



Communication Tools for Pregnancy Centers in Minnesota

Angela Erickson, Executive Director

Why do we need an intentional communications strategy?

“Behold, how good and pleasant it is when brothers dwell in unity!”
— Psalm 133:1

Minnesota pregnancy centers are under threat in the current political climate of our state.

- In 2023, Minnesota removed pregnancy centers from the state budget, ending the long-standing Positive Alternatives grant program.
- The Attorney General's office has publicly characterized centers as working against abortion access — shaping how media and some community members view us.
- Legislators on both sides continue to introduce competing bills; the landscape shifts year to year.
- There's a cost when it comes to reactive vs. proactive communication

What's at stake?

- Funding
- Community trust
- Client access
- Volunteer recruitment

Staff and Board Alignment

“Two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their toil. For if they fall, one will lift up his fellow; but woe to him who is alone when he falls and has not another to lift him up. Again, if two lie together, they are warm; but how can one be warm alone? And though a man might prevail against one who is alone, two will withstand him. A threefold cord is not quickly broken.”
— Ecclesiastes 4: 9-12

When staff and board describe the organization differently, it erodes trust. Alignment is



the foundation everything else is built on.

- Give every staff member and board member the same one-page talking points card
 - Misalignment and mixed messages are one of the fastest ways to erode trust in the community
- Normalize training staff to say, “Great question — let me connect you with our director for the full answer,” rather than improvising.

Include these things on your director report for your board:

- Impact numbers
- Client stories
- Information about important communications
- A plain-language legislative note.
 - PCCMN will keep you up to speed on legislative movements

Keep a short, standing protocol for media or public inquiries so no one is caught off guard.

- What communication channels will you use?
- What is your key message?
- Only authorized representatives for the organization should give statements
- Never say "no comment".

If a staff member is contacted by media for a statement:

- Collect the reporter's name, media outlet, phone number, email, and exact deadline.
- Staff should politely state: "I am not authorized to speak on this, but I will pass your request to our communications team right away."
- Forward the details immediately to the Executive Director or Board President

Carefully monitor reviews internally and externally

- Are you getting written feedback from clients via surveys on their experience?
- Does anyone monitor your reviews on social media and Google?



- You need to address false negative reviews ASAP
 - They drag down your overall score
 - Negatively impact community trust
 - The algorithm will push your center lower on search engine results
 - If you wait– it makes it harder to recall details of a possible incident
 - It becomes a part of your organization’s history in the public eye

Are your purpose and mission statements clear?

“Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves: so be wise as serpents and innocent as doves.” —Matthew 10:16

- Clarifying your purpose and mission statement
 - A purpose statement defines why you exist
 - A Mission statement outlines what the organization does
- Test your mission statement: does it explain your “why” to someone with zero context?
- Your mission should drive your message, not the other way around

30-Second Elevator Pitch’

We are...

We help people who...

By offering (2-3-) specific services...

What makes us unique is...



If you'd like to learn more, you can...

Map Your Community

***“Open your mouth for the dumb, for the rights of all who are left desolate. Open your mouth, judge righteously, maintain the rights of the poor and needy.”
— Proverbs 31: 8-9***

“Community” includes clients, donors, volunteers, neighbors, media, and elected officials — each needs a message suited to what they need and how they’ll use it.

- Lead with the people served and services provided, not political framing.
- Identify key audiences: clients, donors, local officials, media, general public, skeptics, etc.
- Local partnerships and referral relationships are essential for trust-building infrastructure— you need to be integrated into your community

Audience	What they Need to Know	Best Channel
Clients		
Donors		



Volunteers		
Media/Elected Officials		

Build Your Story

“All this Jesus said to the crowds in parables; indeed he said nothing to them without a parable.” — Matthew 13: 34

Stories are uniquely human and draw outsiders into your world. Not only do they connect us to one another, but they live on past us and outside of ourselves.

Storytelling makes the mission real — but it must always protect client privacy and respect client consent.

- Get explicit, written client consent for specific use before sharing any story
- Let the client review the final version before it’s shared publicly

A simple four-part structure

Part	Prompt
Situation	Who came to us, and what were they facing?
Struggle	What was hard or uncertain– without being exploitative?
Support	What specifically did we do? Name real services provided.



Outcome	Where is the client now? What changed (in their words if possible?)
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Story Builder

Situation:

Struggle:

Support (service(s) provided):

Outcome:

Client Consent Obtained? (Y/N, date, scope of use):

General Communication Tips for Dialogue and Persuasion

“A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in a setting of silver.” —Proverbs 25: 11

Talking about the amazing things our centers do can be difficult in hostile environments.

- Avoid repeating negative framing
- Find common ground
- Acknowledge their concerns
- Listen to the other person, avoid defensiveness



Three tests for any public-facing sentence

- Concise: Could a stranger understand this in one read, with no jargon?
- Accurate: Is this exactly what we do — not implied, not medical/legal language we're not licensed to use?
- Mindful: Could this be misread or clipped out of context in a way that invites scrutiny?

Language reference table

Instead of...	Consider...
"We stop women from getting abortions."	"We provide free options counseling and support to anyone facing a pregnancy decision."
"Our ultrasounds are medical exams."	"Our licensed medical staff offer limited ultrasounds to confirm viability and gestational age."
"We're 100% confidential, no matter what."	"We follow strict confidentiality practices; ask staff for specifics."
"The government is trying to shut us down."	"State funding for centers like ours changed in 2023; here's how we've adapted."
"We help women choose life."	"We support women through their pregnancy with a variety of services and material support."

What's Next?

Commit to at least one action:

- One talking point I will start using this week.
- One story I will draft using the Story Builder worksheet.
- One relationship (staff, board, or community) I will check in with about our messaging.
- Developing a communications procedure in place at my center(s) if there's ever a media inquiry



Additional Notes: