Adapting your communications during the COVID-19 pandemic: Making the most of your prevention communications plan

May 14, 2020

Pamela Mejia, MS MPH
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Berkeley Media Studies Group

• Research on news coverage and other narratives about public health and social justice issues

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

• Professional education for journalists
“A goal without a plan is just a wish.”

Antoine de Saint-Exupery
Developing your plan

• What’s your starting point?
What’s your starting point?

What assets can you build on?
• Relationships with reporters?
• A broad network of allies?

What challenges do you face?
• A crowded news environment?
• Limited resources?
Developing your plan

• What’s your starting point?

• Where do you want to go?
The layers of strategy:
Let the overall strategy guide you

- Overall strategy
- Media strategy
- Message strategy
- Access strategy
The layers of strategy: Media strategy

- Identify the best **methods to communicate** with your target
- Decide if engaging with the **media will advance** your goals
- Find the media that will **reach your targets**
- Compile the **media tactics** you will use
The layers of strategy: Message strategy

**Audience:** who we want to hear it

**Message:** what we say

**Messenger:** who says it
Reviewing two prevention strategies & adapting to our new reality

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Policy</th>
<th>Messenger</th>
<th>Policy target</th>
<th>Message</th>
<th>Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Provide prevention education and youth engagement for students, focusing on high-risk students</td>
<td>Student</td>
<td>School board</td>
<td></td>
<td>Schools have a responsibility to equip kids with the skills they need.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

How will you update your values? Think about shared experiences under COVID-19 & the importance of increasing equity.

Who are your messengers? The value of baby steps: beginning with those in privileged positions & moving closer to people most impacted by the issue

These will inform your message! Type it into the chat!
Let’s update the messenger, policy target, message, and values.
Developing your plan

• What’s your starting point?

• Where do you want to go?

• Who will you bring on the journey?
Who will be responsible for . . .

- Creating the communications plan?
- Developing opinion pieces or press materials?
- Tracking media coverage?
- Connecting with reporters?
- Speaking to the press (or training speakers)?
- Coordinating across teams?
- Evaluating and updating the plan?
## Developing your communications plan: GOTMME

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Goal</strong></td>
<td>What do you want to accomplish?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Objective</strong></td>
<td>What actions will you take to accomplish your goal? By when do these actions need to happen?</td>
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<td><strong>Target audience</strong></td>
<td>Who can make the change? Is it a person, or a group? Are there additional audiences who can influence your primary target?</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Message</strong></td>
<td>What does the target audience need to hear? What values can you evoke to connect with that audience?</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Messenger</strong></td>
<td>Who will the target audience respond to? What training or support do they need?</td>
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<td><strong>Evaluation</strong></td>
<td>Are you having the desired effect? If not, how can you pivot?</td>
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<td>What will you do to accomplish your goal? By when do these actions need to happen?</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Tasks</strong></td>
<td><em>What are the specific actions you take?</em></td>
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Sample objectives

- Build your organization’s proactive and reactive communication capacity
- Monitor the media about your issue
- Build relationships with journalists
- Develop and refine messages
- Identify and train potential messengers
- Prepare talking points and other materials
### Sample tasks

Monitor the media about your issue

- **Task:** Select and train staff person in charge of monitoring

- **Task:** Identify key news sources based on overall strategy (Local or national? Trade press? Traditional or new media? etc.)

- **Task:** Select monitoring mechanism (HootSuite, Google Alerts, etc.)

- **Task:** Develop protocol for responding to problematic – or strong - coverage
Sample tasks

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<th>Task: Select and train staff person</th>
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<th>Task: Create mechanism to collect bylines and contact information</th>
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<th>Task: Cultivate relationships with key reporters identified through news monitoring</th>
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| Task: Create and maintain materials to share with journalists (frequently asked questions, resource list, etc.) |
Putting it into Practice: Dealing with Setbacks
You passed a harassment policy, but implementation is challenging.

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<td>In health classes, establish monthly deep-dive conversations with peer leaders about consent &amp; being an upstander</td>
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Example: Dress codes

How do you create a culture of accountability with leadership? Buy-in from youth?

The reality of walking on eggshells with school administrators
Strategies to put into practice

Social media advocacy – regular messaging about your value as school-based preventionists; tagging district & schools

Cultural responsiveness and language access – authentic messengers *and* compensation for expertise

Building relationships with community-based organizations – expanding your circle of messengers
Strategies to put into practice

Create a calendar of awareness months and holidays (we’ll send a list to all participants)

Involve decision-makers in awareness activities and follow-up to ensure accountability

Stay up-to-date on current events and intersecting social justice issues. How do you message your values when there may be push-back?
Preparing for the journey

GOTMME planning tool

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<td>Secondary:</td>
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To support you on your journey…

Talking about Teen Dating Violence:
A Strategic Communications Plan prepared for the California Partnership to End Domestic Violence

February 2015
Prepared by
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Laura Nelson, MPH
Lori Dorfman, DNP

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Thank you!

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Thank you!

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