



# Crisis Communications

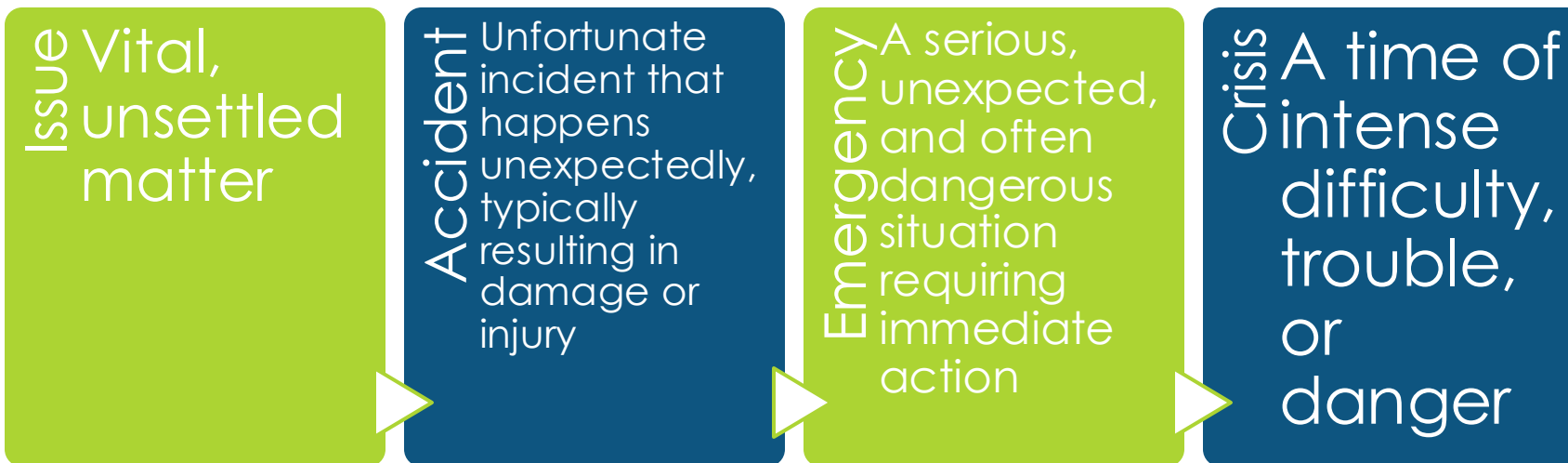
CTAO SPRING CONFERENCE

MAY 15, 2025



**THE SECRET OF  
SUCCESS IS TO BE  
READY WHEN  
YOUR  
OPPORTUNITY  
COMES**

# Definitions

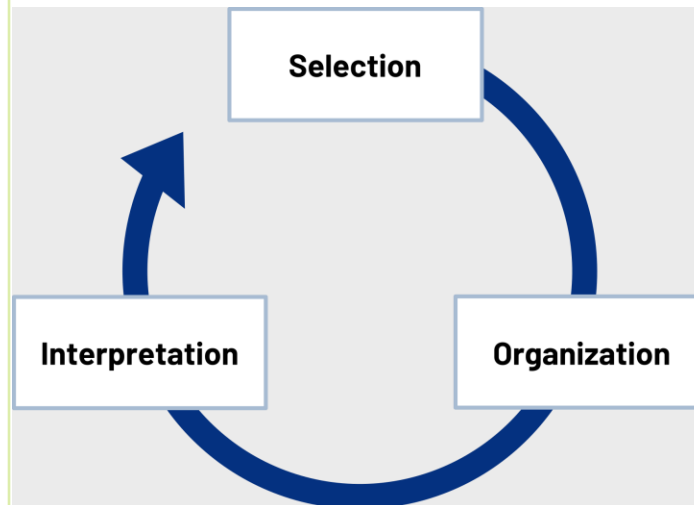


# Principles

## Reputation



## Perception



## Speed of response



# Why crises happen

## Misunderstanding



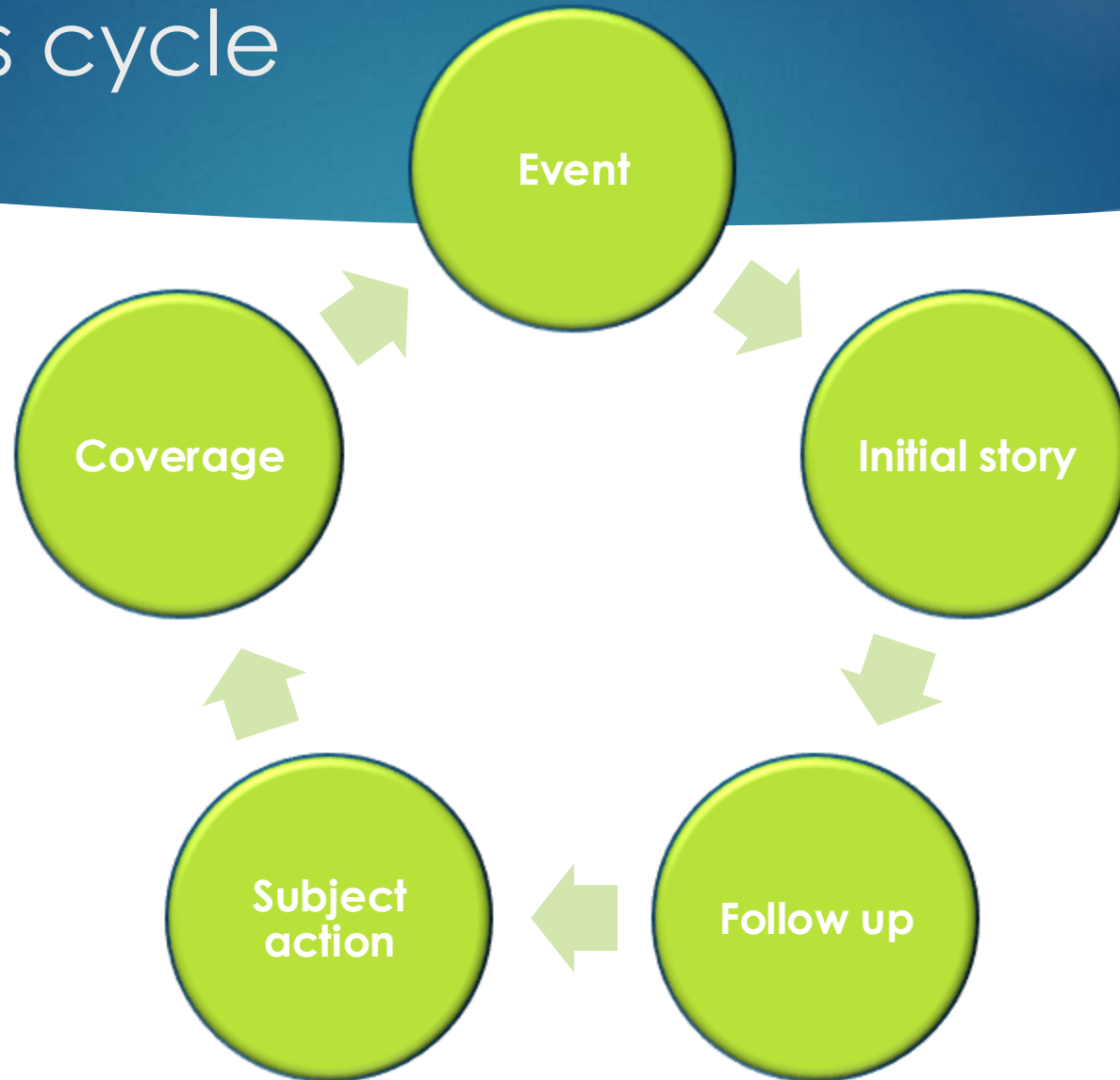
## No control/ No engagement



## Credibility



# The news cycle



# Assessing your crisis potential

Factors to consider

Status of current PR

Plan? Tested?

# Before emergencies strike

Possible scenarios

Key staff and roles

External contacts

Make a plan



# When stuff happens

Fill the “news hole”

Get the facts

Assess newsworthiness

Strategy, message

Communicate

# Avoiding common “potholes”

## Don't

- ▶ Avoid the issue
- ▶ No comment
- ▶ Go “off the record”
- ▶ Lie or obfuscate
- ▶ Abuse existing relationships
- ▶ Ignore or demean public sentiment

## Do

- ▶ Be honest
- ▶ Acknowledge concern
- ▶ Demonstrate understanding/empathy
- ▶ Say and show – do not rely on paper or online statements
- ▶ Provide resolution

# Three Cs of success

## Consistency

If you get the first communication wrong, all statements that follow will be called into question. Credibility goes down. Scrutiny goes up.

## Clarity

Be as clear as possible, providing as much detail as makes sense. Ambiguity leads to more questions, which brings more risk.

- Who
- What
- When
- Where
- Why

## Control

Expect that reporters will get it wrong. Speculation will happen. Don't overreact.

- Record full briefing/interview and post online (when it makes sense)
- Reinforce key points on social media/website
- Make sure to direct audience to where they can get more information directly from you

# Dealing with media

## One set of facts

- Internal first

## Briefings or interviews?

- Level of crisis
- Your media market

## Listen

- Internal/external

## Prepare, anticipate

- Strategy, message, messenger

## Starting points

- Acknowledge first

# When it gets really bad

- ▶ Key staff
- ▶ Think ahead
- ▶ Briefing schedule
- ▶ Use all your tools
- ▶ Don't forget internal comms
- ▶ Pace yourself



# When it's over

- ▶ Thank responders
- ▶ Reward success
- ▶ Collect lessons learned
- ▶ Track issues for any potential reemergence





# Questions?

**Kelly Arledge**

**KWA Public Relations, LLC**

**[KellyArledge@kwapr.com](mailto:KellyArledge@kwapr.com)**

**614.205.0339**