Title Slide

Display this slide while participants arrive

Use pre-session time to:

- Meet and greet participants.
- Pass out participant guides, registration forms, and course evaluations
- Have participants fill out registration forms and any local forms or sign-in sheets
- Mention that this training was developed using funding from the U.S. Department of Homeland Security.
- Introduce instructor/facilitator
- (Optional) participant introductions

What Would you Do?

2 FTA
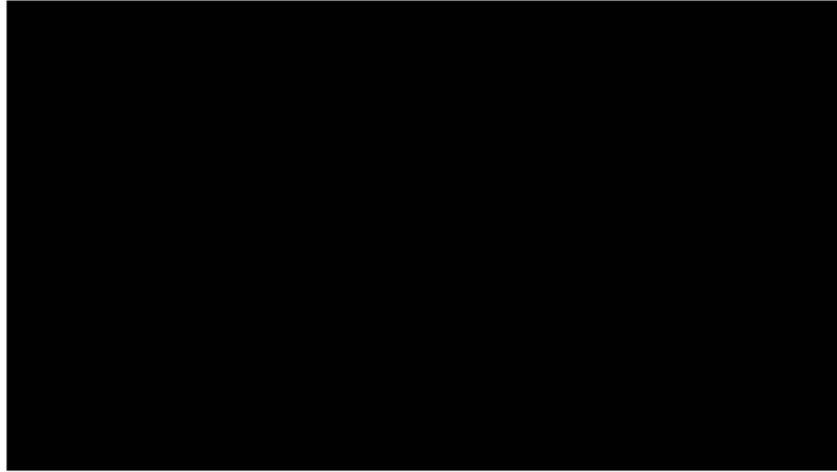
Course Goal

This course will enable you to communicate effectively with passengers and members of your organization during a crisis regardless of its size, cause, or complexity

As the people who are on-scene as a crisis is unfolding, **you**, the front line employees, play an essential and irreplaceable role in minimizing confusion and protecting lives during an incident. You are also the eyes and ears for your organization, relaying vital information to your command center so that it can initiate appropriate responses.

The goal of this course is to enable you to communicate effectively with passengers and members of your organization during a crisis.

Course Objectives

At the end of this course you will be able to:

- Identify the audiences you will communicate with during a crisis and understand their needs

- Recognize the effect that stress and fear have on communication

- Implement effective verbal and non-verbal communication strategies to manage a crisis regardless of its size, cause, or complexity

FTA

Introduction to Crisis Communication
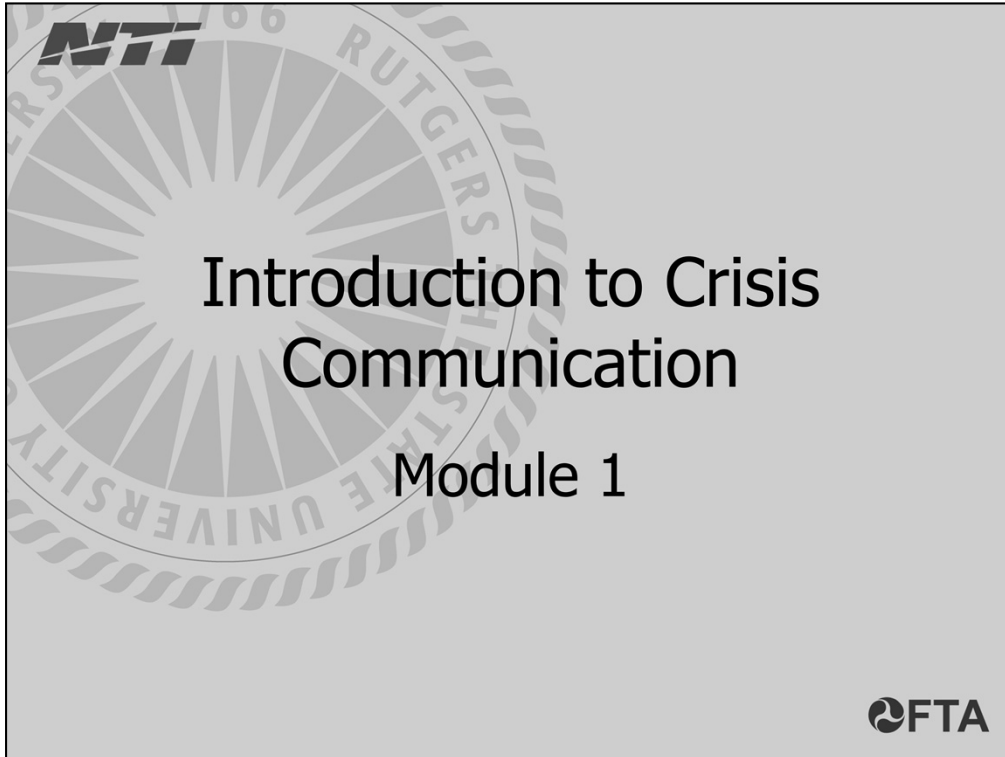
Module 1

Module Objectives

At the end of this module you will be able to:

- Define communication

- Describe a communication breakdown

- Explain how proper crisis communication can prevent communication breakdowns and lessen negative impacts during transportation emergencies

FTA

This is a hidden slide. You may present the objectives to students if you wish.

What is Communication?

- Communication is the activity of conveying information
- It requires
  - ➢ A Sender
  - ➢ A Message
  - ➢ A Recipient
- But it also requires an *understanding* of the message to be effective

⊘FTA

At its most basic level, communication is a process where a message is sent and received. It requires a sender, a message and a recipient. But, to truly say communication has happened, there has to be a match between what's understood by the receiver (the person you are trying to communicate with) and what you (the sender) intended to say.

Communication Breakdowns

- A breakdown in communication occurs when a message is misunderstood

- Messages can be spoken or written words, but they can also be gestures or looks

- Communication breakdowns can occur at any point in the communication process and for a variety of reasons

As we've discussed, it's pretty common to have the experience where what you want to say in your head, what actually comes out of your mouth, and how the other person interprets what you said all differ in some way. These differences are called communication breakdowns, and they occur when a message is misunderstood.

Messages are often spoken, but they may also be conveyed non-verbally, with gestures or looks. Sometimes these gestures or looks could be the source of the communication breakdown.

There are numerous reasons communication breakdowns occur, and they can happen at any point in the communication process.

The first place for a potential breakdown is when you are translating the idea in your mind into a message. Translation problems are not surprising, since some of us are better at conveying our ideas than others, and even really good communicators can run into problems when they are stressed, tired, etc.

Assuming that you do translate your idea into a clear message, a breakdown can also happen in getting the message to the receiver. The message may be blocked out by background noise, or it may be in a format the receiver cannot use—for example, you're communicating in English, but your receiver only speaks Spanish.

Finally, even if the message does reach the receiver, another potential breakdown can take place when the receiver interprets the message you've sent. A misinterpretation may happen for a number of reasons. For example, perhaps you've used a gesture that's widely understood by Americans, but

your speaker is from someplace else and interprets your gesture as rude. Much of this course will focus on causes of communication breakdowns during a crisis and skills you can use to try to avoid or overcome them.

Transit Communication Breakdown

- During a large snow storm, residents were told not to drive and to take mass transit

- The buses tried to drive on unplowed roads, because the agency didn't have access to the DOT's internal emergency operations web site and didn't know which roads were unplowed/unpassable

- Thousands of residents were stranded in the cold waiting for buses that never arrived, because they were stuck

ΩFTA

http://www.oregonlive.com/weather/index.ssf/2009/01/trimet_city_not_communicating.html

Communication breakdowns among Portland-area transportation agencies left thousands of residents stranded in the cold as they waited for buses during the recent snowstorms. And many, unable to drive their cars, had turned to mass transit for the first time or were infrequent users of buses.

Chief among the transportation complaints from the public was the canceling of two-thirds of TriMet's bus lines at a time when officials, including then-transportation commissioner Sam Adams, had specifically asked the public to use mass transit rather than drive.

"They were dutifully going to the bus stops," said Adams, who has since been sworn in as mayor. And when the bus didn't come, they'd call Adams' office, though he had no authority over TriMet's buses.

The public was "rightfully frustrated," Adams said. "No one intended for the buses to get stuck."

Officials with TriMet and the Oregon Department of Transportation did not have access to Portland's internal emergency operations web site. That kept those agencies in the dark about some storm-related complications.

Result: a failure to wave buses away from unplowed roads, in some cases resulting in stranded buses and passengers.

Portland Transportation Director Sue Keil and two TriMet officials present for the meeting agreed that the agencies were not as plugged-in as they should have been. TriMet had a liaison at the city Office of Transportation's emergency operations center, but that was not enough to make sure city plows got to the most popular bus routes.

Michael McGuire, manager of emergency management for TriMet, said the web-based information system, known as WebEOC, would have helped the agency track which roads were clear and which problems the city saw coming.

"Had we been able to access that, it would have been a different story," McGuire said.

Communication Barriers

Many factors can limit communication.
These might include:

- Difficulty understanding spoken or written English
- Impairments:
  - Hearing
  - Cognitive
  - Sight
- Intoxication
- Presence of severe mental illness

It's important to be aware of these communication barriers during a crisis and think ahead about how you might work to address them.

Having difficulty understanding spoken or written English, which is also sometimes called having Limited English Proficiency, can present an obvious barrier to communication, since most safety information on vehicles is written in English, and the majority of vehicle operators use English as their on-the-job language.

<Ask: How might you help a passenger who doesn't understand English?>

You could ask if another passenger onboard could interpret for you, or if you have access to your agency's communication system, you could seek language assistance to help them. You could also use hand motions to indicate the direction to move during an evacuation.

A passenger may experience **impairments of cognition, hearing, or vision** as part of their daily lives, or these could be a temporary effect during an incident. For example, confusion that impairs cognition could happen following a head injury or hearing loss could occur following an explosion. Cognitive impairments might allows include dementia from Alzheimer's or a developmental disability.

Intoxication, whether through alcohol or drugs, can make passengers less able to understand safety-related information. Intoxication also makes passengers behave more erratically. This could be a particular problem if the crisis will interfere with a passenger's ability to obtain his or her substance of choice, for example a long delay.

Finally, **severe mental illness** can have an impact on a person's ability to communicate. However, it should be noted that many people with severe mental illness will respond adaptively and compliantly during a crisis; therefore do not assume that because someone is mentally ill they will be difficult to deal with during a crisis.

Generally, passengers' tolerance for delays will vary based on how anxious they are to get someplace (e.g. rush hour commuters may be less tolerant than mid-weekend leisure riders). You know your system's riders as well as daily and regional patterns best, so keep these in mind when you're evaluating the mood onboard your vehicle during a delay.

Language Barriers
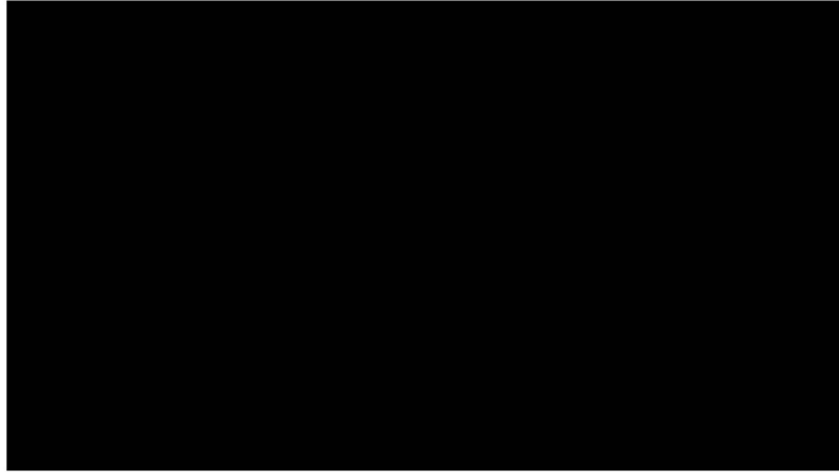
Emotions can Color Communication

- Normal everyday communications are subject to breakdowns

- There is an even greater chance that messages will be unclear or misunderstood when both the Sender and the Recipients are in a stressful situation

- As a transit employee, it is more important than ever to be calm and give clear information during a stressful event

FTA

We've shown how easy it is for a message to become misunderstood or misinterpreted as it travels from the Sender to the Recipient. Even under normal, calm, everyday circumstances, messages can be unclear and misunderstood. Think about how easy it would be for a communication breakdown to take place during times of stress or heightened emotions.

VIA Rail Crash:
Brighton, Ontario, Canada

The following 2 case studies will show how poor communication can make a bad situation worse and how good communication can help to lessen the impact of a potential disaster.

We'll begin our case studies with an example where poor communication made a bad situation worse.

November 1994: Brighton, Ontario, Canada.

On a cold fall night, a VIA Rail Canada Inc. train struck a piece of rail that had been placed intentionally on the track. The piece of rail punctured the locomotive fuel tank and severed electrical power cables. A fire quickly broke out and the trailing portion of the locomotive and the first two passenger cars were engulfed in flames. Among the 385 passengers present during this incident, 46 were injured.

Poor communication and coordination following the initial incident caused further injury and chaotic conditions during the evacuation of the train. Also, the emergency exit features of the passenger cars were found to be unsafe.

During the chaos after the fire erupted, passengers attempted to move to the rear of the train, but they were unable to open the door leading to the following car. Passengers began to panic and reported they felt they might not survive. A crew member eventually made her way to the door and managed to open it. However, before she arrived, passengers and other staff had begun breaking windows with their feet. Passengers then started to escape through broken windows while the train was still moving. Two rail employees then managed to open outside doors and lower the steps that allowed people to exit the train. Many passengers were injured exiting windows as they received cuts and abrasions from broken glass. Others were injured jumping from the windows.
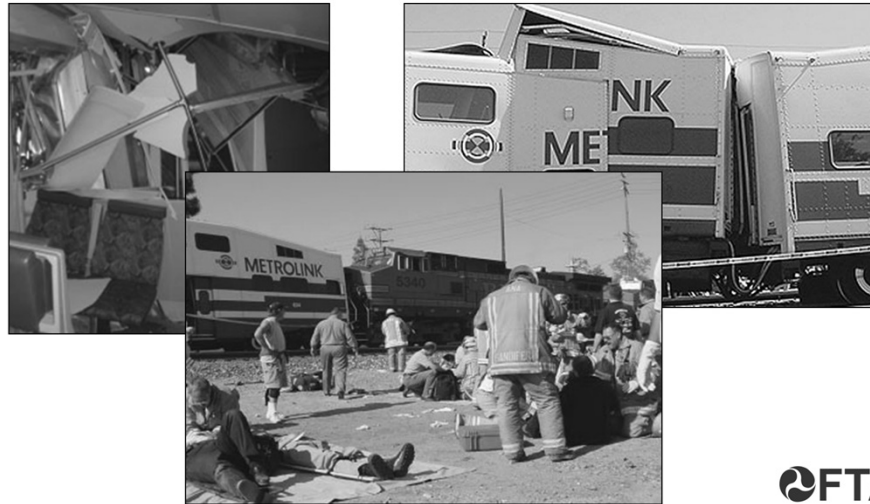
The investigation found that there was inadequate information about the operation of the doors. Manual operation of the vestibule door was accomplished by pulling down on a "T" handle; however the investigation found that many passengers would be unable to reach this handle. It was found that the force needed to operate this handle, coupled with lack of instruction on its use made manual deployment of the door extremely difficult, if not impossible, for some passengers.

