# Lesson Plan: Developing a Plan for Communication Activities within a broader SBC Strategy

Activity-based learning objectives

By the end of this task, participants will have:

* *reviewed a list of ways to reach different priority groups and influencer groups with pros/cons of each;*
* *reviewed a list of the different sorts of media and materials that can be used for communication activities within an SBC strategy ; and*
* *reviewed the elements of a good communication plan*

1. A well designed, multi-channel communication plan is a key element of an SBC strategy. Good communications ensure that the selected messages are reaching and are understood by the key actors in the community. Elements of a communication plan include the priority and influencing audiences; the type of media used; key themes, concepts, and specific content of messages; and the channels through which the messages will be delivered. Developing and implementing a communication plan requires technical assistance from communication specialists, often including creative media/marketing agencies.
2. When you are developing an SBC strategy and refining it using results from formative research, you will be making decisions about communication channels, messengers, activities, and messages; and media and materials to be used for communications. This Task focuses on HOW your team can select an effective mix of activities, channels, messages, and materials for communications within your overall SBC strategy.

**Choosing Communication Channels**

1. Possible Channels include interpersonal communication, community-based approaches, print materials, mass media, social, media, and mobile phones. The following table outlines factors that your team should consider when choosing the mix of channels for a communication strategy.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Considerations** | **Appropriate Channels / Approaches** |
| Complexity of the  Challenge | • Face-to-face communication allows for dialogue and discussion with your audience.  • Mass media can model complex behaviors for large audiences.  • Social media can encourage discussions about the challenge through e-mails, images, memorable slogans/quotes, text messages, chat rooms or voice mails.  • If your audience can read, take-home and written materials allow the audience to refer back to them as often as they would like. |
| Sensitivity of the  Challenge | • Interpersonal approaches and one-to-one communication work well when discussing sensitive topics or when working with marginalized groups. |
| Effectiveness  of Approach to  Address Challenge | • An approach may be more or less effective depending on the challenge being addressed. For example, entertainment education formats are well suited for motivational messages and moving social norms. |
| Literacy | • If audience is not literate, an approach that does not rely on the written word will be more effective. |
| Desired Reach | • Mass media, most Internet-based interventions and many mHealth interventions have an advantage in their potential reach and can provide regional and national coverage. Such approaches can deliver messages to scale. |
| Innovation | • Consider using approaches that are new and fresh for your audience. Using an approach that is unexpected can make it more appealing and interesting to your audience. |
| Cost | • Consider the cost and the cost effectiveness (in terms of cost per person reached) of the various approaches and determine how best to use your budgeted funds. Mass or community-based approaches may have higher upfront costs, but then may lessen over time. Interpersonal approaches may be less expensive, especially if working with volunteers or integrating activities with professionals’ existing jobs or work.  • Tools which help calculate the value for money and quantify the impact of approaches can be found at <http://www.nsmcentre.org.uk/resources/vfm>. |

Note: this table was taken from *Essential Elements of SBCC Programs for Urban Adolescents*. Health Communication Capacity Collective. <http://sbccimplementationkits.org/urban-youth/>)

1. The format below can be used to outline a more detailed plan for communication activities within your SBC strategy including specific audiences, channels, media and materials that will be used. An important part of this matrix is that it builds on the principle that in order to be *persuasive, memorable,* and *effective in promoting change*, messages must include a specific all to action, as well as motivating the audience to act, and/or confronting a barrier which prevents the audience from acting. A matrix can be filled out for each priority practice to avoid one matrix which is very long. Each matrix becomes the guide for media and materials development.

**Communication Plan Matrix**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Communications will promote this Priority Practice:** | | | | | |
| **Primary Audience** | **Influencing Audience(s)** | **Message** | | | **Channels, Media and Materials** |
| Call to Action | Motivation/  Incentive | Barriers |
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