



Chapter 3

Framework for Educating Policymakers



Figure 3-1.
Framework for
Educating
Policymakers

Recommended Steps

1. Understand your education & advocacy limits and rights
2. Establish your policy objective
3. Assess policy landscape
4. Develop a strategy & action plan
 - » Periodic review
 - » Adjustments
5. Build strong base of support
 - » Coalition
 - » Policy education kit
 - » Training
6. Frame & communicate your messages
 - » Policy communications
 - » Media outreach
7. Evaluate

Improving the health of populations through organizational or environmental change often utilizes the framework outlined in Figure 3-1. We’ve adapted these elements for educating policymakers from CDC’s A Sustainability Planning Guide for Healthy Communities (CDC, 2011) and California’s Center for Tobacco Policy and Organizing (n.d.).

This Guide addressed the first element—understand your education and advocacy limits—in . This chapter guides you through the remaining six action steps. As illustrated in Figure 3-1, the steps interrelate and may need to be carried out synchronously. Indeed, as communities, policy environments, and stakeholders change over time, you’ll need to be flexible in updating your strategy, action plan, or policy objective.

Chapter Learning Objectives

After reading this chapter, users will be able to:

- Identify at least three tools, resources, or organizations to assist with policy analysis.
- Describe at least five best practices for creating a strong coalition.
- Demonstrate how to communicate evidence-based policies to policymakers, media, and stakeholders.
- List at least three strategies for evaluating efforts to educate policymakers.

Step A. Establish Your Policy Objective

To select a policy objective, you’ll need to ask this question:

In my state or community, which health issues need policy attention?

An evidence-based public health framework offers a useful process for selecting policy objectives. The Prevention Research Center at Washington University in St. Louis trains public health professionals in the framework shown in Figure 3-2.

Figure 3-2. Evidence-Based Public Health Framework



Source: PRC of St. Louis University Washington

The first five tasks in Figure 3-2 will help you understand the:

- Overall burden, especially in terms of health equity.
- Availability of evidence-based prevention policies.
- Acceptability of prevention options in the current policy environment (see also Step B).

Use this information to engage potential partners in prioritizing your policy objective.

Resources for
Evidence-Based
Policy

- CDC Winnable Battles:
<http://www.cdc.gov/WinnableBattles/>
- Chronic Disease Policy (SOPHE):
<http://www.sophe.org/ChronicDiseasePolicy/index.cfm>
- Clearing the Air (SOPHE):
http://www.sophe.org/cppw_home.cfm
- Community Guide (Community Preventive Services Task Force):
<http://www.thecommunityguide.org>
- Research-Tested Interventions Program (NCI):
<http://rtips.cancer.gov/rtips/index.do>
- State Policy Guide: Using Research in Public Health Policymaking (Council of State Governments):
<http://www.csg.org/knowledgecenter/docs/health/State-PolicyGuideCP.pdf>

Action Guides for Improving Community Health

Partnership for Prevention offers action guides in these issue areas.

- Community health
- Physical activity
- Tobacco control and prevention
- Worksite health promotion
<http://www.prevent.org>

Leadership for Healthy Communities has a guide on community health and childhood obesity prevention:

<http://www.rwjf.org/pr/product.jsp?id=42514>

Policy Objective :: continued

To quantify a public health issue, the following sources may be helpful.

- CDC:
 - » Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS): <http://www.cdc.gov/brfss>
 - » Health, United States 2011: <http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/hs.htm>
 - » Sortable Stats: <http://wwwn.cdc.gov/sortablestats/>
 - » Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System (YRBS): <http://www.cdc.gov/healthyouth/yrbs>
- Community Commons: <http://www.communitycommons.org>
- County Health Rankings: <http://www.countyhealthrankings.gov>
- Office of Minority Health: <http://minorityhealth.hhs.gov/templates/browse.aspx?lvl=1&lvlID=2>

Evidence reviews are very helpful when making decisions, exploring options, building programs, establishing expertise, and building effective programs.

A sound policy solution is based on the evidence. To learn more about applying evidence-based public health approaches:

- Health Promotion Programs: From Theory to Practice, a textbook from SOPHE: http://www.sophe.org/Health_promotions_program.cfm
- Training and guidance via the Prevention Research Center at Washington University in St. Louis: <http://prcstl.wustl.edu/Pages/default.aspx>
- Obesity prevention: A proposed framework for translating evidence into action, Obesity Reviews (Internet Solutions Group Ltd): http://www.internetgroup.ca/clientnet_new/docs/Obesity%20evidence%20framework.pdf
- Models for policy development in The Community Tool Box (Work Group for Community Health and Development at the University of Kansas): <http://ctb.ku.edu/en/About.aspx>

Step B. Assess the Policy Landscape

As you set your policy objective (Step A), assess the policy landscape by identifying current environmental factors that can influence policy. Explore multiple factors, such as the following.

- Internal support within your organization for the public health issue and potential solutions, including fit with mission and leadership interest
- Stakeholders’:
 - » Concern about the public health issue
 - » Support and enthusiasm for a policy solution
 - » Desire to be effective spokespersons for the cause
- State or community:
 - » Assets relevant to the public health issue or solution ()
 - » Preferences and values
- Potential for the policy objective to be unifying or divisive in the state or community
- Relative ease or difficulty of policy consideration in the relevant government branch

What’s Trending?

Stay current on policymakers’ and their constituents’ priorities by actively monitoring news and public opinion via local print, radio, television, and online media. Note that political cartoons can be influential with state and local policymakers. Be sure to read blogs from diverse viewpoints on state and local politics.

Occasionally look outside your region because policymakers look to peers for ideas for future policy proposals to keep competitive. Public interest groups and health news services (see sidebar) are two channels that can help you identify on emerging issues.

One ongoing priority in many states is meeting implementation timelines for the Affordable Care Act. To learn more, go to:

- Healthcare.gov (<http://www.healthcare.gov>)
- National Academy for State Health Policy section on the Role of States in National Health Care Reform (<http://www.nashp.org/nashp-pubs/18>)

Portals into What’s Trending

Association of State and Territorial Health Officials (ASTHO):

<http://www.astho.org>

Center for Best Practices, National Governors Association (NGA):

<http://www.nga.org>

Kaiser Health News:

<http://www.kaiserhealthnews.org/>

National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO):

<http://www.naccho.org/>

National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL), especially its Legisbriefs on hot topics:

<http://www.ncsl.org>

Tips

- Learn what’s going on in your region and scan horizon for policy opportunities.
- Develop and maintain connections with policymakers and other stakeholders.
- Prepare coalition to take action by providing training and tools.
- Diversify funding.

Step C. Develop a Strategy and Action Plan

CDC’s Healthy Communities Program suggests informing your strategy development by asking these questions (CDC, 2011);

- What policies related to your issue already exist?
- To what extent are existing polices fully implemented? Are they effectively enforced?
- What gaps exist between evidence-based policy recommendations and existing policy?
- Is new policy needed? If yes, at the administrative or legislative level?
- What entities and decisionmakers have jurisdiction over that policy area?
- How do these decisionmakers and other stakeholders view potential policy solutions?

