

# CRISIS COMMUNICATIONS PROCEDURE MANUAL

Planning, Managing & Responding Best Practices 2018

# Table of Contents

<b>I.</b>	<b>INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>2-3</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• About NPH Crisis Plan/Purpose</li><li>• Crisis Definition</li><li>• Plan Objectives and Strategies</li></ul>	
<b>II.</b>	<b>CRISIS COMMUNICATIONS POLICIES</b>	<b>4-7</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• General Guidelines</li><li>• NPH Internal Crisis Team/Contact Information</li></ul>	
<b>III.</b>	<b>BOARD OF DIRECTORS POLICY</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>IV.</b>	<b>CRISIS RESPONSE</b>	<b>8-14</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Crisis Communication Checklist Overview</li><li>• Initial Crisis Discovery</li><li>• Checklist Prior to Going Public</li><li>• Situational Assessment Questionnaire</li><li>• Social Media Considerations</li></ul>	
<b>V.</b>	<b>BEST COMMUNICATIONS PRACTICES</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>VI.</b>	<b>EFFECTIVE MEDIA COMMUNICATIONS</b>	<b>15-17</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Spokesperson Interview Guidelines</li><li>• Conveying Information</li><li>• Strategies for Different Media</li></ul>	
<b>VII.</b>	<b>NPH REFERENCE/BACKGROUND MATERIAL</b>	<b>18</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• NPH Mission, Vision, Values Principles</li><li>• NPH Materials and Lnks</li><li>• Organization Overview and Boilerplate</li></ul>	
<b>VIII.</b>	<b>CRISIS SCENARIOS/KEY MESSAGES</b>	<b>19-24</b>
<b>IX.</b>	<b>POST CRISIS RESPONSE/EVALUATION</b>	<b>25-26</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Next Steps</li><li>• Message Preparation, Content and Delivery</li><li>• Post Crisis Checklist</li></ul>	
<b>X.</b>	<b>CONCLUSION</b>	<b>26</b>

# I. INTRODUCTION

## About the NPH Crisis Plan/Purpose

NPH, as part of its proactive marketing and communications program designed to keep all internal and external audiences fully informed about issues affecting the children we serve, has created this comprehensive crisis communications manual for use in a variety of potential crisis situations.

It provides an international strategy template that can be adopted by all NPH offices, outlining procedures, primary contacts and key messages, and offers broad tools for use with the media and other external audiences. Each member of the NPH crisis team, as well as those in the international fundraising offices, should become familiar with this manual and procedures to follow in the event of a crisis.

The success of NPH (and its fundraising entities) depends upon its ability to effectively convey information that leads to donor engagement/loyalty, and maintaining a positive reputation is key to that engagement. A crisis situation of any kind has the potential to negatively affect NPH's reputation; in severe crisis situations, it may also have the power to cause serious detriment to the children we serve. This manual provides guidance for controlling the flow of sensitive information that will, in time of crisis, allow for continued operating success.

As part of our crisis communications strategy, NPH will work closely with international fundraising offices to provide support and guidance in a time of crisis, and will work in conjunction with the communications and public relations teams at each member organization to effectively handle the situation, mitigate damage and respond to public concerns. This manual will be updated regularly to ensure the timely, accurate and responsive dissemination of information to all interested audiences.

**If you have any questions regarding this plan, please contact Gia Rigney at [gia.rigney@nph.org](mailto:gia.rigney@nph.org)**

## Crisis Definition

Crisis Communications is “the effort taken by a company to communicate with the public and stakeholders when an unexpected event occurs that could have a negative impact on the company’s reputation.” While each situation is unique and evaluated individually, formal parameters of a crisis include:

- A significant event that prompts widespread, often sustained news coverage and public scrutiny;
- An event that has the potential to damage an organization’s reputation, financial stability or image;
- An event that due to its volatility, creates high levels of uncertainty;
- An event in which some type of internal action, policy change or organizational structure alteration is necessary for resolution.

In evaluating and responding to a crisis, NPH must first determine what, if any impact, a situation will have on its future. The severity of the situation and the potential to “trigger” negative exposure will guide the response of the organization. **Please note that not all crises warrant a proactive, external effort but rather a coordinated, internal handling of the situation that clarifies the issues for those concerned.**

For NPH specifically, we have outlined the most likely crisis scenarios:

- I. Death of child, volunteer or staff**
- II. Act of violence outside of home (kidnapping, robbery, etc)**
- III. Act of violence against child in home/child abuse/child sexual assault**
- IV. Public health outbreak (Ebola or similar)**
- V. Staff or volunteer inappropriate behavior**
- VI. Financial crisis (misappropriation of funds)**
- VII. Natural disaster (hurricane, earthquake, fire, etc)**
- VIII. Political instability or act of terrorism (Larger than just within NPH)**

### **Plan Objectives and Strategies**

#### **Objectives:**

- Provide effective, accurate and rapid response to any crisis situation to enhance public understanding
- Ensure a unified front by all spokespersons (NPH and international offices) with consistent messaging
- Increase NPH visibility in the most positive manner possible
- Partner with the media to control sensitive information while still helping them do their jobs to inform the public
- Transform a negative into a positive and mitigate any long-term damage to NPH's reputation and donor loyalty
- Stop or mitigate damaging information that undermines confidence in NPH/homes

#### **Strategies:**

- Thoroughly prepare NPH and international office leadership and staff to respond to a crisis and counter inaccurate or incomplete facts
- Regularly review messages for various crisis situations and revise as necessary with all spokespersons
- Reinforce the history and community contributions of NPH and its commitment to caring for and raising children
- Evaluate all potential outcomes with careful situational assessment and select key media for breaking news or media alerts
- Engage local community leaders/governments when necessary/appropriate to respond to and cooperate on a specific crisis

