LESSON 2. COMMUNICATING WITH THE WHOLE COMMUNITY

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Lesson Objectives

At the end of this lesson, the participants will be able to:

- Analyze your community to identify groups requiring consideration when preparing and delivering communications.
- Identify factors that impact communication requirements.
- Identify strategies for communicating effectively with the whole community.
- Identify aspects of communicating with respect.

Scope

- Lesson Overview and Objectives
- The Whole Community
- Community Diversity
- Understanding the Needs of Your Community
- Activity: The Whole Community
- Communicating With the Whole Community
- Action #1: Ensure Message Content Is Clear and Understandable
- Action #2: Tailor Message Delivery to Specific Needs
  - o Activity: Do's and Don'ts
  - o Activity: Communicating With the Community
- Action #3: Identify Alternative Avenues for Communication
- Action #4: Communicate With Respect
  - o Activity: Communicating With Respect
- Activity: Community Awareness Assessment
- Summary and Transition

Methodology

The lesson opens with a video that discusses aspects of communicating with the whole community. Participants will begin this unit by learning about the importance of communicating with the *whole* community and learn about the different types of community diversity. The instructor will present four actions to successfully communicate with the whole community. Participants will complete a series of activities designed to emphasize effective communication in a diverse environment. Finally, participants will begin a community awareness assessment of their own community.

Materials

- PowerPoint visuals 2.1 – 2.24 and a computer display system
- Instructor Guide
- Student Manual

Time Plan

A suggested time plan for this lesson is shown below. More or less time may be required, based on the experience level of the group.

Topic	Time
Lesson Overview and Objectives	3 minutes
The Whole Community	3 minutes
Community Diversity	2 minutes
Understanding the Needs of Your Community	2 minutes
Activity: The Whole Community	10 minutes
Communicating With the Whole Community	2 minutes
Action #1: Ensure Message Content Is Clear and Understandable	2 minutes
Action #2: Tailor Message Delivery to Specific Needs	15 minutes
Activity: Do's and Don'ts	10 minutes
Activity: Communicating With the Community	10 minutes
Action #3: Identify Alternative Avenues for Communication	2 minutes
Action #4: Communicate With Respect	2 minutes
Activity: Communicating With Respect	10 minutes
Activity: Community Awareness Assessment	15 minutes
Summary and Transition	2 minutes
Total Time	**1 hour 30 minutes**

LESSON OVERVIEW AND OBJECTIVES

Visual 2.1
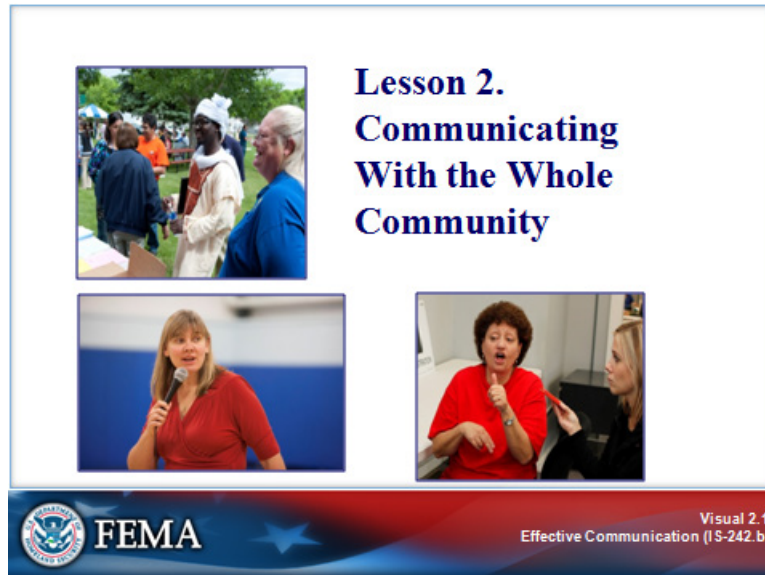
Key Points

This lesson presents strategies for ensuring that you communicate effectively with the whole community, including those with access and functional needs.

LESSON OVERVIEW AND OBJECTIVES

Visual 2.2

Key Points

At the completion of this lesson, you should be able to:

- Analyze your community to identify groups requiring consideration when preparing and delivering communications.
- Identify factors that impact communication requirements.
- Identify strategies for communicating effectively with the whole community.
- Identify aspects of communicating with respect.

VIDEO: COMMUNICATING WITH THE WHOLE COMMUNITY

Visual 2.3

Key Points

Transcript:

Communicating effectively with your community means communicating with the *whole* community. Communities are diverse. They include people of all ages and varied cultural backgrounds, individuals with disabilities, and people with other access and functional needs such as limited English proficiency or literacy limitations.

How can you successfully communicate with such a diverse audience? The first step is to know your audience, including any factors that may impact how you communicate with them. Once you understand your audience, you will be better able to communicate in a way that takes advantage of their communication strengths.

