Communication Fundamentals: Tools for Effective Message Development and Delivery

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The findings and conclusions presented during this training are those of BMSG and do not necessarily represent the views of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.
Berkeley Media Studies Group

- Research on news coverage of public health issues

- Media advocacy training and strategic consultation for community groups and public health advocates

- Professional education for journalists

Note: These services are provided by BMSG to its clients. These services are not provided through a contract with FHI 360 for support of CDC awardees.
Today’s Workshop

- Explore the role of the news media in shaping community health.
- Learn the value of engaging the news strategically to advance goals.
- Learn how to use messages that state your values and put the solution first.
- Practice developing and delivering your messages.
How often do you see the issues you work on in the news?

Are your issues getting the kind of coverage you need?
Activity: Exploring News Coverage

- Find an article (not an editorial) on a health or social issue in the paper on your table.
- Break into small groups based on issue areas and consider the questions on the worksheet.
- Be prepared to share your responses.
Key Functions of the News

Setting the Agenda
- What we think about

Shaping the Debate
- How we think about it

Reaching Target Audiences
- What we do about it
Layers of Strategy

- Overall strategy
- Media strategy
- Message strategy
- Access strategy
Developing Strategy

• What is the problem or issue?
• What is the solution?
• Who can make this change?
• Who must be mobilized to solve this problem?
• What do the target audiences need to hear?
• Who do the target audiences need to hear it from?
Potential Partners

• Community leaders and organizations

• Health departments and researchers

• Businesses and professional associations

• Medical providers and institutions
A Sight to Shock

Andrea Martin of the Breast Cancer Fund had pictures of her mastectomy scars superimposed on photos of models to create provocative ads.

Graphic breast cancer ads taken down

Andrea Martin's body has created the controversy she wanted to create.

Two weeks ago, in bus shelters throughout the Bay Area, full-length color ads appeared that showed Martin's mastectomy scars superimposed on the bodies of young, beautiful models.

Andrea Martin, founder of the Breast Cancer Fund, a San Francisco-based nonprofit, wanted to show people what happens when a woman loses a breast to cancer and to promote awareness of her 10-year-old organization.

But not as many people are willing to see the ads as she had hoped. Representatives of several transit agencies and billboard companies said that after receiving dozens of complaints about the graphic ads, they have decided to pull them.

“We wanted to challenge the cultural treatment of women, their breasts and this disease,” Andrea Martin, the Breast Cancer Fund's executive director, said.

The ads did appear on shelters in Antioch, Brentwood and Pittsburg, but not for long.

“The calls started coming in the next day,” said Jeanie King, general manager of the Tri Delta Transit Authority, who ordered the ads pulled.

“My fear was that someone would blow it.”
Lack of Treatment, Not Ads, Is What’s Obscene

By Keith Rossi

A report that breast cancer awareness campaigns are not effective because most women are not diagnosed early enough is misleading. The lack of treatment, not advertising, is what’s obscene.

When the Breast Cancer Fund, a highly respected breast cancer advocacy organization, launched their awareness campaign, it was intended to raise awareness and encourage early detection. However, the campaign was criticized for not being as effective as expected.

The campaign featured several women who had been diagnosed with breast cancer. One woman, a mother of three, described her experience:

“After being diagnosed, I realized how important it was to get screened regularly,” she said. “I was surprised to learn that 1 in 8 women will develop breast cancer during their lifetime.”

In response, the Breast Cancer Fund issued a statement saying that their campaign was only the beginning of the fight against breast cancer.

The statement read: “We need to continue to raise awareness and encourage women to get screened regularly. We cannot afford to lose any more women to breast cancer.”

However, many experts in the field of oncology believe that the focus on early detection is not enough. They argue that better treatment options are needed to improve outcomes for women with breast cancer.

Dr. Jane Howard, a oncologist at Stanford University, said: “While screening is important, it is not the only solution. We need to develop better treatments to improve the survival rates of women with breast cancer.”

Despite these concerns, the Breast Cancer Fund continued to promote their awareness campaign. The next phase of the campaign will focus on educating women about the importance of getting screened regularly.

In conclusion, while awareness is crucial, it is not enough to prevent women from developing breast cancer. We need to focus on developing better treatments to improve outcomes for women with breast cancer.