For steps in creating an action plan, [see Appendix A](#).

Remember to periodically review your action plan and update it as the policy landscape changes.

Step D. Build a Strong Base of Support

Budget deficits, climate change, increases in international trade, and private sector marketing are just a few of the increasingly complex threats affecting the public’s chronic disease risk. No single group, agency, organization, or business is fully responsible for the web of population health problems or has the resources to solve them. The threats affect all of us and will take multiple sectors working together to solve them.

A strong base of support is the active ingredient that can move an issue from the backburner to the front of a community, eventually leading to policy change. You can either work within an existing coalition or create a new coalition to pursue your policy objective (Butterfoss n.d.).

Partnering with an existing, well-functioning coalition has several advantages.

- Frees you to pursue your policy objective instead of laboring to build a new coalition.
- Reduces administrative time.
- Leverages coalition members’ commitment and experience to working together to advance public health.

If you have an existing coalition, go to [Step E](#).

Training Coalition Members and Partners

Tools, tips, and resources for training your partners appear throughout this Guide. Some of these resources include:

- National Health Education Advocacy Summit (Coalition of National Health Education Organizations): <http://www.healtheducationadvocate.org/Summit/>
- SOPHE webinars and meetings: <http://www.sophe.org/meetings.cfm>
- Shaping Policy for Health™ Competency Based Training Program (Directors of Health Promotion and Education): https://dhpe.site-ym.com/?page=Programs_SPH

See also the Healthy Communities Program ACHIEVE Self-Assessment and other training tools in Appendix B.

Checklist for Building an Effective Coalition

1. Assess the need for a coalition.
2. Clarify vision and mission.
3. Organize the partnership.
4. Involve stakeholders in creating an action plan for the coalition.
5. Build the coalition and train its members.
6. Implement and evaluate the action plan.
7. Sustain and improve the coalition.

Why Coalitions?

Many health promotion activities have a strong emphasis on collective action. Coalitions provide a forum for individuals and organizations within a community to work collaboratively as advocates and activists for health.

Quick Tips on Coalitions

Tip Sheets on Building Coalitions (SOPHE):

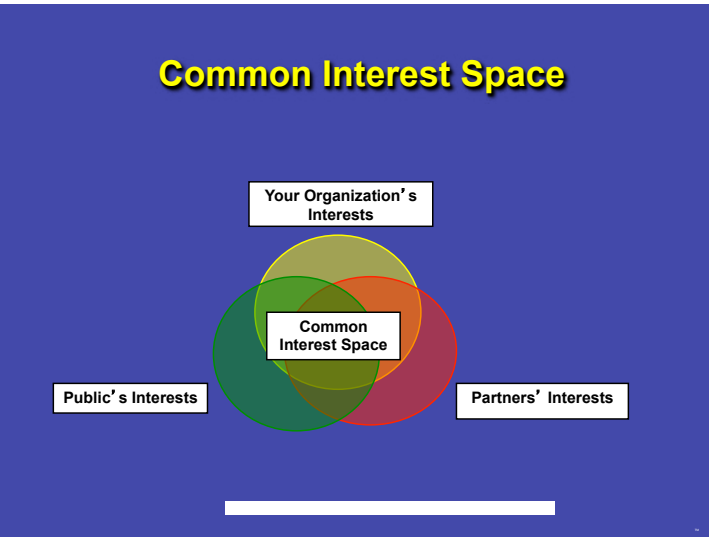
http://www.sophe.org/healthy_communities.cfm

Support :: continued

What Is a Coalition?

Community coalitions are groups of individuals representing many organizations who agree to work together to achieve a common goal (Feighery, 1990), as illustrated in Figure 3-3.

Figure 3-3. Building Partnerships Based on Common Interests.



Source: Olson, Sarah

Coalitions facilitate relationships among partners. Coalitions tend to have the following characteristics.

- A shared commitment to a definition of mutual relationships and goals
 - A jointly developed structure and shared responsibility
 - Mutual authority and accountability for success
 - Shared resources and rewards.
- (Mattessich et al, 2001, p. 7)

Definitions of “coalition” and “partnership” vary, and sometimes the terms are used interchangeably. Regardless of the term, the active ingredient in both coalitions and partnerships is collaboration toward a shared goal.

D1. Assess the Need for a Coalition

In prior steps you determined that a public health problem exists and set some initial policy objectives. Now assess the need for a partnership. See the sidebar for some of the benefits and challenges associated with using partnerships to address policy issues.

Because there is power in numbers, partnerships and coalitions can be excellent at:

- Identifying, developing, and disseminating resources.
- Finding and closing gaps in services.
- Reaching and educating diverse or isolated populations.
- Collaborating to address complex problems.
- Communicating to raise public awareness.
- Changing policy, systems, and environments.
- Providing a united front seeking a solution

If you decide a partnership would be useful in educating policymakers, your initial tasks are to:

- Identify potential partners (including existing coalitions) and their leaders.
- Assess potential partners’ appropriateness.
- Communicate what you can and cannot provide.
- Convene a core group of potential partners and establish a working agreement.
- Involve the partners in the planning and implementation process.
- Ensure that expectations are clarified and understood by all parties.
- Identify additional potential members.

Tip: Choose an issue that is compelling but realistically accomplished.

Partnership Benefits

- Strength in numbers
- Strength in diversity
- Strong relationships developed
- Increased resources
- Consistent voice or message

...and Challenges

- Risk losing autonomy, competitive edge, control
 - Conflicts over goals and methods
 - Expend scarce resources (time, money, status, data) on process
 - Delays in solving problem
- (Butterfoss, n.d.)

Desirable Coalition Attributes

- Shared focus on outcomes
- Commitment to diversity
- Trust in process
- Feasible, comfortable participation
- Community-identified needs and assets
- Leadership development opportunities
- Appropriate guidance, training, funds, and tools

D2. Clarify Vision and Mission for the Coalition

Convene organizations or individuals that you identified in D1 to create the initial vision and mission statements for the coalition. This discussion helps coalition members develop a shared focus on improving health outcomes for priority populations.

You can start the process by collectively assessing the problem, or the assessment can be done after the group establishes a collective vision for the future (Butterfoss, n.d.).

Vision Statements provide a picture of the desired future described in the present tense, as if it were happening now. They should:

- Offer inspiring and uplifting images that are understood and shared by community members.
- Be broad enough to include diverse viewpoints.
- Be easily communicated.
- Describe how members want the community to view the coalition in the next several years.

Mission Statements describe the purpose of the collaboration or the fundamental reason for its existence: what the coalition is going to do and why. They are useful for current members, staff, and people who know nothing about the organization.

Example: XYZ is a community partnership to promote health and injury prevention among infants and children in [Town] through creating policy, systems, and environmental change.

D3. Organize the Partnership

Now that members support the coalition’s vision and mission, work together to set up the organizational structure. Your discussion might consider the full range of partnerships.