Be sure your messages are clear and understandable. This benefits your entire audience.

Next, tailor your message delivery to the needs of the community, especially those with sensory disabilities or language limitations. One way to tailor your message is to provide information in multiple formats so that accessing it does not depend on a single sense or ability of the user. Another approach is to translate materials into multiple languages at appropriate reading levels.

It is important to be sensitive to cultural differences in the way we communicate, including nonverbal cues, and to communicate in a way that bridges those differences.

Next, consider ways to get your message out that will enhance the likelihood of its being received by specific populations. Teaming up with organizations in the community can help.

And finally, communicating with respect will improve your ability to reach the whole community, including those with disabilities and other access and functional needs.

THE WHOLE COMMUNITY

Visual 2.4

Key Points

In emergency management, communication responsibilities are typically quite varied. Your responsibilities may include:

- Educating the community on emergency preparedness.
- Keeping people informed about emergency plans, issues, and events.
- Issuing alerts and warnings.
- Providing accurate information during incidents.
- Sharing information with response partners.
- Engaging the community in dialogues about disaster recovery.

Your target audience can be described generally as "everyone who can benefit from the information."

Although up to this point we have focused primarily on oral communication skills, you have a wide variety of communication tools at your disposal, including, among others:

- Print-based materials.
- Web-based content.
- Broadcast media (television and radio).
- Telephone and face-to-face interaction with individuals.
- Large-group forums such as public meetings.
- Social media.

We'll look more closely at the various communication media in the next lesson. For now, let's consider ways to ensure that your message—regardless of the medium—is appropriate for the whole community.

COMMUNITY DIVERSITY

Visual 2.5

Key Points

Communities include people of all ages, diverse cultural groups, and individuals with access and functional needs. Access and functional needs are factors that impact an individual's access to information and needed programs and services. These factors include, but are not limited to:

- Disabilities that impact hearing, vision, speech, cognitive processing, and mobility.
- Limited English proficiency.
- Literacy limitations.

The U.S. Census Bureau reports that over half the population has some type of access or functional need, and almost 20 percent have disabilities. Further, they project a rapid increase in diversity. Many factors are contributing to the increasing diversity of communities. Examples of these factors include:

- The growing population of people with disabilities living in communities instead of institutional settings.
- The Baby Boom generation reaching their seniority, resulting in a growing senior population.
- Greater international migration contributing to more ethnic and linguistic diversity of the population.

It is important to know the composition of your community and to understand what that composition means for the way you communicate.

Understanding the community is not a one-time event or analysis. Because communities are constantly changing, the process must be an ongoing effort to stay in tune with the capabilities and needs of the population.

UNDERSTANDING THE NEEDS OF YOUR COMMUNITY

Visual 2.6

Key Points

To better understand the communication needs of your community, you should:

- **Understand community complexity** so you will know who your audience is. For example, learn about your community's demographics, and educate your emergency management staff. Potential sources of information include:

  o Census information.
  o Jurisdiction profiles compiled by emergency planning teams.
  o Social service agencies and organizations.
  o Faith-based organizations and houses of worship.
  o Advocacy groups.
  o Chamber of commerce and business leaders.
  o English-as-a-Second-Language (ESL) programs.

- **Know the languages and communication methods/traditions in the community.** Consider not only what languages people speak and understand, but how they actually exchange new information and which information sources they trust. Be aware of myths and stereotypes.

- **Find out where the real conversations happen and decisions are made.** Decisions are not always made at the council level, but often at venues such as the community center, neighborhood block parties, social clubs, or places of worship. Tap into these opportunities to listen and learn more about the community. Develop strategies to reach community members and engage them in issues that are important to them.

- **Implement outreach interventions,** such as establishing relationships with multi-lingual volunteers to help interact with the various groups, and forming alliances with disability advocacy groups.

UNDERSTANDING THE NEEDS OF YOUR COMMUNITY

Visual 2.6 (Continued)

Formal and informal community leaders such as community organizers, local council members and other government leaders, nonprofit or business leaders, volunteer or faith leaders, and long-term residents have valuable knowledge and can provide a comprehensive understanding of the communities in which they live.

ACTIVITY: THE WHOLE COMMUNITY

Visual 2.7

Key Points

Purpose: The purpose of this activity is to review the importance of the whole community.

Time: 5 minutes

Instructions: Entire group:

- Your instructor will read each statement in the Student Manual and ask if it is true or false.
- Be prepared to explain your answers.

Statements:

- In emergency management communication, the target audience is those people who form the majority in the community.

- Access and functional needs are factors that impact an individual's access to information and needed programs and services.

- Understanding the community can be accomplished through a one-time analysis of the jurisdiction's demographics.

ACTIVITY: THE WHOLE COMMUNITY

Visual 2.7 (Continued)

<u>**Instructor Note**</u>**:** If not suggested by the participants, provide the following responses:

False: In emergency management communication, the target audience is those people who form the majority in the community.

