



# Rabies

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## Key facts

- Rabies is a viral zoonotic neglected tropical disease that causes inflammation of the brain in warm-blooded animals
- Approximately 59,000 human deaths are attributed to rabies annually, however, due to underreporting, estimates often differ from the true situation.
- Though the disease is present in all countries except Antarctica, 95% of human deaths cases occurring in Asia and Africa and 40% of those affected being children under 15.
- In the Americas, Australia and parts of western Europe where dog-mediated rabies is mostly controlled, blood-feeding bats are now the primary source of human rabies, becoming an emerging public health threat.
- Domestic dogs are the main source of rabies in humans, contributing up to 99% of all transmissions, while other sources of rabies could include cats, livestock and wildlife (especially blood-feeding bats).
- Rabies is 100% vaccine-preventable, and while effective human vaccines and immunoglobulins exist for rabies, these are often inaccessible or unaffordable to those in need (mostly in rural marginalized communities).
- Rabies is 100% fatal once clinical symptoms appear.
- It is also of socioeconomic importance costing about US\$ 8.6 billion per year including lost lives and livelihoods, medical care and associated costs, as well as uncalculated psychological trauma.

## Transmission

- Through the bite or scratch of an infected animal (mostly from dogs)
- Contact by saliva or brain tissue of an infected animal comes into contact with mucous membranes (eyes, nose, mouth) or an open wound

## Most Vulnerable to contracting the Disease

- Children with pets in their homes (especially dogs and cats)
- Individuals living in rural areas, especially in regions where rabies is endemic
- Communities with predominantly roaming dogs with inefficient dog population control and mass dog

vaccination schemes

- Veterinarians, animal handlers, wildlife workers, hunters, dog traders/breeders, and consumers of dogs

## Signs and Symptoms

### In animals (dogs)

- May initially start with non-specific signs such as fever, vomiting and weight loss.
- Within days, signs can progress to
  - Poor muscle control with clumsy movements
  - Weakness
  - Paralysis,
  - Difficulty in breathing and swallowing
  - Excessive drooling and salivation,
  - Abnormal behavior, excessive barking and aggressiveness
  - Self-mutilation or barking at the site where they were exposed to the virus

### In humans

- Prodromal Symptoms:
  - Early symptoms are nonspecific and can include;
    - Fever
    - Pain
    - Unexplained tingling and pricking
    - Burning sensation at the wound site.
- Furious symptoms
  - Hyperactivity
  - Excitable behavior
  - Hydrophobia (fear of water)
  - Aerophobia (fear of air drafts)
  - Difficulty swallowing
  - Agitation
  - Hallucinations
  - Paralysis
  - Death
- Paralytic (Dumb) symptoms:
  - Paralysis starting at the site of the bite or scratch
  - Coma
  - Death

# What can you do to prevent and control an epidemic?

## Vaccination

- The most cost-effective control strategy and primary prevention method for rabies is the implementation mass dog vaccination and this must be done for all dogs annually
- Additionally, pre-exposure vaccination should be given to high-risk personnel including veterinarians, animal health and welfare practitioners, dog handlers, laboratory workers handling live rabies and related viruses, and wildlife rangers,
- Post-exposure vaccination should be provided for contacts of cases of dog bites, where available.

## Reservoir control and prevention

- Quarantine animals and people that are potentially sick with rabies
- Avoid direct contact with bats (especially blood-feeding bats)

## Monitor the community and identify sick people

- Identify and isolate sick animal and people

## Treatment and management

- Any person bitten by a dog must be referred to the hospital immediately for wound washing and post-exposure prophylaxis for rabies vaccine, if indicate
- Rapidly refer suspected cases to the appropriate health facilities
- Support contact tracing and follow-up of contacts
- Provide psychosocial support to patients and family members

## Sanitation and waste management

- Solid waste management
- Promote proper and safe disposal of dead animals and fluids from infected animals and individuals

## Personal protection and hygiene

- Prevention of dog bites and scratches
- Promote handwashing with soap, especially:
  - After caring for or visiting sick people
  - After handling sick animals
  - After preparing bushmeat
- Promote the use of personal protective equipment (PPE) when caring for sick people or when touching sick or dead animals, specifically gloves and mask
- Discourage people from unnecessary touching of sick or dead animals or things that might have been contaminated by their blood or body fluids

## Food hygiene and safety (during outbreaks originating in animals)

- Discourage wild animals and dogs as a food source if possible

## Social mobilization and health promotion

- Find out the specific advice being given by health and other relevant authorities
  - Promote recommended health practices (such as vaccinating their dogs, use of PPE, etc.)
  - Public education for both children and adults on dog behaviour and bite prevention, what to do if bitten or scratched by a potentially rabid animal, and responsible pet ownership.
- Model following this advice and inform community members of current health practice advice
- Offer support and encouragement to follow the advice
  - Try to gain understanding about if and why health practice advice is not being followed
  - With the guidance of your supervisor and health authorities, work with communities to overcome barriers to following health advice and recommended practices

## PER Treatment Categories

Categories of contact with suspect rabid animal	Post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP) measures
<b>Category I</b> - touching or feeding animals, animal licks on intact skin (no exposure)	Washing of exposed skin surfaces, no PEP
<b>Category II</b> - nibbling of uncovered skin, minor scratches or abrasions without bleeding (exposure)	Wound washing and immediate vaccination

<p><b>Category III</b> - single or multiple skin bites or scratches, contamination of mucous membrane or broken skin with saliva from animal licks, exposures due to direct contact with bats (severe exposure)</p>	<p>Wound washing, immediate vaccination and administration of rabies immunoglobulin/monoclonal antibodies</p>
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## Mapping and community assessment

