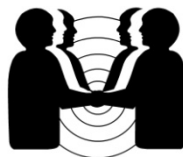
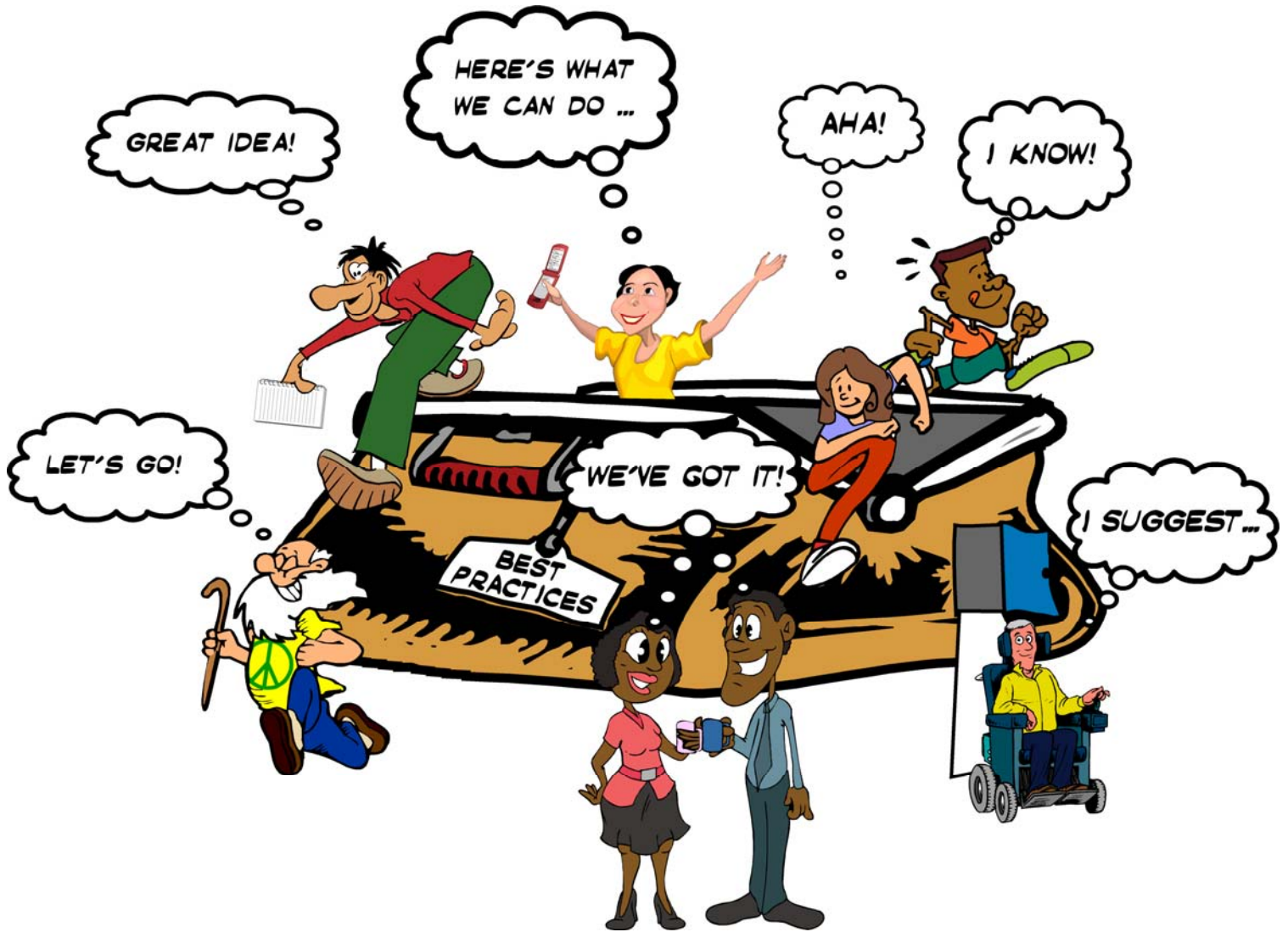


**COMMUNITY EDUCATOR  
BEST PRACTICES**

Last updated August 2009



**COLLABORATING  
AGENCIES  
RESPONDING TO  
DISASTERS**

**Helping Nonprofits Prepare to Prosper!**



## ***BEST PRACTICES FOR COMMUNITY EDUCATION***

### ***THE PREPARE TO PROSPER MODEL***

Simply delivering training does not automatically mean truly reaching the audience with what matters. Even assuming you have taken on delivering the right information to the right people, how can you make sure it “lands”?