Explanation: The target audience can be described generally as "everyone who can benefit from the information." Everyone in the community needs to prepare for disasters and be able to respond appropriately if an emergency situation occurs. This is true regardless of their cultural heritage, the languages they speak, and any factors that impact their communication requirements.

True: Access and functional needs are factors that impact an individual's access to information and needed programs and services.

Explanation: Access and functional needs include, but are not limited to:

- Disabilities that impact hearing, vision, speech, cognitive processing, and mobility.
- Limited English proficiency.
- Literacy limitations.

False: Understanding the community can be accomplished through a one-time analysis of the jurisdiction's demographics.

Explanation: It is important to know the composition of your community and to understand what that composition means for the way you communicate. Because communities are constantly changing, the process must be an ongoing effort to stay in tune with the capabilities and needs of the population.

COMMUNICATING WITH THE WHOLE COMMUNITY

Visual 2.8

Key Points

There are four key actions that will help you communicate effectively with the whole community:

- Action #1: Ensure message content is clear and understandable.
- Action #2: Tailor message delivery to specific needs.
- Action #3: Identify alternate avenues for communication.
- Action #4: Communicate with respect.

We will look at each action in more detail.

ACTION #1: ENSURE MESSAGE CONTENT IS CLEAR AND UNDERSTANDABLE

Visual 2.9

Key Points

As a baseline, all communications should be clear, user-friendly, and age appropriate.

- Be clear. Using plain language benefits most people. Avoid jargon and acronyms, passive voice, and complex structures.

- When presenting information orally, apply the basic communication skills related to listening, nonverbal cues, voice, and engaging the audience.

- Identify your audience, and make sure your presentation is age and education appropriate. Materials and presentations for children will not be the same as those for adults.

- Make sure the format is user-friendly, with an easy-to-follow format. Using symbols and graphics can add clarity and eliminate extra verbiage.

ACTION #2: TAILOR MESSAGE DELIVERY TO SPECIFIC NEEDS

Visual 2.10

Key Points

Segments of the population often have specific needs that, when met, enable them to participate fully in the exchange of information.

Let's look, for example, at communicating with people who have:

- Sensory disabilities.
- Language or literacy requirements.
- Cultural factors that affect communication.

ACTION #2: TAILOR MESSAGE DELIVERY TO SPECIFIC NEEDS

Visual 2.11

Key Points

Sensory disabilities include hearing, vision, speech, and cognitive disabilities, each of which can impact the process of communication.

Every individual is different. For example, a person with a vision disability may be blind or have low vision; the vision loss may have been present at birth, progressive, or caused by trauma, or might be happening gradually with aging.

Individuals with sensory disabilities may not be able to communicate their needs or ask for information, hear verbal announcements or alerts, see directional signs, communicate their circumstances to emergency responders, or understand how to get assistance due to their disability.

They may require auxiliary aids and services or language access services (such as interpreters and adapted materials) to participate effectively in communication.

ACTION #2: TAILOR MESSAGE DELIVERY TO SPECIFIC NEEDS

Visual 2.12

Key Points

A guiding principle for serving individuals with disabilities is access to effective communication.

- People with disabilities must be given the same information provided to the general population.

- Communication with people with disabilities must be as effective as communication with others.

The job aid on the next page provides information about laws protecting the communication rights of individuals with disabilities.

Job Aid: Laws Related to Accessible Communication

A number of laws have been enacted to protect the rights of people with access and functional needs. Below are examples of laws that specifically address accessible communication.
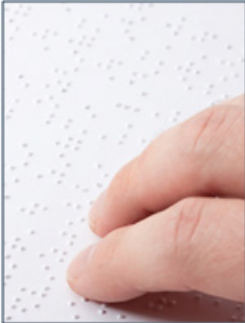
Law	Provisions
Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (as amended)	• Prohibits discrimination during disaster relief and assistance activities and extends those protections to include race, color, religion, nationality, sex, age, disability, English proficiency, and economic status.
Rehabilitation Act of 1973	• Prohibits discrimination against persons with disabilities. • All entities that receive Federal financial assistance are required to effectively communicate with people who have communication disabilities including hearing, vision, or cognitive disabilities. • Federal electronic and information technology must be accessible to people with disabilities. An accessible information technology system is one that can be operated in a variety of ways and does not rely on a single sense or ability of the user.
Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990 and ADA Amendments Act of 2008	• State and local governments must give people with disabilities an equal opportunity to benefit from all of their programs, services, and activities. Requirements include ensuring effective communication with people who have hearing, vision, or speech disabilities. • Telecommunications Relay Services must be made available to individuals with speech and hearing impairments to the fullest extent possible and in the most efficient manner. • Any television public announcement that is produced or funded in whole or in part by the Federal Government must be closed captioned.

