

# Four critical elements in the ongoing work to build and maintain confidence



## How to use this document

This document suggests four critical elements in the ongoing effort to build and maintain confidence in vaccines and the health authorities delivering them. The suggested activities also help you prepare for events that may erode trust in vaccines or the health authorities delivering them. For each step, the document refers to relevant WHO support documents.



## How was this document developed?

This document is part of a WHO series of supporting documents concerning events that could erode confidence in vaccination. Such events can be related to vaccine safety, adverse events following immunization, changes in the vaccination programme, negative public debate, outbreaks or pandemics.

All documents were developed based on scientific evidence, laboratory research and fieldwork within psychology, social and behavioural science and communication and lessons learnt in countries. For an introduction to the theoretical background and evidence, refer to the WHO publication *Vaccination and trust*, available here: [www.euro.who.int/vaccinetrust](http://www.euro.who.int/vaccinetrust).

The supporting documents are intended for use by national

- ministries of health
- centers for disease control
- immunization programmes
- regulatory authority institutions.



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## Four critical elements in the ongoing work to build and maintain confidence

### Gather your inner circle



A communication coordination mechanism (e.g. a communication working group) should be established to help plan communication on a routine basis. The group will also prove its worth in any emerging crisis, as it will facilitate a rapid and well-coordinated response.

#### Consider the following

- Work together in the group to ensure strong routine communication and aligned messaging.
- Share information regularly, via emails and face-to-face meetings.
- Agree on who will be involved in coordinating communications in case of a crisis, your roles and responsibilities and how you will coordinate and share information in a crisis.

### Prepare your organization



In building and maintaining trust in vaccination, you need to develop, implement and widely share communication strategies and plans and train your staff. A strong organization will also help you respond to any possible crisis.

#### Consider the following

- Develop communication and crisis communication plans.
- Ensure senior management engagement and approval of plans.
- Prepare holding statements for use in a crisis.
- Train spokespersons and establish relations with the media.
- Train frontline health workers in vaccination safety and interpersonal communication.

### Build relations



Good stakeholder relations are critical to building and maintaining trust. Stakeholders can become strong advocates and may have knowledge of and access to key population groups. Who they are depends on the context, but may include national authorities, experts, opinion leaders, health workers, professional associations, community leaders, the public and media.

#### Consider the following

- Engage them in disseminating information and developing communication plans.
- Form strategic relationships with stakeholders with access to your priority target groups.
- Work with the media to gain their trust and increase their knowledge of immunization.
- Be visible to increase public knowledge of immunization and trust in your spokespersons.

### Build population resilience



To ensure public trust in vaccines and health authorities and resilience to vaccine safety scares, ongoing communications need to be implemented to build awareness and knowledge of risks and benefits of immunization and diseases.

#### Consider the following

- Conduct research to gain a deeper understanding of key population groups and to test communication products and messages.
- Monitor public opinion on immunization, e.g. through social media monitoring or feedback from frontline health workers.
- Ensure information for key public target groups and job aids for health workers based on the insights gained from your research and monitoring.