A follow-up questionnaire was sent to the passengers after the accident, and their responses indicated that they observed the train crew in the first two cars, where the fire first broke out, became confused and were unable to give basic instructions. The investigation also found that although train crew were provided with information during their training regarding the safest ways to evacuate, they did not get a chance to practice these skills. They also received no instruction on communication techniques or on providing direction to passengers in an emergency.

The passengers were looking to the crew for leadership during this frightening event, but instead they found a crew that was inadequately prepared for emergencies, and therefore unable to communicate effectively with them so that they could respond appropriately during the emergency.

* Mention the February 26, 2012 VIA derailment Train 92 was travelling at 67 mph — almost 108 kilometres — when it derailed west of Toronto, killing the three engineers and injuring 45 passengers. The speed limit while changing tracks at that particular switch, just east of Aldershot station in Burlington, is 15 mph — or 24 kilometres.

**BNSF and Metrolink Crash
Placentia, California**

On Tuesday, April 23, 2002, at around 8:00 a.m., an eastbound Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railway (BNSF) freight train collided head on with a westbound Metrolink passenger train in Placentia, California. Following the collision, 2 people were pronounced dead at the scene and 162 people were transported to local hospitals. Damages were estimated at $4.6 million.

Although an initial communication error caused the accident—the BNSF conductor and engineer both misinterpreted a signal and failed to stop, which caused the collision—good communication during this crisis ultimately saved lives.

First, when the Metrolink engineer realized a crash was unavoidable, he placed his train in emergency, left the control compartment, and ran back through the lower level of the car warning passengers to brace themselves. The accident report states that this warning allowed many passengers to protect themselves so that they were not more seriously injured in the crash.

Second, communication to initiate appropriate emergency responses began quickly. The initial notification to local emergency responders happened within 1 minute of the collision and they were dispatched immediately. This allowed first responders to be on scene within 3 minutes of dispatch. All those seriously injured were extricated, triaged, stabilized, and transported from the scene within an hour of the initial response. All remaining injured were transported from the scene within 2 hours.

The communication strengths of the crew, which ultimately saved lives, were that they effectively conveyed information about the situation to passengers so that they could take action to protect themselves and they communicated effectively to obtain the help they needed from emergency responders.

Crisis Communication

What is a Crisis?

- A crisis is an unexpected event, out of the organization's control, that has potential for very negative consequences

BUT

- Effective communication during a crisis can help reduce the impact

During a crisis, the stakes are much higher. A crisis almost always has the potential for very negative consequences. While an organization can try to plan for them (for example by writing emergency plans and having exercises), crises are unexpected in that their timing cannot usually be anticipated. A crisis is also almost always something which an organization cannot control.

During a crisis, you must strive to give people the best information you can to help them take action to protect themselves or others.

What this Means to You

- Effective communication occurs when what is understood matches what was intended

- The communication process is susceptible to breakdowns in many places

- Effective communication during a crisis can minimize breakdowns and mitigate the impact of transportation emergencies

FTA

This is a hidden slide. You may present the summary to students if you wish.

Your Audience and
Your Message

Module 2

Module Objectives

At the end of this module you will be able to:

- Identify the audiences you are communicating with during a crisis

- Describe communication goals during a transit crisis

- Explain the importance of following organizational communication protocols

FTA

This is a hidden slide. You may present the objectives of this module to students if you wish.

During a crisis, your communications will need to reach a number of groups so that an effective emergency response can occur.

Internal audiences:
Other employees: Internally, you will need to communicate with other frontline employees on the scene so that you can execute your agency's emergency plan effectively.

The OCC: You will also need to communicate details of the incident to the OCC so that they can initiate necessary organizational responses.

Supervisors: You will also need to communicate with your supervisors so they can determine what other actions may be necessary.

Communicating Outside Your Agency

- Passengers/customers
- Emergency responders
- Other transportation modes/agencies
- Media
- The public

During a crisis, your communications will need to reach a number of groups so that an effective emergency response can occur.

External audiences:

External audiences that you need to communicate with include passengers who are onboard at the time of the incident.

Emergency responders: Emergency responders are another essential audience, since they will need to know details of the incident as well as information regarding the vehicle, number and condition of passengers onboard, etc. so that they can respond effectively.

Other transportation modes and agencies: If the incident could have an impact on other modes of transportation, for instance an explosion has affected a passenger train taking out a great distance of track, then freight rail, as well as bus would need to be notified so that freight rail can divert around the affected area and so that bus lines can adjust their service to meet the increased need for transit.

The media: In today's 24/7 information age, when there is a high profile incident affecting the transportation industry there will invariably be immediate media interest. Therefore, an appropriate response to media requests for information must occur. In most cases, frontline employees will not be authorized to speak with the press, so this response may involve directing the media to someone such as a supervisor or the organization's Public Information Officer (PIO) who can meet their needs.

The public: Finally, the broader public will have a tremendous need for information if a large-scale transportation incident occurs; therefore, organizations must devise a system to meet their needs, for example by working with a relief organization to set up an information hotline for those whose family members have been hurt during the incident.

Incident Response Goals

During a crisis, your priorities are to:

- Protect lives
- Stabilize and control the incident
- Minimize service disruptions
- Protect property

FTA

Instructor note: **Modify as needed with specific agency goals**

Protect lives: Protecting people's lives by ensuring their safety is the number 1 goal during a crisis, and many of the communications you will engage in during this time will focus solely on this task.

Stabilizing and controlling the incident is the next goal. Once something has gone wrong, you will need to do everything possible to get the situation under control and to keep it that way until it is resolved. This involves gathering and reporting information, communicating with other employees who may be on-scene, as well as your agency's command center, making announcements, and directing passenger movements (shelter-in-place, relocation, or evacuation).

Minimizing service disruptions both for the passengers onboard your vehicle as well as those using other transportation services is the next priority.

Finally, **property protection** is the last goal. When possible property should be protected; however, this should not be done at the expense of protecting safety or controlling the incident.

Your Organization's Communication Protocols

- Following your organization's communication protocols can help ensure that the right internal audiences receive information about the crisis and are able to respond appropriately

- Additionally, your organization may follow the National Incident Management System (NIMS) during an incident

FTA

Instructor note: Before presenting this material, consult the agency's communication and incident command protocols. Add agency-specific information as necessary to ensure that participants respond according to agency directives. Emphasize the importance of following their organization's communication protocols. Make relevant protocols available for those who wish to consult them.

NIMS is a comprehensive, national, all-hazards approach to incident management. It coordinates the efforts of departments and agencies at all levels of government, nongovernmental organizations, and the private sector to work together seamlessly during an incident or crisis. NIMS outlines and informs the roles played by each department and personnel within each to protect against, respond to, recover from, and mitigate the effects of incidents, regardless of cause, size, location, or complexity. Working together in this way can reduce the loss of life and property and harm to the environment. It has become an effective system mainly because of its proven ability to facilitate an all hazard approach. It is a set of processes for doing normal activities and gives all agencies involved standards for non-normal events.

Lessons learned from previous large-scale disasters point to a need for a National Incident Management System (NIMS) that will provide a coordinated response, standardization, and interoperability. These emergencies are large and small. They range from fires to hazardous materials incidents to natural and technological disasters. With this in mind, each incident requires an effective response. Incidents that are managed through divergent or conflicting objectives will create dangerous conditions for civilians and responders.

- Incidents or events that are not managed will grow and spread
- Mismanagement will intensify dangerous conditions for civilians and responders
- Streamlining multi-agency/multi-jurisdictional efforts improves overall response

Transit's Role within NIMS

- Transit professionals should be familiar with NIMS for emergencies on their own system, and

- To provide support for other local and regional emergencies
  - Evacuations
  - Temporary shelter
 - Transportation of responders
  - Provide vehicles

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As a transit employee, familiarity with NIMS will help you and your agency plan for emergencies and be better prepared to coordinate with response personnel during an emergency.

Also under NIMS, you and your agency may be involved with:
- Emergency evacuation and transport of affected persons, including those with disabilities
- Temporary shelter aboard vehicles or in stations and facilities of responders, patrons or the public
- Transportation of responders to/from emergency sites
- Provision of vehicles and equipment to assist in rescue and recovery

NIMS Incident Command Structure

Activity 1

What Types of Situations Would Require Incident Management Skills?
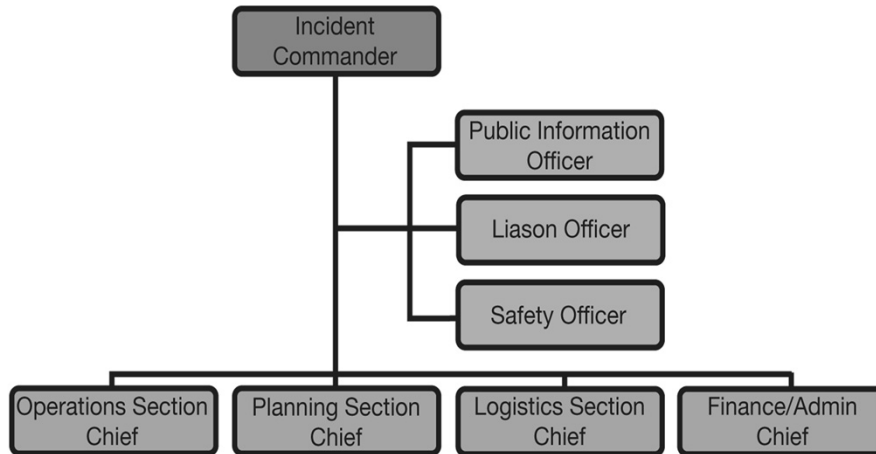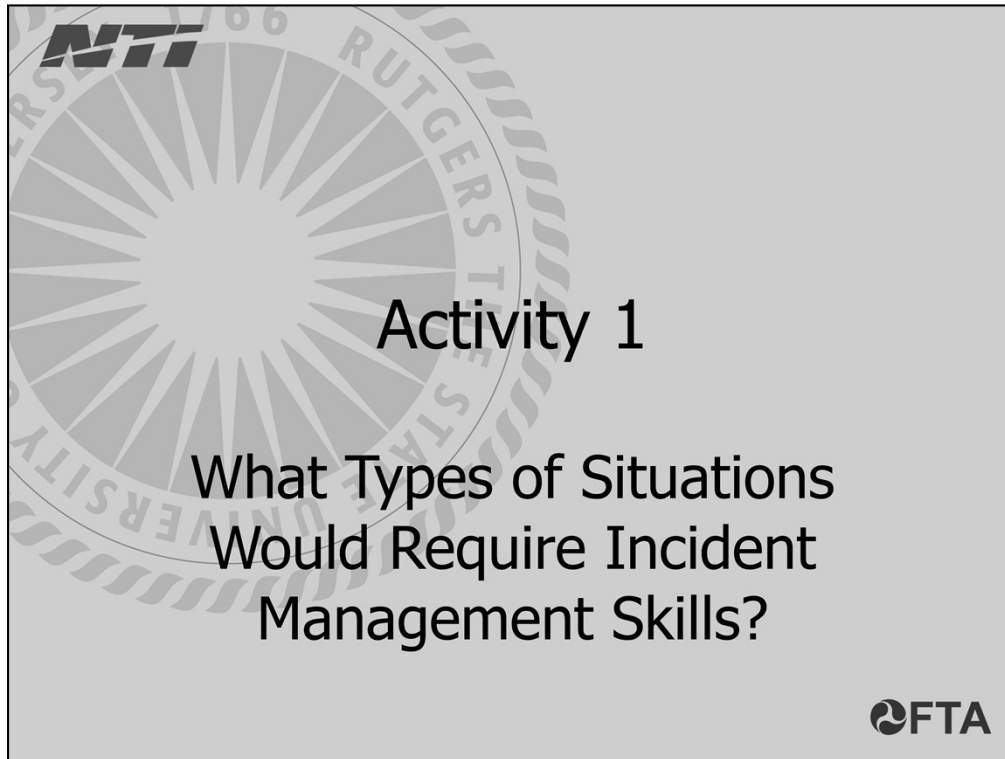
Flip Chart Activity:

Can you think of any types of situations that would require incident management skills?

Incidents (unplanned occurrences that threaten life safety):

Chemical

Dam failure

Earthquake

Fire

Flood

Hazard material (Haz-Mat)

Heat

Hurricane

Blizzard

Illness outbreak

Events (planned occurrences):

Parade

Festival

Sporting event

Concert

What are Your Communication Goals?

To others in your agency:

- Communicate information needed to get help

- Communicate to warn others

To passengers:

- Communicate to inform

- Communicate to maintain control of situation

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Internal communication goals:

Many of your communications will be undertaken to meet your internal partners' information needs, for instance other frontline workers, the OCC, your supervisor.

The primary goals of your internal communications will be to get the help you need and to warn others about what's happening.

External communication goals:

You will also communicate to meet the information needs of external audience such as passenger, first responders, the public, and the media.

The primary goals of your external communications will be to inform these audiences about what is happening and to communicate effectively so that you maintain control of the situation.

What do Passengers Want to Know?

- What's happened
- How long are they going to be stuck
- That you will be updating them
- That they are safe
- That the proper authorities have been contacted
- That you have the situation under control

First and foremost, customers will want to know what has happened. If the incident will result in a delay, they will want to know how long they may be delayed for. Customers will also want to know that you will be keeping them in the loop as anything changes. If outside authorities need to respond to the incident, customers will want to know that they have been contacted. And finally, customers will want to know that you and your organization have the situation under control!

What this Means to You

- During a crisis, there are multiple internal and external audiences with whom to communicate

- The ultimate goals of your communications include protecting life safety, stabilizing and controlling the incident, minimizing service disruptions, and protecting property

- Following your organization's communication protocols can help ensure that the right internal audiences receive information about the crisis and are able to respond appropriately

⟁FTA

This is a hidden slide. You may present the summary to students if you wish.

Why People React the Way they Do
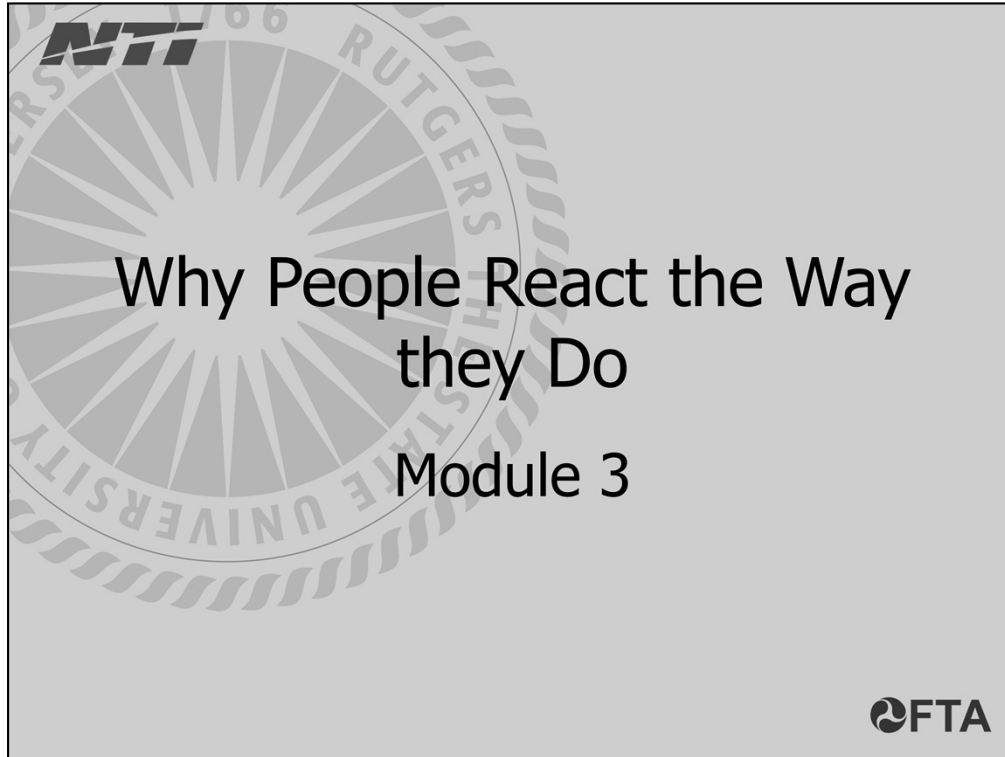
Module 3

There are many other factors that determine how people interpret information and their ability to respond to it—these can be person-specific factors, environmental factors, or informational ones.