- Make a map of the community.
- Mark the following information on the map:
  - How many people and animals have fallen sick with rabies? Where?
  - How many people and animals have died? Where? When?
  - Who and where are the vulnerable people?
    - Who is most affected by rabies?
  - Are there dog meat markets? Where are they?
  - Where are the health facilities? (include traditional healers)
  - Are there any advocacy and support for local support organizations that are against slaughtering dogs as a food source? Where are they and what do they do?
- Record the following information on the back of the map:
  - When did people and animals start to fall sick with rabies?
  - How many people and dogs live in the affected community?
    - Which people in the community have unvaccinated stray dogs?
    - Which people eat dog meat?
  - Are there handwashing facilities in the community, at animal markets and other areas? Are soap and water always available?
  - What are the community's habits, practices and beliefs about handling and slaughtering animals, especially dogs that are sick or dead?
  - Do any animal health agencies, veterinarians or agriculture ministry agencies work in the area?
  - Who and where are the vulnerable people? Who is most affected by rabies?
  - What are the community's habits, practices and beliefs about caring for and feeding sick people? Consider any differences in roles and responsibilities between women and men.
  - Is a social mobilization or health promotion programme in place?
  - Which sources do people use/trust the most for information?
    - Are there rumors or misinformation about vaccines? What are the rumors?

## Volunteer actions

- [01. Community-based surveillance](#)
- [02. Community mapping](#)

- [03. Communicating with the community](#)
- [04. Community referral to health facilities](#)
- [19. Mental Health and Psychosocial support \(MHPSS\)](#)
- [20. Isolating sick people](#)
- [38. Waste disposal and clean-up campaigns](#)
- [43. Social mobilization and behaviour change](#)
- [44. Dealing with rumors](#)

## Other resources

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC); [Rabies](#) (2024)
- World Health Organization (WHO); [Rabies](#) (2024)
- World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH); [Rabies](#) (2023)
- World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH); [Rabies](#) (2023)

# 01. Community-based surveillance

## Overview

- Community-based surveillance is the systematic detection and reporting of significant public health events (such as sudden illness or death in people or animals) within a community by community members and volunteers. It is a simple, adaptable, low-cost public health initiative designed to complement early warning systems for potential epidemic diseases.
- Volunteers use something called a “community-case definition” to detect and report signs and symptoms of potential diseases, health risks and events, and support in community actions and response of local health authorities. Community case definitions are designed to align with the local language and do not require medical training to report on.
- Information discovered during surveillance should be shared with the local branch and health authorities based on the agreed protocol. Where relevant, (e.g. for zoonoses or environmental health events) information should also be shared with animal health and environmental health authorities.
- Community-based surveillance (CBS) can be done alongside other health, WASH or community engagement activities in your community, and therefore is not a stand-alone activity, but one that is useful to partner with other community-based activities.
- Community-based surveillance aids in
  - Early detection of public health risks within the community
  - Complementing early warning systems, extending them to the community
  - Linking early detection to early action within the community

## What to do and how to do it

- Preparation activities
  - Work with supervisors in mapping community needs and human, animal and environmental disease priorities (see Action tool [Community mapping](#))
  - Familiarize yourself with the disease that may be present in your community including signs and symptoms
  - Establish who is vulnerable in the community. Doing this will help you to identify people who are more likely to fall sick
  - Ensure referral mechanisms are clear in case community members fall sick and require referrals to health facilities for care.
  - Engage in community engagement activities such as mobile cinema, house-to-house visits, etc. to remain active and a known resource in the community.
- Recognize
  - Detect signs and symptoms corresponding to human, animal or environmental health risks or events in your community aligned with community case definitions
  - When you detect people who are sick with the disease, assess how severely ill they are and whether they need to be referred to a health facility (see Action tool [Referral to health facilities](#)).
  - Record the health risk or event you detected to ensure it can be followed-up

- Report
  - Report on the detected health risks or event in your community to your supervisor based on the methodology you are trained on (for example, SMS, phone call, or mobile application). *Remember that reporting must be systematic. To avoid confusion, everyone who reports should follow the same methods agreed on in the protocol and in the training.*
  - Your supervisor will then cross-check the report ensuring it meets the community case definition or unusual event requirements agreed on with health authorities. If matching, the supervisor will escalate the alert to the local health authorities for a response or investigation
  - After verification, the supervisor will notify relevant authorities in animal and environmental health for significant animal, zoonotic and environmental health events, especially those that portend a risk to human health.
- React
  - Begin community-level activities based on the health risk following proper safety precautions
  - Referral or care at home
    - Communicate specific health messages and information, and refer sick people promptly to health facilities
    - If sick people can be cared for at home, show their families what to do and provide them with information and supplies, where possible. Use corresponding “volunteer actions” in the ECV toolkit corresponding to the suspected epidemic risk.
  - Support health authorities in their investigation or response following-up on the alert
  - Where relevant, collaborate with and support officials in the animal and environmental health sectors for joint investigation, response and information sharing.

Additional resources on community-based surveillance: <https://cbs.ifrc.org/>

## Community messages



24. Finding sick people



## 02. Community mapping

### Overview

A map of the community enables you to connect issues or problems with particular places and makes information easy to see. Maps are often easier to understand than words.

Mapping aids in:

- Identifying risks and exposure to risk
  - Who and what are most exposed
  - What are they exposed to
- Show existing problems and vulnerabilities (some might make the current threat more serious)
- Understanding resources within the community that might be useful in managing the epidemic
- Obtaining information about other sectors (such as livelihoods, shelter, WASH, infrastructure etc.) that might be influenced by the epidemic, or that might be useful in managing the epidemic
- Analysing links and patterns in the exposure and spread of the epidemic - which may include human-to-human transmission dynamics, exposure from animals, vectors or food, behavioural risks, and environmental health drivers.

