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Over-reassuring stakeholder safety regarding the impact of a crisis is the seventh common misconception of effective crisis communicators. Effective crisis communicators do not over-reassure their public but provide information to their stakeholders to help protect themselves. In Chapter 5, we discuss this type of communication as self-efficacy. The more you can do as a crisis communicator to help protect your stakeholders, the better. Over-reassuring stakeholders about the outcome of a crisis is sure to kill the credibility of any spokesperson.

The eighth misconception about crisis communication is to say *no comment* or to stonewall. Effective crisis communicators meet regularly with their stakeholders and the media to answer questions, remain open and accessible, and keep everyone updated with information about the crisis. Organizations are typically caught so off guard following a crisis that they do not know what to say. In this case, we suggest that they tell people what they know, tell them what they do not know, and tell them what they are going to do to collect information about the crisis.

Misconception nine is to focus more on the organization's image and less on solutions to the crisis. Ineffective crisis communicators try to control their images, scapegoat other parties and absolve themselves from blame. Once a crisis occurs, there is not much that can be done to save or repair an image. Rather, effective crisis communicators focus on finding solutions to the crisis and lessen the impact on those most impacted by the crisis. We contend that it is impossible to control the image or reputation of a company. Multiple events and perspectives by many different stakeholders comprise the overall image or reputation of a company. Ultimately, we argue that organizations should control what they can, which is correcting the problem and learning from the crisis.

The final misconception is that spin is a viable option in effective crisis communication. Spin only makes the crisis worse and makes the crisis communicator look unethical and irresponsible once the truth comes out. Be wary of any advice to use spin as a strategy in crisis communication. Organizations should be wary of those who suggest trying to spin the information surrounding a crisis to obscure responsibility. Organizations that resist this strategy are going to be more effective in their crisis communication.

## SUMMARY

This chapter provided an expanded definition of crisis, explained different crisis types, and delineated key misconceptions associated with the understanding and practice of crisis communication. The next part of this book examines key theories of crisis communication. These theories provide both a vocabulary for understanding crisis communication along with ways to describe, explain, and prescribe the practice of crisis communication. Let's now examine how different theories help us understand and practice crisis communication.