Module Objectives

At the end of this module you will be able to:

- Assess the effect of person-specific factors such as social history, life experience, culture on crisis communication

- Identify the impact of the environment on crisis communication

- Describe the impact of information for others and from transit personnel on crisis communication

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This is a hidden slide. You may present the objectives of this module to students if you wish.

Activity 2
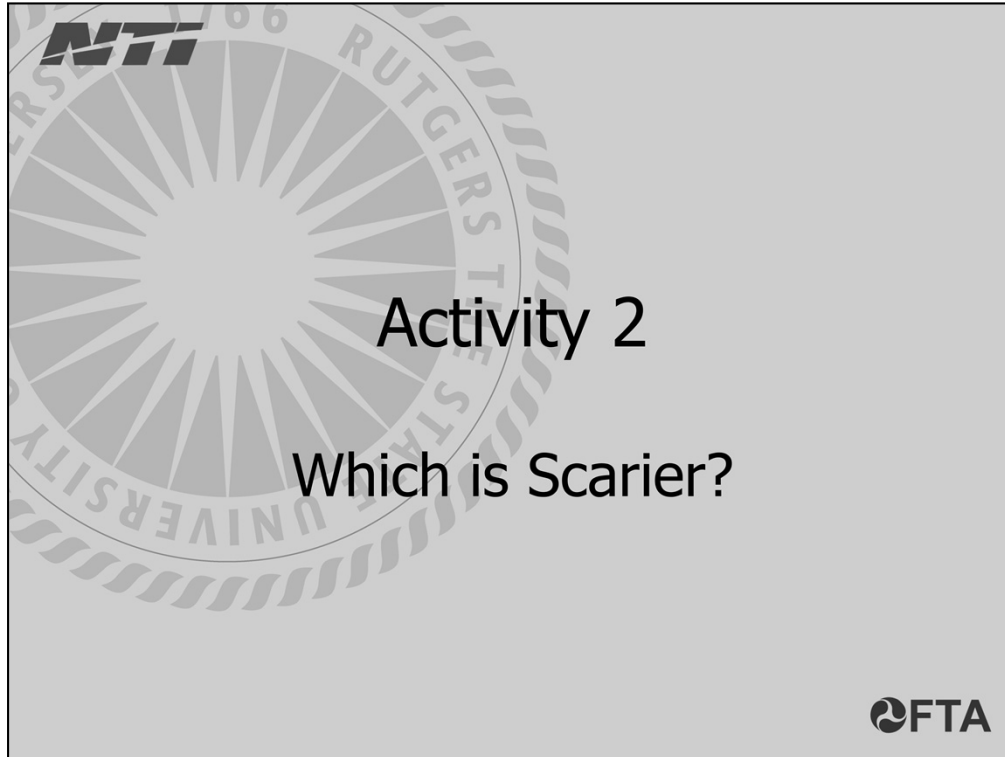
Which is Scarier?

I'm going to present pairs of images. After I show you the images, I would like you to vote by a show of hands on which of the pair is scariest. Don't think too much about it; just go with your gut reactions. *<Show the next 2 slides . The majority of respondents will identify Ebola and plane crash as most frightening. These hazards, while exotic, are unlikely. Additionally, they present less danger to the population as a whole as they are responsible for fewer annual deaths in the US . However, "objective" information such as this is not what drives people's emotional responses to hazards.>*

This slide contains animations.

Image 1: the flu.

Image 2: From the movie Outbreak, where an Ebola-like virus was infecting a small town.

Image 1: a plane crash

from http://www.flickr.com/photos/bartclaeys/

Image 2: A car crash

Transit employees may not respond in the same way as the general public, since they are intimately familiar with a transportation modality. If they select car crash as scariest, tell them that the public will perceive plane crashes as scarier because of their unfamiliarity with transportation risks.

So Which is Scarier?

- Not everyone is scared of the same things

- What scares people is often **not** the same as what is actually the most risky

- Many factors contribute to people's fears and understanding them can help improve communication with them during a crisis

FTA

This activity shows that people's emotional response to hazards (i.e. their fear) is driven by a large number of factors. Specifically, it shows that the things that are most objectively "risky" or likely to kills people are not always (or often) the same as what people are most afraid of.

How people perceive risk and their willingness to accept particular risks is influenced by personal values, culture, life history, and other factors, and you, as experts within your transit systems, may evaluate a hazard and consider it harmless; however, passengers may have a very different view. Every person's response to a hazardous event will be colored by these factors, therefore, no two people will behave in the same way. However, there is a lot a research that can give us ideas of what people find most frightening, and this can help us to better communicate with them when something goes wrong in the transit system.

Fear Factors

Conditions that cause the most fear:

1. Not controllable
2. Unfamiliar
3. Dreaded
4. Caused by humans

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Factors that are most likely to upset people and cause fear include those that are:

1. **Uncontrollable:** If we have the sense that there is no way for us to control the risk we are much less comfortable with it. You're driving your car vs. someone driving a train or bus.

2. **Unfamiliar:** Unfamiliar risks are viewed as more hazardous than familiar ones. People are more afraid of things they don't have much experience with—Ebola vs the flu. People have usually had the flu or know someone who has, but the same can't be said about Ebola.

3. **Dreaded:** Risks that cause dreaded illness or evoke terror or anxiety are more threatening than risks than those that do not evoke such emotions. This is partly why terrorism is viewed as extremely risky and why the risk associated with terrorist attacks is often overestimated.

4. **Human origin:** Risks caused by humans or those considered to be unnatural are more threatening than those that are naturally derived. Acts of nature such as hurricanes or tornadoes are much more acceptable than acts of man such as chemical or oil spills.

How many of you have heard of 'Fight or Flight'? Well, more recent research has shown that people actually respond in 3 ways, so it's really 'freeze, flight, and fight'. So, what exactly do these responses look like?

Freeze: The first response, freeze, is one you have probably seen before. Think of people frozen in the street after 9/11, trying to figure out what's going on, or the first few seconds after a fire alarm goes off. People stop what they're doing and try to figure out what's going on rather than responding appropriately right away.

So what does freezing mean for you as communicators? During a crisis, some people may stay frozen longer than is useful, staying stunned and struggling to figure out what is going on and what to do next. You may need to reorient them to what's going on and use communication techniques to focus them on actions they need to take to protect themselves.

Flight: The next type of fear-induced behavior is running away from the threat. In most situations, this is useful since it gets us away from danger quickly.

<Ask audience: Can you think of some situations where it might not be a good response?>

One situation where having a strong urge to run away might be a problem is when sheltering in place is actually the safest thing to do, for example during a rail accident. In this case, you would need to use strong communication skills to convince people that sheltering is best.

Fight: When running away isn't possible, some human beings and other animals defend themselves against a threat instead. You might see "fight" behavior, if for example, there is a hostage situation on a transit. Or, you may see fight behavior if your instructions during a crisis go against people's instincts—for example if you tell people they need to stay onboard a vehicle they think is unsafe.

Madrid Bombing and Fear Responses

FTA

Physical Effects of Fear

During a crisis, the effects below can have an impact on passengers **and on you!**

- Faster heart rate
- Higher blood pressure
- Faster breathing
- Blood vessels in many parts of the body constrict
- Sweating

FTA

Fear is something most people experience physically as well as emotionally. During a life-threatening crisis, not only will your passengers feel the physical effects of extreme stress or fear, but you will be too! Understanding and expecting these effects will help to limit the impact they have on your ability to act effectively to protect yourself and others. Also, by understanding the range of physical sensations your passengers may feel and the effect these may have on their behavior, you will be better able to communicate with them.

Your heart starts beating faster and your blood pressure increases: This is to get your body the richly oxygenated blood it needs to help you run faster or fight harder. A number of other things would also start happening in your body at the same time.

Blood vessel constriction: If you're going toe-to-toe with a predator, it's better if your extremities (arms, legs, hands and feet) have less blood in them to lose in case you are injured, so your body directs your blood away from these areas. This may lead to hands and feet feeling cold or numb. Your passengers and colleagues may look pale since blood may also leave their faces.

Sweating: The body sweats in anticipation of having to cool itself off after extreme exertion. Sweating paired with blood vessel constriction can lead to a "cold & clammy" feeling.

Pupils dilate: Dilated pupils let in more light to make you better able to see the threat to your safety

Digestion slows or stops: Your body re-directs its energy from digesting food to getting ready to respond to a threat. This response may lead to dry mouth, nausea, or constipation. This may also be felt as "butterflies" in the stomach or a "sinking feeling" in the pit of the stomach.

Loss of hearing: Since vision is the sense most needed in fighting a predator, your body directs your mental focus to this sense rather than hearing. *Note: this may make giving people verbal directions difficult, you may want to use hand signals to indicate evacuation routes.*

Tunnel vision: Your ability to see things outside the middle of your field of vision decreases—again, this is to allow you to better see what the predator is doing. People in combat and police officers facing attackers with weapons have often reported seeing only their attacker until their lives were no longer under threat. *<Audience question: If you are dealing with an acutely terrifying emergency (for example a bomb has exploded in the subway), and you are trying to give evacuation instructions to someone who appears to be experiencing tunnel vision, where do you think it would be best to position yourself?>* **Answer:** Since people experiencing tunnel vision will be best able to see what's directly in front of them, if someone does not appear to see you at first, stand directly in front of them so you are in the middle of their field of vision.

The Influence of "Life Experience"

- Age
- Cultural background or group membership
- Emergency management training
- Experience in leadership roles
- Experience with disasters or traumatic events

FTA

Everyone brings their life experience to the table during interpersonal communication and during a crisis, and people's life experiences have a strong influence on how they will respond to a crisis and to your communications. Just as you don't want people to stereotype or make assumptions about you based on some of the factors listed on this slide, you should not make assumptions about those around you. That being said, you should consider whether people on board your vehicle have strengths you can use during a crisis. For example, someone who is a regular rider or who has emergency management training may be able to help you during an evacuation.

You should also consider whether people have potential vulnerabilities during a crisis that might limit their mobility or their ability to understand safety information.

There are also other factors that you won't be able to easily detect, such as a person's experience with trauma or disasters that can significantly affect their responses during a crisis. Keep in mind that some behavior that you observe that seems strange at first (such as heightened fear in response to a small threat) may be due to people's prior traumatic experiences, and try to be as sympathetic and courteous as possible when faced with these types of responses.

A person's culture can have a big impact how they perceive a crisis and on how they communicate. Some cultural groups may have a particularly negative view of government or figures in uniform that is tied to their cultural background. For example, there are areas of the world where government oppression is common, and if your uniform makes you look like a member of the government, someone from these areas may already view you with more fear, anxiety and hostility than someone with different experiences with government.

Beyond the influence of people's broader culture, group membership can also influence their behavior and your ability to communicate with them. If, for example, you need to enlist the help of a passenger during an emergency on a train filled with Boston Red Socks and New York Yankees fans coming home from a game, it may be wisest to pick a passenger who doesn't have an affiliation with either team since there is known hostility between these teams. There may be hostility or synergy between particular groups in your area, and these are important things to keep in mind when watching your passengers during long delays and when enlisting their help during emergencies.

Instructor's note: **This slide contains extensive animation.** *On the first click, the illusion will display. On the second, the animation will point out the features of the young woman. On the third click, the features of the old woman will be shown.*

This visual illusion can be viewed both as a young woman or an old woman. Ask the class to take look at the image and ask one person to tell you what they see. Ask if anyone sees anything else. Explain the illusion, pointing out the features of both.

For the old woman, her chin is at the bottom of the image and the fur of her coat is up around her jaw. Her mouth is formed by the black horizontal line, her nose is above at the edge of the fur, and her eyes are cast downward. She has dark bangs and a kerchief over the rest of her hair. For the young woman, the fur coat covers her shoulders, the horizontal line is a necklace, her chin is pointing over her shoulder, and the old woman's eye closest to the viewer forms her ear. The old woman's other eye forms the young woman's nose and eye. She has a feather in the front of her hair.

Everyone should now be able to see both figures.

This brief activity shows us that even though this is objectively the "same" image, some of you have seen one thing while the others saw something completely different. However, once you knew there was another way to view the image, hopefully all of you saw something new. The point of this activity is to illustrate that there is often more than one "right" way of seeing the same thing. Talking with someone who sees something differently from us can help us to understand how they see the world and vice versa. The following part of this training deals with many of the different factors that contribute to how people see the world around them, and helps to explain how they may interpret the events of a crisis.

Familiarity with Transportation Mode

- People's responses will vary based on their familiarity with the transportation system. Groups that differ in their familiarity include:
    - ➢ Commuters
    - ➢ Occasional riders
    - ➢ Visitors
    - ➢ Leisure travelers
- Additionally, the day of travel as well as time of travel can influence passengers' tolerance of delays

FTA

Those least familiar with the transportation mode they are using may be the most fearful during a crisis. They may be far from family or in an unfamiliar city, and this can increase their anxiety if something goes wrong. During an incident that requires a quick evacuation, those least familiar with the transit system are most likely to try to use the door they came onto the vehicle through to leave it. This can be dangerous if their initial point of entry becomes blocked during the crisis. New riders may also be less familiar with the emergency features of the vehicle, so you will need to pay careful attention to the evacuation instructions you give to new riders and visitors during crises.

Those most familiar with the transit system, particularly any passengers you see on a daily basis and with whom you have positive interactions, can be your allies during a crisis. For example, you could use daily passengers' or those with emergency management training as 'force multipliers' by asking them to help lead an evacuation or help passengers who need assistance.
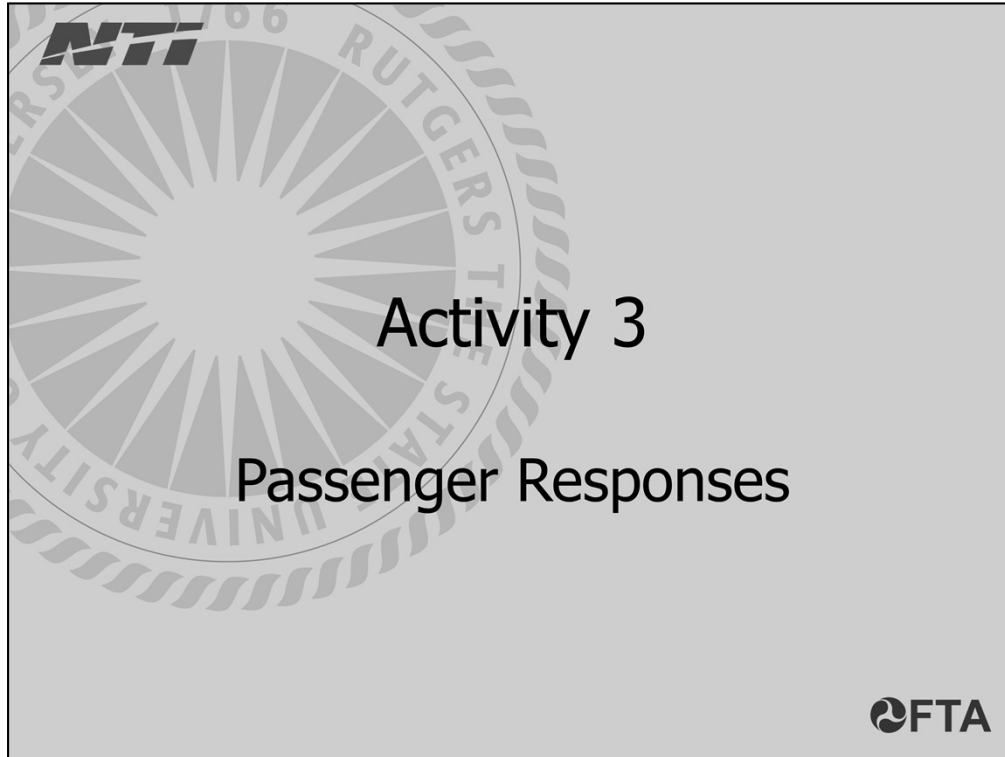
Instructor note: You may wish to modify this activity with regional and modality specific examples.