Figure 3-4: Complexity of Different Types of Partnerships

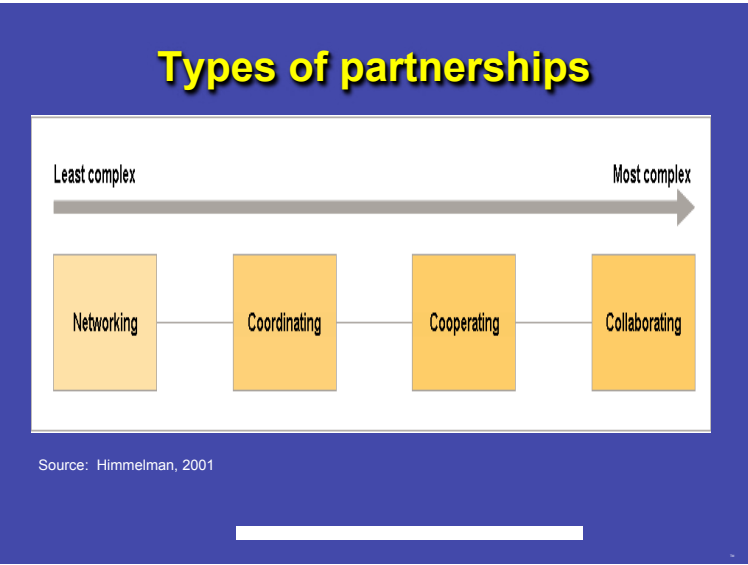


Figure 3-4 shows partnerships have different levels of complexity.
Networking Partnerships: Enable the exchange of ideas and information for mutual benefit, often through newsletters, conferences, meetings, and electronic channels. It is one of the least formal forms of partnership and requires little time or trust between partners.

Coordinating Partnerships: Enable information exchanges and alteration of members’ activities for a common purpose.

Cooperating Partnerships: Exchange information, alter activities, and share resources. It requires a significant amount of time, high level of trust, and sharing of turf.

Collaborating Partnerships: Perform the above activities and aim to enhance the capacity of the other partner(s) for mutual benefit and a common purpose.

(Himmelman, 2001)

The structure of your coalition will depend on the current political landscape and existing efforts and groups (Butterfoss, n.d.)

Coalition Incorporation: Pros and Cons

Advantages

- Coalition has an established clear identity.
- Tax-exempt status (such as a 501(c)(3)) allows donations and some lobbying.

Disadvantages

- More time and effort required: approximately six months and an attorney.
- Incorporation and fiscal reporting; for example, pay initial fee of \$2,500 and annual fee of \$750.
- Regular convenings of officers and board is needed to act on coalition’s behalf.
- Formal disbandment required.

Note that requirements vary by state.

Checklist for Coalition Organizing

Our coalition charter specifies:

- Governance structure.
- Leadership structures and processes.
- Partners’ roles, responsibilities, and accountability.
- Decisionmaking processes.
- Frequency, location, and duration of meetings.
- Financing sources and administration.
- Membership criteria, rights, and responsibilities.

Organize the Partnership :: continued

Regardless of partnership type, your coalition will need to create guidelines or bylaws about how:

- Basic tasks are accomplished (e.g., clerical, meeting logistics, recruitment, research and data collection, public relations and public information, fundraising).
- Leadership is selected (plus roles and responsibilities for each position).
- Successors will be names or elected.
- Members join and what privileges and responsibilities they have.
- Meetings are held and decisions are made.
- Progress is communicated.
- Members are recognized for contributions.
- Communications occur.
- Potential expenses are financed and managed for accountability and transparency.

Be sure to establish processes that will:

- Carry out the tasks to achieve coalition goals.
- Build, nurture, and maintain the coalition.
- Aim to uses available resources efficiently and effectively.
- (Butterfoss, n.d.)

Structured coalitions have bylaws, rules, a template for meeting format, agendas, committees or work groups, leadership job descriptions, and meeting minutes or summaries. The rules should specify membership criteria and voting requirements. Sometimes coalitions find it useful to simultaneously establish their structure as they develop an action plan (see D4).

More Tips for Collaborating

For productive collaboration, researchers with the School of Public Health at Hunter College recommend taking these steps.

- Choose unifying issues.
 - Understand and respect organizational self-interest and differences.
 - Create decision-making structures and processes.
 - Set realistic timelines for work production.
 - Define together what it means to win.
 - Distribute credit fairly.
- (Ritas, 2003)

D4. Involve the Stakeholders in Creating an Action Plan for the Coalition

Planning begins with the coalition systematically assessing the problem. The primary tasks are to:

- Collect and analyze data.
- Conduct an asset and gap analysis.
- Identify partner interests, capabilities, and resources.
- Assess leverage points (e.g., individual behaviors, community awareness, organizational practices, public policy, and community environments).

Next, establish SMART objectives that will help you reach your goal and that are consistent with your coalition’s mission (see sidebar). For each objective, identify steps to achieve it within the specified timeframe. Use multiple strategies, including ones that can obtain quick wins. Remember to include evaluation (Step F) and strategies to build and sustain the coalition (Steps D5 and D7).

The resulting action plan should specify steps to take, target audience(s), the time-frame, and the lead organization or person responsible for each step. See for guidance on creating action plans and for some examples.

Tip: Choose strategies that require the least effort and confrontation, but still get the job done.

SMART Objectives

- Specific
- Measurable
- Appropriate
- Realistic
- Time-framed

Overview of SMART objectives (CDC):

<http://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/evaluation/pdf/SMARTcards.pdf>

Why Members Leave

- Don't feel included or respected
- Disagree with leadership
- Experience conflict with others
- Unclear roles or duties
- Don't see any benefit to participating

These problems can be avoided if the coalition is effectively managed.

D5. Build the Coalition and Train its Members

Building a coalition requires ongoing attention at all steps. Focus on recruiting and retaining a diverse membership. Avoid conditions associated with attrition (see sidebar).

Recruiting

Recruiting coalition members can be labor-intensive. It also can be highly rewarding. Set aside time to develop relationships and go through organizational processes. See also .

A few recruiting practices can be helpful.

1. Develop a relationship; start by listening.
2. Ask your contact for help.
3. Request concrete action, especially a signature, as on a resolution or statement of support; this can help organizations with decisionmaking.

Best Practices for Motivating and Retaining Members

- Provide skills training on leadership and advocacy.
- Offer annual retreats to build relationships.
- Transport members to legislative forums.
- Invite leaders to conferences/grantee meetings.
- Value members' time, talents, and treasure.
- Rotate leadership.
- Send thank-you notes and recommendations.

Build the Coalition :: continued

Transformative Leaders

Transformative leaders are change agents and individuals who achieve outcomes beyond expectations. They can be instrumental to your coalition's success (see D7).

Identify potential transformative leaders by looking for individuals with a knack for:

- Creating and articulating clear organizational vision.
- Empowering followers to achieve at higher standards.
- Leading as peer problem-solvers.
- Building broadbased consensus, involvement, and participation.
- Serving as a role model that makes others want to trust them.

Train, mentor, and provide transformative leaders with leadership development opportunities.

Manage and Market Your Coalition

Effective coalition management is essential.

