Telling Your Story:
Developing Partnerships
To Sustain Your Program

Campus Suicide Prevention Grantees
Technical Assistance Meeting
January 8, 2009
Phoenix, Arizona

Session Objectives

- Review core concepts of communication, and get into a “marketing mindset.”
- Learn to think strategically about communication to strengthen partnerships and support your programmatic goals.
- Hear best practices from other grantees.
Why Communication Matters

- If done properly, strategic communication can:
  - Create new and strengthen existing partnerships.
  - Contribute to the **success** of programs and services.
  - Contribute to the **sustainability** of programs and services.

What’s In It for YOU?

- Creating a communication strategy with your partners can:
  - Provide a strategic “road map” to keep you on task.
  - Generate buy-in for programs and services.
  - Support your plans for sustainability.
  - Provide the most “bang” for your limited time/money.
  - Increase ownership and commitment from partners.
The Typical Approach

• “Experts” tell everyone what to do because “they know best.”

• Then they become upset when their audience:
  – Doesn’t support their programs.
  – Throws away their brochures.
  – Ignores their advice.

• Asking, “What’s WRONG with THEM?!”

A Better Approach: The Marketing Mindset

• What’s wrong with our “product”? 
• Is our message off the mark?
• Do the benefits offset the costs?
• Does our product/service align with our audiences’ beliefs, values, goals?

When approaching partners for support, focus on your shared mission, vision, or goals.
Exchange Theory

What are you going to give me?

What will I have to give up in order to get it?

Does this solve a problem for me?

Is it worth the effort to me?

Strategic Communication

1. Assess current situation
2. Set communications goals & objectives
3. Identify intended audiences
4. Develop & present messages
5. Develop & present materials
6. Implement, evaluate, & modify plan

Develop action plan
Select channels, activities, materials, & partnerships
Set Communication Goals

To support programs and services you want to sustain.

Your Communication Goals Should:

1. Support your programmatic objectives.

2. Support your strategic plans for implementation and sustainability.

3. Promote systems change.
Developing Communication Goals

- What do you want to accomplish?
- Are your goals realistic?
- Are they “measurable” so you will know when you’ve succeeded?

Programmatic and Communication Goals

Programmatic Goal
Integrate suicide prevention policies and protocols.

Communication Goals
- Garner buy-in from key stakeholders.
- Explain gaps in policies and protocols.
- Communicate policies and protocols to campus and community.
Let’s Work on Communication Goals

Programmatic Goal
Promote Protective Factors
Campus.

On

Communication Goals

Identify Intended Audiences

Assess current situation
Set communications goals & objectives
Identify intended audiences
Develop & pretest messages
Select channels, activities, materials, & partnerships
Implement, evaluate, & modify plan

Potential partners to support your goals:
What do you know about them?
What do you still need to learn?
Ask Yourself...

- Who needs to be at the table?
  - Students?
  - Faculty?
  - Residence life?
  - Counseling centers?
  - Administrators?
  - Public safety?
  - Community partners?
  - Wellness centers?

- What information does each need to hear?
  - Hard data?
  - Anecdotal evidence?
  - Combination?

- How do they need to hear it?
- Are your goals still realistic?

Step Into Their Shoes

- What do they value or believe?
- Who or what sources of information do they trust?
- Where and when can they be reached?
- What is keeping them awake at night?
- Can you solve a problem for them?
- Are you sure...or making assumptions?

Don’t Know? Find Out!
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Today’s Audiences Are</strong></th>
<th><strong>Tomorrow’s</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Partners</strong></td>
<td><strong>Partners</strong></td>
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Different Needs, Values, Beliefs, Priorities

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**Get Specific: Segment Your Audiences**

- Members of every partner audience
  - Are distinct.
  - Possess unique needs.
  - Are motivated by different desires.
  - Have own “agendas.”

- Your messages will have to be relevant to THEM to be effective.
Who Are Your Audiences?

- What is your communication goal?
- Which partners do you have to engage to get there?
- How will you segment each partner audience?

Develop Your Messages

1. Assess current situation
2. Set communications goals & objectives
3. Identify intended audiences
4. Develop & pretest messages

Tell your story in a way that resonates with each audience.
An Example...

- DATA Reports:
  - The average “medium” popcorn contains 37 grams of saturated fat.
  - USDA recommends no more than 20 grams/day of saturated fat.

- The COMMUNICATION challenge:
  - Reduce consumption of movie theater popcorn.

One Way To Tell the Story

From the Center for Science in the Public Interest
A Different Way... for a Different Audience

From the Center for Science in the Public Interest

Remember...

If a tree falls in the forest, but no one hears it...
It’s All About THEM!

- Craft safe messages based on what they respond to.
  - Different audiences will need to hear your message in different ways: remember the movie popcorn!
- Create materials and select channels that matter to them.
  - One-on-one meetings? -- Personal letters?
  - Whitepapers? -- Web sites?
  - Social networks? -- Colleagues?

Strategic Communication...

- Is a living, iterative process.
- Involves different challenges at different stages from utilization through sustainability.
  - Different partnerships
  - New goals for existing partnerships
  - Changing programmatic goals
- Requires ongoing review, evaluation, modification—and flexibility!