It is important to create the map together with community members. This helps communities to be active and to be participating members in the care offered by the Red Cross Red Crescent and volunteers.

Community mapping is especially useful in epidemics because it helps to see where the biggest problems and needs are and helps to identify risks and resources such as health posts, emergency vehicles, access roads, shelters, water sources, and so on. Maps can be used to support prevention, preparedness and response to an epidemic.

### How to make a community map

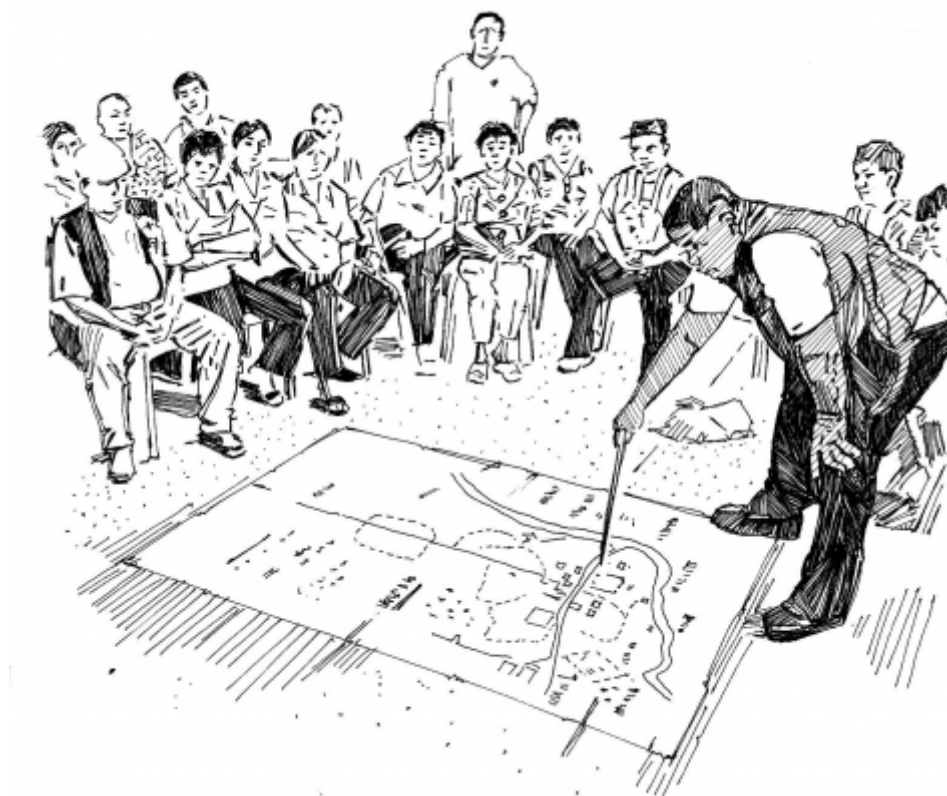
If possible, obtain or create a digital map of the community. If not available, it is possible to draw a simple spatial map that shows the community and all its key reference points. While keeping the fundamental principles of data protection, a community map should include the following:

- The whole community: concentrations of people, their houses, and who lives where
- The main shared/public locations in the community, such as schools, health centres, places of worship, water sources, markets, playgrounds and community meeting centres, communal livestock farming and livelihood areas such as cattle kraal, live bird markets, abattoirs, etc.
- The location of people who are most at risk [if you can identify them]
- Where the epidemic started and how it is spreading [if known and possible to identify]
- Health hazards and risks (e.g. improper rubbish disposal sites, large vector breeding sites)

## Using the community map

The map can be used to mark new cases and/or referred cases. Do as follows:

- Form teams to cover certain areas of the map.
  - Ensuring the participation of members from the community, each team should find out what it can about its area (how many people are sick, who is vulnerable, how many have been referred to health authorities, any other relevant information). If a zoonotic disease outbreak is suspected or implicated, find out who among the community members is keeping animals, how many animals are sick or have died, and/or presence of vectors in households, environment or even in surrounding water bodies. Work with your manager to target and prioritize those who are most at risk. This will require targeting geographically and, within those identified areas, targeting the most in need based on a vulnerability and capacity analysis that includes a gender and diversity analysis.
- Combine the maps of different teams. In doing this, you will be able to see:
  - Which areas of the epidemic you are covering, which areas you may not be covering, and details of each area. This will help you plan your actions. Some of these actions might include: environmental clean-up; distribution of bed nets; immunization campaigns; quarantine, animal biosecurity measures and other activities associated with managing the epidemic.



Making a community map

## 03. Communicating with the community

### Overview

Communicating during an epidemic can be difficult. Disease outbreaks, especially new ones, can cause uncertainty, fear and anxiety that can result in circulation of rumours, disinformation and misinformation. People may not trust the authorities, the health system or organizations including the Red Cross Red Crescent. They may not listen or may not believe the information they receive from people or organizations they do not trust. People may also be overcome with grief for those who are sick or who have died.

Sometimes, communities have strong beliefs that are different from the preventive and protective social measures promoted by the authorities and healthcare providers. They may believe strongly in their own cultural practices, traditional medicine, or other methods that might not prove effective against the disease. They may not accept certain treatments (including medicines and vaccines).