## II. CRISIS COMMUNICATIONS POLICIES

### Guidelines at a Glance

The individual nature of a crisis will vary. Specific response tactics will be outlined in a later portion of this manual based on the “level” of severity NPH designates for each. However, regardless of the type of crisis, these initial steps/principles must be followed in every instance:

- **All potential/realized crises should immediately be reported to NPHI COO, by the National Director or NPHI Executive Director, to gauge severity.**
- **Only** the NPH-designated spokespersons and authorized international office spokespersons are permitted to provide or release any information to the media, including confirmation that a crisis has occurred. Staff, volunteers, board members or others should politely and immediately refer media to **Gia Riney** for information.
- Recognizing that some crises may warrant local response by international fundraising office spokespersons, all offices must first confer with **Gia Riney** for content and to have materials approved.
- **ALL** information provided by designated spokespersons will be guided by transparency and professionalism, and serve to mitigate the crisis while underscoring the leadership position of NPH.
- NPH, in providing information to the media, will abide by personnel and child privacy regulations, financial disclosure privacy regulations and be mindful of any disclosures that may be protected by law or go against individual organizational policies.
- Even if the full extent of the crisis is not known, NPH will be accessible to media to ensure that upon fact gathering, accurate information will be provided.

### Crisis Level Designations

For each identified crisis, the NPHI Crisis Team will evaluate the situation and designate each as Level 1, Level 2 or Level 3 crisis. All Level 1 crises **MUST** be immediately reported preferably via phone to **NPHI COO or NPHI Executive Director** and will be made top priority with complete dedication of resources.

Action steps for Level 2 and Level 3 crisis will be made on a case-by-case basis. In the instance of Level 2 or Level 3 crises that do not necessarily warrant a public response/action, the national director of the home affected will be responsible, working with the crisis team, to create internal materials/statement that inform his staff/volunteers/local community that they are aware of the situation and actionable steps are being taken to resolve it. Key messages/internal communications will ensure staff that procedures are being followed, they are cooperating with local authorities if warranted and to remind them that the privacy of those involved is of utmost importance.

#### LEVEL 1:

- Any situation that involves the death of a child, volunteer, or staff (including those that result from a natural disaster)
- Any situation that involves an allegation of child sexual abuse
- Any situation that involves significant violence or injury such as kidnapping and compromises existing security measures at homes.
- Acts of terrorism on large scale that have potential to harm/affect children and/or local homes.
- Health outbreaks that have direct impact on children/homes/staff (identified case of Ebola with contact with others, etc)

## **LEVEL 2:**

- Health outbreaks that do not have immediate effect on children/staff volunteers (identification of Ebola with no cases in homes or known exposure)
- Natural disaster without major destruction (No injuries or death)
- Financial crisis (misappropriation of funds being handled by authorities/internally)
- Political instability with no direct ramifications to homes/children/staff

## **Level 3:**

- Typical occurrences that do not necessarily warrant a public statement.
  - Child runs away from home and is located and brought home, safe, a short time later.
  - A child alleges mistreatment that is not true
  - Issues of perceived mistreatment due to cultural differences (godparent hears about situation where child was disciplined in manner not consistent with American beliefs)
  - General home issues not dangerous to children but potentially perceived to be (overcrowding, work/labor expectations)

## **NPHI Internal Crisis Team/Contact Information**

The job of the crisis communication team is to review, approve and execute the overall crisis communications plan. NPH recognizes its unique structure made up of NPHI and international fundraising offices and has identified an internal crisis communications team that will have sole discretion/authorization to create the crisis strategy and provide statements to the media. This crisis team will solicit the input, assistance and insight of others as the crisis unfolds but will remain the authoritative principals in disseminating information.

## **NPHI Primary Crisis Team (First point of contact for all crises):**

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Depending on the nature/location of the crisis, NPH will, at its discretion, involve/designate one or more international office contacts or NPH home contacts to act as co-spokespersons in the event of a crisis specific to them.

## **NPH International Office Supporting Crisis Team:**

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## **III. BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

NPH has created a comprehensive Crisis Manual and engaged leadership and staff throughout the organization to act as a crisis team. The team has undergone training to provide the most consistent and honest communication to staff, donors, stakeholders and in the event of publicity, the media.

Some important facts about our Crisis Manual:

- There is one official spokesperson for media – Gia Riney, NPHI Director of Communications, 1-312-477-9047, [gia.riney@nph.org](mailto:gia.riney@nph.org)
- All crisis and potential events or situations should be reported to the NPHI COO and or NPHI Executive Director immediately
- Materials have been prepared to provide facts and information to media inquiries
- Each potential crisis is rated by the crisis team and appropriate guidelines for information dissemination are followed
- NPH believes it is of utmost importance to include staff and stakeholders in the communications regarding crises
- The crisis team undergoes training and a PR firm is engaged to assist within the crisis team if media inquiries are imminent
- A crisis historian is part of the crisis team, keeping records of information prepared and disseminated during a crisis situation

Because we have these important programs in place, it is imperative that board members **DO NOT** engage with media during a crisis. We ask all board members, if they are contacted by any member of the media, to explain that we have a response team in place and to refer the reporter to Gia Riney.



## IV. CRISIS RESPONSE

### **Crisis Communications Checklist Overview: LEVEL 1**

In the event of a **LEVEL 1** crisis, the following steps should be immediately implemented to begin an effective response strategy. (See flowchart at end of section for graphic representation).

#### **INITIAL DISCOVERY**

- **No. 1 action:** The first person to discover the crisis must, through enlisting assistance of whomever necessary, ensure the immediate **safety** of children, staff, visitors or volunteers and the home/site to the best of their ability. Call 911 or international police equivalent if needed.
  
- The first person to identify the crisis should **notify NPHI COO** via phone, and provide an overview of the crisis and extent of all known information. COO will CONFIRM the severity level of the crisis and inform Crisis Team (“1” as the most severe) based on information known at the time of discovery.
  
