Care in Crisis: An Applied Model of Care Considerations for Ethical Strategic Communication

**Julia Daisy Fraustino, Ph.D.**

Reed College of Media

West Virginia University

jdfraustino@mail.wvu.edu

304-293-7005

**Amanda K. Kennedy, Ph.D.**

Department of English and Communication Studies

St. Mary’s University

akennedy4@stmarytx.edu

**Abstract**

Crises ranging from organizational wrongdoings to natural disasters cause destruction and even death. Communication is crucial for reducing harm and protecting public interest. This work forms foundations for ethical public interest communication (PIC)-based organizational communication throughout the crisis lifecycle and across contexts. The applied model of care considerations (AMCC) is proposed and developed. The AMCC presents cross-cutting care considerations (i.e., relationships, interdependence, vulnerability, reciprocity) and four landscapes of care (i.e., physical, cultural, political/economic, human). Model constructs are applied to: (1) Nestlé’s decades-long global baby-formula-promotion controversy, and (2) #DeleteUber consumer outrage surrounding the ride-sharing app’s perceived profiting from travel-ban protests. Rooted in feminist normative philosophies, this research addresses literature’s lack of: (1) general crisis ethics theory, (2) applied crisis communication ethics, and (3) feminist-theory-oriented crisis communication.

*Keywords:* ethics, crisis communication, applied model of care considerations, Nestlé, Uber

**Dr. Fraustino** is an assistant professor of strategic communication and co-director of the Public Interest Communication Research Lab in the Media Innovation Center at West Virginia University. Her research intersects risk/crisis communication, ethics, and digital/social media, appearing in more than 50 journal articles, book chapters, refereed presentations, and government reports.

**Dr. Kennedy** is an assistant professor of communication studies at St. Mary’s University, where she serves as her department’s associate chair. She specializes in feminist and critical theory, methods, and ethics in strategic communication. Her research examines topics in public relations, ethics, feminism, critical theory, affect theory, and poststructural approaches.