ACTION #2: TAILOR MESSAGE DELIVERY TO SPECIFIC NEEDS

Visual 2.13

Key Points

Whether information is print-based, Web-based, or presented orally, appropriate media should be used to ensure information is communicated in alternate formats. Examples include:

- Sign language interpretation of spoken presentations.
- Video captioning.
- Downloadable large-print versions of materials.
- Braille versions of materials.
- Web content with screen reader capability.
- Recorded narrations describing visual materials.

ACTIVITY: DO'S AND DON'TS

Visual 2.14

Key Points

Purpose: The purpose of this activity is to identify communication practices you should use (and those you should avoid using) when communicating with the whole community.

Time: 5 minutes

Instructions: Entire group:

- Your instructor will read each statement in the Student Manual and ask if it is something you should do or should avoid doing.
- Be prepared to follow up the answers with a group discussion.

Statements:

- Use abbreviations and acronyms as much as possible to eliminate extra verbiage.

- Provide information in a single format to ensure that everyone has equal access to the same information.

- Recognize that not everyone with a given disability has the same communication needs.

- Use symbols and graphics to make materials more user-friendly and easy to follow.

ACTIVITY: DO'S AND DON'TS

Visual 2.14 (Continued)

<u>**Instructor Note**</u>: If not suggested by the participants, provide the following responses:

Don't: Use abbreviations and acronyms as much as possible to eliminate extra verbiage.

Explanation: For greater clarity, it is best to use plain language and avoid acronyms, jargon, and complex sentence structures.

Don't: Provide information in a single format to ensure that everyone has equal access to the same information.

Explanation: To meet the needs of all populations in your community, you should provide information in multiple formats. This practice allows individuals to access the information without relying on a particular sense or ability.

Do: Recognize that not everyone with a given disability has the same communication needs.

Explanation: Every individual is different. For example, a person with a hearing disability may have mild to profound deafness or have difficulty hearing sound at low volumes or at certain frequencies. The person may or may not use sign language or speech reading.

Do: Use symbols and graphics to make materials more user-friendly and easy to follow.

Explanation: Using symbols and graphics can add clarity and eliminate extra verbiage. They add an alternate form of expression to written words.

ACTION #2: TAILOR MESSAGE DELIVERY TO SPECIFIC NEEDS

Visual 2.15

Key Points

Language and literacy factors impact the disaster experience because communication is vital to effective response activities.

Immigrants, migrant workers, undocumented workers, tourists, and exchange students may have language barriers. In addition, many individuals may have literacy barriers, including those with limited English proficiency, hearing or learning disabilities, older adults, and others. An estimated 20 percent of American adults read at or below the 5th grade level.

A 2013 study of print- and Web-based emergency preparedness materials collected from local and national sources found that half of the materials tested in the 10th grade to college range, and nearly all were above the 5th grade level.

Be sure your disaster-related materials are written at appropriate reading levels and provided in languages spoken in your community.

ACTION #2: TAILOR MESSAGE DELIVERY TO SPECIFIC NEEDS

Visual 2.16

Key Points

Individuals' cultural heritage may affect not only language, but also how they:

- Transmit and interpret nonverbal cues.
- Respond to different styles of communication.
- Interact during communication.

Such impacts may be even more pronounced in older generations. Failure to discern attitudes, beliefs, values, and rules implicit in different groups could disenfranchise some citizens and work against the community's goal of whole community preparedness.

The job aid on the next page highlights some of the cross-cultural meanings of nonverbal cues.

Job Aid: Cross-Cultural Meanings of Nonverbal Cues

Often, when misunderstandings occur between people from different cultures, it has little to do with what they said—it's how they said it, what they did when they said it, or even whom they said it to. Nonverbal language can have meaning that is culture-specific. Consider the following examples:

Eye Contact

Eye contact has different meanings among different cultures. In the United States, maintaining strong eye contact indicates that the listener is attentive and interested in the message. In some Asian cultures, looking directly into a speaker's eyes indicates disrespect, while lowering the eyes is considered polite manners.

Gestures

Gestures considered as good gestures in one country may be seen as offensive in others. Examples include "thumbs up," pointing, open-palm "stop" gesture, curling the index finger in a "come here" motion, a-OK (index finger and thumb forming a circle), finger snapping, and looking at one's watch or wrist.

Touching

When, where, and how often we touch each other has cultural significance. Americans tend to touch each other less than members of many other cultures. We need to be especially sensitive to cultural differences regarding contact.

Timing

The timing of verbal exchanges—the pause between the conclusion of one person speaking and the other replying—is also culturally influenced. Some people interpret a long wait before a reply as lack of attention. However, in some cultures, a pause before replying indicates a polite and considered response.

Personal Space

Within each culture, there are expected personal distances for different types of relationships. For example, studies indicate that Americans prefer these proximities:

- Personal distance (between friends and intimates): 1.5 to 4 feet.
- Social distance (for social and business transactions): 4 to 12 feet.
- Public distance (among strangers in public): 12 feet or more.

In other cultures, these distances may be different. Nonverbal communication can be confusing when comfort zones are violated.