- Crisis communications team **meeting:** Dir of Communications creates WhatsApp group and initiates a team call via Skype for Business or WhatsApp (do NOT provide too many sensitive details in writing), all members of the NPHI primary crisis communications team and schedule immediate conference call to review the situation and begin managing all communication strategies.
  
- Core crisis team contacts other international staff whom they would like to involve as a member of the crisis team due to their location or knowledge.
  
- For all **LEVEL 1** crises, determine who on the crisis team will be dispatched to the location of the crisis and begin making travel arrangements and arrange for satellite phone if available/warranted.

#### **CHECKLIST PRIOR TO GOING PUBLIC:**

- **Crisis team evaluates aspects of the situation before going public with any information:**
  - Confirm crisis team lead (**Gia Riney**) based on situation, timing and area of expertise
  - Confirm spokesperson for crisis (depending on crisis) and media inquiry spokesperson (Gia Riney)
  - Define roles and responsibilities of all crisis team members within NPH and international offices
    - Crisis team lead
    - Primary and Secondary spokesperson
    - Written materials writer
    - Operations liaison (for technology related issues)
    - Donor outreach coordinator
    - Board outreach coordinator
    - Staff outreach coordinator
    - Materials distribution (press releases/ emails, website, social media)
    - Crisis historian
  - Determine severity of crisis and assess known facts (**Use following questionnaire**)

## **Situational Assessment Questionnaire:**

Use the responses below to begin formulating a public statement regarding the crisis. Do NOT release any information until you have determined the following:

1. What is the crisis and who notified us of it? Does that person/office need to be involved in the response process?
2. Is there potential public interest that goes beyond internal audiences?
3. Are there injuries or death and has the safety of those involved been attended to the best of NPH's ability?
4. What is known and who already knows it?
5. Determine the Crisis Level (1, 2, 3) of the situation in terms of severity and long term impact of damage potential to NPH.
6. What are possible outcomes? Does it have the potential to shut down NPH?
7. Which NPH crisis team members need to be involved?
8. What immediate steps does NPH need to take?
9. Who can NPH trust? (If internal/personnel issue, consider unique internal relationships)
10. What information is needed and can the crisis team acquire it, or does NPH need to work with someone outside of the organization to secure it?
11. When will information be available?
12. What CAN and CANNOT be said?
13. Is legal counsel needed?
14. How will the response be communicated? Press release, e-blast, website, social media, outgoing directory messages?
15. How quickly can NPH provide an initial statement?
16. What media should be contacted? In what manner?

### **□ Prepare plan of action for external and internal communications to include:**

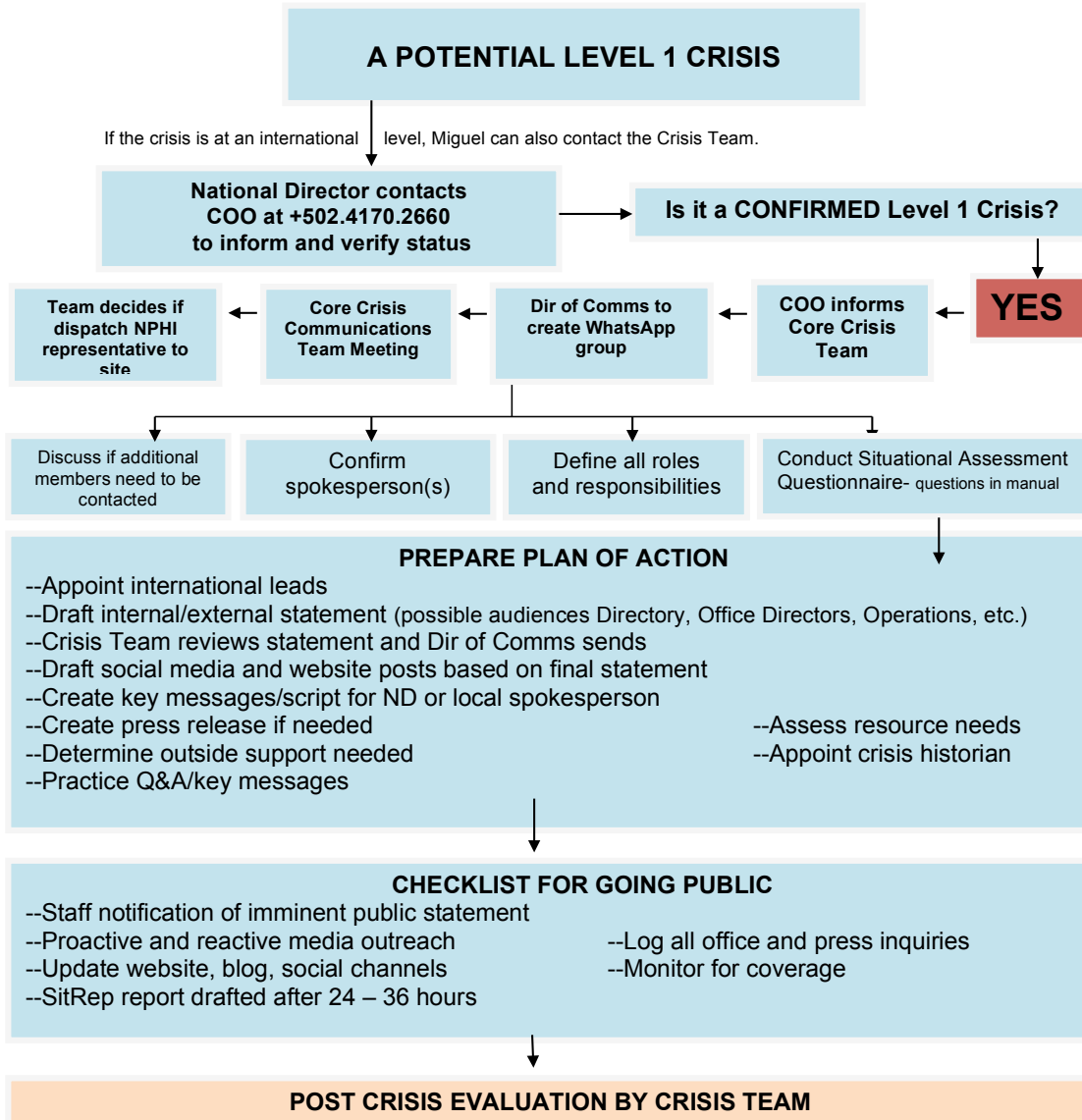
- Determine roles/responsibilities of international offices and resources needed from them. Appoint int'l leads.
- Gia Riney to draft immediate email to entire staff (all staff or directory) informing them of the crisis and initial NPH response. FIRST POINT OF CONTACT. Enlist assistance of international offices for translation if necessary.
- Gia Riney to draft immediate email to any appropriate NPH boards/volunteers/donors informing them of the crisis and NPH's initial response. Enlist assistance of international offices for translation if necessary.
- Gia Riney to prepare initial statement to be posted on [www.nph.org](http://www.nph.org) website and on Facebook and Twitter. (<https://www.facebook.com/nphcommunity/?fref=ts>) (<https://twitter.com/nphi>)