For this exercise, you will describe a situation to class participants and have them provide examples of how different groups of passengers may respond. You may choose to have participants work in groups writing responses in their workbooks before reporting out, or you may choose to have the class participate together and write responses on a flip chart.

Event:

It's Friday evening at rush hour. Your vehicle has a mechanical problem and another vehicle will have to get your passengers. Due to weather conditions it will take the second vehicle at least 1 hour to arrive. Take a few minutes to think about how different groups of passengers described in the previous slide (commuters, occasional riders, visitors or leisure travelers) may differ in how they respond to the event. Explain how you would adjust your communications with the different groups of people.

Optional questions:
How do you think they would respond at in the morning or at midday?

Environmental Conditions

- Excessive heat or extreme cold
- Hazardous weather
- Smoke or fumes
- Poor lighting
- Power failure or blackout conditions
- Isolated location vs. road or station in sight

The environment in and outside your vehicle influences passengers' willingness and ability to get off of or stay onboard it and your ability to communicate with them as well.

Excessive heat or cold: Passengers are less willing to evacuate into unpleasant conditions such as extremely hot or cold weather. During incidents that disable the vehicle's heating or cooling systems, extreme weather can become a critical health and safety issue.

Hazardous weather conditions such as heavy rain or snow can also affect passengers' willingness to evacuate.

Smoke or fumes decrease visibility and can also affect people's willingness to stay on board if sheltering in place is recommended as the safest course of action.

Poor lighting onboard the vehicle due to mechanical failures or blackout conditions will make it hard for people to read emergency signs (for example instructions on operating exit windows). Low lighting may also mean that people are unable to see and assess the danger presented by the incident. Because of this, poor lighting results in passengers relying much more on information from transit staff about what is happening during an incident and what they need to do to stay safe.

Isolated location vs. road or station in sight: Finally, people are much less tolerant of extended delays and more likely to self-evacuate if a station or road is in sight of the disabled vehicle. Therefore, you may need to increase your communications regarding the dangers of self-evacuating in these environmental conditions.

Factors Related to the Crisis

The crisis itself may create barriers to communication and effective evacuation:

- Communications devices such as radios and PA systems may be disabled

- Exits may not be accessible

- Explosions can damage hearing for hours or days

- Smoke and hot gases can make it difficult to breathe and talk

FTA

The hazard that generates a crisis itself may create barriers to communication and may interfere with evacuation. Some examples of barriers potential hazards could create include:

• Disabling communication devices such as radios or PA systems. In the Canadian crash, when the power went out, so did the PA system, limiting the crew's ability to communicate with passengers that weren't directly in front of them.

• Access to exits: Are the paths to the exits or the exits themselves blocked by debris, suitcases, strollers, etc?

• Explosions temporarily or permanently impairing hearing

• Smoke and hot gases making it difficult to breathe and speak

Vehicle Layout and Amenities

Vehicle layout can influence how passengers view the crisis and your ability to communicate with them

- Where are passengers in relation to operators?

- How close are passengers to the hazard or the exits?

- In the case of vehicles with multiple cars such as trains, how many cars are there? Is the train longer than the station platform?

- Is there access to restrooms or other amenities?

FTA

Vehicle layout also has important implications for your ability to communicate with passengers and for how they perceive the crisis. Consider whether the vehicle you operate would allow you to easily convey information to passengers if the PA system broke down. In the case of a bus, this would be fairly simple, but in the case of a train with many cars, how many would you have to walk through to get your message to everyone on board?

People who can see the hazard, will react very differently than those who can't. Think of the VIA rail fire and the responses of those who saw the flames (wanted to exit urgently and panicked) vs. those who didn't (exited calmly).

Passengers are more willing to shelter in place or endure a long delay when their basic needs—water, food, bathrooms—are met. For example on a 90 degree day, people are much more willing to endure a 2-hour delay on a train if it is well air conditioned and equipped with a café car and bathroom. In contrast, a similar delay on a bus stuck in traffic with a broken air conditioner, no bathroom facilities, and no access to water might create health and safety problems, as well as more anger among passengers, and therefore, would need to be managed extremely carefully so that it did not balloon into a full-blown crisis.

Communications from Others

Communications from others can enhance or interfere with your communications and ability to maintain control during the incident. Other sources of communication to consider include:

- Other passengers

- Those on cellular phones

- Media, including news outlets or social media such as Twitter or Facebook

FTA

Communications from others can contribute to an unstable information environment and inform people's perceptions during a crisis.

With wireless internet access available on almost all cell phones, passengers frequently have access to information on events as they are unfolding. For large scale events, information can easily be found through news reports, and during delays by accessing agency alerts. Therefore you should keep this in mind when communicating with passengers, since you do not want to be caught saying you don't know what's going on when your passengers can already read about an incident on your agency's website or on the news.

Additionally, because it is so easy to film/capture live events and immediately post/distribute to multiple audiences, it is extra important to always keep your cool and maintain your professionalism. Bad behavior like losing your temper, shouting, swearing etc. not only reflects poorly upon you, but your agency as well.

Social Media

- There are many kinds of social media

- Know which ones your agency uses so you can direct passengers to them for more information

- Expect that during a crisis passengers may post to or look for information on Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube

FTA

YouTube: Mention that all eyes are on them during a crisis, and ask how long they think it will be before they're on YouTube if they lose their composure and yell at a passenger?

What About Panic?

"A sudden, overpowering terror, often affecting many people at once"

However, panic is the exception, not the rule

"The overwhelming majority of people can and do act reasonably during an emergency"

-Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

FTA

Panic implies a sudden, frantic fear that impairs self-control and rationality. Often, when the terms is used in the context of an emergency it describes a kind of crazed, blind, flight where crowds of people rush towards the exits, crushing everyone in their path to save themselves from a threat.

What is most important to take away from this discussion is the fact that people almost never panic. In fact, ambivalence is a bigger problem than panic. While there are some circumstances where people panic during emergencies, it's very important to note that in more than 50 years of disaster research, studies have shown that the negative behavior described above is extremely rare.

For the most part, people take turns exiting during emergency evacuations of buildings and vehicles, as was the case during the World Trade Center Attacks and during the London and Moscow Bombings. In fact, more often what happens is that people do not react quickly enough when a great danger is present. Instead, people take the time to look around and see what others are doing they gather up their things, and walk slowly towards the exits. Also, people will often want to go back into dangerous areas to help others, when they should be quickly moving towards an exit instead.

Two Kinds of Panic

Individual panic:

- Often in the form of a **panic attack**
- Exaggerated fear response from one person

Group panic:

- Fear and response not proportional to threat experienced by many people
- May involve competition for exits

Note: Group panic is extremely rare. Most people are helpful and orderly during an emergency.

FTA

Panic can affect a single person as well as a group.

Both kinds of panic need to be managed effectively if they happen during a crisis. However, individual panic is more of a medical condition than a communication issue, so it is best managed as such.

Group panic, on the other hand, **is** a communication and crowd management issue. If group panic is poorly handled, it can cause serious injury to large numbers of people if it takes place in a confined space (such as a transit vehicle) during an emergency. Note, however, that group panic is extremely rare.

Conditions that Lead to Panic

- Limits on paths to exit or number of exits
- Large number of people
- Poor knowledge of exits and paths leading to exits
- Inadequate emergency plan or staff unfamiliar with plans or emergency equipment

Based on past incidents where people have panicked during emergency evacuation—by pushing others out of the way, knocking them down, or trampling them to get to the door—researchers have identified factors that usually need to be in place for these types of behaviors to occur.

There are 4 conditions that have to be in place for panic to happen.

1. First, there have to be serious **limits on either the amount of space leading to exits or the number, width, and location of exits**. If pathways leading to the exits are too narrow to allow the number of people present to pass through, or there aren't enough pathways, this can cause panic. Too few exits, or exits that are too narrow or are blocked can also cause panic. Think of a bus, train or station where the paths to exit are blocked or narrow and where there are only one or two ways out.

2. Second, for people to panic there have to be **a large number of people.** Bigger groups of people always take longer to exit, and they are more likely to clog up pathways and exits than are smaller groups. Think of how long it takes people to get off an almost empty train vs. busy rush hour train.

3. Third, when panic has happened in the past, those who panicked were usually **unfamiliar with the exits paths or the exits themselves**. People who are first time visitors to a place, and occasionally even those who are there every day such as office workers, may only be aware of the exit they use most often. This is why it is so important that transit personnel direct passengers to all available exits.

4. Finally, in cases where people panic, there is almost always an **inadequate emergency plan, or not enough training to the plan**. In emergencies where evacuation has gone terribly wrong, there was either no plan specifying what staff should do during an emergency, or if there was a plan, personnel had not been trained in and able to practice their duties prior to the emergency. A good plan that spells out what to do in certain contingencies, for example, if an exit is blocked, is the first step in making sure staff can be effective in emergencies. The second step is ensuring personnel know the plan by heart. An emergency is not the time to be flipping through a book looking for important phone number or the closest tunnel exit; you should know how to find these before a crisis happens.

Reactions that Lead to Panic

- Limited time to escape

- Perception that time is running out

- Most people respond by using the exit path and exit they know best

- Potential leaders fail to influence behavior

FTA

Once the four preconditions I just mentioned are in place, the research has also shown that certain reactions are much more likely to lead to panic. These include the following:

5. **People must perceive that if they do not exit by some time limit, they will be seriously harmed**. Until people perceive that there is a limit on the time they have to exit before being seriously hurt or killed, they will not rush to exit. This explains why people often react very slowly at the beginning of a crisis. Most often, they look around to see what everyone else is doing and won't really get moving unless they see an actual threat to their lives such as flames or smoke.

6. For a panic to take place, people must also feel like their **time to exit is running out**—i.e. if they don't get off the train soon, flames will overtake them and the door will be blocked.

7. **In many cases of disastrous exiting, most people chose to use the most familiar exit path and exit.** When scared, people's ability to think clearly is impaired, so they have a very strong tendency stick to what they know. Also, their ability to consider alternate choices is impaired. This is a critical problem if many people in an emergency are in a new place, as this may result in many people trying to reach the main exit at once. In the case of many disastrous nightclub fires, people have been found dead, piled by the front exit even though other exits were available, because they all chose to go back out the way they came. **What this shows us is that you need to give very clear direction about which doors to use; especially if people will be exiting the vehicle in a way they don't usually such as at a grade crossing or using the rear door.**

8. Finally, group panic is much more likely to occur when people who have the potential to be **leaders fail** to do so. In many historic instances where emergency evacuations were unsuccessful due to group panic, those who could have led people to safety failed to do so. This may have happened for several reasons: some potential leaders may have been unwilling to take the lead, some may have been unable to communicate, while others communicated ineffectively, and finally, in some instances, the people evacuating may have been unwilling to listen to the directives of potential leaders.

    This a spot where you can turn the tide in a panic. By exercising good leadership, you can stop a panic before it starts. Most people want to be led and they will be looking to you for information, so be sure to give it to them!

Panic that Causes Injuries or Death

Once the traffic is flowing:

- Crowd is so dense that individual actions have no impact

- Exits are not kept clear

FTA

If all or most of the factors on the last two slides have all come into play, then the final two factors related to the flow of people have an impact on what happens next. At this point, giving instructions to people may not change their behavior, but there are still things you can do to keep people safe.

9. Once the crowd of people is moving towards the exits, crushing may happen since in an **extremely dense crowd a person's ability to control his or her own movement is largely lost**. Once passengers are swept up in a current of movement flowing in a particular direction, people may inadvertently bump up against others and knock them down, and then because of the traffic flow pushing them forward, be unable to avoid stepping on anyone who falls. Passengers may also be crushed against a closed exit door if the flow of traffic behind them keeps surging forward.

10. Finally, when there is a strong flow of movement, people may also be crushed if the **exits aren't kept clear**. You can prevent this by getting those who have already exited to move away from doors. In extreme cases, if exits haven't been kept clear, this has led to tangled pile-ups of people that block the exits from the inside, limiting first responders' ability to gain access to a structure.

Use video from DVD here.
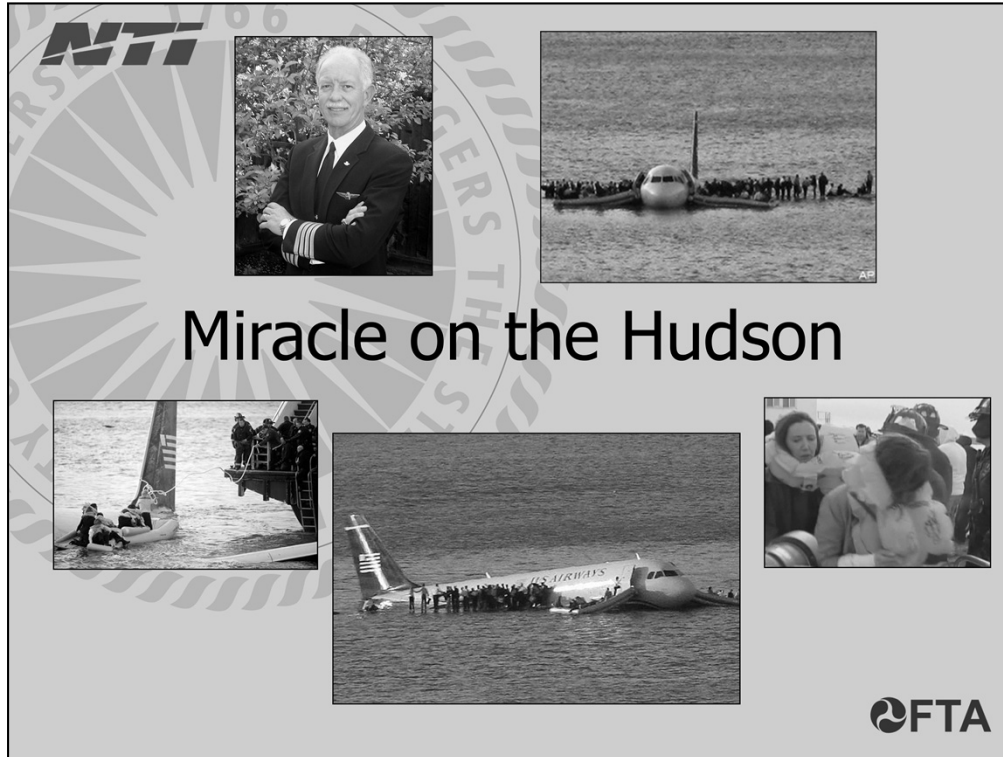
Miracle on the Hudson

On January 15, 2009, US Airways Flight 1549 from LaGuardia in NYC to Charlotte, NC suffered a "bird strike" three minutes after takeoff from a flock of geese. The strike resulted in the immediate loss of thrust from both engines. The crew determined they would be unable to reach any airfields and glided over the Hudson River and landed on the water. All 155 occupants safely evacuated the airliner, which was still virtually intact though partially submerged and slowly sinking, and were quickly rescued by nearby ferries and other watercraft.