The Breast Cancer Fund and other organizations are working hard to raise awareness and encourage early detection. However, in order to truly make a difference, we need to invest in research and development of better treatments.
PREVENT ION WORKS
BBFYFNTJQN WQPKS
The Need to Reframe

Institutional Accountability

Personal Responsibility
What Can We Do?

- Understand how the issue is currently framed.
- Translate individual problem to social issue.
- Assign responsibility for a solution.
- Articulate values.
- Illustrate the landscape with story elements.
“Smokefree multi-unit housing is a terrible idea. People should be able to smoke in the privacy of their own homes. If you don’t want your family exposed to secondhand smoke, then don’t smoke inside your home.”
Sample response with a landscape frame:

“Secondhand smoke is a serious health threat. Smoke from one unit or common area can travel through doorways, cracks in walls, electrical lines, plumbing, and ventilation systems. While residents can prohibit smoking in their own units, adopting a tobacco-free policy for multi-unit housing building or property will ensure that secondhand smoke does not threaten the lives and health of all residents.”
Values Brainstorm

What values are connected to the work you do?

Access
Prevention
Duty to protect
Future generations
Equity

What other values motivate you?
“The people baking the pie ought to be the ones to have a decent slice of it.”
— Heather McGhee, Demos

“Marketing is just washing over this country like a tidal wave, and we're trying to give people swimming lessons.”
— Kelly Brownell, Yale Rudd Center
Lakoff’s Conceptual Levels

- Level 1: overarching values like fairness, responsibility
- Level 2: issues like housing, children’s health, food, living wage
- Level 3: specific strategies like tax breaks for developers, health insurance for kids and families, nutritional standards for foods in schools

Thanks to the Rockridge Institute
Activity: Message Development

Write a message that answers the following questions:

• What’s wrong?
• Why does it matter?
• What should be done?

Remember to think about who is your messenger and who is your audience.
Message Development

What’s wrong?
In Sacramento, the school district has limited capacity to track reservations for joint space usage.

Why does it matter?
1) Having access to school district property that is traditionally locked after the school day helps children and families get the physical activity they need to stay healthy.
2) All children should have a place to play and get exercise. School playgrounds, especially in neighborhoods with few parks and recreation centers, provide a safe place for play and help reduce childhood obesity.

What should be done?
The school district should create a technology solution that allows users to reserve space online.
Interview Tips

• Know your goals.
• Stay on message.
• Speak to shared values.
• Resist the urge to say everything.
• Stick to your expertise.
• Prepare for hard questions.
• Provide compelling examples.
• Use reasonable, clear language.
• Remember to follow up.
“Sure, parents are responsible, but parents need help... [Go on to your program or solution].”

“Well that’s a tragic story but not typical. Let me tell you a more typical story...”

“That's not what's important here. Let me tell you what is.... [Go on to your program or solution]”
Elephant Triggers

Don’t think of a pink elephant.
(You’re thinking of one, aren’t you?)
Next time your department spokesperson starts a sentence with: “This is not about….,” stop and think: Is this going to reinforce the counter frame?

Other potential “elephant triggers”:
• Not
• Don’t, won’t
• But
• Nevertheless, nonetheless
• Still
• Yet
Elephant Trigger Example

San Francisco Chronicle

Food truck bill seeks to combat childhood obesity

Rachel Gordon
Wednesday, February 29, 2012

In this city of food fanatics, a proposed state law designed to promote children’s health would ban food trucks from just about every neighborhood in San Francisco except the Financial District, South of Market and Dogpatch.

That bill is moving through the California Legislature, and a San Francisco supervisor introduced a proposal of his own Tuesday that would ease local restrictions on food truck operations near schools.
“The goal here is not being food Nazis,” said Monning...
Activity: Answering Hard Questions

Which questions about your work do you most dread being asked by reporters or the public?

Brainstorm possible responses on your worksheet.
Activity: Mock Interviews

• Break into groups of three (reporter/interviewee/observer).
• The interviewee will highlight a solution.
• The observer will give feedback to interviewee.
• After 3 minutes, the trainer will tell you to switch roles.
Watch the following clip of a Fox TV interview with Harold Goldstein, executive director of the California Center for Public Health Advocacy.

What message delivery techniques and strategies did he employ?
Develop strategy:
- Message is never first or foremost.
- Know what you want and how to get it.
- Not all news coverage is strategic.

Frame the debate:
- Illustrate the landscape.
- Connect your values to solutions.
available at www.bmsg.org/tools.php