- Gia Riney and crisis team to draft factual, detailed key messages based on what is known at the time and anticipated media questions that include crisis status, response and proactive steps to remedy the situation.
  - These messages will reflect NPH's mission, tone, previous content, statement of facts, next steps and approach to situation (See messaging examples contained in plan)
  - If necessary, translate to other languages.
- Crisis team to prepare a script/talking points for any NPH front office staff so they are immediately prepared to direct media or inquiries to appropriate spokesperson.
- WITHIN TWO-SIX HOURS OF CRISIS NOTIFICATION, crisis team lead to draft press release/media alert and prepare to distribute it to appropriate media. Translate as necessary.
- For any international offices that wish to issue their own statements, ALL communications MUST be approved by Gia Riney prior to distribution.
- Assess what resources are necessary (i.e. audio/visual equipment and location for press conferences, lectern, signage for podium, satellite phone, etc.) and designate NPH staff member(s) to begin gathering materials.
- Crisis team to determine what assistance NPH requires from any outside partner, law enforcement, legal counsel, translator, and contact organizations/individuals for input.
- Crisis team designates one person to act as “crisis historian” (typically spokesperson Gia Riney) documenting all steps taken throughout crisis for historical perspective and post-crisis evaluation. This documentation should contain:
  - Crisis start date
  - Team/responsibilities
  - Documentation of all internally created press materials, social posts, internal communications organized by distribution date/time
  - Incoming media inquiry log (who contacted you, contact information, and what was communication resolution/response)
  - Timeline of steps taken by NPH daily to address situation
  - Coverage of the crisis if possible (via PDFs of stories)
  - Roadblocks preventing swift communications (people, technology, language barriers, cultural nuances, etc)
- Practice key messages/ Q&A with media spokesperson, focusing on the 4 “R”s of crisis management:
  - **Regret:** Express sorrow, sympathy for situation with any injuries/death
  - **Responsibility:** If crisis has resulted directly from NPH action or mismanagement, take responsibility for crisis
  - **Reform:** State what steps NPH is going to take to right the wrong and how NPH will prevent it from happening again
  - **Restitution:** Will there be any financial or actionable restitution victims will see as a result of the crisis? State details in clear, concise manner.

### ***CHECKLIST FOR GOING PUBLIC:***

- Crisis team designee to contact all staff, either via phone, in-person meeting or email, to inform them they are about to issue first public statement and remind them of the proper channels for issuing statements.
  
- Crisis team media outreach designee to begin proactive and reactive media outreach depending on the nature of the crisis to keep media informed in a timely manner about the crisis. **ALL MATERIALS/STATEMENTS HAVE BEEN APPROVED BY GIA RINEY PRIOR TO DISTRIBUTION.** (May include press conference, distribution of release over wire, or to previously defined media contacts via email).
  - Contact three or four pre-defined media with whom NPH feels they can establish a professional and mutually beneficial information exchange.
  
- Update website, blog, Facebook, Twitter with statement/situational overview and utilize hashtags for the most widespread communications if necessary or warranted.
  
- Depending on severity/level of crisis, team will regularly update press releases or media alerts, web content and staff/volunteer/donor communications.
  
- All media inquiries should be directed to Gia Riney or agreed upon spokesperson in country of crisis. No unauthorized persons should provide any statements to the media.
  
- Crisis team lead/PR counsel logs ALL media inquiries and begins to monitor for coverage to assess initial reaction/reporting of crisis issue and to determine if messages are being accurately delivered. Works in conjunction with crisis historian.

## Level I Crisis Flowchart



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## **Crisis Communications Checklist Overview: LEVELS 2 AND 3**

As outlined, only Level 1 crises warrant an instant response. However, for those designated as Level 2 or Level 3, there still needs to be a concerted level of oversight for potential expansion of the issues or a change in status. If a determination is made that a crisis is Level 2 or Level 3, after initial discovery, the following action steps should be taken and next steps defined based on the details of the situation:

### **LEVEL 2:**

- In instances such as natural disaster where there are no injuries/property damage, or health outbreak where there is no immediate exposure/illness:
  - Gia Riney to create public statement to send to directory, post on website, acknowledging situation and providing update that all are safe. Include outside organizations NPH is cooperating with, that NPH is following the situation closely and will continue to provide regular email updates as necessary. A Situation Report
  - Email to donors/supporters with situational update and assurances of safety of all involved.
- For other more serious situations such as financial misappropriation that has NOT been made public, creation of a statement with facts known, steps being taken, etc. that can be disseminated if needed.
- Political instability: Statement issued acknowledging instability and any travel warnings to visitors/volunteers. Do NOT want to create any unnecessary fear but important to acknowledge facts as known.