Over the years, CARD has found some specific strategies to delivering trainings that make a difference. With emergency preparedness, it can be an uphill struggle to get past the fear, distractions and misconceptions to inspire a sustained commitment to effective preparedness choices. Preparedness is not a neutral conversation; we had decades of threat-based messages, scary images, and campaigns branding a small percentage of the public as “responders.”

This document provides an overview of what CARD has adopted as official Best Practices for our community facilitators and trainers. It represents our intentional shift away from "telling information to" the audience, to "culling information from" the community. These Best Practices were assembled using research on learning styles for diverse communities, facilitation, team leadership, deliberate practice, and creativity.

CARD trainings were originally designed to complement the disaster-focused trainings offered by traditional emergency management agencies. What they have added to the conversation is not just preparedness information tailored for special needs, but a unique emphasis on inspiring results. This approach carries over to any community education that seeks to inspire positive, sustained action.

All of CARD’s best practices support each other in building a powerful overall effect. You may notice some overlap in concepts and applications. While each of these practices is worth taking on individually, we urge you to embrace the whole of them in your approach to community education.

A growing base of scientific, empirical and anecdotal evidence indicates that using fear and threat motivations to achieve sustained behavioral change is ineffective, and produces negative consequences. Education about emergency preparedness is a sometimes extreme example of this, with messages that warn people of destruction and loss, using photos of terrible disasters. But preparedness can and should be a positive thing: protecting the people and things you love; strengthening your ability to handle crises AND opportunity; or building teams, leadership, or economic health. CARD has actively eliminated the use of disaster threat messages as the "motivation" or context for preparedness and planning actions. We use non-violent language to convey our materials. We DO NOT use aggressive disaster imagery in our materials. Our philosophy is "Prepare to Prosper!"

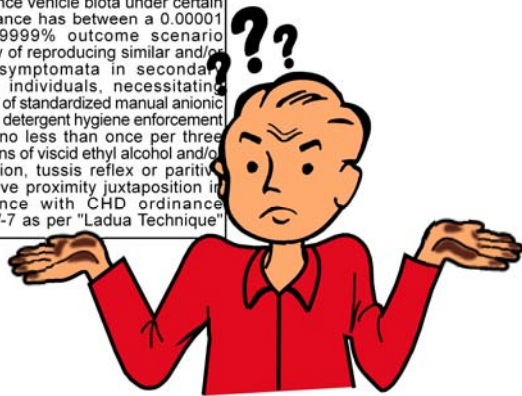
Completely eliminating the fear-based approach can be harder to do than it sounds. It's natural and common to use warnings to help people be more "aware" of what's at stake. But those kinds of warning produce only temporary results in a small percentage of the people. By blending in other elements of CARD best practices – such as providing clear and immediate benefits that are relevant to people's needs – you can establish a positive context that will support meaningful, sustainable change and encourage people to embrace the best in what you have to offer.





## NOTICE!

During periods of elevated or advanced activity of or related to communicable viruses, germs, and/or more esoteric methods of transference for negative-effect temporary biological status alteration subsystems, exposures to transference vehicle biota under certain circumstance has between a 0.00001 and 99.9999% outcome scenario possibility of reproducing similar and/or related symptomata in secondary exposed individuals, necessitating execution of standardized manual anionic surfactant detergent hygiene enforcement practice no less than once per three applications of viscid ethyl alcohol and/or sternutation, tussis reflex or paritit periclitative proximity juxtaposition in accordance with CHD ordinance 1215GJV-7 as per "Ladua Technique"



The whole point of teaching is to educate and empower the people you speak to. Sometimes we're too familiar with the subject to recognize barriers to other people.

Anything that makes your message more difficult, confusing or intimidating will prevent people from taking action. CARD works to make the elements of emergency management – (including preparedness, planning and response) – more accessible, empowering and sustainable for nonprofits, health agencies, and service providers. This sometimes means rewriting familiar emergency management content into simpler, “plain English”.

A key piece of accessibility means removing jargon and unnecessary acronyms, as well as making the contexts, concepts and content more intuitive and relevant to agencies whose primary missions **are not** disaster focused. Sentences should err on the side of shorter. Vocabulary should be as simple as possible, while still accurate. If you must use an acronym, be sure to explain it – and whenever possible make it an easy one to pronounce and remember.

