Communications Toolkit: Supporting Your Community Prevention Strategies

Thursday, June 30th, 2016
10:00 – 11:30 A.M.

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Communications Specialist at EDC
Project Director, Center of Excellence for Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation
Agenda/Roadmap

• Importance of Communications to Awareness and Action

• Overview of Communication Planning process

• Planning for Your Own Program
Objectives

Participants will have an understanding of how to:

1. Identify prevention strategies that can be supported by communications efforts
2. Identify and understand their audience in order to create targeted communications plans
3. Develop effective messages
4. Choose an appropriate communication channel
5. Evaluate their actions
Communications Are Tied to Intended Actions

What actions are needed to reduce substance use/misuse?

Type into the chat box below
Communications Planning

Good intentions can go wrong

http://www.teamjimmyjoe.com/2015/05/31
Communications Planning Model

1. Planning and Strategy Development
2. Developing and Pretesting Concepts, Messages, and Materials
3. Implementing the Program
4. Assessing Effectiveness and Making Refinements
Successful Communications Campaigns

• Systematically planned
• Communications tied to overall strategy
• Clear audiences and goals
• Clear call to action
• Pre-tested
• Evaluated

FACT:
CATS ARE TWICE AS LIKELY TO GET CANCER IF THEIR OWNER SMOKES

BE THE GENERATION THAT ENDS SMOKING

https://www.thetruth.com/
Communication Planning Steps

Communications Toolkit: masstapp.edc.org/communications-toolkit
Step 1: Analyze Your Situation

✔ What problem are you trying to solve?
✔ What else is being done?
✔ What is your organization’s capacity?
✔ How can communications help?

http://www.savingadvice.com/articles/wp-content/uploads/2012/05/analyze.jpg
What problem are you trying to solve?

**Logic Model Example 1**
Hover your mouse over the highlighted strategy in the logic model to view examples communications that could support this strategy.

**Problem to be addressed:** Misuse/abuse of opioids

**Local manifestation of the problem:** 7.43% of local high school students in grades 9-12 report past-30-day misuse of prescription opioids.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Intervening Variables</th>
<th>Strategy</th>
<th>Target Group</th>
<th>Outputs</th>
<th>Outcomes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Access to prescription pain medication</td>
<td>Campaign to increase safe use, storage, and disposal of prescription drugs</td>
<td>Parents or grandparents of school aged youth</td>
<td>Number of advertisements, number of publicity events, number of PSAs</td>
<td>Increased number of adults with information on safe use, storage, and disposal of prescription drugs</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>Decreased access to prescription pain medication in the home</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Decreased rates of 30 day prescription drug abuse among 13-17 years olds</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
What resources does your organization have?

- Budget
- Staff
- Timeline
- Technology
- Community Partnerships
How Can Communications Help?

**Logic Model Example 1**
Hover your mouse over the highlighted strategy in the logic model to view examples communications that could support this strategy.

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Opioid misuse</td>
<td>Access to prescription pain medication</td>
<td>Campaign to increase safe use, storage, and disposal of prescription drugs</td>
<td>Parents or grandparents of school aged youth</td>
<td>Number of advertisements, publicity events, number of PSAs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **Short-Term**: Increased number of
- **Intermediate**: Decreased access to
- **Long-Term**: Decreased rates of 30 day

**Intervening Variables**:
- Campaign to increase safe use, storage, and disposal of prescription drugs
- Publicize prescription take-back days in the community
- Publicize availability of Rx drop boxes in police stations
- Develop Public Service Announcements (PSAs) targeted at parents
Step 2: Understand Your Audience

- Narrow down who needs to change
  - Targets vs. Agents of change
- Set communication objectives
- Learn more about your audience
  - Audience profile
  - Audience persona


Who Is Your Audience?

Communication Efforts

Who has influence?

Who should change?
Why narrow down your audience?
Communication Objectives

What do we want the audience to **do**? (sometimes also know, think, feel)

- What exactly do we want them to change?
- Awareness is not specific enough
- Be clear: how will the change contribute to your overall goals?
Learning About Your Audience
Learning About Your Audience

• What do you want to know?
• What will it take for your audience to take the desired action?
  – Readiness to act
  – Motivations
  – Values, beliefs
  – What do they think about the desired action?
Learning About Your Audience

• How will you find out?
• Community assessments
• Focus groups
• In-depth interviews
• Published literature and national surveys
• Polls
• Observation
Step 3: Develop your Message

- Include call to action
- Build motivation, highlight benefits
- Use fear messaging with caution
- Use sensitive language that resonates

https://kenyonstanleycapstone.files.wordpress.com/2012/01/bullhorn-on-left-istock_000003095976medium2.jpg
Characteristics of Good Messages

• Appealing
• Culturally appropriate
• Audience’s own language
• Attention getting for your audience
• Clear -- don’t trade cleverness for clarity
• Visuals/sounds match and support the message
The Message Triangle

What problem are you addressing, and why is it important to your intended audience?

What steps can your intended audience take that will lead to better outcomes?

How is your coalition addressing the problem in a way that will resonate with your intended audience?
Pre-Test Messages and Materials

• Ask target audience for reaction
  – Understandability, clarity, language
  – Does anything distract from the message?
• Use broad prompts (don’t lead)
• Take pre-testing feedback with a grain of salt
Use Sensitive Language

- Choose humanizing language
- Avoid stereotypes
- Avoid jargon
- Cultural and linguistic competency (more than translation!)
Step 4: Create and Implement Your Strategy

- Choose your Channels
- Develop an Action Plan
Getting Your Message Out: Six Main Channel Categories

- Interpersonal Communication
- Outreach and Education to Local Groups
- Mass Media Campaigns
- Media Relations
- Social Media
- Non-Traditional Communication
Action Planning

• Specific calendar, including:
  – Detailed steps for each channel
  – Who is in charge
  – Partner/staff responsibilities
  – Milestones to monitor progress
  – Regular team meetings to identify roadblocks and make adjustments
Step 5: Evaluate Your Plan

✓ Plan for evaluation from the start
  – SMART Communication Objectives
✓ Process and outcome evaluation
✓ Improve and sustain
✓ Consider finding an evaluator to help
Evaluating Your Communication Efforts

- **Process measures**: are you doing what you planned and is it reaching people?
- **Outcome measures**: did the campaign get audience members to do what you wanted?
- **Were there unintended effects?**
Using Evaluation Results

Use evaluation results to:

• Identify needed improvements and modifications
• Demonstrate impact
• Share successes to build sustained support and buy-in
• Empower other coalitions/groups to follow in your foot steps
Summing up

1. Analyze your situation
2. Identify and understand your audience
3. Develop your message
4. Create/implement your strategy
5. Evaluate your plan
Managing the Message

• When working with partners, ad agencies, youth, or others to create messages:
  • Provide guidelines and parameters
  • Use a creative brief or other tool to keep everyone on the same page
  • Review messages to ensure they meet guidelines
Support

• BSAS-funded grantees: Contact your TA provider

• Communities not funded by BSAS:  
References