In many countries messages take the form of directives and one-way-communication. However, community engagement and participation have played a critical role in successful disease control and elimination campaigns in many countries

During a disease outbreak, trusted communication with the community is vital. To build trust, two-way communication is important. "Two-way" means volunteers should both *give messages to* AND *receive messages from* the community. Community members must feel respected and listened to and should have the opportunity to share their beliefs, fears and concerns. To accept volunteers' messages, community members must be able to trust you and have confidence in what you say. Once you understand the beliefs, fears and concerns of community members, you can provide them with truthful and accurate messages.

Providing health messages that are consistent, clear and easy to understand also helps to build trust. Giving accurate information to the community is critical, especially when it is necessary to persuade people to adopt safe practices (which might be different from what they would normally do). Some changes in behaviour that may be promoted are things such as:

- Accepting vaccinations or other medical treatments
- Washing hands with soap at crucial times
- Wearing personal protective equipment
- Burying loved ones in ways that are different from what they would normally do (safe and dignified burials)
- Practising social distancing
- Wearing insect repellent or sleeping under bed nets
- Agreeing to be isolated from others to avoid infecting them
- Preparing food and water differently (often by cleaning, boiling or cooking thoroughly)
- Quarantine and culling of animals (which in the case of livestock animals, is often a main source of food, nutrition and livelihood and may be difficult to accept by the farmers who own them)
- And other recommended public health measures

## What to do and how to do it

### *Communicating in an epidemic*

- Engage and involve community leaders and community members
  - Find out where the community obtains its information: Who do they trust to give them health information (for example: health authorities, community or religious leaders, doctors, traditional healers)
  - Work with communities to identify, choose and plan appropriate solutions for stopping the spread of disease
  - Talk to members of the community about their ideas, fears, beliefs and actions
    - Try to understand how much they know about the disease and its transmission
    - Try to understand beliefs and practices that might impact the spread of the epidemic
    - Try to understand what motivates or helps them to change behaviours
    - Try to understand what stops them from changing their behaviour
- Use different methods of communication
  - Use two-way communication when possible
    - When you understand the community's beliefs, fears and concerns, try to address these in your own messages
  - Sometimes, one-way communication methods are used to spread health messages to large numbers of people quickly
    - One-way communication methods should always be accompanied by two-way communication methods to ensure the community perspectives are known and listened to
  - People learn and retain information differently. It is important to use different methods
    - Communities are composed of different people and groups who may have different communication preferences or needs.
      - Think about how to target different groups, especially those who are hidden, stigmatized or considered "different" because of their religion, sexual orientation, age, disability, illness, or for any other reason:
        - Think about where you will go to reach them
        - Find out if they trust the same or different sources than other groups within the community
        - Discover if they have different access needs, such as language translation or in case of a disability – a different method of communication
    - When choosing methods of communication, consider what people prefer, trust and can access easily
      - Think about the characteristics of your target groups (for example, do they have access to media, such as radio or television? Can they read if they receive pamphlets of information and in what language? Are they accustomed to getting information from social media? Etc.)
      - Think about the resources you have access to (for example: do you have access to poster printing? Is there an appropriate location within the community where you can offer to answer questions or give out information? Etc.)
      - Consider the content of your message(s) and think about the most appropriate way to share that content in the specific context (for example: targeting men and women separately)
- Communication should be:
  - **Simple and short.** People should be able to understand messages easily and be able to remember and repeat them accurately and without difficulty.
  - **Trusted.** Delivered by people the community trusts, by a method the community trusts (for example:

radio, television, posters, town-hall discussions, market meetings etc.).

- **Accurate and specific.** Always provide correct and precise information. Messages should be consistent and should not be cause for confusion. *If* messages must change (due to new and advancing information about the epidemic), be honest and clear about what has changed and why.
- **Focused on action.** Messages should be action-oriented and should advise members of the community about what they can do to protect themselves and others.
- **Feasible and realistic.** Make sure that people have the capacity and resources to carry out the actionable advice you give.
- **Context-specific.** Information should reflect the needs and situation of the specific community. In all your messages, take account of social and cultural factors that might encourage community members to adopt safer behaviours (such as accepting vaccines) or prevent them from doing so.

### ***Different ways of communicating***

There are many, many ways to communicate with communities. The following one and two-way methods of communication are some examples you might consider. Methods can (and should) be combined to ensure accessibility to as many community members as possible.

- One-way communication methods
  - Video, films, television commercials
  - Songs, poems, drama, role-play or theatre, or other edutainment methods
  - Community announcements such as: community town-criers, loud-speaker announcements, SMS or WhatsApp, mass messaging, social media messages, radio broadcasts
  - Posters, billboards
- Two-way communication methods
- Door-to-door visits
- Meeting with key informants such as: community or religious leaders; traditional healers or midwives; teachers; elders, etc.
- Community discussions encouraging participatory methods such as: three pile sorting, voting charts, mapping, polling, barrier analysis, community planning
- Use of feedback and suggestion boxes or presence of trusted focal persons to receive anonymous feedback or messages from community members.

### ***Pay attention to rumours***

Rumours can cause panic and fear or can promote unsafe practices. Under the influence of the rumours, communities can lose trust in the health authorities, and they may lose belief in the ability to stop the epidemic. Rumours sometimes cause people to reject interventions that could prevent the spread of disease. Volunteers must:

- Listen for rumours or incorrect information.
  - Note when and where a rumour was heard and report it to your volunteer supervisor or National Society focal point immediately
  - Try to understand why the rumor is spreading fast and of what importance it is to the community. For example, is it just based on lack of knowledge or fear of the unknown, or is it associated with certain socio-cultural beliefs or associated with the stigmatization of a certain demography of people?
- Correct the rumour

- Give the community clear, simple facts about the disease
- Reiterate and explain clearly what they can do to protect themselves and others

## 04. Community referral to health facilities

### Overview

During an epidemic, sick people frequently cannot be treated at home or by volunteers or family. They require medical care and need to go for treatment to a health clinic or hospital.