Immediately after the A320 had been ditched in mid-river, Sullenberger gave the "evacuate" order over the PA, and the aircrew began evacuating the 150 passengers, both on to the wings through the four mid-cabin emergency window exits and into an inflatable slide that doubles as a life raft, deployed from the front right passenger door (the front left slide failed to operate as intended), while the partially submerged and slowly sinking airliner drifted down the river with the current. Two flight attendants were in the front, one in the rear. Each flight attendant in the front opened a door, which was also armed to activate a slide/raft, although the port side raft did not immediately deploy; a manual inflation handle was pulled. One rear door was opened by a panicking passenger, causing the A320 to fill more quickly with water. The flight attendant in the rear who attempted to reseal the rear door was unable to do so, she told CBS News.[49] It was later revealed that the impact with the water had ripped open a hole in the underside of the airplane and twisted the fuselage, causing cargo doors to pop open and filling the plane with water from the rear.[50] The flight attendant urged passengers to move forward by climbing over seats to escape the rising water within the cabin. One passenger was in a wheelchair. Having twice walked the length of the cabin to confirm that no one remained inside after the plane had been evacuated, Sullenberger was the last person to leave the aircraft.

Evacuees, some wearing life-vests, waited for rescue on the partly submerged slides, knee-deep in icy river water. Others stood on the wings or, fearing an explosion, swam away from the plane.[49] Air temperature at the time was about 20 °F (−7 °C), and the water was 36 °F (2 °C).

Lessons from the Hudson

- Learn and practice your agency's emergency procedures—they save lives

- Establish leadership immediately

- Communicate efficiently and effectively

- Give people a sense or urgency, but do so calmly

- Keep exits clear

FTA

Although a number of conditions existed to cause group panic on the US Airways flight, quick-thinking, knowledge of emergency procedures and clear instructions by airline staff made helped to safely evacuate the plane. The lesson from the Hudson can translate to your actions during a transit crisis.

•Learn and practice your agency's emergency procedures—they save lives

•Establish leadership immediately

•Communicate efficiently and effectively

•Give people a sense or urgency, but do so calmly

•Keep exits clear

What You Can and Can't Control

- You Can't Control
  - People's experiences or initial reactions
  - The environment
  - Communications from others
- You Can Control
  - How **you** communicate during an incident

We've just talked about a lot of things that influence passengers' reactions to crises and your ability to communicate with them. It's important when thinking about these factors that you keep in mind which of them you can and cannot control.

You should think about these factors when communicating, but know that you can't control them:

Passengers' personal history, culture or their initial responses are not under your control during a crisis.

The environment that you encounter during a crisis is something you will have to be aware of, but that you will not be able to change.

You can't control the information passengers receive from others on board or from the media.

But, you **can** control how you communicate with your passengers. You can ensure that you give them the best information possible during a crisis to help them take the actions needed to ensure their safety.

Module Summary

- Fear has a powerful effect on the body and can interfere with your ability to communicate

- Social history, life experience, culture and other person-specific factors influence crisis communication

- Environmental factors influence passengers' behavior and perceptions and can interfere with crisis communication

- Your communications with passengers are critical in determining how they react to a crisis and the actions they take

FTA

This is a hidden slide. You may present the summary to students if you wish.

Effective Verbal Crisis Communication
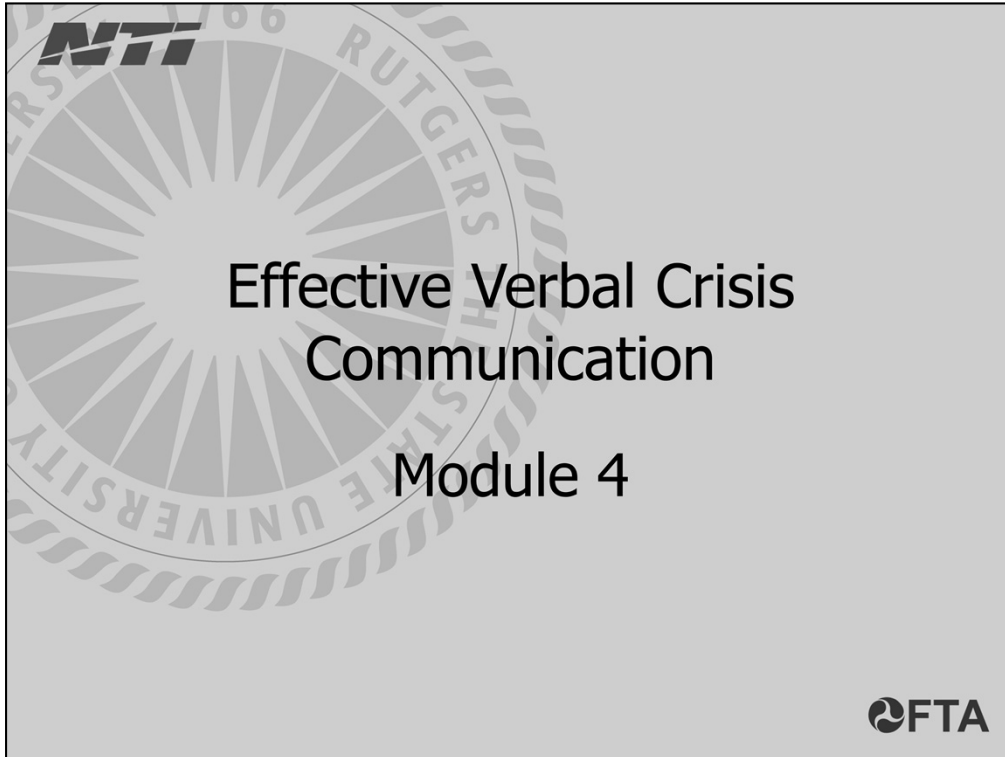
Module 4

Module Objectives

At the end of this module you will be able to:

- Describe the factors that build trust and credibility during crisis communication

- Use a system to ensure essential information is sent to internal and external audiences during a crisis

- Identify the components of effective messages

- Develop emergency announcements that passengers understand

FTA

This is a hidden slide. You may present the objectives of this module to students if you wish.

Building Trust and Credibility

"People who are upset don't care what you know until they know that you care." - Will Rodgers

- Gain trust through being empathetic and open
- Build credibility by quickly providing accurate information

You need to be credible and trustworthy to successfully communicate during a crisis. Your information can be the speediest and most accurate out there, but if your audience doesn't perceive you as trustworthy, it won't matter.

Empathy and caring are vital to building trust. You have about 30 seconds for the people you're communicating with to decide whether you're warm and caring, and concerned with their well-being, or cold and unsympathetic. Risk communication experts have found that empathy and caring accounts for fifty percent of trust; the other fifty percent is contributed to equally by dedication/commitment, honesty/openness, and competence/expertise. To paraphrase Will Rodgers, "people who are upset don't care what you know until they know that you care".

Covello, V. T. 1993. Risk communication and occupational medicine. J Occup Med 35(1):18-19.

Examples of Empathy and Caring

- "This must be very frustrating for you."

- "I wish I had more information to share with you."

- "It has been a long time. Let me see if I can get another estimate on how long this is going to take."

When there is conflict or stress, and you have to tell people things they don't want to hear, you may be tempted to depersonalize things. But, when you make things impersonal, you eliminate the possibility of showing empathy towards the people you are communicating with, and this erodes trust.

So, get personal. Whatever you do, don't be a bureaucrat and use your organization's policies to explain why things are happening the way they are. Instead, use the first person "I, me, we, you", not "Bus company X, my organization, passengers". You can express empathy with statements of understanding such as: "This must be very frustrating for you". Scared or stressed people want to know that you care about what's happening to them and that you understand that a difficult situation is creating problems for them. Empathy statements create that feeling.

Showing Empathy

FTA

Openness and Trust

"*You don't want to sit there thinking that the driver knows what is going on and just isn't telling me. That makes me even more irate.*"

-Passenger response during a focus group

FTA

As the statement above indicates, it is very important not to be seen as deliberately hiding things, or even as not sharing what you do know, since this will make passengers less able to trust you. When you know something about the situation tell people, also tell them when you don't know anything, or that nothing has changed since your last update. You want people to feel that they know what you know.

Example:

On September 21, 2005, A JetBlue flight carrying 140 passengers left Burbank, California bound for JFK in New York. After takeoff, the pilots realized they couldn't retract the landing gear. They decided to land at LAX to take advantage of long, wide runways and modern safety equipment. To burn fuel and lower the risk of explosion before the landing, pilots circled the airport for hours. TV networks locked on to the stricken plane as it circled over Los Angeles and viewers stomachs knotted as they understood that they might be preparing to watch passengers fly to their deaths. Since JetBlue planes are equipped with satellite television, passengers on Flight 292 were able to watch live news coverage of their flight while the plane circled over the Pacific for hours. However, the in-flight video system was turned off "well before landing" and everyone survived the emergency landing.

http://www.time.com/time/nation/article/0,8599,1107825,00.html

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/JetBlue_Airways_Flight_292

Credibility

To be credible as a communicator:

- **Be fast:** <u>You</u> want to be the first source of information

- **Be right:** What you say must be right. You cannot be perceived as being inaccurate, even if this means saying "I don't know".

FTA

Your credibility when communicating verbally is determined by two factors, your speed and your accuracy.

First and foremost, **be fast.** During a crisis, tell people something right away, even if you can only tell them "The train is stopped. We don't yet know what caused it to stop, but we're investigating right now." Update them frequently. You'll be busy during a crisis, but time will pass much more slowly for your passengers, so develop a schedule for updates, tell them about it, and try to stick to it as much as possible.

Following an incident, fearful and anxious people will want to *do something*, and left to their own devices, they usually won't do the safest thing. For example, British transportation researchers surveyed members of the public, and when presented with 4 different accident scenarios where staying on the train would have been the safest thing to do, they all said they would most likely self-evacuate. But, they also said that given the option they would try to get information from a train operator. So, what this means is that passengers want your input on their actions. You just need to give it to them quickly, because if they have to wait too long for instructions, they will act on their own, and you want to stop that from happening! Also, if you're not the first source of information during an incident, and you leave people alone with their fears and anxieties, they'll look for other sources of information such as other passengers,and then you've started losing control of the situation. Remember, you're a leader in a crisis!

Be accurate. Speed is really important, but so is making sure what you say is right. If you are wrong, or are perceived as being wrong, you will lose credibility and trust, and these are incredibly difficult to get back once they're gone!

Accuracy

Being accurate means:

- Never bluffing when you don't know the answer

- Avoiding speculation when you are uncertain

- Being able to say "I don't know"

- Expressing certainty in what you do know

FTA

If you need to be right to remain credible and trustworthy, how then do you deal with uncertainty?

Being right doesn't mean having an answer for everything. It means always being truthful and **never bluffing** when you don't know the answer to something, since this can later lead to making contradictory statements which will damage your credibility and erode people's trust in you.

Being right and maintaining your credibility also means **not speculating**. Speculation, although not a form of deception, can also erode your credibility and your passengers' trust. For instance, if a mechanical problem was causing a delay and you didn't know what it was or how long it would take to fix, but speculated about it when asked by a passenger, you would be setting yourself up for trouble. If you speculated that it was a minor problem, and it turned out to be major, causing you to revise your estimate of the delay, then passengers would no longer trust the accuracy of your information, and they would be much more unhappy about the longer wait than if you had simply said you couldn't guess how long the problem would take to fix without knowing what it was. "There's really no way of knowing what the problem is until the engineer goes back there to take a look"

Being right means **being able to say I don't know**. However, there are good ways to say I don't know and ways of saying it that can erode your credibility. Saying "I don't know" when you actually do won't work, since it will damage trust. Saying "I don't know" in a way that doesn't convey caring or commitment also won't work for the same reason. The best way to say "I don't know" is to say it only when you truly don't have enough information about a situation to give an answer. You should then **express confidence in your organization**'s process to find the answer. It's also important not to be wishy-washy about whether you can give an answer when you have incomplete information, since this will again make you seem less competent and like you might be hiding something.

Express certainty about whatever aspects of a changing situation you can, for example, by stating that until you hear back from the Command Center, there's really no way to estimate how long it will take for the

tow truck to come.

If they are clear and visible, signs about emergency equipment and procedures, such as those indicating emergency exits, can help passenger to respond properly during emergencies. But, it's important to keep in mind that most passengers do not pay close attention to emergency signs during normal travel. So, it is a lot to expect that that will pay attention to signs when they are scared.

Also, during an incident (when the information on signs is most vital), passengers are least able to process and act on new information. They may also be unable to see signs due to low lighting or smoke conditions. As a result, your role as expert operators of your vehicle's equipment is more vital than you might have imagined it to be during emergencies.

Be sure to mention/reference the VIA Rail incident originally mentioned/discussed on slide 13.

Internal and External Communications

Whether communicating internally with your control center/dispatch or with passengers during an incident, the most important things to convey are:

- Who?
- Where?
- What?

WHO

WHERE   WHAT

FTA
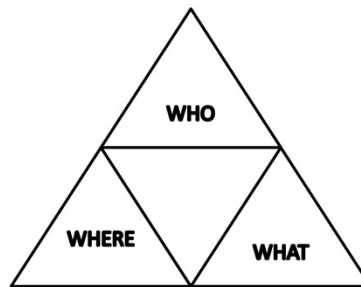
As we've already learned, people have a hard time processing and remembering information during emergencies. The communication triangle can help you to ensure that you report the most complete information possible to your passengers, to your command center, and other important audiences such as first responders, so that they can initiate effective emergency responses.

It prioritizes the information you send first, for example, in case you get cut off when communicating with the OCC, and allows you to fill in details afterward.

*Be sure to follow agency protocols in they event they differ from this model.

Who

- Identify yourself

- For Control Center/Dispatch, give your name and any identification number you have

- For passengers, give your first name to establish a more personal connection with them

Who:

Identify yourself.

Internal Audiences:

For internal audiences, state your name and any identification number you have, "I'm John Smith, Bus Operator 12345"

For Passengers:

When speaking with passengers, give your name so that you can a more personal connection with them and establish empathy: "My name is John Smith, and I'm the conductor on this train."

Where

- Give the location of the problem first, including direction of travel and landmarks

- Control center/dispatch will know where you are and where the problem is, even if communication is cut off

- Passengers will know if the problem is within their vehicle (and to stay away from it) and how far they are from their destination

FTA

Where:

Give the location of the problem. This may seem like common sense, but in the chaos of a crisis, this important detail can be overlooked. The location is the most important information when communicating internally, since even if your communication gets cutoff, dispatch will know your location and that there's a problem, so they will be able to send help to you. You may also know the location of the situation before you know the exact nature of the problem you are dealing with.

Internal audiences such as the OCC:

An example of communication with dispatch might be something like: "I'm at the 10th mile marker traveling northbound in the right-hand lane on **"*insert regionally-appropriate highway*"**. Always indicate your direction of travel, your lane if possible, and any significant landmarks since this helps the OCC determine how best to get responders to you and whether other modes of transit need to be rerouted.

