

MODULE 13-EFFECTIVE PUBLIC HEALTH CAMPAIGNS

MODULE OVERVIEW

This module explores the principles of an effective public health campaign in the Health in All Policies context and provides participants an opportunity to apply these principles to a simulation exercise, where breakout groups prepare and present their own model campaigns on relevant HiAP topics.

	Duration
Lecture – Effective public health campaigns addressing determinants of health	15 mins
Optional group activity 1 –SOCO writing	15 mins
Optional group activity 2- Target audience mapping	15 mins
Optional group activity 3 – Key Messages	15 mins
Group activity – Preparing a model public health campaign	60 mins
Group activity – Class presentations and feedback	30 mins
Total time	2h 30 mins

Learning Objectives

- Train and empower health professionals can mount effective public health campaigns in the context of social, environmental and development policies, in the Health in All Policies context.
- Learn about the building blocks of good communications messages, as relevant to health professionals working in the HiAP context, with illustrative examples from real campaigns.
- Learn about the strategic building blocks of effective campaigns, including how to: define your Strategic Objective; Target Audiences; Key messages; Tools & Tactics for campaigning.
- Practice mapping target audiences & the development of clear, powerful, key messages.
- Develop and present a model concept for a public health campaign in the HiAP context.

Key messages

- Health professionals can initiate, lead and guide communications campaigns in the HiAP context so as to ensure that health is a key priority in policies of social, economic, development and environment sectors.
- An effective public health campaign involves grouping messages and activities around a Single Overarching Communications Objective (SOCO), that identifies the change that you want to achieve, against actionable and measurable targets.
- An effective public health campaign has a well-defined target audience, which is positioned to act upon the messages that you convey.
- An effective public health campaign has key messages that conveys solid public health facts but appeals to the heart as well as the mind.

Key readings for participants

Recommended

General Communications Principles

- [WHO \(2015\) Effective communications - Participant handbook \(Sections A & B\)](#)
- [WHO Principles for Effective Communications – Online Tools](#)
<https://www.who.int/about/communications/principles>

Communications Theory

- **SUCCEs Model of Communication: *Made to stick: Why some ideas survive, and others die.*** Heath, C., & Heath, D. (2007). New York: Random House.
- **SAGE Publication (1995)** Designing health messages: Approaches from communication theory and public health practice / edited by Edward Maibach, Roxanne Louiselle Parrott. *International Educational and Professional Publisher, ISBN 0- 8039-5397-6.*

Campaign Examples

- [BreatheLife – A Global Campaign to Reduce Air Pollution for Health & Climate Benefits](#)
- [WHO Campaign for action – meeting the NCD targets](#)
- [WHO Campaign essentials – Depression: Let`s talk](#)

Optional (for Environmental risks focus)

- [Health in Sustainable Development <http://www.who.int/sustainable-development/en/>](http://www.who.int/sustainable-development/en/)
- WHO (2014) Fact sheet N°313 - [Ambient \(outdoor\) air quality and health](#)
- WHO (2016) Fact sheet N°292 [Household air pollution and health](#)
- [Air pollution, climate and health - The calculation is simple](#)
- [Household air pollution, climate and health - the calculation is simple](#)
- [Health in the green economy: co-benefits to health of climate change mitigation. Household energy sector in developing countries](#)

Supporting materials for instructors

- Handouts 1-2-3 – Embedded in Lecture
- [WHO \(2015\) Effective communications - Handbook](#)
- [WHO principles for effective communications](#)
 - [Accessible](#)
 - [Actionable](#)
 - [Credible and trusted](#)
 - [Relevant](#)
 - [Timely](#)
 - [Understandable](#)
- **SUCCEs Model of Communication:** *Made to stick: Why some ideas survive, and others die.* Heath, C., & Heath, D. (2007). New York: Random House.
- **SAGE Publication (1995) Designing health messages:** Approaches from communication theory and public health practice / edited by Edward Maibach, Roxanne Louiselle Parrott. *International Educational and Professional Publisher*, ISBN 0- 8039-5397-6.

Teaching notes

This module is heavily focused on learning-by-doing and aims to reinforce the participants' ability to prepare a concept of an effective public health campaign. It is suggested you begin the module by describing the importance of effective public health campaign and outline the characteristics and structure of an influential campaign.