When carrying out epidemic prevention and control activities in the community, always keep the idea of referral in mind.

A community referral is a recommendation (often made by a community volunteer) to seek services at a health facility or from a health care professional. This recommendation is usually based on the identification of signs of disease or the risk that a disease poses to a person, family or community. A community referral is not a confirmation of illness, nor is it a guarantee that any specific treatment will be given. A diagnosis, and any subsequent treatment, is determined by a health professional and not by the community volunteer.

### What to do and how to do it

#### *Identifying people who need to be referred*

- Learn the symptoms of the disease that is causing the epidemic and the signs that indicate that affected people should be referred to health facilities
- Always keep your own safety and protection in mind
  - With the advice of your supervisor, find out how you can tell when a person is severely ill and needs to be referred

#### *Map and visit referral facilities*

1. Unless there is only one referral facility in the community, the selection of a health facility for volunteers to which to send community referrals should be done by a health professional supporting or working at the National Society and validated by the National Society leadership. Volunteers cannot decide alone to which facilities they can send referrals.
2. Once a health facility has been identified and validated by the National Society, with the support of your manager, visit health facilities and talk to doctors and nurses to coordinate referrals
  - Inform them about Red Cross Red Crescent branch activities in which you are involved and how this may lead to community referrals from branch volunteers trained in epidemic prevention and control
  - Discuss the best method for sending sick people from the community to the health facilities:
    - Public transport?
      - Can people access it? Pay for it?
      - Can sick people use it?
      - Is there a risk of disease transmission to other passengers?
    - Ambulance services?
      - Does the health facility have ambulances?

- Does the Red Cross Red Crescent branch have ambulances?
- Can people access them? Pay for them?
- How do you contact the ambulance?
- Is the disease highly infectious and requiring special transport?
  - If the disease is highly infectious (like Ebola or Marburg), special transport must be arranged so that there is no risk that other people could not infected
  - Tell them about your activities and how you plan to do referrals. Take advice from them

### ***Plan and prepare to make referrals***

1. Plan how referrals will be made and facilitated
  - Can the National Society provide transport?
  - Do people have money to pay for transport?
  - Does the health facility require prior notification of the referral? If so, how will the health facility be informed of the referral?
2. Always carry the relevant disease tool with you when you are doing community-based referrals
  - This will help you remember what you should know about the disease and its symptoms.

### ***Making a referral***

1. Volunteers act on behalf of their National Society and must have the consent of the National Society before undertaking activities. They should be trained in the principles of the Red Cross Red Crescent Movement and should have appropriate training and supervision before making community referrals.
2. Volunteers should obtain the consent of the person to the referral, or of the guardian if it is a child.
3. Volunteers should work to uphold these principles:
  - Confidentiality – It is important to keep information about community members private and not to discuss people's health, healthcare or other private details with others in the community. Remember that breaches of confidentiality often happen unintentionally, for example, when discussing the day's work with friends or family members.
  - Respect – It is important to respect peoples' choices and decisions, even if you do not agree with their choices.
  - Safety – If you have concerns about the safety or security of a person (in relation to the community referral, or any other aspect of their situation), you should discuss it with your supervisor to find a safe solution if possible.
4. When you refer, always explain clearly to the family concerned what the disease may be, what its symptoms are, and why you think referral is necessary.
  - Give the family information about the health facilities available and how to reach them by different means of transport
    - Help the family if special transportation is needed





## Community messages



24. Finding sick people

## 19. Mental Health and Psychosocial support (MHPSS)

### Overview

#### *Normal reactions to abnormal events*

It is normal and expected to have strong reactions to abnormal and difficult events. People and communities who experience difficulties may be affected emotionally, mentally, physically and/or socially. Some of these effects may include:

#### Normal reactions to abnormal events

- **Emotional.** Anxiety, grief, guilt, anger, irritability, frustration, sadness, shame, numbness, loss of hope, loss of meaning, feeling of emptiness.
- **Mental.** Loss of concentration, memory loss, confusion, intrusive thoughts, difficulties in decision making, disorganized thought.
- **Physical.** Increased heart rate, sleeping problems, aches (stomach, head), back and neck pain, muscle tremors and tension, loss of energy, inability to rest and relax.
- **Social.** Risk taking, over- or under-eating, increased intake of alcohol or cigarettes, aggression, withdrawal, isolation.

#### *Psychosocial support*

- The term “psychosocial” refers to the dynamic relationship between the psychological and social dimensions of a person, where the dimensions influence each other. The psychological dimension includes emotional and thought processes, feelings and reactions. The social dimension includes relationships, family, community networks, social values and cultural practices.
- “Psychosocial support” refers to actions that meet the psychological and social needs of individuals, families and communities. Psychosocial support (PSS) requires training and supervision. Your supervisor can help you access the appropriate training before you begin to offer PSS to community members. They will also provide you with supervision and support while you provide PSS.
- We provide psychosocial support to help people who have been affected by a crisis. Volunteers should explain what psychosocial support is and if they are appropriately trained, they should offer to provide it to those who wish to receive it. Early and adequate psychosocial support can prevent distress and suffering from turning into more severe mental health problems.
- Psychosocial support during emergencies should ensure safety and promote calm, connectedness, personal and collective efficacy, and hope.