- Focus on team building, decisionmaking, and consensus development.
- Adhere to established guidelines or bylaws.
- Maintain lines of authority.
- Do what is in the action plan.
(Butterfoss, n.d.)

Proactively market the coalition.

- Clarify the coalition's product: its agenda.
- Brand the coalition—logo, mission, byline.
- Simplify the message.
- Focus on data and accomplishments to build credibility with external audiences and value provided to members.

Books about Effective Coalitions

Butterfoss FD. (2007). Coalitions and Partnerships for Community Health. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Mattessich PW, Murray-Close M, Monsey BR. (2001). Collaboration: What Makes It Work (2nd ed.). St. Paul, MN: Amherst H. Wilder Foundation.

Why Evaluate?

- Meets demands for accountability
- Provides supportive evidence for the partnership
- Builds case for continued support
- Provides positive publicity of important successes
- Generates information about effectiveness to inform future efforts

D6. Implement and Evaluate the Action Plan

Put your coalition plan into action by implementing it. Through your evaluation plan (see Step F), monitor progress, partnership functionality, and outcomes. Communicate results. Make sure your coalition uses monitoring and evaluation data to inform future actions.

Communications

Effective coalitions consistently update members about progress and next steps. They also publicize successes, reward and recognize partners’ contributions, and periodically adjust goals, objectives, and steps as needed.

Evaluation

Evaluation should be planned from the beginning as a part of the coalition’s action plan. Evaluations can occur at three different levels or a combination of these.

- **Basic** evaluations examine coalition infrastructure, processes, or functions.
- **Intervention** evaluations assess coalition activities.
- **Outcome** evaluations gauge changes in population health, policies, systems, or environments.

Coalition evaluations should be guided by a plan that specifies:

- What will be measured, when, and how.
- How the data will be collected and by whom.
- Who will analyze the results.
- How the results will be shared.
- How the results will be used to modify the action plan and partnership processes.

See also Step F.

D7. Sustain and Improve the Coalition

A focus on sustainability will help you anticipate and prepare for change. Achieving sustainability means following these major principles.

- Sustainability is a change process that strengthens infrastructure and strategies.
- Coalitions must create strategies and structures that can perceive and adapt to changes in the policy landscape.
- Normal coalition operations are structured to be sustainable even if a critical partner leaves.
- Coalition leaders consider sustainability when making decisions. For example, they ask if a proposed change will benefit most or all stakeholders.

10 Steps to Sustainability

The Center for Civic Partnerships recommends 10 steps to promote sustainability (Center for Civic Partnerships, 2001).

1. Create a shared understanding of sustainability.
2. Position effort to increase sustainability odds.
3. Create a plan to work through the process.
4. Look at the current picture and pending items.
5. Develop criteria to help determine what continues.
6. Decide what to continue and prioritize.
7. Create options, including funding, to maintain priority efforts.
8. Develop sustainability plan.
9. Implement sustainability plan.
10. Evaluate outcomes and revise plan as needed.

A sustainability mindset should guide decisions about the coalition and its actions (see sidebar). Coalition members and leaders must commit to an ongoing process to promote five factors associated with sustainability, as described in Figure 3-5.

Last, but not least, build on past successes to move to new goals and strategies (Butterfoss, n.d.).

Tip: Consider Sustainability from Day 1

Short-term Sustainability

Assure that strategies relate to objectives (e.g., decision-makers and the community support the strategies and implementation is effectively managed and evaluated, with modifications as needed).

Long-term Sustainability

Assure that the community-led movement or organization is viable (e.g., it is flexible, strongly led, well-funded, and marketed).

More Resources

Coalitions Work:
<http://www.coalitionswork.com>

Coalition Sustainability Checklist, Community Anti-Drug Coalitions of America (via the Marshfield Clinic):

<http://www.marshfield-clinic.org/proxy/SPF-Ch4-Coalition-Sustainability-Checklist.1.pdf>

Sustain and Improve the Coalition :: continued
Figure 3-5. Tips for Creating Sustainability Factors

| Factor | Tips |
|-----------------------------|---|
| Community Ownership | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Shared focus on outcomes• Commitment to diversity• Trust in process.• Feasible, comfortable participation• Community-identified needs and assets• Leadership development opportunities• Appropriate guidance, training, funding, and tools |
| Transformational Leadership | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Clear and shared vision• Cohesion and participation• Gains in engagement• Changed communities |
| Transition Planning | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Leadership• Multiple leaders: shared power and resources, priority setting, performance evaluation• Flexibility to prevent burnout• Former leaders mentor future ones• Membership• Continuous recruitment, with members actively reaching out to others• Members mentoring new members• All members expected to lead |
| Diverse Funding Portfolio | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Designation of lead or fiscal agent• Membership dues• Community donations• Partner financial and in-kind contributions• Grants and contracts |
| Energized Membership | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Extraordinary meetings• Celebratory events whenever possible• Recognition of everyone’s efforts• Persistent focus on outcomes |

Sustain and Improve the Coalition :: continued

Do’s and Don’ts for Building Successful Coalitions

Best Practices

- Have champions to inspire, lead, be spokespersons, or a combination of these.
- Distribute accountability among members.
- Make good use of data and resources.
- Begin with the end, that is, a focus on the collective goal and objective instead of the process.
- Conduct productive meetings.
- Directly address issues of membership equity and inclusion and money-membership.
- Encourage members to be honest about individual needs and resources.
- Be realistic and truthful about progress.
- Pursue organizational competence.
- Address turf issues.
- Ensure mutual benefit.

Practices to Avoid

- Unclear, unrealistic, or vague:
 - » Goals for the coalition.
 - » Roles, responsibilities, and processes.
- Insufficient authority (or responsibility without authority).
- Low trust.
- Poor communication.
- Poor follow-through.
- Costs, including nonfinancial, to members exceeding benefits.

Coalition Building Resources

Coalition Guides (SOPHE):

http://www.sophe.org/healthy_communities.cfm

Collective Impact (Stanford Social Innovation Review, Winter 2011):

http://www.ssireview.org/articles/entry/collective_impact/

The Community Tool Box (University of Kansas):

<http://ctb.ku.edu/en/About.aspx>

A Sustainability Planning Guide for Healthy Communities (CDC):

http://www.cdc.gov/healthy-communitiesprogram/pdf/sustainability_guide.pdf

Resources for Communications

- Guerilla advocacy: Using aggressive marketing techniques for health policy change, Health Promotion Practice (SOPHE):
<http://www.sophe.org/chronicdiseasepolicy/doc/Guerilla%20Advocacy.pdf>
- Making Health Communication Programs Work (National Cancer Institute):
<http://www.cancer.gov/cancertopics/cancerlibrary/pinkbook/page1>

Step E. Frame and Communicate Your Messages

What and how you and your coalition communicate with policymakers and stakeholders are critical to the success of your policy education efforts. All too often, well-intended and seemingly clear policy communications leave unanswered questions that may have negative consequences (see Set the Standards Ohio case study in Chapter 6 {hyperlink}). In contrast, effective policy communications:

- Enhances relationships among collaborators.
 - Creates awareness of an issue, changes attitudes toward a community health issue, and encourages and motivates stakeholders or policymakers to advance evidence-based health policies.
- (Ammary-Risch et al, 2010)

Begin by answering some basic questions:

- What is my goal?
- Whom do I need to influence?
- What is my message?
- What do I want to achieve through communications?