ACTION #2: TAILOR MESSAGE DELIVERY TO SPECIFIC NEEDS

Visual 2.17
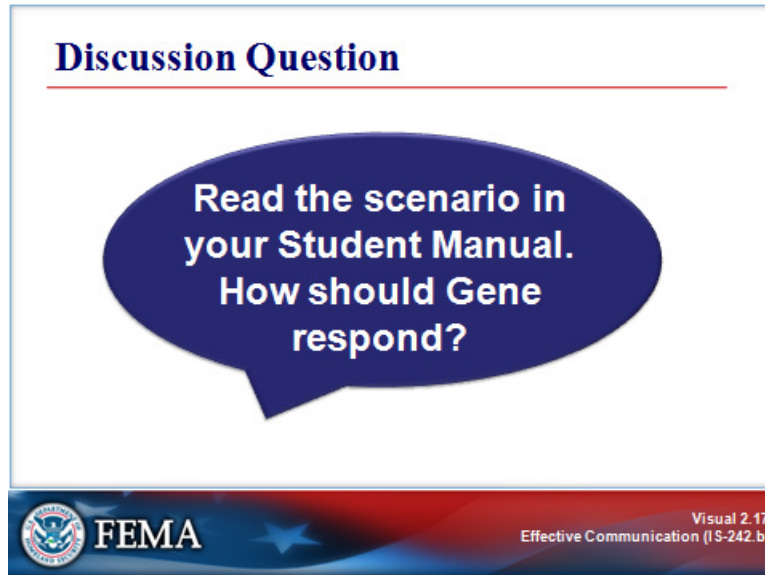
Key Points

Scenario: Gene has been asked to speak at a town meeting about how to be prepared for extreme temperatures. When he arrives, he notices that many in the audience are people whose families immigrated from India. During his talk, people of Indian heritage are slowly shaking their heads back and forth, whereas others in the audience are obviously engaged with the message.

How should Gene respond?

> **Instructor Note:** Give the participants a few minutes to read the scenario. Then, facilitate a discussion around the question. If not provided by the participants, review the following:
>
> If Gene understands the communication traditions of his audience, he will feel comfortable continuing with his presentation.
>
> Slowly shaking one's head back and forth does not always mean disagreement. Rather, in parts of India it signals, "I'm listening." The Indian members of the audience were paying every bit as much attention to his message as others.
>
> A good response would be to provide his own positive feedback—perhaps making eye contact and smiling—to demonstrate that he understands. Asking a question or two would enable some members of the audience to verbalize their response and further engage them with the speaker and the rest of the audience.

ACTION #2: TAILOR MESSAGE DELIVERY TO SPECIFIC NEEDS

Visual 2.18

Key Points

Using the strategies below, you can demonstrate that you respect generational and cultural differences among community members—and build powerful relationships as a result.

Approach others with interest and openness. Approach generational and cultural differences with interest, not fear or negativity. Take interest in the interests of others. You can learn fascinating things about other people if you choose to do so.

Speak slowly and clearly. Focus on slowing down your speech. Try not to rush your communication. Remember, it takes more time to correct miscommunication and misunderstanding.

Ask for clarification. If you are not sure you understand the meaning being communicated, politely ask for clarification. Avoid assuming you've understood what's been said.

Check your understanding frequently. Check both that you've understood what's been said and that others have fully understood you. Use active listening to check your own understanding (e.g., "So what you are saying is . . . "), and use open-ended questions to check other people's understanding.

Avoid generational or cultural idioms. Language is contextual and has cultural implications. Examples of idioms include sports or other expressions, such as: "ace in the hole" and "a long row to hoe." As a good general rule, if the phrase requires knowledge of other information—be it a game, generational event, a metaphor, or current social media—recognize that this reference may make your communication more difficult to understand, or even worse, offensive.

Be careful of jargon. Watch the use of TLAs (Three-Letter Abbreviations) and other language or jargon that may not be understood by others.

ACTION #2: TAILOR MESSAGE DELIVERY TO SPECIFIC NEEDS

Visual 2.18 (Continued)

Be patient. Cross-cultural communication may take more time.

Be sensitive to whether you are understood. Watch for "puzzled" looks from your audience. Most people show it on their faces when they don't understand. Look for changes in body language.

The job aid on the next page provides some tips about learning about your community's cultures.

Job Aid: Learning About Your Community's Cultures

It's not realistic to become an expert on every culture that you may encounter. However, it **is** reasonable for you to learn about the populations that make up major parts of your community.

Take the time to learn the basic customs of the ethnic groups in your community.

- **Tune in.** Making yourself aware of key cultural and other differences that you will need to address during an emergency will help you learn what to expect of the groups and whether your message is being communicated.

- **Research.** Read news articles about the groups represented in your community. Frequently, these articles can provide good insight into the people and the behaviors that are part of their cultures. (This strategy is especially helpful when you are new to a community or are from a different part of the country.)