## What to do and how to do it

Psychosocial support activities include:

- Psycho-education
  - Explain how to identify signs of psychosocial distress
  - Provide advice on how to cope during outbreaks (e.g. maintaining a daily routine as much as possible; calling friends and family to keep in touch and show care for each other; fact-checking information about a disease against trustworthy sources)
  - Share tips about relaxation
- Health education can have a positive psychosocial impact:
  - Health education can help community members to better understand their health status, regain a sense of control and cope with their situation
  - While being ill, and even after medical clearance, it can be difficult for people suspected of infection to resume normal life. Educating communities about the nature of the disease, how it spreads – and does not spread – and how to protect against it is an important tool against fear and stigma
- Active listening: Ensure the affected population can raise their concerns, provide suggestions and feedback. This information is used to reduce fear, address rumours and misinformation and increase sense of agency and dignity of the affected population.
- Life skills and vocational skills activities/lessons.
- Creative activities, sports and physical activities.
- Restoring family links.
- Child friendly spaces.
- Supporting memorials and traditional burials.
- Support and self-help groups
  - These include efforts to help people in isolation or quarantine maintain contact with their relatives and friends.
  - Community volunteers that respond to crises are also exposed to loss, devastation, injury and death. It is therefore important to seek support from managers when needed, and to create a supportive environment by showing concern for staff and other volunteers.
- Psychological first aid

## 20. Isolating sick people

### Overview

- Some diseases are so dangerous or infectious that it is necessary to isolate people who are sick to prevent them from passing the infection to others. Isolation means separating those who are sick from those who are healthy.
- Isolating people is not imprisonment; it is not done forcibly and should be carried out with their consent. You need to explain to affected people and their families why isolation is necessary. People may also need to be isolated from their companion or livestock animal (and vice versa), if it brings the risk of transmission of disease. In extreme cases of progressive outbreaks, sick livestock animals may need to be culled (selectively slaughtered) to stop the spread of a disease to other animals and humans. Animal isolation, quarantine or culling should also not be done forcibly and should be carried out with their care-giver's consent.
- When a person is in isolation, the people who come into direct contact with them (for example, family members and healthcare providers) must be protected using the appropriate protective measures, like personal protective equipment (PPE). The number of people who are in direct contact with the sick person should be kept to a minimum. For example, only one family member should provide care, food, water, etc. to the sick person.

### What to do and how to do it

#### *Surveillance and detection*

1. Even if a disease requires isolation, you should continue monitoring, looking for cases of the disease (see Action Tool [Community-based surveillance](#)).
  - When cases are found, the need for isolation should be explained to those who are ill and their families.
  - Explaining isolation protects others, including members of the sick person's family. It may be easier for both the sick person and his or her family to understand why isolation is being proposed if they receive a complete explanation.
2. Provide support to the affected person, family members and healthcare providers to facilitate isolation.
  - This is not done forcibly, and the wishes of the family and sick person should be respected as much as possible.
  - Those who care for a person in isolation should be shown how to assist him or her and how to protect themselves. They should be provided with proper protective equipment.

#### *Management and care*

1. Provide psychosocial support to families (see Action Tool [Psychosocial support](#)). Isolation of a loved one can be very hard, for the family as well as the person in isolation.
2. Make sure that people in isolation have adequate food, water, and health care, as well as help to cope with any loss of livelihood.
3. Ask if those who need isolation have dependants (e.g. children, people with disabilities) that may need additional support. Inform your manager, who will liaise with the Red Cross Red Crescent protection

team for dependants to get the appropriate support.

### ***Social mobilization, messaging, and community engagement***

1. Talk to the family, community and elders/leaders to prevent stigma and social rejection.
  - Try to stop isolation from causing stigma or social rejection of sick people and their families.
  - Explain to the community why isolation is necessary.
  - Seek the help of elders and community leaders to fight stigma.



Talk to the community and elders to prevent stigma and social rejection.

## **Community messages**



24. Finding sick people

## 38. Waste disposal and clean-up campaigns

### Overview

- Diseases can spread easily in environments where there is waste and lack of sanitation. Rubbish can attract rodents and create breeding and feeding sites for various domestic, wild and scavenging animals and insects (including mosquitoes and flies). Human or animal faeces can also attract flies and other insects that carry germs, cause diseases and contaminate water sources.
- Human and animal waste infected with certain diseases (including animal carcasses, hospital waste, etc.) can also attract different animals and insects which may then spread the diseases to other animals and to humans.
- Standing and stagnant water provide breeding sites for various insects, including mosquitoes.

### What to do and how to do it

#### *Planning and preparing for clean-up*

- Work with traditional and community leaders, the village health committee and other community partners to decide what needs to be cleaned up and how to go about it.
  - Help to organize activities on agreed “clean-up” days.
  - Ask community leaders to organize volunteer groups for each clean-up initiative.
- Speak with community members about the importance of keeping their community clean.
- Organize a community initiative to plan and create a central garbage disposal area.
- Make sure to have the cleaning tools and supplies available in advance to distribute among the community.

#### *Facilitating community clean-up*

- Organize special clean-up days in which all members of the community participate (twice a year or more often if possible).
- Motivate and support the community to work together to:
  - Keep the community free of animal faeces and urine.
  - Keep the community free of puddles and other mosquito breeding sites.
  - Keep the community free of rubbish and garbage (by burning or burying it).
  - Clear vegetation from around riverbanks and ponds near the community
  - Clean the areas around water sources (such as pumps and wells).
  - Create and maintain water soak pits around water sources.



**Tell community members how important it is to keep their community clean. Organize regular clean-up campaigns. Include houses and latrines, etc.**

### **What you can do**

- Work with traditional and political leaders, the village health committee and other community partners to decide what needs to be cleaned up and how to go about it.
- Help to organize activities on agreed “clean-up” days.
- Ask community leaders to organize volunteer groups for each clean-up initiative.
- Organize special clean-up days in which all members of the community participate (twice a year or more often if possible).
- Organize a community initiative to plan and create a central garbage disposal area.