Policy communications is a three-legged stool with various sub-components.

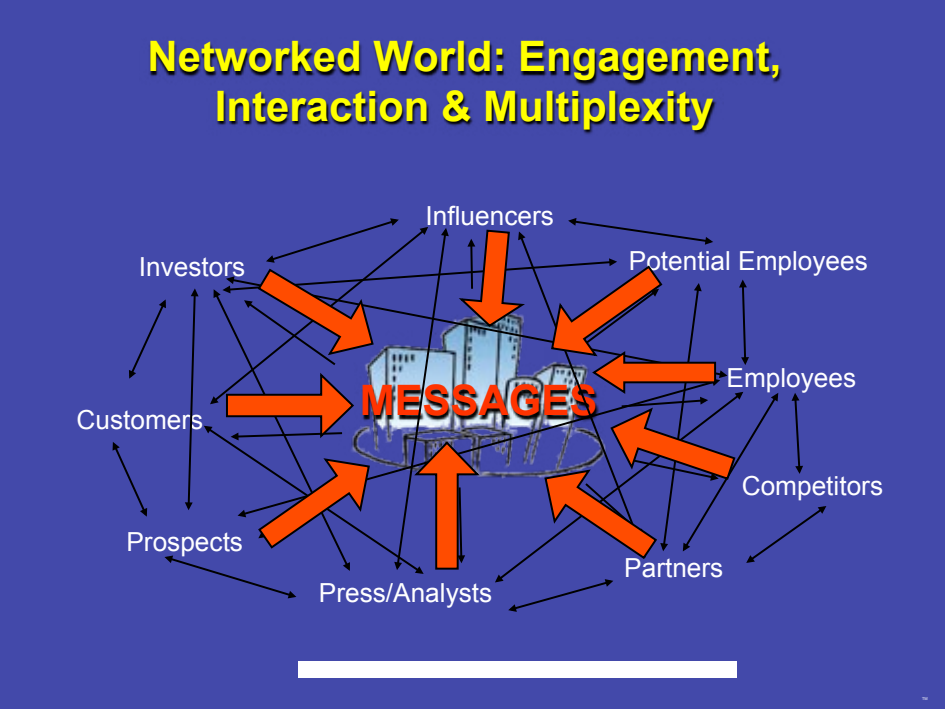
- Message
 - » Framing
 - » Local Context
 - » Social Math
 - » Elevator Pitch
 - » Non-Competing Message
 - » Bridging Techniques
- Messenger
 - » Tactical Division of Labor
- Receiver (policymaker, media, voters)
 - » Policymakers
 - » Traditional Media
 - » Social Media

Frame and Communicate :: continued

In making decisions about each of these components, you must also consider environmental conditions (see Step B {hyperlink}). One specific condition is the complexity of today’s media environment. The Internet enables conversations among people that were not possible when mass media controlled many communications channels.

These networked conversations are enabling powerful new forms of social exchanges, as illustrated in Figure 3-6.

Figure 3-6



Source: Lefebvre, R. Craig

Tips for Effective Framing

- Translate individual problems to a social issue.
- Assign primary responsibility to a community policy, system, or environment.
- Frame to address the fundamental values of the audience.
- Present an appropriate solution.
- Make an appeal; explain how the solution will make things better.

Framing Resources

Berkeley Media Studies Group:
<http://www.bmsg.org>

Frame and Communicate :: continued

Messages

Your messages should be both grounded in evidence and framed for impact.

Framing

Framing is a mental recipe for communicating an issue in a way that will help the audience understand it and form an opinion.

In effective policy communications, framing entails shifting the public debate:

- From isolated episodes that focus on individuals as the problem. Example: an interview of an uninsured family.
- To a social or community-level problem needing policy attention. Example: asking the local Chamber of Commerce why it does not support a Medicaid expansion.

When people see, read, or hear episodic coverage, they think that individual behavior is a cause or solution (get a job, pay for health insurance). Example: inexperienced medical residents are the cause of so many medical errors.

When consumers get thematic coverage, they seek changes in community systems, policies, and environments. Example: medical residents were forced to work excessive hours by residency directors; this practice puts patients in harm’s way.

Local Context

Provide as much local data and other local context in your briefing materials. Localizing helps your audiences understand the relevancy of your issue. Using a story involving a local family or group is another way to help your audience connect.

A related tactic is to embed your messaging in success stories. However, be careful to not slip into an episodic/individual frame. Always connect your success story to a thematic frame.

Messages :: continued

Social Math

Social math is the process of converting data into easily understandable information by placing them in a social context that provides meaning. Your goal is to improve understanding by providing a big-picture (or social context) and by giving meaning.

Social math tactics—while staying true to the science behind the numbers:

- Break down the numbers.
- Make comparisons with familiar things.
- Provide ironic comparisons.
- Personalize and localize the number.
- Create compelling visuals
- Make the data interesting and meaningful.
- Grab attention.
- Compose memorable media or sound bites.

Figure 3-7: Comparison of Conventional Data with Social Math Presentations

| Straight Data | Social Math Examples |
|---|---|
| In Maryland, 58,370 people were injured in traffic crashes in 2000. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• On an average day in Maryland, 160 people are injured in a traffic crash.• Every hour of every day in Maryland, 7 people are injured in a traffic crash.• While 1 murder occurs every 34 minutes, 1 traffic fatality occurs every 13 minutes. |
| In the US, each year over 200,000 children are injured on the playground. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Every day, 18 classrooms of children are injured on America’s playgrounds.• Every 2.5 minutes, a child is injured on a playground. |

Communicating Data Guide

Making Data Talk: Communicating Public Health Data to the Public, Policy Makers and the Press (National Cancer Institute):

www.cancer.gov/cancertopics/cancerlibrary/MDT-Workbook.pdf

Five C’s of Effective Messaging

- Clear
- Concise
- Consistent
- Convincing
- Compelling

Messages :: continued

Elevator Pitch

Elevator pitches are 60-second prepared messages designed to convey your message during a brief elevator ride or other opportunistic setting.

A pitch to educate a policymaker about an issue should have these elements.

1. What the member needs to know.
2. Why the information is important.
3. What you are doing about the issues.
4. Who supports acting on the issue.
5. What is the impact on your state, school district, county, or community.

It also should tell a compelling story.

Non-Competing

Never frame your message to directly compete with other health issues. Examples to avoid:

- Teen pregnancy costs the country \$\$\$ million, yet we spend more on breast cancer screening.
- Spend \$\$\$ on X cause, not on Y cause.

This type of framing gives policymakers an excuse not to act on either issue. Also, the competing group always finds out.

Bridging Techniques

A policymaker, community activist, reporter, or blogger may ask a question to draw you into controversy or catch you off guard. Use bridging techniques to get back on message.