### **LEVEL 3:**

- After informing NPHI COO of the situation, the National Director of the home where the situation has taken place needs to document the details of what happened and create a short statement that assures those concerned that everyone is safe/unharmful. (In the instance of a pequeño who has run away, for instance). Should NOT be proactively distributed but rather in response to inquiry.

## Social Media Considerations

The emergence of social media as a primary communications platform has made instant and accurate response to a crisis situation that much more critical. With information traveling instantaneously through social channels, a core part of NPH's crisis strategy is to use social media to its advantage. Social media provides a unique opportunity to instantly and in real time monitor conversations taking place and is a telling way to gauge an audience's pulse in the days following a crisis.

Social media tips for crisis communications:

- All NPH entities should re-post the same messaging used in the NPHI post released only by NPHI Communications Team.
- Communicate with honesty and candor and remain professional.
- Let situation determine tone of posts. The more severe the situation, the more formal the tone.
- Image can be generic or if a natural disaster, could be a previous image used of similar event.
- If posting image from other source, remember to credit (example Guatemala volcano eruption image from CONRED)
- Use social channels for timely updates. This is faster than manual press release distribution to media and allows more frequent news.
- Twitter is the primary source journalists use to follow breaking news. Create 1-2 ownable hashtags and use them throughout your updates/posts. When 140-character limit is too short, tweet link to longer story/update posted on website, etc.
- Encourage NPH staff/volunteers to share official NPH-issued posts with others to increase touch points and information dissemination but remind them to let NPH speak and to not inject their personal opinions. While they are free to use personal social pages as they wish, remind them to **NOT** speak on behalf of NPH on those pages and to be cognizant that their personal opinions can do damage if not aligned with official messages/information.
- Use social media if specific fundraising links/requests are being created in response to crises and set up easy ways for visitors to donate/take action.
- **MONITOR CONSTANTLY:** Designate a specific crisis team member whose sole job is to monitor social sites (your own and others) to view conversations and respond to comments, inquiries and opinions. Ensure they are trained, knowledgeable and qualified to be page/account administrator.
- Depending on nature of crisis, posting a YouTube statement made by the spokesperson immediately is an effective way of demonstrating emotion and commitment of NPH to seeing crisis through. Update as necessary.

## **V. BEST COMMUNICATIONS PRACTICES**

- Remain calm and don't panic
- PUT PEOPLE FIRST; be empathetic, speak from the heart
- Be relatable: appoint the correct spokesperson. Not every high ranking executive is the best choice
- Be swift and convey initial response, even if it's a simple acknowledgement, within 60 minutes
- Emphasize key points through repetition and ensure all spokespersons are informed and educated for consistent messaging
- Be accurate: Check facts, verify what you can and can't say and don't speculate
- Work with the media, not against them. Help them do their jobs.
- Utilize multiple channels/touch points for information dissemination: web, email, social, face to face, phone
- Provide regular updates
- Remember that you are always "on"
- Be accessible to supporters, media and staff
- Clearly state actions you'd like supporters to take (or not take) to increase support/momentum

## **VI. EFFECTIVE MEDIA COMMUNICATIONS**

During a crisis, the media has a job to do. NPH also has a job to do: To work seamlessly with the media so that they get the information they need to report on the issue, and we accurately convey the information we want disseminated to our various audiences. Knowing how to communicate effectively with and through the media during a crisis will:

- Position NPH as forthright, authoritative, timely and concerned about all involved in the crisis
- Foster continued good relationships with current supporters/donors who see NPH as an important source of information during the crisis, especially since our homes are remote and international
- Allow NPH to maintain its stellar reputation and demonstrate its proactive attention to the crisis
- Allow NPH to reach out and connect to potential new audiences who have heard its story and are attracted to its mission
- Assure that NPH's messages are communicated accurately with as little editing as possible



## **Spokesperson Guidelines**

### **5 Key Steps for Effective Interviews**

#### **1) Focus on your audience**

- Who is the end audience, what do they want to hear about the crisis and how does it affect them?
- 15 –Second Rule of Communications: Time is precious, state your key message immediately and don't run on.
- Start your statement with your ideal headline.

#### **2) Know the reporter/news outlet**

- What is their typical tone? Do they have a position on the crisis?
- Ask them how you can best provide information and in what context?
- Send background materials so they have basic information.
- Verify they have correct name spellings, titles and contact information.

#### **3) Be proactive and provide solutions**

- Focus on positive steps NPH is taking to address the situation.
- Anticipate questions and provide specific examples of how supporters/media/local communities can help.
- Be direct: crises are hard but don't sugarcoat interviews.

#### **4) One core theme!**

- Reinforce your ONE main message/speaking point.
- Bridge frequently by answering reporter's question by going back to your main point.
- Put a face on NPH and the children to humanize the situation.

#### **5) Use supporting points and examples to strengthen position**

- Paint a picture of the situation.
- Use stories of children to emphasize concern/action.
- Provide any numbers or statistics you have.

## Conveying Information

Prior to Each interview:

- Prepare the following information:
  - Key message to convey
  - Support (example, analogy, statistic)
  - Steps, if any, you'd like readers to take
  - The most difficult question the reporter might pose

During Each Interview:

- Utilize the **STAR** model of communications for interviews:
  - **S:** Situation/Dilemma. Detail situation and provide context and background.
  - **T:** Task. Describe the challenge and key message.
  - **A:** Action. What needs to be done and how can others help.
  - **R:** Results. What will come out of the expected action.