- **Network.** Talk to the leaders of the cultural groups in your community. You will find that most will be pleased that you care enough to make the effort and will be very willing to share key attributes of their culture with you.

- **Participate.** Many communities sponsor special days on which the various cultures represented in the community can share their food, artwork, and other entertainment with their neighbors. Take the time to attend these events. Pay careful attention to what you see and hear.

ACTIVITY: COMMUNICATING WITH THE COMMUNITY

Visual 2.19

Key Points

Purpose: The purpose of this activity is identify whether a communication practice is recommended or not recommended when communicating with members of the whole community

Time: 5 minutes

Instructions: Entire group:

- Your instructor will read each statement in the Student Manual and ask if the practice is recommended or not recommended.
- Be prepared to follow up the answers with a group discussion.

Statements:

- Ensure that all materials are written at approximately the 10th grade level.

- Be sensitive to cultural differences in interpreting gestures, eye contact, and personal space.

- When you don't understand someone who has difficulty communicating, pretend that you understand so as to avoid giving offense.

- Avoid cultural idioms and metaphors that depend on familiarity with unrelated activities such as sports or social trends.

ACTIVITY: COMMUNICATING WITH THE COMMUNITY

Visual 2.19 (Continued)

<u>Instructor Note</u>: If not suggested by the participants, provide the following responses:

Not Recommended: Ensure that all materials are written at approximately the 10th grade level.

Explanation: Many people have language or literacy barriers related to limited English proficiency, hearing disability, learning disability, advancing age, or other factors. An estimated 20 percent of American adults read at or below the 5th grade level. Emergency preparedness materials should be written at reading levels that enable the whole community to benefit from them and should also be provided in alternate formats.

Recommended: Be sensitive to cultural differences in interpreting gestures, eye contact, and personal space.

Explanation: Nonverbal language can have meaning that is culture-specific. It is important to know your community audience and become sensitive to the different ways they may regard eye contact, gestures, touching, timing, and personal space during communication.

Not Recommended: When you don't understand someone who has difficulty communicating, pretend that you understand so as to avoid giving offense.

Explanation: If you are not sure you understand the meaning being communicated, you should politely ask for clarification. Avoid assuming you've understood what's been said. False assumptions can lead to awkward misunderstandings and may burden the speaker by making it necessary to backtrack, repeat, and clarify.

Recommended: Avoid cultural idioms and metaphors that depend on familiarity with unrelated activities such as sports or social trends.

Explanation: Language is contextual and has cultural implications. If a phrase requires knowledge of other information—be it a game, generational event, metaphor, or current social media—this reference may make your communication more difficult to understand, or even worse, offensive.

ACTION #3: IDENTIFY ALTERNATE AVENUES FOR COMMUNICATION

Visual 2.20

Key Points

When selecting how to communicate with and educate your community, it is wise to use multiple formats and media to reach the widest possible audience.

You should also identify distribution methods that will ensure everyone in the community gets the message. When conducting communication and education activities, include:

- Social, cultural, and religious groups.
- Advocacy groups.
- Ethnic radio and television stations that broadcast in their native languages.
- Children, to educate their parents.

And when disseminating information through public forums, be sure the facilities are accessible by those who use wheelchairs or other assistive devices.

ACTION #4: COMMUNICATE WITH RESPECT

Visual 2.21

Key Points

Practice basic etiquette when meeting people with disabilities and others with access and functional needs. For example:

- Do not shout at a person with a hearing disability unless asked to do so. Speak in a normal tone but make sure your lips are visible. The same holds true for people with limited English proficiency.
- When meeting someone with a visual disability, identify yourself and others with you (e.g., "Jane is on my left and Jack is on my right."). Continue to identify the person with whom you are speaking.
- If the person's speech is difficult to understand, do not hesitate to ask him or her to repeat what was said. Never pretend to understand when you do not.
- Place yourself at eye level with the person when conversing. Some ways to accomplish this without drawing attention to yourself are sitting on a chair or standing a little farther away to reduce the steep angle of the sightline. This is effective when interacting with all people who are sitting as well as persons with short stature.

Additional etiquette guidelines include the following:

- Find a place to sit and talk if a person has decreased physical stamina and endurance, which is preferable to standing during the entire interaction.
- Talk directly to the person with the disability, not to a person who accompanies them. Doing otherwise implies that you doubt the person's ability to understand, which is disrespectful.

The job aid on the following pages will help you to communicate with respect.

Job Aid: Using Inclusive Language

Language influences behavior. Inclusive language is a powerful ingredient for achieving successful outcomes that are beneficial for the whole community. Consider the following language guidelines when referring to people with disabilities and others with access and functional needs.