- Acknowledge or respond to their question with a brief and honest response.
- Use a bridging word or phrase.
 - » “But the real issue is…”
 - » “However, …”
 - » “On the other hand …”
 - » “I really can’t speculate on that but what I do know is …”
 - » “Certainly that’s an important point, but it’s important to understand …”
 - » “No. Let me explain why …”
- Return to your message.

Frame and Communicate :: continued

Messengers

Consider who is the best, most convincing and trustworthy messenger for your audience. Indeed, other individuals may be better suited or more effective in communicating your issues and solutions.

For example, strategically choose the individual to educate a policymaker.

- Is she a constituent?
- Does he know the policymaker or her staff?
- Is he a good briefer who can think on his feet?

Find the right messenger mix:

- Authentic voices that speak from experience.
- Experts with authority or technical expertise.
- Persons who are trusted source of information for the audience.

Tactical Division of Labor

Perhaps your near-perfect messenger works for a nonprofit with strict rules about advocating or lobbying activities. In this case, pull together a messenger team. Your lead messenger would have a prominent role, but another team member with more latitude would, for example, request a specific policy action. Another team member might contribute supporting facts or a story to bolster the case.

411 Checklist:
Your
Policymaker

Use information to develop your strategy for building a strong relationship with your policymaker.

- Where do they live in the district?
- Where do the voters live?
- Who were active sup-porters in their most recent campaign?
- What issues did they promote during the campaign?
- What precincts were strongest and weakest for them?
- What groups do they pay attention to or have membership in?

Frame and Communicate :: continued

Receivers: Policymakers

As discussed in , your policy communications may focus on just one group of decisionmakers, such as state administrations, legislators, school administrations, or local boards of health.

Decisionmakers

Build strong relationships with policymakers by becoming an expert resource for them. The first step on this path is researching their:

- Interests and priorities (see sidebar).
- Portfolio and roles.
- Position on issues.

Do not skip this step. Learning about them will help you get the new relationship off to a good start.

To position yourself as a resource, then do the following.

- Document the population health problem.
- Provide evidence-based policy solutions.
- Answer their questions by providing factual information.
- Become a familiar face or name in local media as an expert on your policy issues.
- Tell them about your programming and how it helps the district.
- Ask your clients to meet with policymakers and share their story of how your policy, program, or service helped protect their health ().
- Invite policymakers to visit your program or service site, especially if local media may be present to do a story.
- Send them thank you notes, or have your program participants send complete thank-you postcards that you provide.

The policy brief is a core tool for informing policymakers and is explained in . See Chapter 6 for case studies of public health professionals who have developed effective relationships with policymakers.

Receivers: Policymakers :: continued

More Tips

Before you reach out, consider:

- Timing: Is the policymaker in the middle of the legislative session or is it a quieter period after the session ended?
- Controversy: Try to avoid unless controversy is a win-win-win.
- Skepticism: Policymakers and practitioners may question the applicability of research done somewhere else. Local data and local information are critical.

Training Tool

Policymaker’s Idol:
Communicating Your
Message Scenarios

Core Media Outreach Strategies

Request

Ask a TV or radio station to air your public service announcement

Pay

Pay a fee to place an ad in a newspaper, website, or other channel.

Earn

Serve as a consulted source, generate coverage of an event or release that is “newsworthy,” or submit a letter to the editor or op ed.

SOCO

Single Overriding Communications Objective or SOCO worksheet (CDC; see page 45):

http://www.cdc.gov/healthy-water/pdf/emergency/drinking-water-advisory-communication-toolbox.pdf

Frame and Communicate :: continued

Receivers: Media (Traditional and Social)

Traditional media (journalists, newspapers, or broadcast stations or programs) and social media are additional receiver communities for your message.

Briefing the media can help you put your issue on their radar screen, improve their understanding of your issue, position yourself or coalition as resource experts, and encourage inclusion of scientific viewpoints in their coverage of your issue.

Five Tips for Dealing with Media

Tailor your media communications to journalists or to your social media community. Be strategic.

- 1. Frame your issue for access. Be clear about what makes your story exciting.
- 2. Identify the reporters or bloggers covering your issue. Develop your own media list.
- 3. Understand your direct media audience. Is there a pattern to what they cover and how they present issues? What are their audience profiles? Media companies often provide demographic profiles to potential advertisers.
- 4. Monitor the current media environment. What topics are in the news? How are the issues being covered?
- 5. Be prepared to respond to the media. Know your facts. Be prepared with your SOCO (see sidebar). Be able to refer the reporter to other spokespersons. Remember you are always “on the record” and any comment you make may be attributed to you.

Receivers: Media :: continued

Earned Media Tactics

Op eds, letters to the editors, and media advisories are the workhorses of using traditional media to inform your audiences. Social media channels are another way to inform and generate coverage.

provides additional guidance on what to include in traditional media resources. The following guidance explains what to do with the resources.

Media Advisories

- 1. Fax and e-mail it to both the reporter and the assignment editor or news desk two days before the event (not before).
- 2. Call the news desk to make sure it arrived.
- 3. Call the reporter to pitch the story. Ask the reporter if she/he is on deadline.
- 4. On the event day, fax the advisory to TV assignment or news desk early in the morning (before 7 am for morning events).
- 5. Have press kits ready at the event ()

Media Releases

- If reporters do not come to your event, call them and offer them a media release and a chance to interview the people involved.
- Call radio stations with the offer of a live interview.

Letters to the Editor

- Follow guidelines . Be pithy and short (fewer than 250 words). Submit.
- Demand or request equal space if you think they did not properly cover your side of the story.

Useful Words to Get Covered

Consider using one or more of these terms in your framing to attract media coverage.

- Conflict
- Milestone
- Breakthrough
- Local
- Anniversary
- Irony
- Broad Interest
- Injustice
- Impact
- Importance
- Celebrity
- Deviance
- Tragedy
- Proximity
- Mystery
- Visual interest

Resources

Editorial Board Meetings
(Texans Care for Children):

<http://texanscareforchildren.org/Advocate/Editorial-Board-Meetings>

Recommended Adolescent Health Care Utilization: How Social Marketing Can Help (NIHCM Foundation):

<http://www.nihcm.org/pdf/NIHCM-SocialMarketing-FINAL.pdf>

Receivers: Media :: continued

Editorial Board Visits

Editorial board visits are another earned media tactic. The objective of the visit is to seek the newspaper, radio, or TV outlet’s editorial support for your issue.

The basic steps are:

- Pull together influential materials that explain the importance of your issue and relevance to its audience.
- Consider whether to include a couple of partners who can provide additional points of view.
- Call the editorial board of the broadcast outlet to request a meeting. The health reporter may also attend the meeting.
- Prepare to answer tough questions.
- Present your points at the meeting.
- Make your “ask” (e.g., request that they write an editorial about a policy solution) before you leave.
- Send a thank you note that summarizes your position and include any promised materials.
- Continue to maintain contact with reporters so you develop a long-term relationship.

Timing Tactics

Consider how the timing of your event or release may affect coverage.

