Strategic Message Development

Campus Suicide Prevention Grantees Technical Assistance Meeting

Today we will focus on…
Strategy – Anara Guard, Linda Langford
• Stigma reduction – Patrick Corrigan
• Safe messaging – Jane Pearson
• Group exercise – You

How does your messaging fit into your overall strategy…?
Messaging = materials you develop and disseminate, training and forums you offer, other communications
The headline we will never see…

**BROCHURE**

**CHANGES**

**STUDENTS—**

**PROBLEM**

**SOLVED!!**

---

*Social Marketing is*

“…not a science, but rather a professional craft…that targets complex, often socially controversial behaviors, with delayed and distant benefits, to audiences who often do not recognize they have a problem, much less are looking for a solution.”

*William Smith, 2006*

---

Strategic message development…

Helps you reach identified audiences with messages that are designed…

…to affect specific behaviors

…in engaging, safe and effective ways, and

…that fit your overall program strategy.
“Fit your overall strategy”

• Does the concept of the message fit your local problems, and your overall strategy for change?
• Do the messages make sense given other prevention efforts on campus?
• What specific behavior are you trying to change? Why? What are the barriers to this change? What are the benefits to this change?

“Price”

• What the consumer pays to obtain the product:
  – Time    Effort    Risk
  – An exchange of value
• To sell: benefit ≥ cost. How will you overcome the barriers? View from the audience’s perspective…
Where will you get info?

- Information sources to help design an effective messaging campaign:
  - Focus groups
  - Interviews with target audience
  - Surveys
  - Polls re: attitudes and behaviors of target population
  - Literature*

Reducing Stigma

- Is stigma truly a barrier to the behaviors you are trying to change?

Questions to consider

- What are you trying to change?
- Who is your target audience?
- What does your target audience currently think or believe?
- What impact do you want your message to have?
- What measures can you use?
Messages that “stick”

- Simple – use analogies
- Unexpected – develop jarring, unexpected messages
- Concrete – use specific language and details
- Credentialed – rely on authorities or testable ideas
- Emotional – tap into negative or positive feelings
- Stories – tell stories about real people

Other considerations

- Localize your information
- Culturally appropriate
- Timing
- Dosage – repetition of message
- Credible messenger or influencer
- Credible channels

Measure your results

- What behavior do you want to change?
- How will you know if it did?
- Something tangible—calls to a hotline, donations
- Can be a proxy for the real results you want to know
Resources

- NIMH Reporting on Suicide
  www.nimh.nih.gov/suicideresearch/mediasurvivors.cfm
- Social Marketing Toolkit
  www.SoundPartners.org
- “Why Bad Ads Happen to Good Causes”
  www.agoodmanonline.com
- Suicide Prevention Resource Center
  www.sprc.org Search for: Social Marketing

References


References

More references

• Smith WA. Social marketing: an overview of approach and effects. 2006. Injury Prevention 12 (Suppl 1); i38-i43

More references

• Van Orden KA, Joiner Jr. TE, Hollar D, Rudd MD, Mandrusiak M, Silverman MM. A test of the effectiveness of a list of suicide warning signs for the public. SLTB; 2006; 36(3): 272-287