In that lecture, you may also want to some examples of good public health campaigns, such as [BreatheLife](#) . The majority of the module is then dedicated to preparing a concept of the campaign in small groups. It is likely you will often need to remind the groups to manage their time well. The remainder of the module's time is for each group to present their policy brief. It is recommended that you give thought to the campaign topic(s) so that they have the most relevance to participants and the context in which they work. A number of topics with supporting material are suggested here as examples. As always, it is useful to point to the learning objectives and outline the structure of the module so that the participants know what to expect.

LECTURE: EFFECTIVE PUBLIC HEALTH CAMPAIGNS ADDRESSING DETERMINANTS OF HEALTH

15 mins

- Purpose of a public health campaign in the context of policy making
- Characteristics of effective and influential public health campaign
- Illustrative examples of public health campaigns in the contexts of those building blocks

Purpose of a public health campaign in the context of policy making

Addressing social and environmental health risks/determinants such as air pollution, housing risks, water and waste risks, occupational risks, and chemical hazards, generally cannot be addressed only at the individual and health care provider level. These require policy action by non-health sector actors.

As health in all policies “ambassadors” we need to be able to communicate convincingly about risks – and solutions - to a range of other audiences, from policymakers in sectors such as transport, energy and finance, to the general public. We need to feel comfortable “stepping outside” of the paradigm of patient treatment and behaviour change – to tackle a much wider world of policy choices.

And that includes leadership in communications campaigns that build greater community awareness of health impacts, health-based discussion of policy options, which lead to concrete decisions by governments and active involvement of civil society.

To that aim, knowing the fundamentals of good communications skills and tactics, and how to apply those in real-life issues that we face, is essential, and will make you more effective in your HiAP aims and interactions. Lecture sections are numbered to correspondent with the PowerPoint Slide deck.

These principles are drawn from the wider WHO communications package. Effective Communications and applied specifically to the HiAP setting. However, it is highly worthwhile to review the entire WHO model, which is referenced in your recommended readings.

I. Characteristics of Effective Public Health Campaigns

1. Guiding Principles: *Effective communication and campaigns is a two-way street.*

- Effective campaigns require you to define clearly what is your communications ***goal or aim first of all***, something we call the Single Overarching Communications Outcome (SOCO)

- But developing a SOCO also requires ***you to know your audience***, and what are their priorities and concerns, and then shaping your message to relate to those issues, and eventually trigger a reaction.
- Effective campaigns also are ***not just about building clear sharp messages, however important***. While the message is one building block, it is not the only one. Building a campaign requires you to consider the ***range of tactics and tools***, that are most suitable to your audience to deliver those messages, as well as to engage them interactively in action.
- Finally, in order to build an effective campaign, ***it is important to involve your stakeholders in brainstorming, message-building and strategizing about your campaign design***, along the lines that are described in this module. If stakeholders, champions or influencers are involved in identifying practical goals, developing messages, and shaping the tools and tactics for your campaign, you will have a far more robust campaign, with local buy-in and ownership from the start.

2. We will talk about some of the building blocks for these approaches now in more detail – before moving to test and practice them in group exercises. Specifically, our focus will be on:

- Learning about, and practicing development, of SOCOS – Single Overarching Communication Outcome that you want to archive.
- Defining and mapping your target audience
- Developing key messages for your SOCO
- Tools and tactics for creating a campaign

3. Theory of Change - Recognizing the incremental nature of change

According to communications theory (Nuttall et al) Change in attitudes occurs gradually, and if attitude change occurs. So, if your campaign strategy works incrementally along this ladder of change, it will be more successful.

Campaign messages and tactics need to first of all reinforce awareness about the problem and solutions, but not stop there. It can move towards bigger “asks” for action. Traditional public health campaigns have been highly effective in putting these principles into practice for issues such as: getting people to test for HIV, have their children vaccinated, and use bed nets. Recently we have seen the revival of a very assertive and, apparently, successful campaigning to promote a very old public health strategy, handwashing, to protect from COVID91.

In traditional public health campaigns, however, the behaviour you are advocating for, and encouraging, is often very direct, personal and immediate.