For Passengers:

Telling passengers where they are located geographically and where the problem is within the vehicle (particularly if it is an isolated problem on a long vehicle) is also important.

If passengers know their geographic location, they can figure out how far they are from their final destination and, in the case of incidents involving delays, use this information to decide whether they need to warn loved ones, colleagues, etc. that they will be delayed. For example: "There's a mechanical problem, so we've stopped on the shoulder of *<insert highway>* to address it. We're 2 miles from the *<insert name>* exit traveling North."

If passengers know where the problem is on the vehicle, then they can avoid that part of the vehicle, and create mental maps of where a potential threat is in relation to their position. For example: "There's smoke coming from the car at the very rear of the train. If you're in that car, please move

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away from it towards the front of the train."

What

- Describe the type of problem you are having

- Control Center/Dispatch will know if it is a mechanical issue, a natural occurrence, or a human-caused event

- Use relevant terms for passengers, clearly describing if a situations is "unsafe"

FTA

What:

The what of the triangle involves telling whomever you're speaking with about the type of problem you're encountering:

Internal Audiences:

When communicating with dispatch, you might say "My right rear axle is cracked and my bus is stopped on the shoulder of the road."

Passengers:

When communicating with passengers, you would give them similar information, but in terms that are more relevant to them: "The problem is affecting the rear wheels of the bus, and it's **unsafe** to run the bus in this state so we will have to wait for help to come." Including the word "unsafe" generally helps the passenger to understand the seriousness of a mechanical situation. Passengers generally won't challenge the operator when they hear that a situation is "unsafe".

Finally, once you've delivered enough essential information to internal audiences to enable them to initiate their response, you can provide them with more detail. You can also provide more detailed information to your passengers.

More Detailed Information

After you provide the basic essential information, you may then provide additional details:

- People—information about any injuries and their current condition

- Response—Describe any emergency response, including assistance by passengers

- Event – Any more details you think might be important or relevant

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People: You can give more detailed information on the other people present and their condition (both crew and passengers), for example:

For internal audiences: "When I went off the road, an older woman who was standing in the aisle hit the side of her head and now she feels woozy. I am fine and no other passengers are hurt. The bus is 80% full." For any injuries, give as much detail as possible, as this helps first responders when they arrive at the scene.

For passengers: "During the accident, one person suffered a minor injury. No one else was hurt."

Response: You then can tell the OCC and passengers about any emergency response that's already been initiated:

For internal audiences: "a passenger who is a nurse is looking after the woman who hit her head, but she says that she'll need to go to the doctor to get checked out."

For passengers: "The injured passenger is being looked after by someone with medical training."

Event: You can give more detail about the event:

For internal audiences: "The bus is in okay shape—no sign of a fire hazard, so it's probably safe to stay on board to keep warm until another vehicle comes to take the passengers to their final destination."

For passengers: "Even though there's a wheel problem, the bus is otherwise in good shape. I've called headquarters and they're going to send another bus to get all of you to your final destination. In the meantime, the safest thing to do is to stay on board to keep warm."

Developing Messages and Warnings

Make sure that messages are **C**LEAR:

- **C**ommon words used **C**onsistently
- **L**ittle, not long
- **E**xact
- **A**ctionable
- **R**epetitive

FTA

You need to break through the fear and confusion passengers feel when their lives or safety are at risk so that you can keep them safe during a crisis. The acronym above can help make your messages work.

C: Stick to **commonly** understood words. Use simple language and avoid words that may not be understood by everyone (such as slang or acronyms) or words that are specific to your occupation (transportation jargon). People don't discharge or disembark from a train, they get off or exit.

And finally, be **consistent**. As much as possible, you and whomever else you are working with should present a consistent and confident message. If you disagree, do it in private. Decide what information you'll be giving to passengers and make sure you that each of you is giving the same information.

Think little, not long: at the best of times people have short attention spans, and this only gets worse when they are stressed or scared, so think **little not long**. Long messages are hard to keep track of when people are distressed, so say what you need to using as few words as possible.

Exact—say **exactly** what you want people to do, so there's no ambiguity. For example, don't just tell people to evacuate the train, since that can mean different things to different people. When evacuating, do you want them to use a window, rear, or side exit? What side of the vehicle do you want them to evacuate to? To avoid confusion, and potentially dangerous actions among passengers, give precise direction: "move toward the back of the vehicle and exit through the side door onto the left of the vehicle. Once you've exited, move 20 feet away from the doors and keep together in a group until I give you more instructions".

Actionable: Focus your message on what you want people to **Do**. During incidents that involve a lot of waiting, where there may not be much that people can do at the moment, ask something of them. Having something to do makes frightened people less anxious since it helps to restore their sense of control. You could ask people to familiarize themselves with the vehicle's evacuation features, or to take a couple of minutes to get to know the passengers around them, you could also pass out paper and ask people to write down their names and any assistance they might need during an evacuation so that you have an accurate count of who is on your vehicle and so that you can better plan your next move.

Repetitive—fearful and anxious people understand best when presented with information more than once, so repeat the most important parts of your information to be sure that everyone on your vehicle hears and understands what's being said.

Be Positive

- Upset people focus on negative things and ignore everything else

- It takes around 3 positive things to counteract every negative one

- Avoid communications containing no, not, never, nothing, none, and other negative words

FTA

Upset passengers will dwell on the negatives when you are talking to them. This concept is important to remember during a crisis, since you'll undoubtedly be telling people a number of things that they do not want to hear. Keeping this negative dominance and it effects on communication in mind will help you to better manage a crisis.

The first way you can use this concept practically is that for every negative thing you have to tell passengers, you should try to counterbalance it by a larger number of positive or solution-oriented messages so that people focus less on the negative message. Research has shown that you need at least **3 positives** to counteract every negative to make people feel less angry.

Here's an example to illustrate. Imagine that you are the conductor on a train that stuck in a tunnel. Passengers are agitated since it is the morning commute and they are stuck waiting. You now need to announce that the train is having mechanical difficulty and will not be moving yet (which is a negative); however, you can give 3 positive and action-oriented messages to try to counteract this and lessen people's anger: you can tell them first what your crew is doing to investigate the problem, second, that you've alerted your command center, and third that you will be giving them another update in 10 minutes.

Another practical implication of people's focus on negatives is that people who are already upset may become more upset when they hear messages that contain negative words such as **no, not, never, nothing, or none**. Consequently, during high stress conversation with passengers, avoid using unnecessary negative words, since this could drown out any positive or solution-oriented information you present.

The first and last effect

The order in which we receive information (both verbal and written) influences how well we remember it. We are most able to remember:

- What comes **first**
- What comes **last**
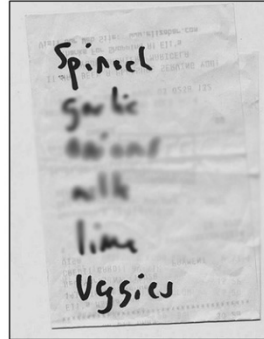
When given information, we pay most attention to and remember what comes first and what comes last. We usually just gloss over what's in the middle. Perhaps you have come across this effect if you've ever left your grocery list in the car and been able to remember the first few items and the last few, but not those in the middle.

It is an effect that is even more obvious during times of extreme anxiety such as crises. So, why is this important to know? Well, if you're giving passengers information that you want them to remember, tell them what's most important to know first, don't bury that information in the middle of your message. You can put "nice to know" but non-essential information in the middle and then reemphasize your most important point at the end.
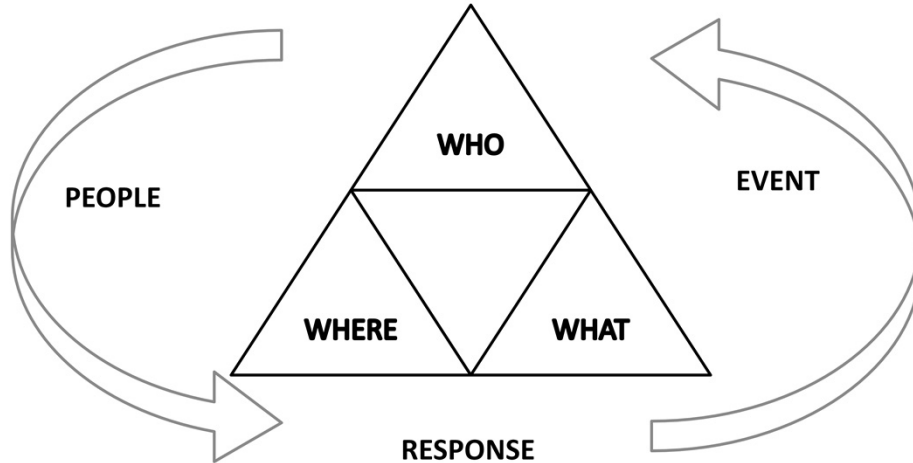
Here it all comes together so you can remember the steps.

Activity 4

Create Internal and
External Messages
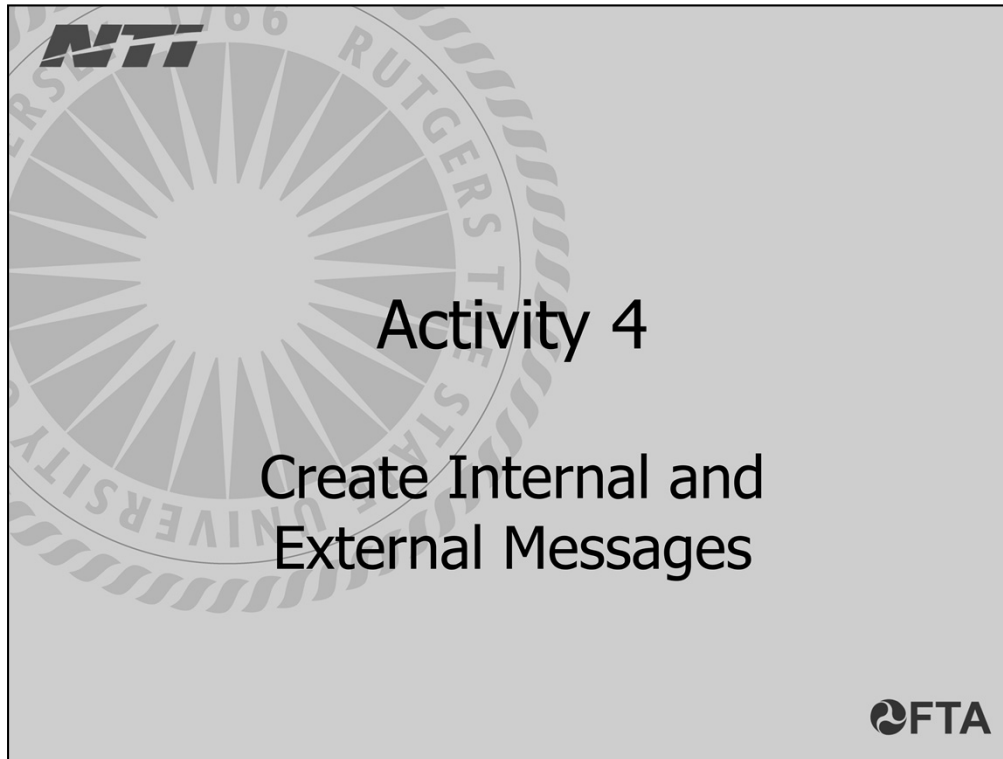
Allow participants two minutes to develop an evacuation message AND an informative message to their control center/dispatch in response to 1) an incident that requires evacuation or sheltering-in-place, 2) a suspected IED. Participants may pick whatever type of vehicle they are most familiar with. Each pair of participants working together need to craft a message first for internal audiences and next for passengers.

Scenario 1: There is a day-long severe weather warning affecting the area your agency serves. Throughout the day, you've faced severe thunderstorms and gale force winds. You've heard news reports that some riverbanks and coastal areas have begun to flood.

Suddenly, in the last 10 minutes, the weather has taken a turn for the worse, and it has started to hail. Several softball sized hail pellets have hit your vehicle, cracking the windshield and creating multiple dents in the side panels. It is rush hour, so the vehicle is full, and people are anxious to get home. You are two miles from the next station. You are in a moderately isolated, industrial area.

Scenario 2: A passenger has come to you about a potential suspicious package. It has a lot of wires coming out of it, so you assume that an IED has been found (on whatever kind of vehicle you are most familiar with).

In groups of two (1 person acting as a vehicle operator, the other acting as operations command center), give a complete report on the situation using the communication triangle.

Bad Evacuation Message

Attention please. It is necessary for everyone to immediately evacuate the train. Disembark as quickly as possible. Offer your assistance to any other passengers who require it as you proceed towards the exits. Once outside, move away from the train and stand together in a group.

> Where should passengers evacuate to? The left of the train, the right? Which exits should be used? How far away from the train should they move?

FTA

This slide contains animation. *<each bullet appears on click, then text boxes highlighting problematic words and instructions appear>*

Let's begin with a somewhat standard but not every good evacuation message.

<click one shows the announcement text>

Attention please. It is necessary for everyone to immediately evacuate the train. Disembark as quickly as possible. Offer your assistance to any other passengers who require it as you proceed towards the exits. Once outside, move away from the train and stand together in a group.

<click two shows the first text box identifying a problem with the announcement text>

The first problem with this announcement is that it uses unfamiliar words that may confuse passengers who are already scared and confused. It is also very indirect and impersonal, avoiding any use of "we" or "you"

<click three shows the second text box identifying a problem with the announcement text>

The second problem with this announcement is that it doesn't give enough specific detail on what passengers should do.

Better Evacuation Message

Attention please. For your safety, we need to evacuate the train. Please leave using the doors on the right as quickly as you can. As you leave, please help other passengers. Once you're outside, move 30 feet away from the train and stand together in groups by the light posts.

Announcement is shorter. It uses only familiar words and lists exactly what to do and where to go

FTA

This slide contains animation. *<each bullet appears on click, then a text box highlighting good words and instructions appear>*

<click one shows the new, improved announcement text>

Attention please. For your safety, we need to evacuate the train. Please leave using the doors on the right as quickly as you can. As you leave, please help other passengers. Once you're outside, move 20 feet away from the train and stand together in groups by the light posts.

<click two shows the first bullet identifying a strength of the revised announcement text>

This announcement is shorter than the first one, while giving passengers more information.

<click three shows the second bullet identifying a strength of the revised announcement text>

The second strength of this announcement is that it uses only familiar words, so that it does not further confuse passengers who are already scared and confused. It is also very direct and personal, making use of the pronouns "we" and "you"

<click four shows the last bullet identifying a strength of the revised announcement text>

The final strength of this announcement is that it gives specific detail on what passengers should do.

<the last click shows a text box highlighting the specific instructions presented in this announcement>

As you can see, this announcement tells passengers exactly which doors to use, how far to stand from the train once they've exited, and where to gather.

Module Summary

- Empathy and openness build trust during crisis communication

- Speed and accuracy, as well as your professional presence build credibility

- The communication triangle can help to ensure that you deliver essential information regarding an incident to internal and external audiences during a crisis

- Making your messages **CLEAR** will help to ensure they are effective

FTA

This is a hidden slide. You may present the summary to students if you wish.