*Make sure that your outreach efforts and materials use language – including vocabulary and phrasing choices – that will be understood by the people you are trying to reach.*

Help make the context, concepts, and content more intuitive and relevant to audiences who are not necessarily interested in, focused on, or initially empowered by:

- removing acronyms
- embracing simple terms
- explaining jargon you must use
- sticking to the point
- seeking an immediately relevant context

Take another look at your:

- Educational materials
- Posters and signage
- Announcements
- Names of groups, projects and agencies
- Website – navigation; content; titles
- Speech – presentations; meetings; pitches

## PLEASE: WASH YOUR HANDS!

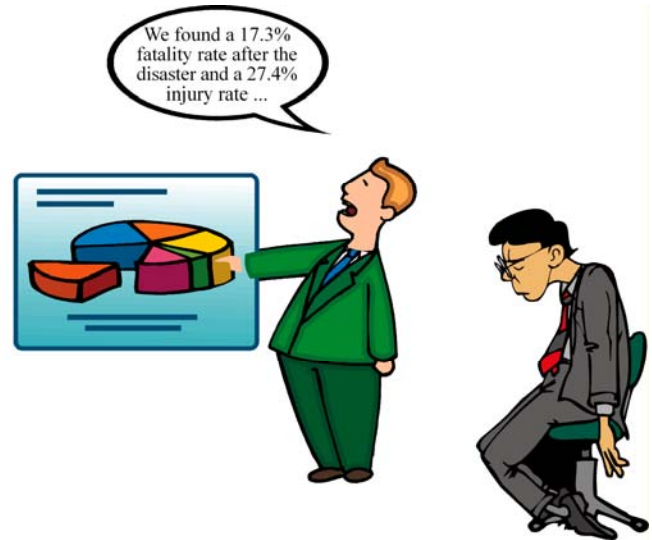




Much emergency preparedness education is delivered in the “lecture” style – assuming that the audience will be a willing, passive recipient of all the advice you have to offer. To really empower the audience – to address their needs and to motivate action – it is vital that you are able to connect to them and draw them into an active participation in the training.

CARD shapes all of the curriculum to capture the knowledge and contributions of those attending, and meaningfully engages the audience in sharing and creating appropriate solutions to the unique preparedness, planning, and response issues they face.

This is the essence of why CARD’s Trainers are trained as facilitators first. It is critical to keep your audiences engaged and connected to the experience. One of the surest ways to achieve this is to sustain an active role for them in the training – not ask them to passively sit there and merely receive your wisdom. That engagement comes about when they answer questions, when they are made to think things through, and when they share their own knowledge. Create opportunities for all of these and actively draw them into dialogue and conversation often. The insights that people reach on their own will usually be more meaningful and long-lasting than what is handed to them.



Do not cross into making every sentence an open question. Remember that having an audience raise their hands or answer yes or no questions or act something out is a form of engagement. This type of interaction, the self and group learning it fosters, makes the training valuable – separate from the topic of emergency preparedness

## BASIC STRATEGIES

- Use open questions to solicit input from participants.
- Use easy, closed questions to warm them up (such as “raise your hand if you have ever ...”).
- Invite participants to offer answers or suggestions to each other when appropriate.
- Validate participants’ contributions, whether questions or comments. Repeat them if necessary so everyone can hear.
- Don’t let engagement get out of hand. Sometimes you will have to limit contributions just to stay on track.



