Break Through The Noise: Messaging That Makes a Difference

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Objectives

• Understand the importance of building and integrating the characteristics of your audience into your message and communication strategy.
• Apply the key constructs and concepts of marketing and behavioral model(s) to develop effective messages.
• Identify best practices for specific communication channels to reach intended audiences.

Behavior Change Theories

• Theories provide insight about how people think about health issues, change their minds, and redirect their actions and behavior.
• Theories are developed from decades of research and expert thinking.
• Theories can be used as a blueprint to develop good interventions.
Behavior Change Models/Theories

- Health Belief Model
- Transtheoretical Model (stages of change)
- Social Cognitive Theory
- Diffusion of Innovation
- Theory of Reasoned Action

Health Belief Model (HBM)

- Developed in the 1950s by Rosenstock, Hochbaum, etc., to help explain health related behaviors.
- Found that health behavior is determined by personal beliefs or perceptions about a disease and the strategies available to decrease its occurrence.

Health Belief Model (HBM)

It is a useful framework for designing change strategies.
- It is helpful for developing messages that are likely to persuade individuals to make healthy decisions.
- It helps to explain whether a recommended preventive course of action would take place.
- It could guide the search for why and help identify leverage points for change.
Health Belief Model (HBM)

The following are the constructs or parts of the health belief model:
- Perceived susceptibility
- Perceived severity
- Perceived benefits
- Perceived barriers
- Cues to action
- Self-efficacy

Risk and Protective Factors

- Risk and protective factors are conditions in people’s lives that make them more or less likely to use harmful substances.
- To get the most out of prevention efforts, it is important to reduce risks and to boost protective factors.
- Risk factors can vary according to age, ethnic/cultural identity, social and psychological development, and environment.

Audience Segmentation

- No such thing as the “general public” in prevention messaging
- Define subgroups of the general public according to common characteristics
- Understand the beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors of these audiences related to substance use
  - Review literature, data
  - Perform a community assessment
Audience Segmentation

- Determine which audience segments have the biggest needs
- Consider if this audience is persuadable
- Decide which segment of the audience has the most influence and impact
- Ask if it is realistic to reach this intended audience

Know Your Audience

Identify one, at most two, intended audiences
- Primary audience: Target group
- Secondary audience: Influencers of the target group

FDA’s Real Cost Campaign

Youth tobacco prevention campaign, launched in 2014
- Prevent susceptible youth from trying tobacco
- Keep experimenters from becoming regular tobacco users

https://youtu.be/Cw1mV_Kdhil
https://youtu.be/WmqZoKZuHcG
### Create Key Messages

- Use the “rule of three”
- Use the “rule of 3C’s”
- Tip: Create IF-THEN statements

### Loss Frame vs. Gain Frame

- Loss frame emphasizes the consequences of failing to take certain actions
- Gain frame emphasizes the benefits of certain actions

### One-Sided vs. Two-Sided Messages

- One-sided messages okay for audiences whose attitudes are already in the desired direction
- Two-sided messages best for skeptical audiences or those who need convincing
  - Perceived to be more researched, fair, honest, transparent
  - Prompt audience to think more critical about the issue
Logic and Emotional Appeals

Effective messaging is compelling and generally includes a mix of facts and figures and reasons why people should care.

Scare Tactics: What are They?

Graphic illustrations of the worst consequences of a behavior (especially without evidence or the use of research) in order to create fear/anxiety in engaging a behavior.

- Scary stories of use and abuse (often told by people in recovery)
- Scary stories of the consequences use and abuse (often told by family members or others impacted, mock drunken driving crashes)

Scare Tactics: Why They Don’t Work

- People are hardwired to defend against negative messaging.
- Young people filter information differently than adults.
- High risk groups can be more attracted to risky behavior.
- Strong warnings can send unintended messages.
Communication Channels

- Billboards, posters
- Brochures, booklets, newsletters, pamphlets
- Newspapers, magazines
- Radio, television
- Social media
- Websites

Billboards, Posters

- Appropriate for visual (graphics and images) and/or emotional appeals
- Not appropriate for deep, lengthy or complex messages
- Tend to be effective at drawing attention
- Cost: $250 to $100,000 or more
- Outdoor Advertising Association of Wisconsin

Brochures, Booklets, Pamphlets

- Appropriate for communicating more difficult or complex facts that must be thought about carefully
- May be effective for targeting audiences that already support your cause
- Cost: Varies
### Newspapers, Magazines
- Appropriate when the objective is political or policy change.
- Paid versus earned.
- Costs: Less than $100 to over $10,000.
- Wisconsin Newspaper Association.

### Radio, Television
- Appropriate for grabbing and maintaining attention to messages with novel, interesting, and emotionally evocative messages that are dynamic.
- Paid versus earned.
- Costs: Varies ($15 to $100,000).
- Wisconsin Broadcasters Association.

### Social Media: Facebook, Twitter
- Appropriate for education and enforcement:
  - Education: For those who understand why they should change and find it easy to do alerting them to a substance use issue and telling them how to do something about it will be enough.
  - Enforcement: For audiences that resist information and do not respond to coaxing, highlight new laws and policies or enforcing existing ones more strictly.
- Costs: Free to $5 or more.
### Websites/Internet

- Used to communicate simple or complex messages, provide stories or facts, archive past and present campaign materials, provide contact information
- Requirement
- Short, memorable web address on all campaign materials
- Cost: Free to $1,000 or more

### Communication Channels

- Use the channel your intended audiences uses
- Use a message tactic that is appropriate for the channel
- Use multiple channels

### Interact with DHS

- **Facebook:** facebook.com/dhswi
- **Twitter:** twitter.com/dhswi
- **YouTube:** youtube.com/dhswi

Subscribe to the DHS press release email list at dhs.wisconsin.gov.