Motivate and support the community to work together to:

- Keep the community free of animal faeces.
- Keep the community free of puddles and other mosquito breeding sites.
- Keep the community free of rubbish and garbage (by burning or burying it).
- Clean the areas around water sources (such as pumps and wells).
- Create and maintain water soak pits around water sources.





Make sure to dispose of waste properly. This will help to protect the community from germs.

## Community messages



07. Protecting yourself against mosquitoes



17. Sleeping under mosquito nets



20. Collecting and disposing of rubbish

## 43. Social mobilization and behaviour change

### Overview

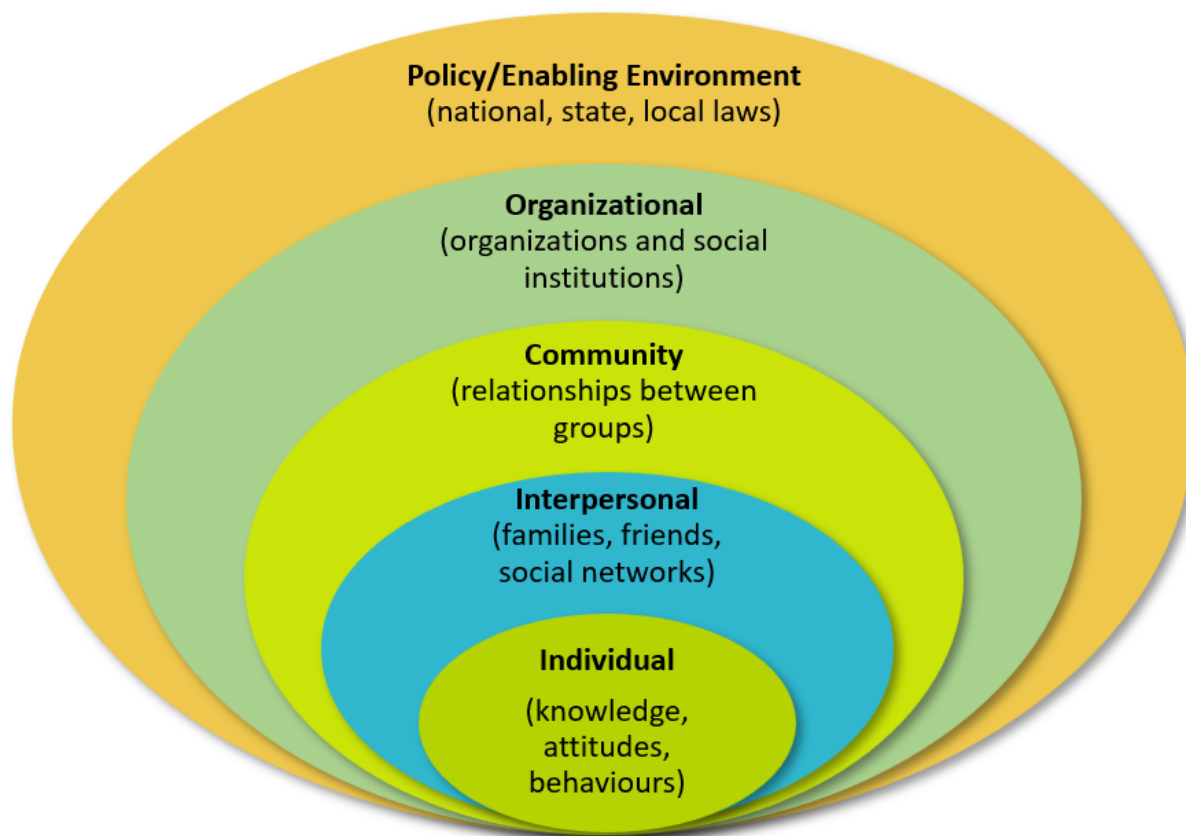
There are many reasons why people practise unhealthy behaviours. People are affected by access to services or facilities, social norms and influences where they work, live or play. Behaviour change is the study of how and why people change some habit or action in their life. As volunteers, we need to understand WHY the behaviour is happening and WHAT actions will lead to change to create healthy behaviours. Examples of healthy behaviours include handwashing, breastfeeding, immunizations, consistent condom use and use of bed nets.

In any culture and context, behaviour change involves three elements. Before people will change their behaviour:

1. They need to know what, why and how they should change. They need knowledge.
2. They need to have the right equipment, access and capacity. They need an enabling environment.
3. They need to be motivated to change.



The social-ecological model below shows how each person's behaviours are affected by many different levels of influence including the individual level, the interpersonal level, the community level, the organizational level and the broader policy level which includes laws and policies that allow or restrict a behaviour. In order to promote health, it is important to consider and plan behaviour change activities across multiple levels at the same time. This approach is more likely to result in successful behaviour change over time. As a volunteer, it is helpful to understand that behaviour change is difficult for many people because of these many levels and the complex interactions and expectations across the different levels. If you consider how each of the levels affects the behaviour of the person you want to help, you can try different interventions at each level that is specific to their needs.



Socio-ecological model

### What do to and how to do it

The general process for developing a behaviour change intervention includes staff and volunteers working through the general steps of:

1. Sensitizing the community to the behaviour change process using the theory of change model.
2. Assessing the problem behaviour – why it is practised, who practises it, when it is practised and what factors in the environment or society encourage the behaviour. Assess this information at the different levels of the social-ecological model for each community you serve.
3. Identifying an appropriate behaviour goal based on your assessment.
4. Reviewing the causes or barriers at each level that allow the behaviour to continue. Identify interventions

that align with each cause or barrier and that can be used at different levels.