Effective Non-Verbal Communication
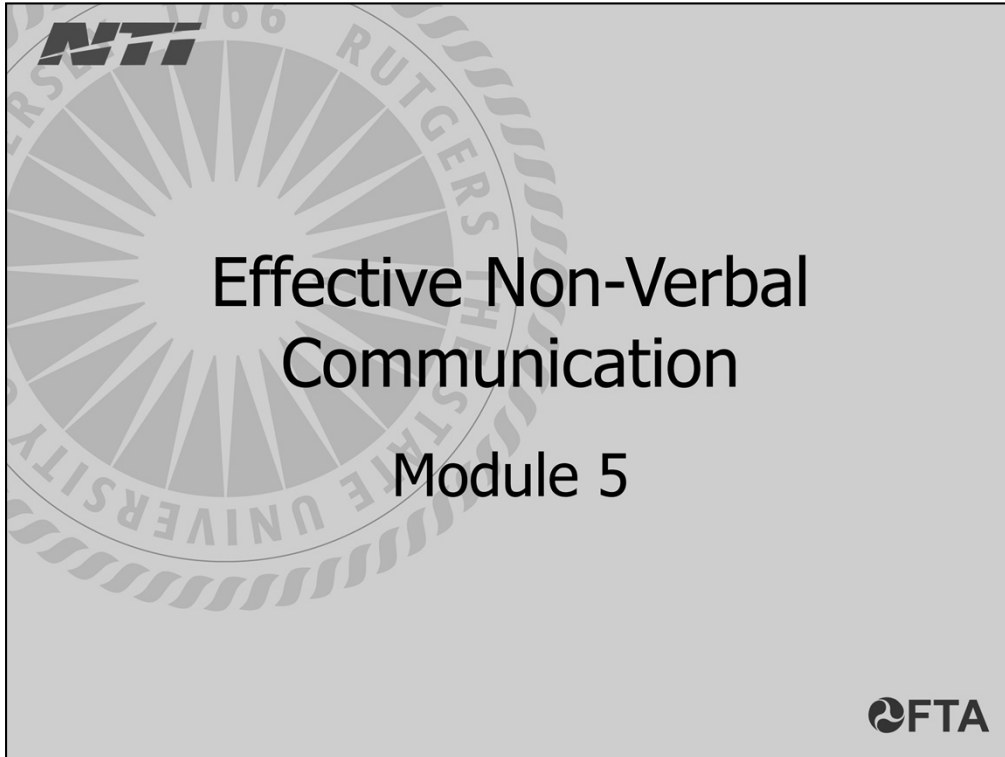
Module 5

Module Objectives

At the end of this module you will be able to:

- Identify positive and negative non-verbal behaviors

- Discuss the impact of non-verbal behavior on crisis communication

- Demonstrate positive non-verbal communication techniques

FTA

This is a hidden slide. You may present the objectives of this module to students if you wish.

Non-verbal Communication

It's not just what you say, it's how you say it...

FTA

People often pay very close attention to non-verbal cues during communication, and in high-stress or emergency situations these cues can be even more important than verbal ones. In fact, non-verbal communications such as tone of voice, facial expressions, and body language can provide more than 75% percent of message content. While non-verbal communication varies depending on the culture it takes place in, there are certain forms of non-verbal communication that are widespread, and your awareness of these can enhance your ability to communicate during a crisis or detract from it.

Instructor note: This slide contains animation.

You can tell a lot about a person's emotional state from looking at his or her face. There are some universal human emotions that are easily identified by people from any culture. Fear is one such emotion: when extremely frightened, our eyebrows go up, our eyes open wide, our nostrils flare, and our mouths open. Anger is also easily identified: Eyebrows are pushed together, lower eyelids are straightened, and the lips are tensed and thinned, and when an individual is extremely angry the chin may also jut forward and the teeth may be displayed. Happiness, disgust, surprise, sadness, and contempt are the others.

<Take a moment to go through each of the images and ask the participants to identify the emotion each face is expressing. Ask whether are they are positive or negative emotions? Each slide fades in on a mouse click.

Instructor note: **This slide contains animation. Each image display on click.**

The way we position our bodies and the gestures we make also add a lot of meaning to the social interactions that we have. If these convey a different message than the one we're communicating verbally, this can confuse the people we're speaking with. Having a better understanding of postures and gestures can also help us to understand others, for example, when walking through a train during a delay, if we know the non-verbal cues of impatience or hostility, we can look for these in passengers and take them as a sign that we need to provide updates on the situation or do something to diffuse the tension.

The postures and gestures above are all usually perceived negatively, and shortly we will discuss why this is the case. But before doing so, a demonstration is in order…

<Briefly demonstrate using positive and negative non-verbal communication skills to the audience before continuing to discuss the slides in this section. Let the audience know that you're first going to demonstrate negative non-verbal behavior. Ask them to briefly note their impressions of both interactions for a brief discussion that will take place after the demonstration. Begin by asking an audience member a question. While the person is responding, fold your arms across your chest, lean back slightly, rock on your heels or fidget with your feet, and look past the person you're speaking with or at the clock (if there is one in the room) while he or she is responding. Ask the same question again to another audience member, but this time keep your arms in a neutral position beside your body, lean in slightly towards the person who is speaking, gaze at his or her face, and engage in sustained eye contact. If appropriate, smile while the person is speaking or nod your head slightly to indicate agreement with what he or she is saying.

Take 5 minutes to discuss their impressions of both interactions. Lead this discussion into covering the material on the next three slides on specific negative and positive non-verbal behaviors.>

Negative Non-verbal Communication

- Avoiding eye contact
- Licking lips
- Tight-lipped
- Clenched hands
- Head in hand

We convey a lot of important information during our interpersonal communications through our faces. Subtle facial movements as well as where we look when speaking can make the difference between being perceived as credible and competent, or as hostile, untruthful, and nervous. The way our faces respond when speaking with others also sends cues about our how we feel about them, and can help to diffuse difficult situations or make them worse.

When we lie, we tend not to look those we are lying to directly in the eye. So, **avoidance of eye contact**, as well as body movements that interfere with eye contact such as **frequent blinking** or **touching our eyes** can lead the person we are speaking with to think we are being dishonest even when we are telling the truth.

Being tight-lipped can also be interpreted as a sign of anger when paired with other cues such as **clenched fists** or furrowed eyebrows.

As previously mentioned, a **hand clenched** into a fist is a sign of anger and hostility.

Holding your head in your hand is also a sign of anger and hostility, or of frustration. This motion is a suppressed hitting of the disagreeable person, where instead of striking out, the hand hits the back of one's own neck.

Negative Non-verbal Communication

- Leaning/sitting back
- Arms crossed on chest /arms across front of body
- Pacing back and forth
- Drumming on table, tapping feet, twitching, etc.
- Raising voice/high-pitched tone of voice

FTA

Much of what we convey to others, we do with our body movements and with how we position ourselves in relation to them. For example, every person has an amount of space around themselves that is considered personal. The amount space each person needs is largely prescribed by his or her culture, with some cultures requiring more to feel comfortable—e.g. Europeans, and some less—e.g. Latin Americans. We allow those we are most comfortable with to encroach much further into our personal space, and we subtly stand further away from people we do not like or feel comfortable with. As a consequence, when we lean away or sit back from someone we are speaking with, we can seem uninterested, withdrawn, and like we are distancing ourselves from them.

Another non-verbal cue that relates to our personal space is crossing our arms over our chest. Any position that places our arms across the front of our bodies give us a subconscious feeling of protection, since our arms are there to protect our vital organs from impending blows—even if they're only verbal ones. However, when we adopt this posture when speaking with someone, they also get the sense that we have put up a barrier, and can therefore perceive us as uninterested in what they are saying, or as being, angry, defensive, or stubborn.

Hiding one's hands from view is interpreted as cue of deceit. This is likely because a hand hidden behind the back or in a pocket could (at least in theory) contain a weapon.

There are many body movements that convey impatience, frustration, or anxiety. Many of these are suppressed fleeing movements—basically, when you want to move away from the unpleasant person or situation, but it is socially unacceptable to do so (or physically impossible), you instead engage in some other form of movement. This suppressed form of movement, however, still sends the cue to others that you want to leave and therefore conveys a negative message to whomever you are speaking with. Pacing is the most pronounced of these movements; however, drumming of fingers, tapping of feet, or jiggling a leg up and down while sitting, all convey impatience or annoyance, depending on the context. Rocking back and forth can also convey impatience, or in the context of an emergency, profound anxiety.

Finally, a non-verbal cue that conveys a great deal of meaning is tone and volume of voice. The words "please remain calm" take on a completely different meaning when spoken quietly and clearly than when yelled in a high-pitched tone of voice. During a conversation, a raised voice conveys hostility, while a high-pitched tone conveys nervousness or that the truth is being hidden.

Positive Non-verbal Communication

- Maintaining eye contact
- Leaning slightly toward person you are speaking with
- Open hands
- Hand to chest/heart region
- Upright posture
- Lowering voice

FTA

Now that negative non-verbal communication has been addressed, we can discuss non-verbal communications that are perceived positively.

If an avoidance of eye contact leads a speaker to be perceived a deceitful, lacking confidence, etc., then maintaining it for an appropriate length of time while you are speaking with someone has just the opposite effect.

Leaning in slightly when speaking with someone shows you are comfortable with them and interested in what they are saying.

Keeping your hands visible, either at your side or slightly in front of but not across your body shows that you have nothing to hide. This leads you to be perceived as open, and honest.

A hand to the chest or heart gives people the sense that you are sincere and honest as well.

While slouching leads you to come across as lacking confidence, standing tall makes you seem self-assured, assertive, and in control.

Finally, maintaining control of your voice by keeping the tone low and even makes you seem like you're in control of yourself and whatever situation you are addressing. A low and even voice can also lead you to be perceived as caring and honest.

Activity 5

Using Non-Verbal Skills
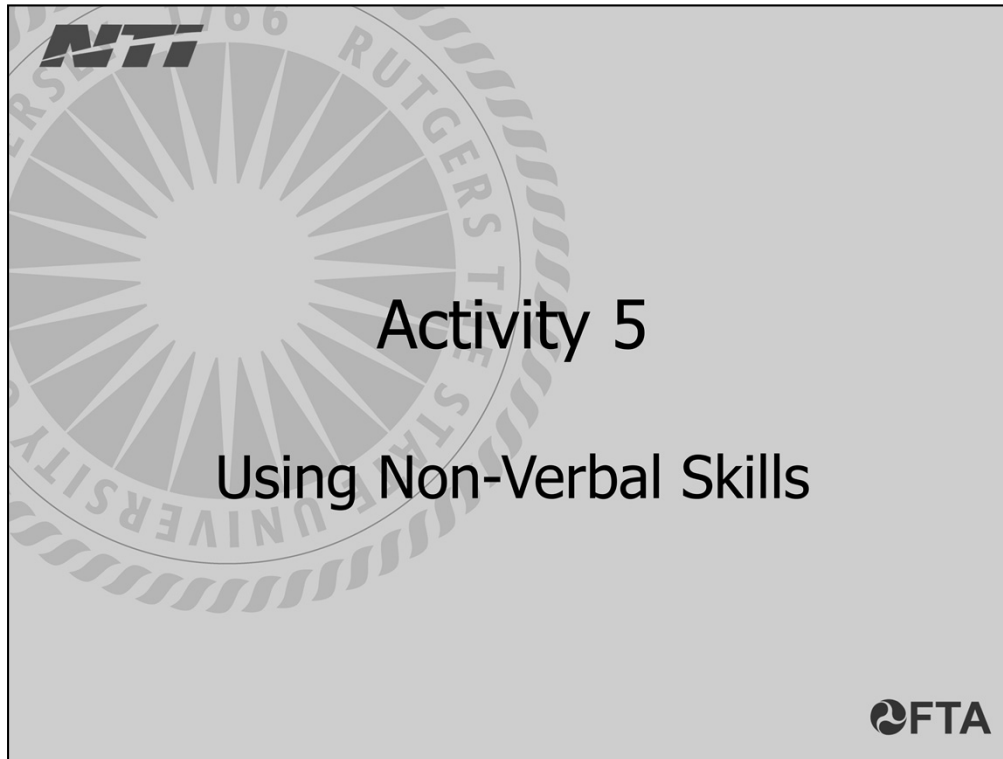
This exercise will allow participants to observe and practice the non-verbal communication skills they have learned about.

Part 1:

Select a participant. Tell the class that the participant is an upset customer. Begin by demonstrating negative non-verbal behavior (telling them you understand their concerns while simultaneously leaning away from them, crossing you arms, tapping you foot, etc.). Follow that up by using positive non-verbal behavior (leaning slightly in, nodding, having your hands at your side, using a calm voice, etc.)

Part 2:

If the participants seem willing, you may also have them practice their non-verbal communication skills in groups of two.

Use non-verbal communication skills to enhance your verbal message when speaking with a passenger who is angry because your vehicle has been rerouted from its usual station due to flooding conditions.

Scenario: Passenger is convinced he/she going to have pay a $25 fee because this change has led to a missed doctor's appointment. He/she is insisting that you or the transit organization pay the fee.

<Have participants practice their non-verbal communication using role play. In groups of two, have the first participant act like with a passenger who is angry because he or she has been rerouted from his/her usual station due to flooding conditions. He/she is going to have pay a fee because this change has led to a missed doctor's appointment. Have the second participant try to defuse the passenger's anger by using strong verbal communication and congruent non-verbal behavior.>

Module Summary

- Observing passengers' non-verbal behavior can help you better manage transportation crises

- Managing your non-verbal behavior and ensuring that it does not contradict what your are saying can enhance your crisis communications

- Positive non-verbal communication techniques can improve your crisis communications and passengers' confidence in your ability to manage a crisis

FTA

This is a hidden slide. You may present the summary to students if you wish.

Managing Non-Compliant Passengers

Module 6
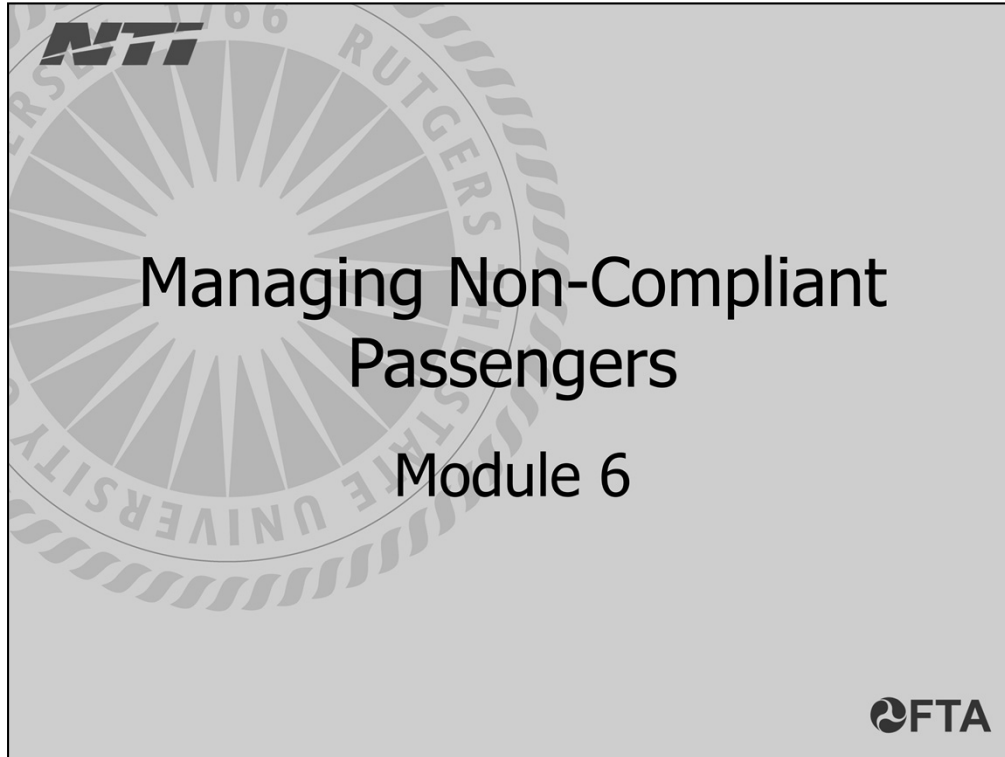
This part of the course addresses managing non-compliant passengers during a crisis. Before we get into the content, I want to begin by saying that if at any time someone who is non-compliant becomes threatening to you or others, then safety should become your top priority. If a situation shifts from being simply uncomfortable to being threatening, you will need to stop applying communication strategies to address the passenger's behavior and seek help right away.