- Morning events can be covered on a midday newscast or even yield a live feed from the event and be featured on 5 pm news.
- Afternoon events may be used for the evening news at 5, 6, or 11 pm.
- Weekly and daily newspapers have deadlines. Learn if the reporter may need to work on article prior to your event. Do you want to pre-release the information under an “embargo”?

Receivers: Media :: continued

Social Media Tactics

Many of the tactics for traditional media can be adapted for social media. Figure 3-8 contrasts some of the characteristics that differentiate traditional and social media environments. Importantly, the two environments are gradually merging (for example, newspapers have integrated social media components into their websites).

Consider these characteristics when adapting materials for social media platforms.

Figure 3-8: Traditional and Social Media Characteristics

| Characteristic | Traditional | Social Media |
|---------------------|---|--|
| Information Flow | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• One-way• Two-way | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Multi-directional• Interactive |
| Platforms | Static | Dynamic |
| Culture | Business-like transaction | Reciprocity (if someone else covers your issue on their blog, return the favor) |
| Content Development | Controlled by producer | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Collaborative with online communities• Less control |
| Timeliness | Production cycle can delay | Immediate/real-time |
| Audience | Passive consumer | Participant |

In the next page, we cover 3 prominent social media tools.

- Blogs
- Twitter
- Videos

Social Media
Tips and Tools

Health Communication & Social Marketing Practice gateway (CDC):

<http://www.cdc.gov/health-communication>

Tweeting For a Better World: Essentials of Social-Media Strategy for Smaller Nonprofits (The Bridgespan Group):

<http://www.bridgespan.org/tweeting-for-a-better-world.aspx>

Using Social Media Platforms to Amplify Public Health Messages (Georgetown University):

<http://csic.georgetown.edu/involved/fellowships/188086.html>

Examples of Population Health Blogs

Get Ready for Flu:

<http://getreadyforflu.blogspot.com/>

Health Affairs:

<http://healthaffairs.org/blog/>

Health News Review:

<http://www.healthnewsreview.org/blog/>

Mind the Gap:

<http://healthcommunications.wordpress.com/>

New Public Health:

<http://blog.rwjf.org/publichealth/>

The Pump Handle:

<http://scienceblogs.com/thepumphandle/>

Receivers: Social Media

Blogs

Blogs are a special kind of social media site in which one or more authors post commentaries. Many blogs permit readers to respond to postings.

| | |
|---------|--|
| Step 1: | Listen What blogs are covering health policy? Who is your audience? What do they care about? |
| Step 2: | Identify Goals and Objectives What is your message? What do you want to accomplish? |
| Step 3: | Community Participate in existing blogging community (e.g., responding to posts or Tweeting) |
| Step 4: | Plan Who will write it? Who will host? Who will monitor and respond to comments? |
| Step 5: | Evaluation What does success look like? What is your return on investment? |

Tips

- Keep your commentaries short and concise.
- Clearly state the main point early.

Receivers: Media (Social) :: continued

Twitter

Twitter supports microblogging via tweets, which are 140-character message.

Understand that Twitter is a conversation tool not a broadcast tool. Participate in the conversation around your issue. Use:

- Hashtags (#) to tag conversations on Twitter to make them easy to search and follow. Example: #SHPI
- @[TwitterUserName] in replies to participate in the discussion. Example: @sophetweets

Other Uses

Beyond starting or joining policy conversations, consider these services.

| | |
|---------|--|
| twtpoll | Create quick Twitter polls or powerful web surveys (fee-based service) |
| twtvite | Connect with your followers through social groups Educate and raise awareness Create calls to action |

Videos

A picture is worth a thousand words. Put the video and camera capabilities of your smart phone or other device to use. Create short, compelling videos on your issue and then post them on your website, Facebook page, and blog. Make them available on YouTube. Ask partners to recommend the video and to comment on the YouTube page.

Resources

Tweeting For a Better World (The Bridgespan Group):

<http://www.bridgespan.org/tweeting-for-a-better-world.aspx>

The Twitter Guide Book (Mashable):

<http://mashable.com/guide-book/twitter>

Interview Checklist

Before beginning an interview, know exactly:

- What you will say.
- How you are going to say it.
- How you will respond to potential negative issues that may arise.

Receivers: Media :: continued

Acing an Interview

As you become known as an expert on your issue, you may be asked to do an interview for print, broadcast, or social media.

Preparation is the key to effectively communicating your message in an interview. Here’s how to ace it in 10 basic steps.

1. Be Prepared.
Know the reporter: What have they written? What is their angle? What questions might they ask?
Know your audience: Are you trying to reach laypeople or a technical audience? What messages will resonate?
2. Stay on Message.
Effective messages are clear, succinct, and simple. Repeat the message. Come alive through stories and anecdotes.
3. Keep It Simple.
Focus on just 2-3 main points, then illustrate with anecdotes or word pictures. Use numbers and statistics sparingly. Avoid technical jargon.
4. Lead with Your Conclusion.
Journalists write stories in inverted pyramids, starting with the main or big-picture findings first, then drilling down to the details.
Imagine the headline and then say it early, often, and clearly.
5. Control the Interview.
Focus on giving a response (not necessarily an answer). Convey enthusiasm, confidence, and knowledge.

Avoid repeating negatives and don’t entertain hypotheticals. Avoid saying “no comment.” Instead bridge back to your message.

6. Play It Straight.
If you don’t know, say so. Don’t speculate and have to correct yourself later. Say you are unsure and will get back to them (then do so).

Receivers: Media/Acing an Interview :: continued

7. Take Your Time.
Speak slowly and clearly. Pause before responding. Avoid saying “uh,” “er,” “you know,” or “like.” Rather, collect your thoughts and then answer.
8. Remember: Perception Is Reality.
Body language is 80% of the message. Even if the interview is by phone, stand up and smile as you talk to convey energy and enthusiasm.
On camera, display confidence, knowledge, and credibility. Look the interviewer or camera in the eye. Use subtle hand gestures to emphasize a select point.
9. Respect the Reporters.
Meet the reporter’s deadline.
Be patient if the reporter’s knowledge is limited. Provide background.
10. Be Yourself.
Act like yourself, and your personality, knowledge, and confidence will overshadow any nervousness. Smile and enjoy yourself.

Tips for Neutralizing Loaded Questions

- As you listen, identify provocative questions.
- Screen out “loaded” words in your response.
- Do not repeat negatives.
- Determine actual issue.
- Begin with an honest and empathetic response.
- Bridge to your positive message.

Uses of Evaluation Findings

You can use evaluation findings to:

- Improve existing efforts.
- Identify ineffective efforts that can be retooled or eliminated.
- Provide accountability to funders and partners, giving them documentation about outcomes.
- Identify effective strategies and practices to disseminate to other public health professionals.

Step F. Evaluate

Evaluation is a way to both measure and contribute to the success of your program. It is an ongoing process that should begin when you first plan policy education and continue through implementation.

F1. Collaborate

Pull together an advisory committee to critique the evaluation plan and make suggestions. Engage your staff and the committee throughout the evaluation process.

F2. Set the Scope of the Evaluation

The scope of an evaluation should be suited to your organization’s or your coalition’s capabilities.