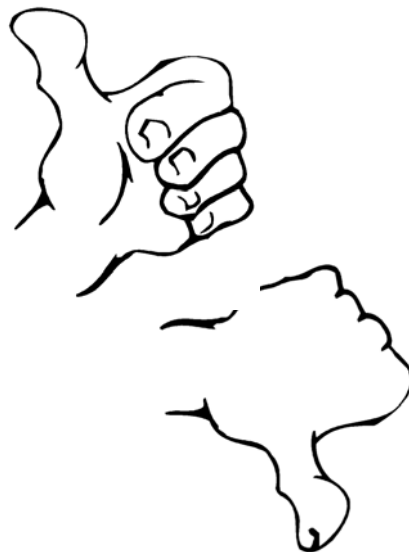
# MAKE IT VISUAL

From *Trainer Best Practices*



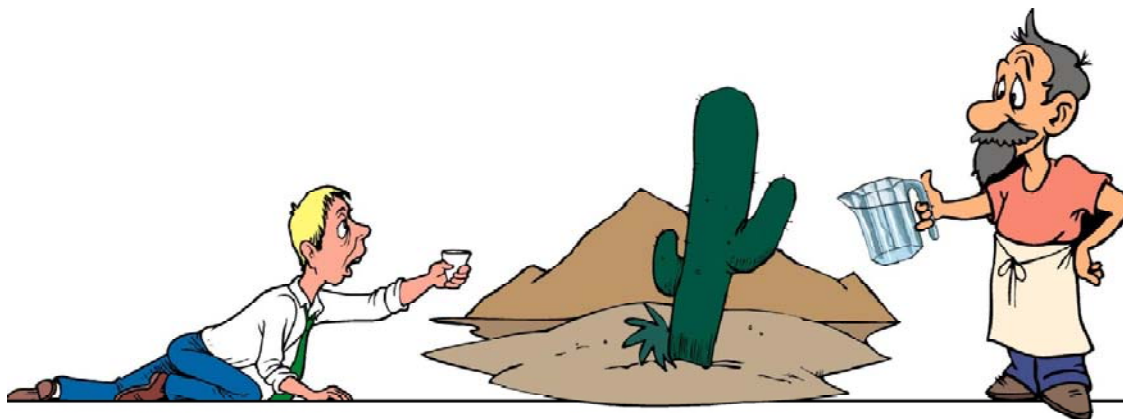
Experts in adult learning dynamics tell us that most adults learn visually. This is especially powerful when multiple aspects are combined: text with pictures; audio with imagery; physical practice with visual guidance. CARD incorporates these principles into our curriculum, and we take extra effort to make tools, resources and presentations visually memorable and engaging. This also supports active audience involvement, as it is much more tempting for most people to tune out a droning speaker or a wall of text.

Pay attention to how your messages are crafted and you will find countless opportunities to include diverse graphic elements in your material. They don't have to be complicated – even simple visual pieces make a difference:



Few of us have all the time and funding we need, and reinventing the wheel uses it up without benefit. CARD's ongoing practice is not to duplicate existing services, but to address the unmet preparedness and response needs of vulnerable populations and the local nonprofits who serve them. For example, though they were very popular, CARD stopped providing first aid CPR, and a Ham & Cram class (for Ham Radio licenses) because enough of our agencies could find acceptable and accessible offerings from other businesses. By removing them from our curriculum, it freed up resources to devote to providing unique offerings which were needed.

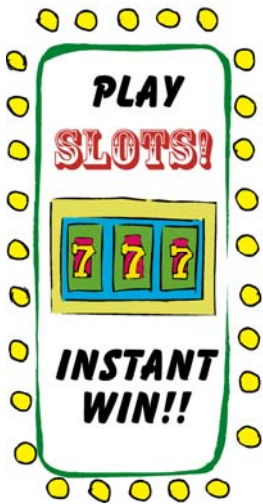
Each class, product and initiative should be scrutinized to ensure that it fills a gap, addresses a need or otherwise meaningfully contributes to your target groups. For CARD, that means the nonprofit and special needs preparedness movement. One important step is to consider who has and has not already been served. In preparedness, it is often popular to focus on techniques that seem to have worked in the past. And yet, this often results in offering those same services to the people who have already received them – when the ones who could not benefit from the old model continue to be left out.



NOTE – This includes, but is not limited to:

- creating solutions for poor and low-income communities
- creating a safe and neutral setting for anyone unable or disinclined to engage with traditional response agencies
- developing alternative contexts and motivations for preparedness actions





It is hard to keep people inspired about something they may benefit from “someday”. And, maintaining the status quo is rarely inspiring! With budget cuts and staff turnover, disaster planning processes become harder to sustain and less valuable. As with creating a positive context, you need to offer tangible, immediate benefits, not just avoiding losses, if your goal is to achieve changes in behavior.

The most common preparedness message is to get ready because of future disasters and potential problems. To people facing immediate health issues, or who aren’t sure how they’ll feed their kids tonight, or who have nowhere to sleep – consider how the message lands – “Bad things may happen to you some day if you don’t do what we tell you!”

CARD emphasizes the short-term advantages of taking on preparedness. Our classes and materials are designed to be of immediate value: leaving each participant already more prepared and better able to accomplish preparedness goals just from attending. As part of this philosophy, CARD works to empower service providers and build the leadership capacity and resources of participants. This makes the time invested beneficial whether or not there is ever a disaster.