Areas to Avoid During Interviews:

- Do not use jargon not familiar to mass audiences
- Do not use pronouns "we" or "our." Always use interviews as an opportunity to use full "NPH" name.
- Do not repeat a negative question ("Why is this situation so bad?" "This situation is so bad because...")
- No word fillers (I think, I believe, I feel). State facts using solid examples.
- Do NOT say "no comment." If you do not know the answer, state simply, "I do not have that information now (or am not authorized to release those details currently) but will provide it as soon as it's available."
- Speak only on behalf of the organization. NO personal opinions, positions or actions should be provided.

## Strategies for Different Media

The previous guidelines should be utilized for all types of media interviews. Below are complementary strategies specific to phone, TV and radio interviews.

### Phone and In-person print interviews:

- Nothing is off the record. Know that anything you say, even during a casual greeting or closing, can end up in print.
- Take a few minutes to think answers through before answering. Don't rush to speak.
- Offer beneficial background information and resources (websites, etc) that will fill out story.
- Use facts, figures and statistics.
- Restate key messages and bridge back to main point.
- Don't allow yourself to be led to a question/topic that is off limits or could position NPH negatively.
- Offer any necessary follow up to check facts, messages.
- Gather all reporter/outlet contact information. Pass along to crisis historian if they don't already have the information.

### TV interviews:

- Typically, the producer will conduct a pre-interview call/meeting to establish direction and expectations. Use it to ask questions and establish agenda.
- Be flexible with scheduling, knowing sometimes taping schedules can change.
- Keep answers short and concise. Aim for no more than 3-4 sentences per answer.
- Watch reporter for interview conclusion cues.

- Wear solid colored, conservative clothing.
- Direct attention to person doing interview, NOT camera.
- Remain seated and poised until you know for sure interview taping/segment is over.
- Verify when interview will first appear (which broadcast?).

### **Radio interviews:**

- Verify if interview is live or taped.
- Keep answers short and concise. Aim for no more than 3-4 sentences per answer.
- Speak slowly and clearly.
- Use NPH name often.
- Vary speech conventions: do not use a monotone voice.
- Thank reporter at beginning and end of interview, be sincere.
- Verify when interview will appear.

## **VII. NPH REFERENCE/BACKGROUND MATERIALS**

For reference, organization information and background can also be accessed on NPH's website: [www.nph.org](http://www.nph.org). Additionally, depending on the location/nature of the crisis, individual fundraising offices may also have support materials to distribute. NPH asks that all materials be provided to Gia Riney for reference prior to distribution.

Specific documents from [nph.org](http://www.nph.org) that may be helpful during times of crisis include (to send to media or provide download information):

### **NPH Vision, Mission, Values and Principles**

<https://www.nph.org/mission>

### **NPHI Case Statement Brochure**

[https://www.nph.org/ws/news/archive/2017/NPHI\\_Case\\_Statement\\_Brochure\\_May\\_2017.pdf](https://www.nph.org/ws/news/archive/2017/NPHI_Case_Statement_Brochure_May_2017.pdf)

### **NPHI Annual Report**

[https://www.nph.org/intranet/reports/docs/6/NPHI\\_Annual\\_Report\\_2017\\_0227\\_lowres.pdf](https://www.nph.org/intranet/reports/docs/6/NPHI_Annual_Report_2017_0227_lowres.pdf)

### **Child Protection at NPH**

<https://www.nph.org/protection>

### **What Makes Us Unique**

<https://www.nph.org/unique>

### **Press Release Boilerplate:**

Since 1954, NPH (Nuestros Pequeños Hermanos, Spanish for "Our Little Brothers and Sisters") has been working to save vulnerable children and their families from the ravages of poverty. With the help of our staff, volunteer and donors, over 18,000 children have grown up as part of our extended family that serves over 7,000 children in nine impoverished countries. In addition to our child and family services, our community outreach programs provide over 140,000 services yearly. Children in our NPH family receive a quality education, healthcare, spiritual formation and opportunities to grow and give back to their communities.

For more information visit our website at [www.nph.org](http://www.nph.org).

## VIII. CRISIS SCENARIOS/KEY MESSAGES

NPH has identified the top potential crises it would be most likely to face and created a typical headline regarding that crisis. Below are sample responses. Depending on the nature of the crisis and specifics, these messages will be reworked for accuracy, appropriateness and timeliness, but the below provides a FRAMEWORK from which to begin. These crises assume the media has ALREADY picked up/been tipped off to the story.

### **Scenario #1: Headline or Potential Story Angle:**

***“Physical Abuse (either physical or sexual) allegations surface against NPH employee at organization’s home in XX”***

#### **1. Lead off statement of who NPH is and express concern for those involved**

The primary responsibility of Nuestros Pequeños Hermanos since its founding in 1954 is the health, safety and welfare of our children. The organization has many formal policies in place to protect those in our care. NPH is devastated about the extremely serious and recent allegations against a [former] NPH staff member, and we are fully and actively cooperating with law enforcement in its investigation while focusing our efforts on the well-being of the three children involved.

#### **2. State facts as they are known AND which can be made public at that time.**

Three children, all under the age of 18, have come forward and stated they have been victims of ongoing and physical abuse by our former NPH (position) at NPH (country). Per our policy, we are taking every possible step to ensure and guard their privacy through the course of this investigation. The adult under investigation was removed from his duties at NPH (country) and is no longer a part of the organization.

We are working closely with law enforcement to investigate the nature of the abuse allegations and are fully cooperating with the FBI to ensure prosecution for any illegal activity that may have occurred. Should the charges prove to be true, we support the judicial system in extending the most severe sentence possible. Most importantly, we are taking appropriate steps to address the effects on the children involved and ensure their mental and physical health and healing.

NPH’s number one priority is protecting the children in our care, and we will continue to be vigilant in following all policies and procedures regarding the safety and well-being of those involved and all in our homes.