Module Objectives

At the end of this module you will be able to:

- Describe the incident circumstances that can lead to non-compliant or angry passengers

- Select appropriate strategies to manage non-compliant or angry passengers during a crisis

- Explain when it is best to walk away from situations involving non-compliance or anger

FTA

This is a hidden slide. You may present the objectives of this module to students if you wish.

Crisis Communication

Non-Compliant or Angry Passengers

Most people are cooperative and compliant during serious crises. Some may not comply if:

- Your instructions go against their instincts

- The incident involves prolonged waiting

- There are adverse environmental conditions

It's important to understand that angry customers want you to fix their problems, but often this just isn't possible. Luckily, they also want:

•You to be helpful and make an effort on their behalf

•Acknowledgment of their situation and their feelings

•To feel they have choices

The circumstance that are most likely to lead to non-compliance include when:

•**Your instructions go against their instincts:** If you tell passengers to do something counterintuitive (for example, staying onboard a train that's badly damaged), you are more likely to encounter non-compliance since people are very concerned with their safety and may think your instruction isn't safe.

•**The incident involves prolonged waiting:** The longer people have to wait during a delay, the more angry and frustrated they will become. If this anger and frustration boils over, they may take action on their own to resolve the problem (for example by self-evacuating through a window exit).

•**There are adverse environmental conditions:** If a delay involves waiting on a vehicle that's stiflingly hot or very cold, people may decide that they will be most comfortable or safest by getting off of it.

What do Angry Passengers Want?

They want the problem fixed

If that can't happen right away, they also want:

- To feel like you're making an effort to help them

- To have you acknowledge their situation and their feelings

- To feel they have choices

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It's important to understand that angry customers want you to fix their problems, but often this just isn't possible. Luckily, they also want:

•You to be helpful and make an effort on their behalf

•Acknowledgment of their situation and their feelings

•To feel they have choices

Active Listening

Angry and distressed people want to be heard. Active listening is a technique that facilitates this process. It involves:

1. Listening carefully to what is said

2. Summarizing in your head what was said

3. Sharing your summary with the other person

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There is a big difference between hearing, which is the mechanics of sound waves from another person's voice hitting your ears, and listening which is processing the meaning of what the other person is saying. Active listening allows you to move from just hearing to really understanding what someone is trying to tell you. It also allows you to get feedback from the person you are speaking with to make sure that you have correctly interpreted what they've said.

Active listening involves 3 steps.

- Listen carefully and attentively to what the other person is saying, without letting your mind wander to how you're going to counter argue.

- Make a mental summary of what the person has said to you.

- Finally, feed that summary back to the person. This feedback step allows the other person to give you more information if your summary doesn't match what they intended to convey and it helps to prevent miscommunications. It's important when using active listening that you include statements that convey empathy for how the person is feeling, if appropriate. (See slide 55 for examples of empathy statements.)

Example of Active Listening

Summarize with Empathy

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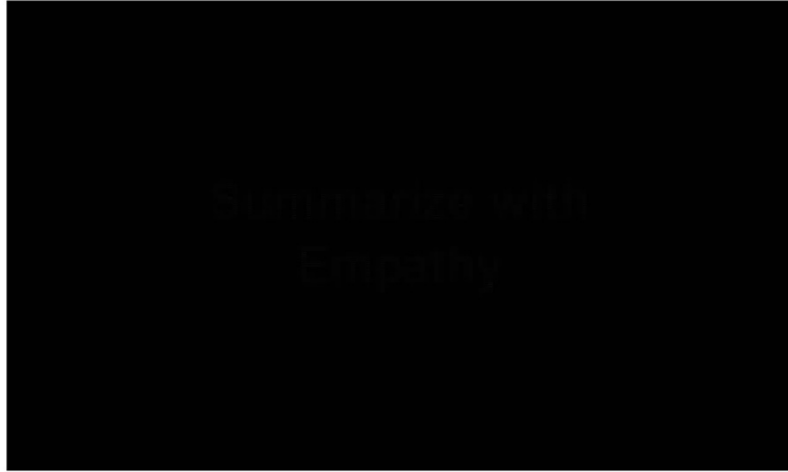
Be Assertive

- You cannot match the angry passenger's aggression with aggression of your own, but you can **be assertive**

- Being assertive means letting the passenger know the circumstance under which you are willing to have a conversation with them and what behavior you will not tolerate

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You can be assertive when dealing with an angry or non-compliant passenger, particularly when they are so angry or disruptive that their behavior has become unacceptable. You can do this by setting some limits. An assertive limit setting statement conveys to the individual:

(1) That certain behaviors are unacceptable

(2) A request to change that behavior

(3) An indication of the consequences that will occur if the customer does not alter their behavior

(4) A question that gives the client a choice

These kinds of statements are appropriate under two circumstances:

First, you may set assertive limits to begin to end a conversation when you have determined that further discussion is not going to accomplish anything. Generally, you make this determination based on:

a) The passenger's behavior and

b) Having tried other gentler techniques to gain their compliance or reduce their anger

Limit setting may also be used to try to get the customer to modify their behavior, so you can work together to resolve the conversation positively.

Give Choices and Consequences

- Giving choices and consequences for non-compliance allows people to maintain some sense of control and dignity

  "If you keep yelling and swearing at me, we won't be able to continue talking about how we're working to resolve the delay. Would you like to yell or would you like to hear how we're working to get you on your way to work?"

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We've just discussed assertiveness. You can implement this concept by giving choices and consequences for undesirable behaviors. Angry people want you to fix their problem. In many crises, such as a prolonged mechanical failure that makes passengers late, you won't be able to fix their problem. When angry passengers behave non-compliantly, for instance by trying to get off of a delayed train when it isn't safe to do so or by refusing to shelter in place, presenting them with choices and consequences about their behavior can help to increase their compliance.

When offering choices and consequences, be sure that you only offer consequences that you are willing to follow through on. Telling someone that you will have to call the police isn't effective if you're unwilling or unable to do it. Presenting a consequence that cannot happen will cause you to lose credibility and may lead other passengers to think they can behave non-compliantly as well.

Adapted from *Defusing Hostile Customers: A self-instructional workbook for public sector employees*, by Robert Bacal and NTI's *Violence in the Transit Workplace Training*

Example of Choices and Consequences

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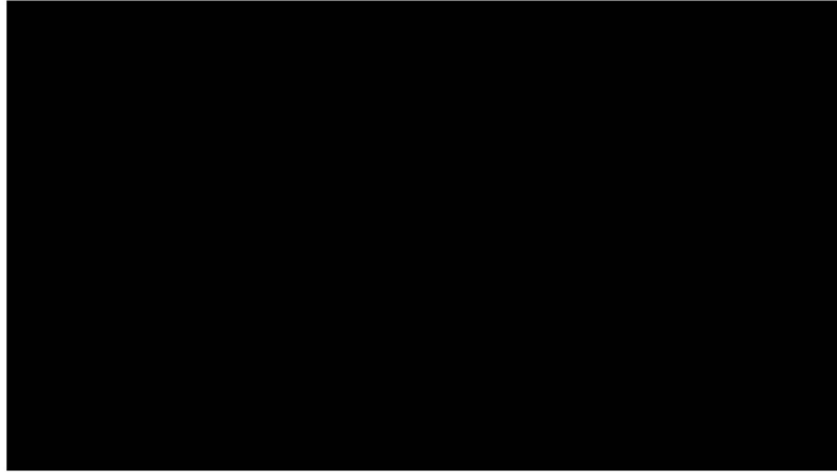
Cooperative vs. Confrontational Language

Avoid

- **Absolutes:** never, always, impossible, etc

  "It's impossible that you read X on our website. You're wrong."

- **Negatives:** don't, I can't, not allowed

  "Don't open the emergency window, we haven't received confirmation that it's safe to evacuate yet."

Instead, choose:

- **Words that invite choice:** usually, often, possible

  "It is possible that you may have misread X on our website?"

- **Positives:** it would be safest if, I might be able to, state the behavior you would like instead of what's not allowed

  "Please keep the emergency window closed, since we haven't received confirmation that it's safe to evacuate yet."

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The language you choose when dealing with angry or non-compliant passengers can escalate the situation or help to calm things down.

Absolutes such as never, always, impossible, close the door on collaborative and resolution focused communication. They also invite conflict.

Words that invite choice such as usually, often, possible, facilitate communication, and allow passengers to save face when they're wrong.

Negatives: Upset or frightened passengers will dwell on negative words and messages instead of focusing on the content of whatever else you're saying. In the context of dealing with a difficult passenger, these words can also seem like you are commanding them or challenging them to disobey you. This is why words such as don't, can't, or phrases such as not allowed, should be avoided.

Instead of negatives, phrase things positively and focus on what you can do. Options for doing this include saying things such as "it would be best if" or stating what you can do if you can't take the action the passenger would like. You can also reframe negative positively, by focusing on what you want the passenger to do rather than telling them what you don't want them to do.

Adapted from *Defusing Hostile Customers: A self-instructional workbook for public sector employees*, by Robert Bacal

Disengaging: Knowing when to Walk Away

- During conversations with angry customers, you may need to temporarily or permanently disengage

- Reasons to disengage include:

  - Anger and non-compliance that don't respond to other communication techniques

  - Feeling that you are losing your self-control

  - Verbally abusive behavior from passengers

  - Threatening behavior from passengers

- If at any point you feel that you may be in danger from the non-compliant or angry passenger, you need to disengage and call your agency or 911

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Communication, while helpful, can only get you so far. Ultimately, you cannot control what someone else does, and there may be instances where you need to acknowledge that your discussion is not productive and that you need to disengage. You may decide to temporarily disengage, by taking a break before continuing to talk to the passenger, or you may decide to permanently disengage by having no more dealings with the passenger.

Reasons to disengage include:

•Anger and non-compliance that are not be responsive to management through other communication techniques

•Feeling an impending loss of self-control

•Verbally abusive behavior from passengers

•Threatening behavior from passengers

Adapted from *Defusing Hostile Customers: A self-instructional workbook for public sector employees*, by Robert Bacal

Strategies for Disengaging

- If you need to take a temporary break from the conversation, use a plausible reason to leave

- You may need to leave the conversation to call for help to protect your or other passengers' safety

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If you need to take a temporary break from the conversation, use a plausible reason to leave

Plausible reasons include:

- Consulting a colleague or a supervisor
- Checking on the progress of the delay
- Checking a policy
- Offering to get something for the customer

You may need to leave the conversation to call for help to protect your or other passengers' safety

- If you can do so safely ask the passenger to wait in an area away from others
- Try to make the call away from the threatening passenger

Adapted from *Defusing Hostile Customers: A self-instructional workbook for public sector employees*, by Robert Bacal

The Communication Process
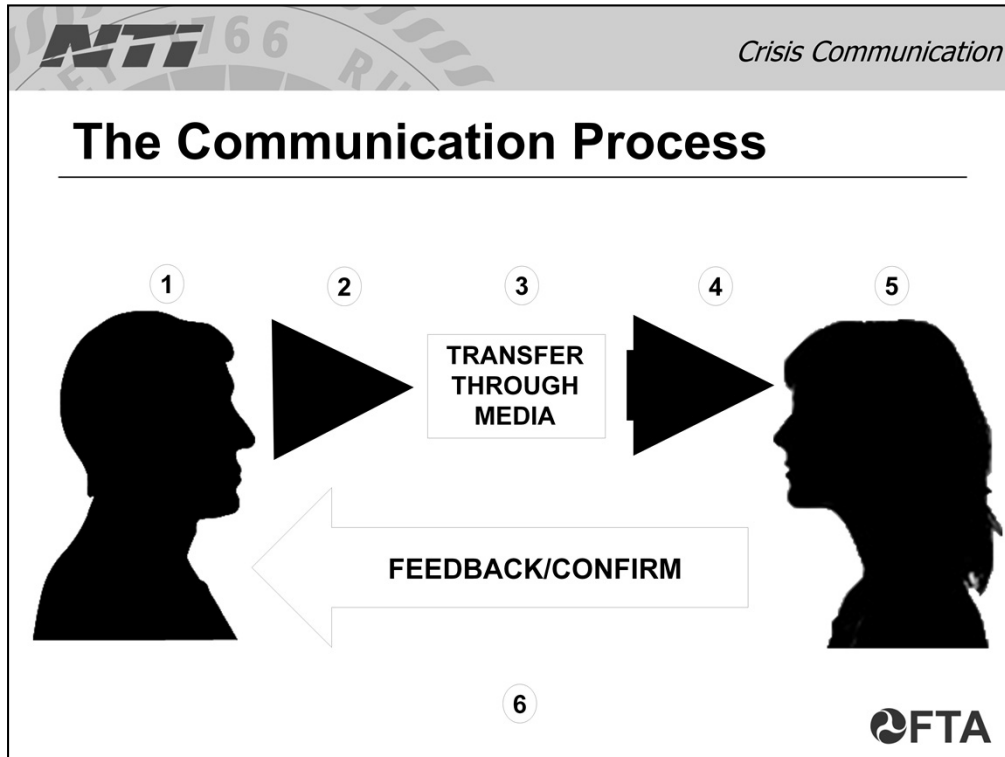
Instructor Note: **Ask: How many of you have great communications with your spouse or significant other? (Usual response — only one or two in the group will raise their hands).**

The communications model explores communication as a six step process:

Step 1: The sender formulates an idea that he/she wants to convey. It is difficult to make a message clear to others before it is clear in your mind. Make sure messages are concise. Eliminate information that is not essential to the message you are trying to impart. The more information included, the greater the chance that important parts will be lost. If it is necessary to send a long message, send it in manageable parts.

Step 2: The sender sends the message. First get the attention of the intended receiver. Second, consider how you convey the message. Differences in word meaning are a major source of communication failure.

Step 3: The message is transferred though the medium. In most cases during an incident it will be verbal, either face-to-face or on the radio. Minimize outside interference in the form of noise or confusion if possible.

Step 4: The receiver receives the message. Let the sender know you are ready to receive the message.

Step 5: The receiver interprets the message.

Step 6: The receiver confirms the message has been received and understood by providing feedback. If there is any confusion or misunderstanding the sender has the opportunity to correct it. The sender should ask for feedback if it is not provided.

Module Summary

- Incidents involving prolonged delays, adverse environmental conditions and those where transportation personnel instruction contradict passengers' instincts are most likely to lead to anger or non-compliance

- Active listening and cooperative language can assist in the management of angry or non-complaint passengers

- Giving choices and consequences is the first technique to use with angry or non-compliant passengers

- Disengaging is the final strategy to use with angry or non-compliant passengers

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This is a hidden slide. You may present the summary to students if you wish.

Questions or Comments?
Session Evaluations

For More Info Contact:
www.ntionline.com

The purpose of this training was to provide you with the knowledge and skills needed to communicate effective during a crisis. As you've learned today, there are many things that you and your organization can do to improve communication during a crisis that will help to ensure everyone's safety. I now challenge you to take what you have learned back to your organization and apply it to your every day work activities.

Trainer Note: Please remember to have participants fill out the post-test and evaluation forms.