



Extending Your Reach: Techniques to Disseminate Effective Health Messages

APA Webinar - April 7, 2015

Q & A Session

The following are the questions and answers that were part of the Q & A session at the end of the APA Webinar, “Extending Your Reach Techniques to Disseminate Effective Health Messages”. If you have any additional questions about the content, please contact Patty DiSandro at pedisandro@apa.org.

Question 1: How did you know how many people you reached in the “Mental Health First Aid” program?

Measurement in communications can be very challenging. Sometimes you know that you are sending your message to somebody and can track that, but you don’t know where it goes from there, and that’s where tracking becomes difficult. In many cases, for example, we know how many people are receiving a certain magazine, or how many people are on an e-news distribution list, or how many people are newspaper subscribers, so we can use those accurate figures – which is what we’ve done with the figures presented in the Mental Health First Aid estimate.

Question 2: How can we make sure that our messages and strategies are culturally appropriate?

It’s important to take into consideration the cultural and linguistic components of messages and ensure your materials are appropriately matched to your audiences. I have consulted with subject matter experts in particular cultural areas, or I’ve also gotten feedback on draft products or language from members of particular cultures, to help understand and ensure messages are appropriate. One of the projects that my company works with is the National Veterans Caregiver Training Program, and they deliver training to people who are caregivers of Veterans who have been wounded in service. They wanted to create a training program in Spanish and planned to deliver the program in Puerto Rico and some other communities with high Spanish-speaking populations. They consulted with experts in the Spanish language and also Hispanic culture because they wanted to ensure that not only was the training being translated, but also that it was culturally appropriate for those particular groups. Use the tools that you have, and if you’re not sure, ask somebody. Work with others to make sure that your information is being presented in a way that’s culturally appropriate. The [National Center for Cultural Competence](#) at Georgetown University is a great resource.

Question 3: Do you have any recommendations for those planning to disseminate information using a web show, an online show with short episodes?

I think that is a really cool idea. Let’s pretend that the web show is already developed. Shop it around. Prepare your pitch information and share it with all of your target audiences, and don’t forget to work with your knowledge brokers. People are happy and grateful to get all different kinds of resources. You can promote a web show the same way that you promote a toolkit or a fact sheet. Prepare your pitching information or your little blurb in the same way as with any other kind of research that you



wanted to share and then disseminate that to your knowledge brokers who would then send it back on to your target audiences.

Question 4: Do we need to refresh messages? Do messages and approaches become less effective over time?

It depends on the success that you've had to date with your messaging. If you've had great success, sometimes it's okay to stick to that messaging. If you've not had the uptake that you wanted, if your results are not matching your original objectives and you're not measuring up to what you set up for yourself, I would say, yes, it's probably a good idea to take another look at that messaging. Sometimes these things (i.e., messages) take time to find their legs and to really establish themselves, so it's hard for me to answer that question. Sometimes it just takes time and every situation is a little bit different. So I'm not answering the question on purpose because I'm just saying it all depends! Sometimes you need to update over time and sometimes you need to give things time to adhere.