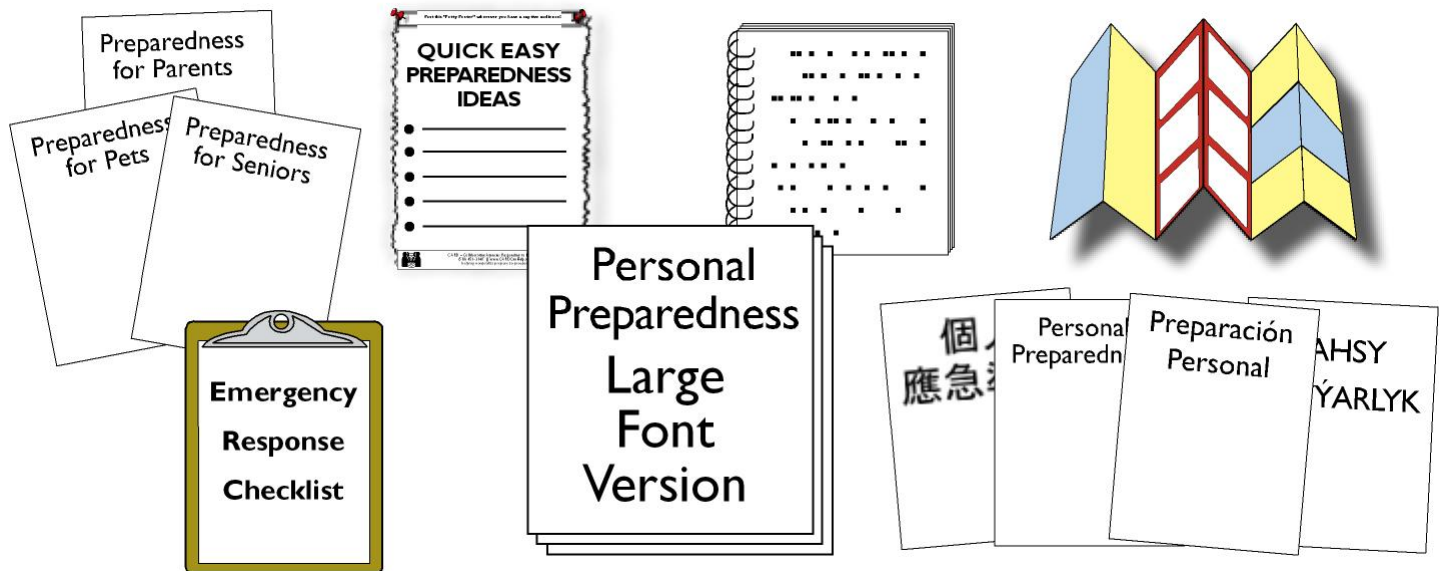
The essence of our community education is empowerment – not disasters. Leadership skills; good health and critical thinking skills are all benefits that come with that. What is the essence of YOUR training? And what are the immediate benefits that can come with it?

Accept the facts: We are drawn to immediate benefits!

One size never fits all. The simplest questions can get wildly different answers from different people.

This is a much bigger concept than formatting materials. That is certainly a vital step: language translations, Braille, large font, or ASL interpreters all provide access that is otherwise denied. But they do not address whether the original material is of any help to the new audience. For example, people whose first language is not English, should have dual language/phrase books, know where their language is supported, have bilingual contacts and know that under stress, fluency in English may decrease rapidly. This content is usually not on the English language version – so it isn't there to be translated..

In the years following the Loma Prieta earthquake, hundreds of agencies participated in "visioning sessions" on what works and what doesn't work in furthering their preparedness. Agencies continue to provide further understanding of their needs and priorities; CARD works with this valuable feedback to create original content, materials and presentation styles that address the current needs and goals of the agencies we serve.



## Some samples of other ways to custom-tailor:

### Delivery Options

- ✓ Live presentations
- ✓ Video or PowerPoint
- ✓ Short / long versions
- ✓ Delivered by outside trainer, by staff or by consumer

