

It can be confusing and overwhelming to the public to hear so many messages about Ebola at once. Clear, simple messages are needed to help people change the behaviors that are spreading Ebola.

To improve understanding of the most critical messages, we invite you to join the National Ebola Response Center (NERC) in a new national campaign called the *Ebola Big Idea of the Week*. This national campaign will focus discussion on one key issue for an entire week, coordinated with partners across all forms of media, including radio, television, print news, SMS text messaging, and social media.

## **The Four Ebola Big Ideas of the Week**

- 1) Safe Burials Save Lives: November 10
- 2) Get Early Treatment: November 17
- 3) Stay Safe While You Wait: November 24
- 4) Celebrate Survivors: December 1

- The national campaign will start Monday November 10 and will run for 4 weeks. Partners and spokespersons should focus messaging on the designated “Ebola Big Idea of the Week”.

- Training for the “Ebola Big Idea of the Week” will take place Saturday, November 8<sup>th</sup> at the SLAJ Training Center, 8:30am-4pm. Speakers will include Ebola experts, leaders, and survivors, who will provide information on the four Big Ideas and taking questions on these topics. Radio personnel, print journalists, and television journalists are all invited to attend and learn more about each Big Idea. Lunch, transportation cost, and lodging will be provided by the Sierra Leone Association of Journalists (SLAJ).

- Infographics, pictures, and recorded PSAs will be distributed during the November 8<sup>th</sup> training on each Big Idea topic. You are also encouraged to develop your own programming.

- The NERC CEO Major Conteh will hold a Wednesday press conference during each week, to reinforce the critical messages on “The Ebola Big Idea of the Week”.

### **Ebola Big Ideas of the Week**

1. Safe Burials Save Lives: November 10
2. Get Early Treatment: November 17
3. Stay Safe While You Wait: November 24
4. Celebrate Survivors: December 1



\* The NERC Communications and Information Pillar includes representatives from the NERC, the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Information, SLAJ, The US Embassy, the CDC, WHO, UNICEF, United Nations, and BBC Media Action.

## Big Idea 1. November 10<sup>th</sup> - 16<sup>th</sup>: Safe Burials Save Lives

- **Treat any death as if it could be Ebola.**
- **Call 117 and district call centers to report all deaths.**
- **The dead body should only be handled by people who are trained in safe medical burial practices and are wearing protective equipment.**
- **Protect yourself**
  - **Do not touch, wash, or clean the body.**
  - **Do not touch body fluids of a dead person or anything a person who has died from Ebola has touched while they were sick.**
  - **Remove and burn the mattress and other items used by the person while sick.**
  - **Keep people away from the home**

*Consider interviewing: 1) Burial team members; 2) Ministry, CDC, WHO, or NGO experts 3) Red Cross or other agencies in charge of burials; 4) DHMT; 5) priests or imams who can counsel families; 6) chiefs who encourage their villagers to practice safe medical burials for the good of their families, 7) families who have had a positive burial experience.*

*Encourage listeners to take a pledge: "I pledge that if I die from Ebola, I want a safe, dignified medical burial to protect my family and friends."*

### **Why should we adopt safe, dignified, medical burials?**

- Touching a dead body is the most common way people are infected with Ebola.
- Practicing safe, dignified medical burials is a way to show respect for the person who has died while keeping yourself, your family, and your community safe.
- During this temporary crisis, all deaths should be handled as if they could be Ebola.

### **What should we do when there is a death?**

- Call 117 and district alert lines to report the death.
- Do not touch, kiss, clean, wash or wrap the body. Find other respectful ways to honor the dead.
- Pay your respects or pray from a safe distance of at least 2 meters or 6 feet away from the body.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water or chlorine solution. Do not touch body fluids or anything that the person who has died touched such as clothing, beds, linens, utensils, and plates.
- Wait for a trained burial team who will wear full protective equipment to touch, prepare, and bury the body of the person who has died.
- Do not invite friends or neighbors into the house for 21 days. If possible, find a family member, friend, community leader, or religious leader to talk to during this difficult time.