Do's	Don'ts
• Use **people-first** language. Place the emphasis on the individual instead of the disability. • Use language that is respectful and straightforward. • Refer to a person's disability only if it is relevant. • Remember that individuals are unique and have diverse abilities and characteristics.	• Avoid terms that lead to exclusion (e.g., "special" is associated with "separate" and "segregated" services). • Avoid judgmental, negative, or sensational terms (e.g., brave, courageous, dumb, super-human). • Avoid making assumptions or generalizations about the level of functioning of an individual based on diagnosis or disability.

Guidelines for Inclusive Language

The table below offers language guidelines for referring to people with disabilities and others with access and functional needs.

Preferred	Avoid
People with disabilities	The handicapped, the disabled, the impaired
An individual or person with a disability	Disabled person
Access and functional needs	Special needs, vulnerable
Deaf, hard of hearing, hearing loss, sensory disability	Deaf and dumb, the deaf, mute
Accessible communication, effective communication	Special communication
He has a speech disability	He has a speech impairment, speech impediment
He is blind, he has low vision	The blind, sight impaired
She has a mobility disability	She's mobility impaired, physically challenged, crippled, an invalid, lame, differently-abled, bedridden, house-bound, a shut-in
She has… (multiple sclerosis, cancer, etc.)	She suffers from, is afflicted with, is stricken with, is impaired by
He uses a wheelchair, a scooter, a mobility device	Wheelchair bound, confined to a wheelchair, wheelchair person

Job Aid: Using Inclusive Language (Continued)

Guidelines for Inclusive Language (Continued)

Preferred	Avoid
Assistive devices, assistive technology, durable medical equipment	Handicapped equipment, special devices
Power chair, motorized wheelchair	Electric wheelchair
She sustained a spinal cord injury, has paralysis, is a spinal cord injury survivor, has paraplegia, has quadriplegia	She's paralyzed, she's a cripple, she's trapped in her body, her body is lifeless, crippled, useless
Prosthesis, prosthetic limb	Fake leg, wooden leg, peg leg
He has cerebral palsy	He's spastic, palsied
He has epilepsy, has seizures	He has spells, fits
She is a little person, she has dwarfism, he is of short stature	She's a dwarf, he's a midget
She has Down syndrome	She's Downs, a Down's kid, mongoloid, retarded
He has a learning disability	He is learning disabled, slow, slow learner, dumb
A person with an intellectual disability, developmental disability	The mentally retarded, retard, retarded, mental retardation, mentally impaired
A woman with a cognitive disability, a person with dementia or Alzheimer's Disease	Senile, demented
A child with a traumatic brain injury, a person who sustained a head injury	Brain damaged, slow
He has autism, he is autistic (this term is preferred by some people with autism)	Mental, mentally impaired, retarded, dumb
She has a mental illness, a mental health disability, psychiatric disability; he has a diagnosis of schizophrenia or bipolar disorder, uses behavioral health services	Emotionally disturbed, disturbed, crazy, psycho, schizo, insane, manic, manic depression, mental, mental patient; she has a behavior problem, he needs behavior management, she's a problem child, he is crazy, she is out of control
Congenital disability, sustained a birth injury, an injury acquired at birth	Birth defect, defective
Children who receive special education services, children with Individual Education Plans	Special education kid, special needs child, rides the short bus, SPED, he's special ed, he is special

Job Aid: Using Inclusive Language (Continued)

Guidelines for Inclusive Language (Continued)

Preferred	Avoid
Senior, older person, older adult, elder with a disability	The frail elderly, the elderly
Accessible bathroom, accessible parking, accessible housing, accessible transportation	Handicapped bathrooms, handicapped parking, special needs housing, special housing, special transportation
Medical needs, acute medical needs, health care needs	Special medical needs
She requires support or assistance with…	She has a problem with…
Planning with people with disabilities	Planning for the disabled
Whole community planning, inclusive planning, integrated planning	Special needs planning, special plans, special needs annex
Universal cot, accessible cot	ADA cot, special needs cot, special medical cot
Personal assistance services, personal care assistance for children, youth and adults, caregiver (more appropriate with children)	Patient care, caregiver (for an adult), carer, takes care of
Functional needs support services in a general population shelter, accessible shelter, universal shelter	Special needs shelter, special shelter, special functional needs shelter
Person who receives disability services	Client, patient (unless referring to the acute care services of a nurse or doctor), burden, welfare case
Disaster survivor	Disaster victim (when used to describe an individual who survived the disaster)

The difference between the right word and the almost right word
is the difference between lightning and a lightning bug.
-Mark Twain

ACTIVITY: COMMUNICATING WITH RESPECT

Visual 2.22

Key Points

Purpose: The purpose of this activity is to identify behaviors that demonstrate communicating with respect.

Time: 5 minutes

Instructions: Working individually:

- Read the following descriptions of how people may behave when they communicate.
- Determine whether each behavior demonstrates communicating with respect.
- Be prepared to explain your answers.

Instructor Note: Give the participants 5 minutes to complete this activity. Ask for volunteers to share their responses.