### Content Specific

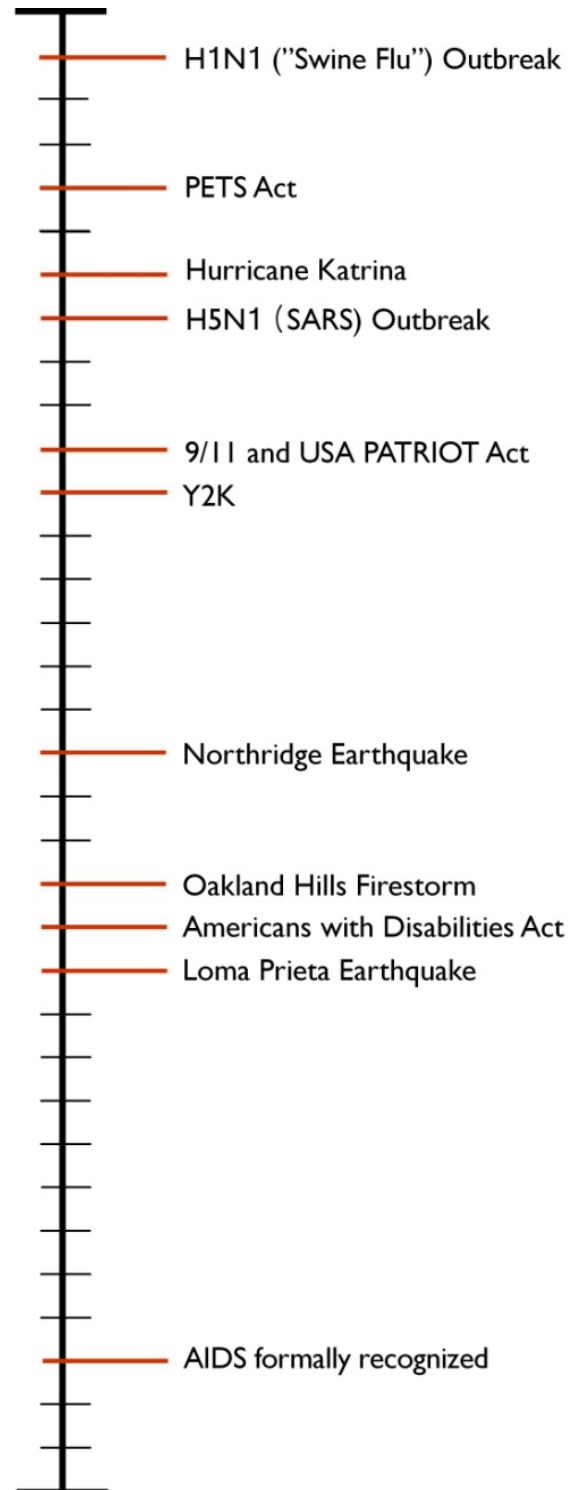
- ✓ By location
- ✓ By agency
- ✓ By consumer
- ✓ By special considerations

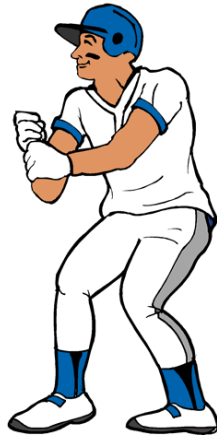
Any message you deliver will be heard differently based on factors such as your relationship to the audience; their relationship to the topic; or simply how people feel that day. The first two are things you can address by acknowledging their history and relationship to this topic. You may consider yourself an expert in your field, but that in no way prevents others from having a long and rich experience with it themselves. And it's an especially prominent issue for entering new territory. Applying what has been done in the past to a new environment – perhaps, a group that has not truly been included previously – may require re-thinking things. Your topic could land as the opposite of everything they've come to believe, a pointless re-hashing of what they've been doing for years, or of course anything in between.

Few things are more harmful, wasteful or inadvertently offensive as ignoring the history and experiences of the community you are trying to serve.

Hurricane Katrina – and the funding it generated – has prompted many groups to embrace vulnerable population preparedness and planning. Many well-intentioned groups are now reaching out, using old methods that have never worked, even when millions of dollars were invested. By not knowing history and not acknowledging the past experience of the communities, these initiatives stand little chance of success, and they leave communities unprepared. Every community need not go through their own disaster to benefit from the lessons learned by others. CARD endeavors to capture and share lessons – both successes and failures – and leverage our collective knowledge.

Different communities have had vastly different experiences with these disasters.



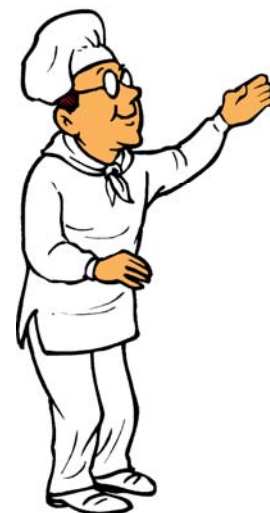


There is no limit to how many different things you could spend your time and energy on. You can't become expert in all things, but you can be great in some things.