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## **Scenario #2: Headline or Potential Story Angle:**

***“Visitor to NPH home in XX found to have abused children during three separate visits”***

### **1. Lead off statement of who NPH is and express concern for those involved**

The primary responsibility of Nuestros Pequeños Hermanos since its founding in 1954 is the health, safety and welfare of our children, and we have many formal policies in place to ensure their well-being. NPH is devastated about the extremely serious recent allegations regarding wrongdoing to our children by a visiting individual not employed by our organization, and we are fully and actively cooperating with law enforcement in its investigation.

### **2. State facts as they are known AND which can be made public at that time.**

Two children at our NPH home in xx have come forward to say they were victims of (physical or sexual) abuse by one of our NPH visitors during two separate visits in 20xx. We are taking every possible step to ensure and guard their privacy through the course of this investigation.

Per NPH's established policies to protect the safety of our children, we did conduct a thorough background check on this individual prior to his first home visit, as we do for all visitors to our NPH homes. This individual's background check did not indicate any prior criminal record.

NPH's international visitor policy states.....xyz. However, given the circumstances, we are thoroughly reviewing our policies on NPH home visitors and have formed an advisory panel to see if there are areas in need of policy enhancement.

We are working closely with law enforcement to investigate the nature of the abuse allegations and are fully cooperating with them to ensure prosecution for any illegal activity that may have occurred. Should the charges prove to be true, we support the judicial system in extending the most severe sentence possible.

Most importantly, we are taking appropriate steps to address the effects on the children involved and ensure their mental and physical health and healing, as well as support the other children in the home.

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## Scenario #3: Headline or Potential Story Angle:

### ***“NPH employee under Criminal Investigation for Possession of Child Pornography”***

#### **1. Lead off statement of who NPH is and express concern for those involved**

The primary responsibility of Nuestros Pequeños Hermanos since its founding in 1954 is the health, safety and welfare of our children. The organization has many formal policies in place to protect those in our care. NPH is devastated about the extremely serious and recent allegations against a [former] NPH staff member, and we are fully and actively cooperating with law enforcement in its investigation.

#### **2. State facts as they are known AND which can be made public at that time.**

During periodic computer maintenance, inappropriate material was discovered on the NPH-issued computer of one of our now-former employees and, per our very stringent policies, we immediately alerted law enforcement about the discovery. This individual was removed from his duties at NPH immediately, and is no longer a part of the organization. (The material recovered was not depicting any of the children in our care)\*.

NPH has ensured, through an exhaustive and methodical process, that the alleged wrongdoing on the part of this individual is contained to the charges presented, and there was no inappropriate behavior conducted with ANY child under the care of NPH.

NPH's number one priority is protecting the children in our care, and we will continue to be vigilant in following all policies and procedures regarding their safety and well-being.

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## Scenario #4: Headline or Potential Story Angle:

### ***“NPH staff member killed in attack in xx country”***

1. Lead off statement of who NPH is and express sympathy for those involved
2. State the facts if they are known
3. Volunteer or staff: paint the picture of their contributions
4. Working with authorities to assure steps are being taken to ensure safety of others
5. Tout the accomplishments or important role the person played
6. Decide if the organization will establish some type of memorial or scholarship fund – more long term
7. Inform people how they can immediately help or help in the future
8. Next steps: what NPH needs and what it doesn't

**\*\* Must receive permission from family to publicize funeral arrangements if it's a volunteer or staff.**

NPH was devastated to learn of today's death of NPH Home Director John Smith in Guatemala and we'd like to extend our deepest sympathies to John's family and the many people whose lives John touched. Words cannot describe what this loss means to us and we are heartbroken.

Per what law enforcement has already reported, John was killed at about 10 am today while on his way back to our NPH home. The police are conducting a thorough investigation into the circumstances and those responsible. They will issue statements as more facts become known.

John has been our NPH (Position) since 2010 and his contributions to helping transform the lives of the more than xx children in our NPH Guatemala home are beyond measure. During John's tenure, the children experienced many benefits including x, y and z. He will be greatly missed but his many contributions will live on in the children and our home.

John's family is planning his funeral services and we will keep our NPH community informed as they announce the details.

### **Modification as necessary of Monica's statement after recent kidnapping:**

All staff, volunteers and visitors are aware and immediate security measures were put in place including restrictions of outings with children, and restrictions of walking to town. The Governor of Chimaltenango, who had just visited NPH Guatemala, was asked to establish a meeting with the local police department in order to request increased police presence in the area, especially during non-peak hours. Two security analysts from Orphan Secure are currently at NPH Guatemala to assess security risks, provide timely recommendations to enhance preparedness and update security measures. Immediate recommendations will be implemented by NPH Guatemala.

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## **Scenario #5: Headline or Potential Story Angle:**

***"NPH Home Director Accused of Child Abuse by Staff Members"***

***See above response in Scenario No. 2 if allegations are with merit. Below response is appropriate if allegations and without merit and alleged by disgruntled staff member/volunteer.***

### **1. State facts as they are known AND which can be made public at that time and defend and highlight accomplishments of person accused.**

Recently, child abuse allegations by our home director in NPH XXX were reported by a former staff member in that same home. NPH has been aware of these allegations for more than three months and upon learning about their serious nature, immediately launched an internal investigation.

The person making the initial allegations, due to performance issues, is no longer employed by NPH. Unfortunately, despite our formal internal grievance policy, this former staff member did not follow accepted procedures, resulting in the dissemination of unfounded and untrue accusations.

After an exhaustive investigation, we have determined that the accusations were wholly without merit. There was absolutely no wrongdoing conducted on the part of our home director. John Smith has been with NPH for more than 10 years and his leadership, contributions, concern for the children and vision in helping to transform their lives has been exemplary. We are proud to have him as an integral part of our organization and regret that the actions of one disgruntled

former employee have tarnished his reputation. We continue to stand by him and his work and thank him for all he does for NPH.

