

Communications - Making the Link Between Evaluation Outcomes and Sustainability

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December 10, 2007

Sustainability Communications Mindset

Look down the road not only for sustaining your initiatives but also for creating an environment that integrates the goals and mission of the initiatives into the fabric of your community.

1. Who needs to be at the table?
2. What stories do we need to tell to get them there?
3. What data do we need to provide to make the stories relevant to a particular audience?

Who Needs To Be at the Table?

- Organizations with similar priorities as yours.
 - Think outside of the typical audiences
 - Current grant partners
 - State Suicide Prevention Coalitions
 - Other community agencies
 - Civic organizations
 - Businesses
 - Others?

Who Needs To Be at the Table?

- Things to ask yourself:
 - What are the top three priorities of our current partner agencies?
 - Where is there natural alignment without money as a motivator?
 - Within the community, what other organizations/agencies have priorities/vision/mission that align with one or more components of your initiative?
 - Follow the money
 - How does funding funnel into your community?
 - How are existing youth initiatives or prevention initiatives funded?

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What Do We Need To Say to Potential Partners?

- Messages must be relevant to your audience
- Messages must be in a format that is easy for your audience to read and understand
- Messages must be delivered in a timely way by a trusted source

What Do We Need To Say to Potential Partners?

- Questions that you can use to help you make your case:
 - What's their definition of success?
 - What are their priorities?
 - What are they interested in?
 - What information do they trust?
 - What level of technical detail do they demand?
 - What data do you already have?
 - What data do you need to tell your story?

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What Data Do You Need?

- What do you currently have? What are you currently gathering?
- Depending on the status of your program evaluation you can
 - Work with your evaluator to ensure that evaluation instruments will provide you with relevant data for the communications goals developed
 - Use existing evaluation data in a way that is relevant to your audience
 - Some of both

Inventory Your Data

- What type(s) of data do you have?
- Where did your data come from?
- What is the quality of your data?
- What message does the data convey?

Potential Audiences

Ask yourself how would you use the same data for different audiences?

- Statewide Suicide Prevention Coalitions?
- Policy makers?
- Non-profits?
- Foundations?
- **Businesses?**
- **Community leaders?**
- **Parents?**
- **School Districts**
- **Others?**

How might you present the same data in different ways to resonate with these audiences?

Pulling It All Together

- ✓ Look down the road at our situation
- ✓ Set our communications sights on sustainability
- ✓ Identify who we want at the table (target audiences)
- ✓ Figure out what is relevant to those audiences for message development
- ✓ Figure out what sources of information they trust to deliver the message