

Tipsheet: Questions for Creating or Reviewing Campaign Materials

Here are some general questions to ask yourself as you create campaign materials or review existing for possible use in your campaign.

- 1) Is the message concept a **fit** for your local problems and overall strategy for change? What are the goals and objectives of the piece, and does that reflect accurately the changes needed on your campus? What change do you want this piece to produce?
- 2) Do these messages make sense given **other prevention efforts** that are planned or underway? To what extent do these messages address common determinants of the behavior and reinforce messages being conveyed through other channels, for example at orientation, through policy change efforts, etc. Will you reinforce the message through other channels (e.g., a website, mailing to a complementary audience, etc.)?
- 3) Is the **target audience** clear? Does it fit your overall strategy and communications goals?
- 4) Do the messages clearly specify a **desired action**? Is the action realistic for this audience? Do the messages convey how the behavior is possible and desirable?
- 5) Do the campaign messages and other complementary efforts work to promote the benefits and lower the barriers to the behavior? Are the **benefits and barriers** addressed those that are most salient to this audience?
- 6) Do the messages provide the audience **what they need** to carry out the behavior, e.g. specific information?
- 7) Do these messages accurately reflect the results of **research on your audience**, for example, their current beliefs and attitudes about the topic and the behavior?
- 8) Do the messages or images avoid normalizing or reinforcing undesirable behaviors? If an audience member saw or heard the message without full attention, would the sounds and images convey **healthy behaviors**?
- 9) Were the messages **pilot-tested** with your audience to make sure that the concept is clear and appealing and that images, language, and other message elements are acceptable to the target audience? Remember, we are not the audience!
- 10) Where, when and how will this be disseminated? Do the necessary **dissemination channels** fit with the topic, audience preferences, the desired action, and the local context? What happens if this piece is found out of context—can it **stand alone**?
- 11) Are the **desired outcomes** clearly specified? How could you gather process and outcome data to assess the effectiveness of these messages? Do you intend to measure effects? How?

Some persistent questions that we noticed while reviewing these pieces:

Statistics—do they help? Are they persuasive? How do you know? Is the lack of knowledge of this fact why a certain behavior exists or fails to exist?

Visual response. View the piece at a distance, close up, while walking past. What does your eye go to first? What is your 30 second impression? Your lasting impression?

Text vs. graphic. Are these at odds with one another? If you couldn't read the text, what impression does the graphic give? What is a "story" about the people in the images? Are the graphics all showing negative images but the text is trying to convey hope? Or vice versa?

Pronouns. How many voices or perspectives are included? Does the piece shift from "we" to "they" to "you" to "she"? Is this confusing?

Normal. Is depression being normalized? Is help-seeking portrayed as easy? Beneficial?

Getting help. How prominent are the phone numbers? How many are there? Can you tell which one you should use when? How do you find the counseling center? Are there multiple channels to use (phone, web, email)?

Audience. Who is this for? Do they respond to it? Never mind what we thought—was it tested on appropriate audience members?