, Risk Perception Theory, vicarious rehearsal

B-3 Determine qualitative and quantitative research methods to meet the needs of intended audiences

C-1 Implement both process and impact evaluations

C-2 Apply theoretical and research-based findings to public health communication practice

To demonstrate this skillset you will, at a minimum, need to convince your reviewers that you are familiar with communication research theories. Many of you will put these into practice every day. But if your job duties do not encompass research and evaluation, you certainly may—and should reference working knowledge you may have gained through course work. The CDC's CERC course and manual, referenced several times above, gives a good overview of several relevant communication theories. http://emergency.cdc.gov/cerc/resources/pdf/cerc_2012edition.pdf (This is also an invaluable resource for media relations) <http://emergency.cdc.gov/cerc/training/basic/index.asp>

The APHA's TRAIN learning management system also offers resources. www.TRAIN.org

Keep in mind that research can also encompass activities such as conducting (or observing focus groups), writing probes for focus groups, developing and evaluating surveys, conducting key informant interviews and analyzing key informant interviews. These all are appropriate to reference in describing your experience with, or knowledge, of communications research. If you have a graduate degree your capstone project or thesis work may support your knowledge of this skillset and that may be referenced.

Here is a good resource to assist you with this skillset:

<http://www.cdc.gov/healthcommunication/research/>

VII. INTEGRATED SKILLS

A-1 Have knowledge of public health (10 essential public health services, public health as a profession, Winnable Battles, accreditation, and Healthy People 2020) and public health law and ethics as they relate to public health communication

A-2 Protect patient confidentiality and other issues relating to an individual's health privacy

B-1 Have knowledge of public health legal issues, (e.g., laws regarding HIPPA, libel, disclosure, copyright, trademarks, fair use, First Amendment issues, slander, privacy, regulations on commercial speech, lobbying, and grassroots lobbying)

B-2 Use laws regarding media access, due process, records access, to meet the needs of various publics

B-3 Understand communicable disease reporting requirements

C Be honest and transparent in communicating to both internal and external audiences

This skillset primarily deals with public health practice. If you do not work in public health, it may present a challenge. However, even if your job is outside of a public health agency you may already be working on some of the topic areas (Winnable Battles, Healthy People 2020, 10 essential public health services) in the work you do every day. The resources listed below may help you to craft this part of your narrative. If you are unsure of your expertise or knowledge in this area, you are strongly encouraged to refer to the below!

Winnable battles

<http://www.cdc.gov/winnablebattles/>

<http://www.healthypeople.gov/>

Public Health accreditation

<http://www.phaboard.org/>

Communicable disease reporting requirements

<http://www.health.ny.gov/professionals/diseases/reporting/communicable/>

Patient confidentiality/HIPPA

<http://lawatlas.org/query?dataset=public-health-departments-and-state-patient-confidentiality-laws>

Public health laws and ethics

<http://www.cdc.gov/phlp/docs/phl101/phl101-unit-2---16jan09-secure.pdf>