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## **Scenario #6: Headline or Potential Story Angle:**

### ***“Earthquake in Haiti Causes Severe Damage to NPH facilities”***

**Note: Details on a scenario such as this can vary greatly so below are general bullet points rather than pre-populated statements. Each will be addressed individually.**

- NPH to issue an immediate statement – **NPH is actively monitoring the situation in Haiti and has a team of first responders en route to the home. We do not yet have any details of the impact on the children and staff and our home, but will provide details as soon as they are confirmed and available. The safety and well-being of our NPH family is our most critical concern.**
    - Respond within 60 minutes of the crisis
    - Be brief, to the point and focus on safety of our family
    - Update only as we **confirm** information
  - As information comes in state the confirmed facts – multiple daily statements if necessary via press releases to established media outlets, social media, website, email. Blanket coverage.
    - Injuries, death
    - Are children safe? Where are they? Who is with them?
    - Damage to structures
    - Damage to surrounding area
  - How to help - shoes/clothing, doctors, food and water, \$\$
    - How to also **not** help and communication that we will inform audiences when help is warranted
    - Memorial fund/announcement (future)
    - How to recognize with a scholarship fund those impacted (future)
  - Establish communication with someone who is there on the ground to confirm information and provide constant updates.
  - Provide information regarding who we are partnering with (hospital, another nonprofit, etc...)
  - Someone should go immediately from the international team as part of crisis manual procedures
- 

## **Scenario #7: Headline or Potential Story Angle:**

### ***“Two Children at NPH Haiti Stricken with Ebola: Operations at Home Compromised”***

#### **1. Lead off statement to express concern for those involved**

At NPH, the health, well-being and safety of our children and staff are our foremost concern, and after discovering that two of our children have been stricken by the Ebola virus, we are focusing all our efforts on containing its spread while swiftly addressing the health needs of the children affected.



**2. State facts as they are known AND which can be made public at that time.**

Yesterday afternoon, after being monitored for Ebola-like symptoms for more than 24 hours, a definitive diagnosis was made on two of our children. A 9-year-old boy and 6-year-girl living in our NPH home were transported to the NPH St. Damien Pediatric Hospital where they are both under constant care by a team of expert medical professionals.

We do not yet have an update on their conditions but will release information as it's available and as long as it does not compromise their privacy. The Ebola outbreak is not isolated to NPH, but rather a country-wide epidemic and we have been working closely with medical professionals, other NGO's and government partners on policies and procedures to address the condition and minimize risk to our children and staff.

**3. State specific steps taken in conjunction with other organizations to provide peace of mind that other children are being protected to the best of NPH's ability.**

We are currently following World Health Organization Ebola protocols to contain its spread and have taken the following actions:

- Actively monitoring other children and assessing risk factors
- Arrival of Dr. Pilar Silverman from NPHI Medical Services to provide medical and monitoring expertise
- Action 3
- Action 4
- Action 5

**4. State how supporters can help and how to NOT help.**

## IX. POST CRISIS RESPONSE/EVAULATION

Once a crisis has subsided, NPH must evaluate the success of the crisis communications response. This is to ensure business continuity and will allow NPH to make any adjustments to future crisis planning. NPH should first **designate a Crisis Evaluation team**, made up of the core crisis team along with any others that played a pivotal role during the situation (other staff, international offices, outside counsel, etc). Tactics should include:

- Continue monitoring media for post crisis stories and contact any reporters with outstanding requests.
- Update media lists (using documentation from crisis historian) with all media NPH communicated with during crisis.
- Review post crisis evaluation on following page to determine what was successful and what needs improvement. Edit crisis plan to reflect any additional or different strategies.
- Create internal questionnaire to key staff requesting their feedback on crisis response. Administer via Survey Monkey or similar so that respondents may remain anonymous.
- Comprehensive internal report for staff: A post crisis report should be created by Director of Communications or another NPH core crisis team member that identifies the steps taken during the crisis to respond, addresses issues and mitigates damage. It will outline the outcomes of the situation and highlight the key messages that resonated throughout media coverage during the crisis. This will be distributed, either via hard copy or email, to NPHI staff and any international offices that contributed to efforts.
- Outward (public) facing crisis recap should be prepared and posted on website and included in any year-end reports chronicling the crisis, response and outcomes.
- For fundraising offices, all donor databases should be updated with new contacts garnered throughout crisis.

### Post Crisis Checklist

#### ***Preparation:***

- Were staff/resources mobilized quickly and calmly?
- Did we consider public perceptions—including donor perceptions—when addressing crisis?
- Did we accurately evaluate the severity of the situation?
- Did we work in conjunction with any other applicable organizations?
- Did we position ourselves as the expert?
- Did we utilize the procedures outlined in this manual?

#### ***Content and Delivery:***

- Did we put public safety and regard for victims first?
- Did we emphasize commitment?
- Were our messages straightforward and accurate?
- Were we open and honest?
- Did we utilize key messages and provide examples?

- Did we avoid pitfalls such as saying “No comment” or going off the record?
- Did we avoid acronyms or industry jargon?
- Were our spokespersons engaging, informative and positioned as experts?
- Did we stay calm?
- Did we update audiences regularly?
- Were we easily accessible?
- Did we avoid conjecture and stick to the facts?
- Did we monitor coverage as it was taking place and modify our messages accordingly?
- Did we successfully document all activities during the crisis?

## X. CONCLUSION

The tools contained in this crisis communications manual will allow NPH to effectively respond to various crises with speed, confidence and accuracy while continuing to support the very important work begun by Fr. Wasson many years ago. It is important to continually review policies, procedures and make sure all NPH staff is aware of the importance of a proactive crisis plan.

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### NPHI Communications

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Version 05  
November 2018 – updated contact information and revised flow chart.

Version 04  
June 2018 – Added NPH Bolivia contact and #. Highlighted names for replacement and or questions.

Version 03  
April 2017 – updates made to contacts, board of directors page and references