5. Discussing the suggested interventions for each social-ecological model level with the community.
6. Identifying appropriate interventions for the context at each level. Interventions should be planned to address the stages of the theory of change by first giving knowledge and addressing environmental factors, motivating key people to gain approval and intentions, and ultimately inciting people to action that contributes to the overall goal.
7. Implementing the interventions at each level.
8. Monitoring to see if change is happening. Change takes time but it must be monitored to ensure that it is happening, even slowly. Additionally, as people go through the change process, their barriers and causes will change. The behaviour change interventions should adjust to these changes to ensure that change can continue.
9. Recognizing that when change is not happening as intended, further assessment and intervention tweaking is needed.
10. Continuing to implement, monitor, assess and adjust as the change process happens.

For more information, please consult the eCBHFA Manual for volunteers on [Behaviour Change](#), including:

1. Principles of behaviour change
2. The social ecological model
3. The stages of behaviour change
4. Activities for behaviour change

## Community messages



23. Encouraging healthy behaviours in a community

## 44. Dealing with rumors

### Overview

- Rumours are stories of uncertain truth. They often spread in communities during epidemics when people feel fear or anxiety about the disease. Rumours often provide an explanation for what is unknown about the disease, even if the explanation is not true.
- Rumours include *misinformation* or *disinformation*. Misinformation is when incorrect information is spread, without the intent to deceive, through a misunderstanding or a mistake. An example of misinformation is the rumour that Ebola is caused by witchcraft. In truth, Ebola is spread by a virus, but people often mistake it for witchcraft because they cannot see the virus or have never heard of the Ebola virus before.
- Disinformation is when incorrect information is spread intentionally to deceive or manipulate, such as “fake news”, which is disinformation disguised as news and is often spread for political or economic gain. An example of disinformation is when someone who sells multivitamins advertises that the tablets “cure” HIV, even though they know it is not true.

In epidemics, we often see two kinds of rumours:

- Rumours about possible cases
  - These rumours can violate community members’ privacy and right to confidentiality and may put them at risk
    - Rumours can often reflect pre-existing fears and prejudices within the community. This may lead to placing blame on different people or groups. This type of untrue belief can give community members “permission” to discriminate against someone or a group without feeling guilty, because of untrue beliefs.
  - They may also cause the unnecessary use/waste of health resources when rumoured cases must be followed up
- Rumours about the causes or treatment of the disease
  - Can distract from public health messaging
  - May conflict with the behaviours and practices recommended to fight the epidemic
  - Can create a dangerous situation for volunteers and healthcare providers if they cause mistrust

Paying attention to rumours can help us to understand the beliefs and perceptions that influence people. Using this information, we can make our messages specific to the community, the context and the beliefs. Rumours may also serve as a warning sign of hazards such as violence or risky behaviours so these can be managed quickly.

### What to do and how to do it

#### *Listen for rumours and capture information*

- Establish a system for listening to rumours: Listening for rumours involves more than just hearing the words people use. To effectively listen to rumours, you need to:
  - Build trust with community members: Identifying rumours is not as simple as asking people about any

rumours they have heard. This will not necessarily uncover rumours because people may believe a rumour to be true and therefore not consider it a rumour. Also, people may not trust you as someone to discuss their beliefs with, in this way.

- Listen to the language the community is most comfortable using
- Tune into social and traditional media to understand what people are hearing and what they are saying
- Engage in open and unstructured conversations with diverse groups of people to understand the beliefs they hold and why they hold them
- Host group discussions with community members and members of community groups (such as women's or youth groups)
- Pay attention to what you hear during your work as a volunteer, but also during your personal time
- Establish a method of collecting information about rumours: Use a rumour log where you can record:
  - Details – what is the rumour?
  - Date - when was the rumour heard?
  - Location - where was the rumour heard?
  - Channel – how is the rumour being shared/spread?

### ***Report and help to verify rumours***

- Report rumours to your supervisor: Ask them to verify if the rumour is true or false
  - Sometimes parts of a rumour are true and other parts are false. It is important to understand the facts
  - Follow the guidance of your supervisor in uncovering more information about the rumour if possible
  - You may be asked to find out more information about the rumour from community members. You may also be asked to speak to the source of the rumour to understand more about what is being said and why
    - Explain that you are verifying a rumour, which may or may not be true, and repeat the rumour that you have heard
    - Ask them what is true/untrue about the rumour you heard and to state in simple terms the facts and how they know them
    - Repeat what you have heard, to check that you have understood them correctly. You should finish with a clear understanding of what they are describing – if you are not sure ask again
    - Try to find out what triggered the rumour. For example, did the rumour start because of a badly worded message? A government announcement? Etc.

### ***Plan a response to rumours***

- With your supervisor, develop a plan to address and prevent rumours. Do not ignore or deny rumours.
  - Rumours usually do not go away on their own and can cause big problems if they are not addressed
  - Replace rumours with accurate information
    - Respect local customs and beliefs and align messages with pre-existing beliefs and customs. For example, a common rumour might be that Ebola is caused by witchcraft; the conventional response is to refer to Ebola as a virus. However, rather than deny this pre-existing belief, it may be more useful to accept that this is what people believe and to create recommendations and messages that align such as: do not touch this person unprotected but feel free to provide food [and prayers] as a token of empathy
    - Use communication channels/people that community members trust
    - Use language that people understand and are comfortable with

- Continue to engage in conversation with communities to make sure you are being understood