The beginning of this process, of course, is to know what your strengths are. Being able to assess your own strengths – and weaknesses – is an important part of being able to deliver your best. As a trainer, look for feedback from all sources to help you with this process. Participants in your classes may have insightful comments about where you excel and where you fall short. Be willing to let go of what is not a good use of your time.

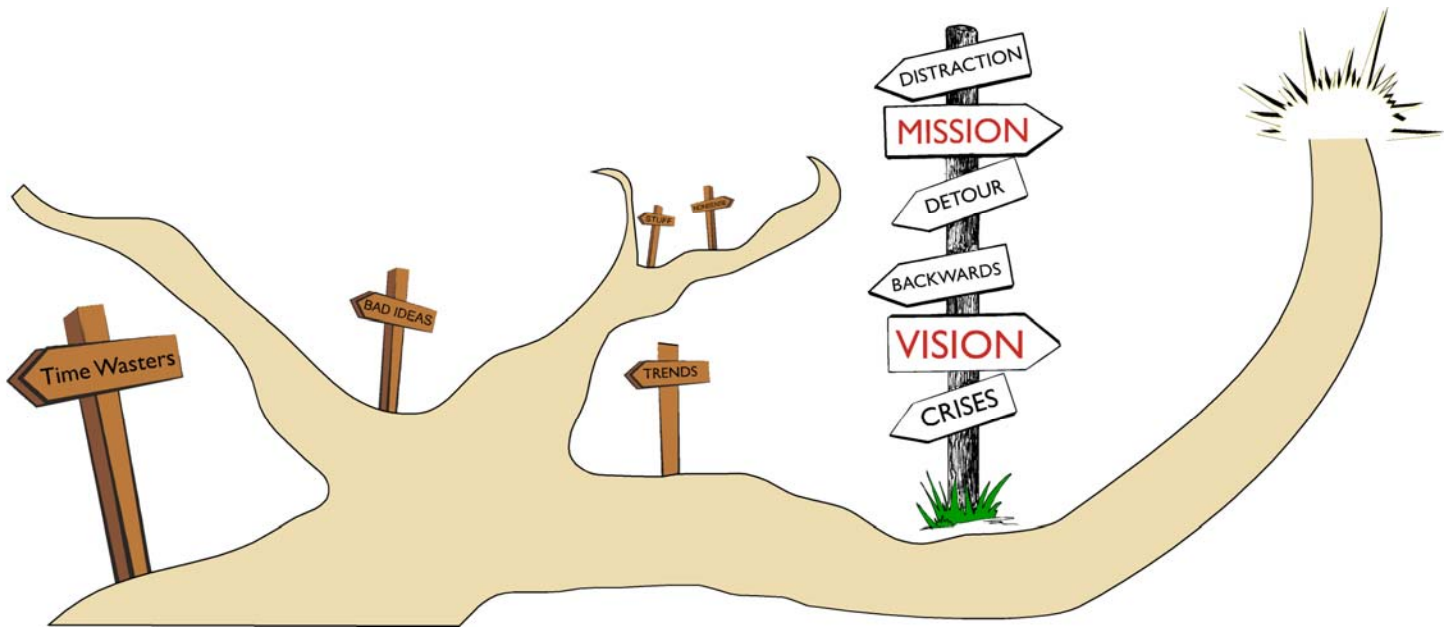
Traditional responders (local government, American Red Cross, FEMA, etc.) are designed to address "mass care" issues. Trained nonprofits and faith agencies are best equipped to address "special care" and the needs of the vulnerable communities they serve every day. Rather than non-profits dabbling in general population preparedness, and traditional response agencies dabbling in special needs preparedness, we help agencies to define specialties and hone unique skills. The CARD approach encourages agencies to focus on their strong skills and assets and develop their preparedness strengths in their own niche market. We look to create sustainable ways for all agencies to work together for the benefit of the whole community.

- Seek out and listen to feedback from audiences, other trainers, or other relevant sources.
- Tailor presentations to suit the audience, and make it suit you, the facilitator, as well. Participants will benefit more from you when you are at your best.
- Tap into your passion for a subject, situation, relationship or other element that lets you shine. Look for ways to let your training reflect what you love and are committed to.
- Be honest and flexible. If it turns out your best skills aren't what works best for the community you serve, perhaps you can partner with or host someone who is better able to fill the gap.