ACTIVITY: COMMUNICATING WITH RESPECT

Visual 2.22 (Continued)

Instructions: Indicate whether each behavior is effective or not effective at demonstrating respect in communication.

Communication Behavior	Effective	Not Effective
When talking to a person with a hearing disability, speak louder than you normally would.	☐	☐
If a deaf person is assisted by a sign language interpreter, direct your comments to the interpreter.	☐	☐
When meeting someone with a visual disability, identify yourself and others with you.	☐	☐
When talking to a person in a wheelchair, remain standing.	☐	☐
When referring to people with disabilities, refer to the disability only if relevant.	☐	☐
Assume that each individual with a disability has unique abilities and characteristics.	☐	☐
When talking to a person with a hearing disability, make sure your lips are visible.	☐	☐
Speak with exaggerated enunciation, slowness, and volume when talking to an older adult.	☐	☐
When talking to a person with limited English proficiency, make sure your lips are visible.	☐	☐

ACTIVITY: COMMUNICATING WITH RESPECT

Visual 2.22 (Continued)

Instructor Answer Key:

Instructions: Indicate whether each behavior is effective or not effective at demonstrating respect in communication.

Communication Behavior	Effective	Not Effective
When talking to a person with a hearing disability, speak louder than you normally would.	☐	☑
If a deaf person is assisted by a sign language interpreter, direct your comments to the interpreter.	☐	☑
When meeting someone with a visual disability, identify yourself and others with you.	☑	☐
When talking to a person in a wheelchair, remain standing.	☐	☑
When referring to people with disabilities, refer to the disability only if relevant.	☑	☐
Assume that each individual with a disability has unique abilities and characteristics.	☑	☐
When talking to a person with a hearing disability, make sure your lips are visible.	☑	☐
Speak with exaggerated enunciation, slowness, and volume when talking to an older adult.	☐	☑
When talking to a person with limited English proficiency, make sure your lips are visible.	☑	☐

ACTIVITY: COMMUNITY AWARENESS ASSESSMENT

Visual 2.23

Key Points

Purpose: The purpose of this activity is to analyze your community's cultural communication needs.

Time: 10 minutes

Instructions:

- Use the worksheet in your Student Manual to begin to analyze your community's cultural communication needs.
- Continue completing and updating the worksheet after you return to the workplace.

Instructor Note: Based on the class makeup, determine if this activity is best completed as an individual or group activity. Give the participants 10 minutes to begin work on this activity. After 10 minutes ask for volunteer participants to share information that they have identified. Encourage the participants to continue completing and updating the worksheet after they return to the workplace.
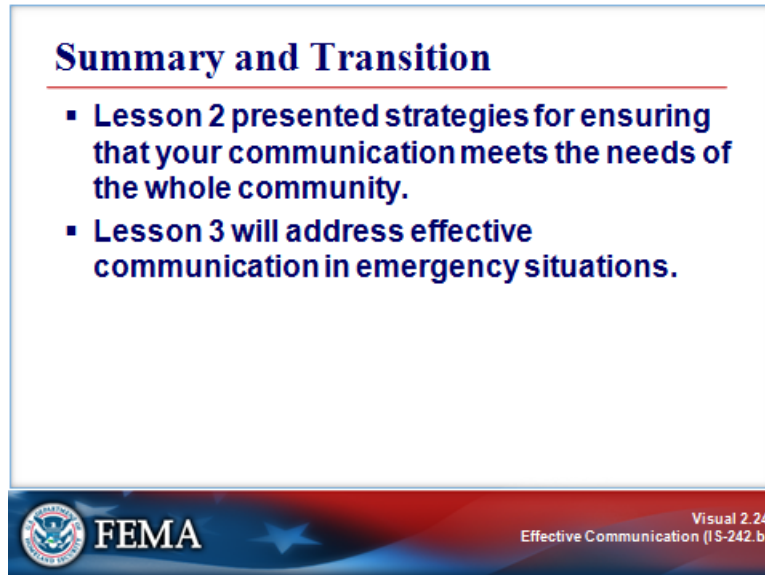
Community Awareness Assessment

Ethnic Communities/Cultural Groups: What ethnic communities/cultural groups are represented in your community? (List below.)			
Groups:			
Where is this community/group located?			
What languages are spoken by this community/group?			
Is there a large proportion of people with limited English proficiency in this community/group?			
Does this community/group have community gathering places or hold cultural events?			
Are there radio or TV stations that broadcast in their native language?			
What are the implications for communicating with this community/ group?			
Where can you find additional information to help you plan your communication with this community/ group?			

SUMMARY AND TRANSITION

Visual 2.24

Key Points

This lesson presented strategies for ensuring that your communication meets the needs of the whole community. You should now be able to:

- Analyze your community to identify groups requiring consideration when preparing and delivering communications.
- Identify factors that impact communication requirements.
- Identify strategies for communicating effectively with the whole community.
- Identify aspects of communicating with respect.

Lesson 3 will address effective communication in emergency situations.