### **What happens during a safe, dignified, medical burial?**

- A safe, dignified, medical burial helps keep Ebola from spreading to your family and your community.
  - After you call 117 or district alert line, a burial team of trained individuals will arrive. Someone will talk to you about the death. Other burial team members will put on protective equipment to safely remove the body of the person who has died.
  - If the burial team needs to test the person who died for Ebola, they will collect a swab sample from the mouth of the person who has died and send it to the laboratory to test for Ebola.

# Ebola Big Idea of the Week

Sierra Leone, November 10- December 7<sup>th</sup>

A NERC\* Coordinated National Media Campaign

- Because test results for Ebola can take several days to a week, you cannot wait to bury the person who has died. To keep you, your family, and your community safe, the burial team must remove the body quickly and can't wait for test results.
- The person who died will be placed in a protective bag by the burial team. The burial team will remove the body from the house in this protective bag, and take the body to a cemetery or burial space to safely bury the body.
- Ask if a priest or imman can pray for the body at the cemetery. In some cases, the family may be able to view the burial from a safe distance (at least 15 feet, 5 meters).
- To protect you and your family the burial team will disinfect the house with a safe chlorine solution.
- All items that the person who died touched such as a mattress and clothing should be taken from the house and not used by anyone else.
- If a swab was taken and sent to the laboratory, a health official will follow-up with the family to share the results of the Ebola test.

## Big Idea 2. November 17<sup>th</sup> to 23<sup>rd</sup>: Get Early Treatment

- **Get help; call 117 or a district hotline.**
- **Early medical care saves lives. Drinking lots of Oral Rehydration Solution (ORS) or water gives patients a better chance to survive.**
- **Patient who go to an Ebola Treatment Unit (ETU) or Community Care Center (CCC) are helping protect families and loved ones, and helping to prevent infections in more family member.**

*Consider interviewing: 1) Nurses and doctors at Ebola Treatment Units; 2) Ministry, CDC, WHO, or NGO experts 3) Medicine sans Frontiers staff or NGOs running an ETU; 4) DHMT; 5) chiefs who encourage their villagers to seek early medical care; 6) Survivors who can testify as to the type of care they received, and how it saved their life.*

*Encourage listeners to take a pledge: “I pledge that if I get Ebola, I will seek early medical care, in order to protect my family and friends.”*

### **Why should you try to get care as quickly as possible?**

- With early medical care a person’s immune system has a better chance to fight off the Ebola virus.
  - Remind people that early medical care can help increase their chances of surviving Ebola.
- At the health facility, the medical team treats the disease by lowering fever, keeping the patient hydrated, providing good nutrition, reducing pain treating other infections.
- People who receive early treatment have a much higher chance to survive infection.
- People who go to treatment centers or community care centers help protect their family, because they are not spreading Ebola in the home.

### **What can you do to help the sick person?**

- Making sure the sick person drinks plenty of water or other liquids can help them survive Ebola.
  - Give them oral rehydration solution (ORS) if you have it available. It does the best job helping Ebola patients. If you don’t have ORS, give them water. You can also give other liquids such as coconut or jelly water.
  - Give them as much ORS or water as they can drink. Try to get them to drink 5-7 liters per day.
  - Provide the sick person with food, but avoid touching them.
  - Provide the sick person with his/her own plate, cup, and other utensils, toothbrush, etc. and do not handle these items yourself.

## Big Idea 3. November 24<sup>th</sup>-November 30<sup>th</sup>: Stay Safe While You Wait

- **Protect yourself and be safe while you wait.**
- **Do not touch the sick person, their body fluids, or anything they touched.**
- **Support the sick person by giving them as much liquids as they can drink and oral rehydration solution(ORS) if available**

*Consider interviewing: 1) Ministry, CDC, WHO, or NGO experts 2) DHMT; 3) chiefs who encourage their villagers to be vigilant for cases, and protect the family while waiting for help; 4) Survivors who can testify that they took ORS, and how it saved their life.*

*Encourage listeners to take a pledge: “I pledge that if I get sick with Ebola, I will isolate myself so as not to spread disease. I pledge I will take care of myself by drinking ORS, so I have a chance to survive.”*

### **What should you do if someone in your family or household becomes sick?**

- Get help. Call 117 or the district hotline, neighborhood watch or support team, or tell a local community leader immediately.
- Do not run away or hide people with symptoms of Ebola. Try to find an Ebola Treatment Center or Community Care Center for them. Early care helps them, and can help protect others in the family.
- Encourage the sick person to drink plenty of Oral Rehydration Solution (ORS), water or other liquids.