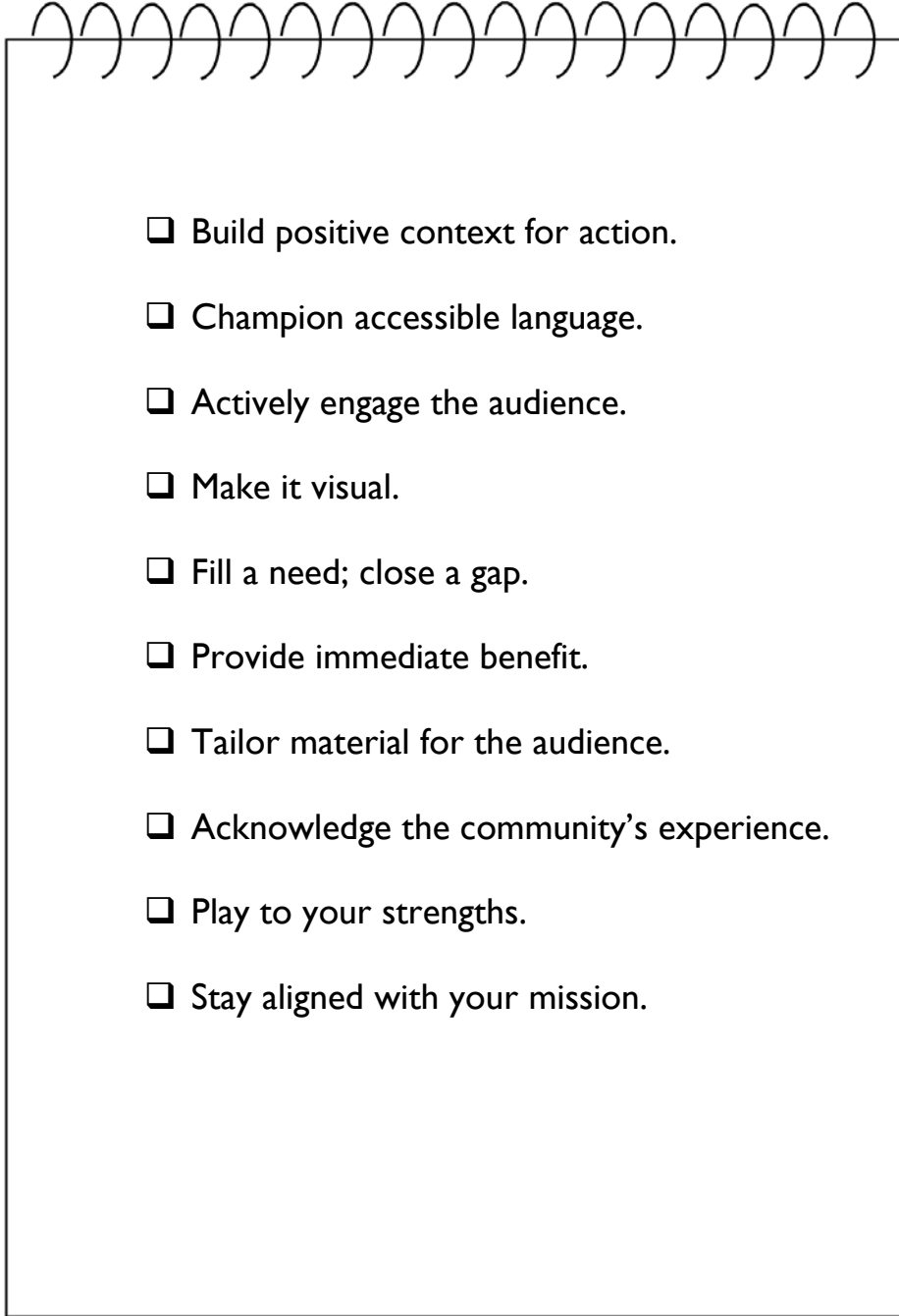


No-one can be all things for all people, and trying to serve all people all the time is the path to failure. It is important to keep a clear understanding of your priorities, your resources, your mission, and your vision of what you want to achieve. One common way problems arise comes from chasing funding. It can be very tempting to accept contracts or grants that become available, even if they move you away from your true purpose, goals and commitments.

At CARD, we take on only projects that are in keeping with our vision of a community where all people are safe and prepared in a positive way, suited to their own needs and abilities. Being prepared to prosper in the face of crisis sometimes means saying no to certain pressures, projects and even certain “opportunities.”





- 
- Build positive context for action.
  - Champion accessible language.
  - Actively engage the audience.
  - Make it visual.
  - Fill a need; close a gap.
  - Provide immediate benefit.
  - Tailor material for the audience.
  - Acknowledge the community's experience.
  - Play to your strengths.
  - Stay aligned with your mission.



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