- Talent: Your internal research and evaluation resources (e.g., a staff person or partner with the expertise).
- Time: The availability of that staff or expert partner to be involved and the amount of time necessary to collect various types of data.
- Treasure: Resources that can support both the collection of more or better data and data analysis.

Be sure to budget enough time and money. If you use consultants, make expectations clear.

F3. Use a Logic Model

Most evaluations begin with a theory of change or program logic model. This step diagrams the linkages between your goals, objectives, and activities. Chapter 4 provides step-by-step guidance on how to create an action plan to educate policymakers based on one type of logic model framework. Use the resulting action plan to guide your evaluation planning.

Your evaluation plan should address the information needs of all users. It might specify how the results will be used internally and disseminated externally.

Evaluate :: continued

F4. Decide on Type of Evaluation

Decide what type of evaluation – process, impact, or outcome --is best suited to your policy education effort and capabilities. Figure 3-7 highlights capabilities by type of evaluation. All three types can produce quantitative and qualitative data. See sidebar for examples of evaluation findings.

Figure 3-7. Types of Evaluations Suitable to Policy Education

| Type | Level of Inquiry <ul style="list-style-type: none">Examples of Indicators | Suitability |
|---------|---|--|
| Process | Program <ul style="list-style-type: none">InstructorsContentMethodsTime allotmentsMaterials | <ul style="list-style-type: none">Data provides counts, not rates or ratiosShort-term feedback on implementation, content, and participant or audience responseInitial signals of what is working, what is not |
| Impact | Behavior, Cognition <ul style="list-style-type: none">Knowledge gainAttitude changeHabit changeSkill development | <ul style="list-style-type: none">Short- and long-term feedback on indicators (middle column)Probably more realistic endpoints for most public health interventions than outcome evaluations |
| Outcome | Outcome <ul style="list-style-type: none">MortalityMorbidityDisabilityQuality of life | <ul style="list-style-type: none">Long-term quantitative feedback on health status, morbidity, and mortalityOften used in strategic plans |

Adapted from Green, 1980.

Compared to process and impact evaluations, outcome evaluations tend to be the most expensive and require the most time. If surveillance data are available to use, outcome evaluations can be the least expensive to support.

Examples of Evaluation Findings

Process

- Satisfaction with a policy communications training
- Resource allocation to various parts of the policy action plan

Impact

- Changes in smoking rates

Outcome

- Changes in geographic dispersion of heart disease

Tools & Resources

The Community Tool Box (University of Kansas):

<http://ctb.ku.edu/en/default.aspx>

Evaluation Planning Worksheet

(SOPHE)

Pathfinder: A Practical Guide to Advocacy Evaluation (Innovation Network):

http://www.innonet.org/client.../advocacy/pathfinder_advocate_web.pdf

Use of Social Media in Health Promotion: Purposes, Key Performance Indicators, and Evaluation Metrics (Health Promotion Practice)

Evaluate :: continued

F5. Select Evaluation Methods and Measures

The best evaluations triangulate data, that is, they combine qualitative and quantitative methods. They also pull from multiple sources and ask different questions. Triangulating is like looking in a room from two or more windows in order to get a more complete perspective. Nonetheless, understand that no evaluation is completely objective, value-free, or neutral.

The primary challenge for evaluating policy efforts is that:

- Policy change may require years, not months.
- The dynamics at play with policy change are complex.
- Educating policymakers is a small factor in the process of making policy; many other factors can exert a strong influence.

Qualitative Evaluation

Qualitative data help to define issues or concerns and strengths from the community perspective. Through the use of existing or new qualitative data, you can learn about:

- Needs, assets, and attitudes.
- Status of available health promotion policy, programs, and practices.
- Resources and physical structures in the community.

Qualitative Methods

Observation

- Audiovisual methods
- Spatial mapping

Interviews

- Individual
- Individuals in a group setting (several people together, but does not necessarily take advantage of group process)
- Focus groups (6-10 people, often a relatively homogenous group, that uses group process and allows participants to build on each other’s ideas) (LeCompte, 1999)

Evaluate :: continued

Qualitative Interviews

In-depth interviewing can be approached in several ways.

- Informal conversational interview
- Structured using a general interview guide (see below)
- Semi-structured with a standardized, but open-ended interview guide

General Interview Guides

These guides help standardize interviews by providing a list of questions or issues to be explored so that similar information can be sought from multiple individuals or groups.

Many interview guides have a general outline of issues with subsets of predetermined subject probes to pull additional information. The outline format helps to facilitate a conversational quality to the interview.

Recording the Data

Before starting the interview, seek the interviewee’s permission and consent. Recording can be taking notes during and after the interview. The notes may even include your feelings (e.g., tired, excited); thoughts (impressions of the interview process); and surroundings.

Tape recording is an option if interviewees consent. It is best to have two taping devices. Prior to starting the interview, make sure the devices are on and working.

Deeper Dive: Books on Evaluation

The Practice of Health Program Evaluation. Grembowski D. (2001). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications

Qualitative Research: A Guide to Design and Implementation. Merriam SB. (2009). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass

Tips

- Involve stakeholders.
- Measure program processes, impacts, and outcomes using measures appropriate for the questions asked.
- Expect frustration from those collecting data, such as stemming from resistance to feeling judged.
- Present findings in an objective and useful manner.

Evaluate :: continued

F6. Implement and Analyze the Data

Collect and analyze evaluation data using the measures and methods established in your plan. Connect the results of your evaluation plan back to your theory of change to help interpret. Involve your advisory committee.

Qualitative data can be coded for analysis. The source can be transcriptions of or notes from interviews. Common coding practices include:

- **Focused coding**, which uses predetermined categories.
- **Open coding**, which draws categories and themes from the data itself.

All coders should label the data so that anyone can go back to the data.

To improve the quality of the analysis, have multiple people code and analyze the data. They (or a third party) then compare results and resolve differences. An advisory committee can be useful in this last process to help triangulate the analysis.

Evaluate :: continued

F7. Disseminate Evaluation Findings

Dissemination is an active process.

- Consider dissemination when planning the evaluation.
- Discuss the interim findings with key audiences.
- Package the final results to appeal to different audiences.
- Use multiple channels to distribute copies.
- Ask partners to share the results with their networks.
- Brief key audiences and recommend ways for them to use the findings.

The dissemination process can be formal (e.g., releasing an official report) or informal (e.g., discussing the results at a staff meeting). _____ are a useful format to inform audiences about your results.

Before you share the evaluation results, make sure the report has a clear “take home” message. As appropriate, describe contextual factors that may have affected the results. Present the data in an objective and useful light while acknowledging potential sources of bias. Acknowledge persons who assisted.

Note that disseminating evaluation results does not have to wait until the end of the program. Provide interim results, and use those data to make adjustments.

Think creatively about dissemination channels. They can include newsletters, your website, or community forums.

Sample Outline for an Evaluation Report

When communicating your evaluation results, include these elements.

- Purpose of the evaluation
- Stakeholders involved
- Program or policy description
- Methodology description
- Evaluation update or results
- Recommendations

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