### **What do you do to protect yourself and other family members while you wait?**

- Sometimes, it can take a few days to find an open bed in a treatment center. It is very important to take steps to keep you and your family safe while you wait for help. Entire families have gotten sick and died from trying to treat one Ebola patient at home.
- Whenever possible, sick people should be cared for in a health care facility instead of at home.
- If you cannot get the sick person to a health care facility, there are a few things that you can do to help the sick person and reduce the chance of spread while you wait.
  - Assign only one person to take care of the sick person.
  - Keep the sick person in their own space, away from the rest of the family, preferably in their own room.
  - If a room is not available, keep the sick person’s mattress at least 3 feet (1 meter) away from other family member’s mattresses and beds.
- Do not touch the sick person, their body fluids, or anything they have touched.
- All body fluids including stool, vomit, blood, breast milk, urine and sweat are dangerous and must not be touched.
- Do not share any items with the sick person. Do not wash the sick person’s clothes, and do not share mattresses, sheets, or blankets.

### **How should you protect yourself if you cannot avoid touching the sick person or their things?**

- It is strongly discouraged to touch a sick person, their body fluids, or items they have touched.
- Only trained health workers with protective equipment can safely touch the sick person, their body fluids, or items the sick person has touched.
- If you cannot avoid touching the sick person, their body fluids, or items the sick person has touched, be sure to protect yourself:
  - Use protective barriers such as gloves or double plastic bags and cover any uncovered skin (e.g., wear long sleeves or a raincoat).
  - Be very careful removing the protective barrier. Do not touch the outside of these items with bare hands.
  - Frequently wash hands with soap and water.
  - Disinfect with chlorine solution

## Big Idea 4. December 1<sup>st</sup>-7<sup>th</sup>: Welcome Survivors Back to the Community (Celebrate Survivors)

- **Accept survivors and welcome them back into your family and the community.**
- **It is safe to be around someone who has survived Ebola.**
- **If a person has survived and recovered from Ebola, they can no longer spread Ebola to others through casual contact.**
- **Men who recover from Ebola should abstain from sex or wear a condom during sexual contact for at least 3 months after recovery. However, it is otherwise safe to be around this person.**

*Consider interviewing: 1) Ministry, CDC, WHO, or NGO experts 2) Counselors or mental health professionals; 3) DHMT and Psychosocial Support team members; 4) Nurses who can describe their joy in seeing survivors; 5) chiefs who encourage their villagers to honor survivors as heroes, and welcome them back as people who can help the outbreak; 6) Survivors themselves, who can testify about their experiences and joy, and provide hope to Sierra Leone.*

*Encourage listeners to take a pledge: “I pledge that I will honor Survivors of Ebola as national heroes, and welcome them back into the community.”*

- People who survive Ebola need hope and social support from family, friends and the community
- It is safe to be around someone who has survived Ebola.
  - Once a person survives Ebola, the person is unlikely to get Ebola again.
  - There is no known case of a person getting Ebola a second time.
  - If a person has survived and recovered from Ebola, they can no longer spread Ebola to others through casual contact.
  - Men who recover from Ebola should abstain from sex or wear a condom during sexual contact for at least 3 months after recovery as Ebola can be found in semen up to this time. However, it is otherwise safe to be around this person.
- If they choose to, survivors can have an important role in social mobilization, health communication, and in caring for Ebola patients and orphans.
  - Survivors of Ebola should use protection when taking care of other people sick from Ebola, but are unlikely to be at risk for re-infection.
- Accept survivors and welcome them back to your family and the community.
  - Our survivors are heroes.
  - People who have survived Ebola give hope to others who are still fighting the disease.