### Appendix C: Worksheet for Developing Messages to Counter Rumors

Use the worksheet below to walk through the steps outlined in the playbook section Step 2: Take action to address rumors. You can use the worksheet to respond to a range of rumors that come up during emerging public health issues.

| **Q** | **Guiding question** | **Your answer** | **Notes** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 1 | What is the rumor? |  | Use approaches in the Set up a way to identify rumors section to understand the rumor you have detected and its level of risk. |
| 2 | What type of rumor is it? State why it is a rumor and what information would discount or address it. |  |
| 3 | What level of risk does this rumor pose? |  | If the level of risk is HIGH, you may need to prebunk or inoculate people against the rumor as soon as you detect it. |
| 4 | Who is spreading the rumor? |  |  |
| 5 | Does the rumor disproportionately affect any populations? Explain |  | If YES to either, prioritize these respective populations before others.  If NO or unclear to both, prioritize other groups as discussed below. |
| 6 | Are some people more inclined to believing this rumor? Explain |  |
| 7 | Would a message from your organization or partner organization(s) stop people who spread this rumor from doing so? Explain |  | If YES to all, add general audiences and partner organizations, then people who are spreading the rumor to the priority list.  If NO to any, prioritize general audiences. |
| 8 | Does the community perceive your organization to be a trusted messenger? Explain |  |
| 9 | Do you work with any partner organizations that are trusted messengers for people spreading the rumor? |  | If YES, co-create tailored messages intended for priority audiences with them and disseminate through their channels, in addition to your own efforts.  If NO, focus on people who are likely to believe and be most impacted by the rumor, as well as general audiences. |
| 10 | Who are the priority audiences for your message? |  |  |
| 11 | What additional information do you need to consider about these audiences when creating messages? |  | Consider factors like audiences’ priorities, values, questions, concerns, needs, beliefs etc. |
| 12 | What are your communication goals? List them in an order that aligns with your priority audiences. |  | Use guidance from Figure 5. |
| 13 | Which action approach(es) will you use? List them by audience. |  | If you responded HIGH RISK to Q3, prioritize prebunking and inoculation.  Use guidance from Table 3. |
| 14 | On which platform(s) is this rumor spreading? |  |  |
| 15 | Which communications channels will you prioritize for disseminating your message? |  | Prioritize based on Q14 but add others, like partners’ preferred platforms. The format, character limits, structure, and framing of the message you develop in Q23 will depend on the communications channel you choose.  Use guidance from Table 5. |
| 16 | Which organizations, businesses, online or community influencers do priority audiences trust? List them in order of preference by audiences. |  | Co-create messages with these parties and include them as disseminators. |
| 17 | List the trusted sources and partners that will serve as messengers. |  |  |
| 18 | List other considerations that inform your message dissemination strategy. |  |  |
| 19 | Are your priority audiences’ motivations to change behaviors and beliefs driven by specific benefits or moral values? |  | If YES, use gain framing or moral reframing techniques for your message.  If NO, use other message framing strategies. |
| 20 | List any message framing strategies you will incorporate into your message and why. |  | Consider the motivations of your priority audiences. Use resources from Appendix D: Message Framing Strategies and Templates. |
| 21 | List any message framing templates you might use to create your message. |  |
| 22 | How will you tailor your message to match your priority audiences? |  | Remember to tailor based on your answers to Q15-18. |
| 23 | Share the message(s) you have created. State the target audience(s) and dissemination channel(s) for each. |  | Adapt based on your communications channels from Q15 and message framing techniques from Q19-22. |
| 24 | Did you incorporate good practices related to language, tone, visuals, structure, etc.? |  | If YES, proceed to dissemination.  If NO, incorporate good practices for quality assurance or accept consequences of not doing so. |
| 25 | What are some underlying assumptions of your message? |  |  |
| 26 | What are some potential pitfalls of your message and how will you address them (if at all)? |  |  |