In the case of HiAP, your aim will often be to promote some sort of policy change in sectors outside of the health sector, including things like: new rules or regulation about pollution emissions; new taxes on fuel or elimination of subsidies for polluting fuels, like kerosene; new urban development measures that provide safe bicycle and pedestrian access to major activity centres; or reduce poverty by supporting safe, durable housing. In those cases, the progression from change to action, while similar on one hand,

can also be even more complex. Policy makers not only have to become personally convinced, they need to have a reasonable case for making a policy argument about the desired change to other colleagues or the public, and that the change is achievable, affordable and cost-effective.

Here we see a ladder of change, in that policy context, moving from a personal awareness of the problem, to understanding the relevance of the problem to your own political or policy agendas, to taking action.

Question to group: Can you think of an example of this kind of progression, in a policy context?

(Hint to lecturer: we can look at anti-tobacco campaigns as examples of this kind of incrementality. Over decades greater awareness about the health impacts of smoking and second-hand smoke in many countries led first to a) banning smoking in offices and cafes; to more drastic measures that sharply limit advertising, plain packaging of tobacco, and higher taxes on tobacco products). All along this continuum, numerous cost-effectiveness studies have documented the economic benefits of these changes. Evidence of measures successfully applied in one country, often helped convince neighbouring countries, that such legislation was feasible),

4-9. Building SOCOS

A SOCO is your “Single Overarching Communications Outcome”. That means what do you want to actually be achieved? In line with our theory of change, the endpoint here is something “actionable”. You want your policymaker / or influencer, to not only to be “made aware” of the problem, but you want him or her to allocate funds; draft a new policy; strengthen policy enforcement.

Here are some examples of SOCOS, drawing from the air pollution and health policy arena, and specifically the [BreatheLife](#) campaign. In the campaign, WHO, the UN Environment Programme/Climate and Clean Air Coalition, and the World Bank have joined together to both raise awareness of air pollution’s health impacts, as well as to promote policy solutions for countries, cities and regions that reduce health impacts as well reducing critical climate emissions. Many of these same policies also have other win-wins, such as promoting traffic safety, healthy physical activity, and more.

- Cut deaths from AP by 2/3 by 2030 (NOT in the SDGs)
- Get 50 National Governments to adopt Air Quality Standards in line with WHO AQ guidelines ($10\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ for PM 2.5)
- Cities prioritize investment (\$\$) in clean transport – BRT/tram, safe, dedicated in walking & cycling networks, over roads and parking development.
- % of city residents cycling or taking transit to work increases from 5-15% by 2025

OPTIONAL GROUP ACTIVITY: Develop a SOCO

15 mins

Notes to Presenter: Now we are going to each write out a SOCO, using the handout below. Instruct Participants to **ONLY** focus on the SOCO, they will complete the Key Messages in the next section.,

Now, take just a couple of minutes to reflect on a SOCO that you could create for an issue that is important in your HiAP work. And then two or three of you can share your examples.

Tips:

- Make your appeal direct, brief and try to include a call for action, as per the principles we just reviewed.
- Remember to use some of the emotional appeal tactics that we just discussed
- Ensure your message is evidence based
- If you use numbers, remember to compare them with something familiar to average people

Handout 1 – SOCO & Key Message Grid

SOCO _____

	Key Message 1	Key Message 2
Emotional appeal		
Supporting facts/data		

13. Identifying your Target Audience: From Champions to Blockers

Hand in hand with defining your SOCO is defining who you are trying to convince – and compel to action.

Your target audience may be at the national government level, or it may be the local municipality. It may be the school principle and teaching staff, or the head of a factory. Or it may be local, traditional spiritual or tribal leaders. In all cases, this mapping exercise is important.

Early Adopters and Champions- Who, within your larger target audience could be “early adopters” of your message or approach, and help you convey the message to others, including more “passive supporters” who might buy in later?

Blockers and Avoiders - Identify the people who might actively oppose your campaign – and also those who will simply duck the issue.

14. Tactics for approaching different target groups. There are simple ways in which you can tailor your messages and approaches to the different sub-audiences you will have to face. In the case of **Champions**, it is critical to meet with them well ahead and involve them in the design of your campaign, as well as making the most suited figures part of the “Public Face” of the campaign, capable of convincing others. It would be helpful to include a few “**Silent Boosters**” as well – because including them will also help win their buy-in. Significantly, they will also provide you with a realistic profile of the “blockers” and “avoiders.”

In terms of the **Blockers** – it is important to be aware of their arguments and monitor what they say before and during your campaign. If they are influential, you will need to confront them more directly with facts and evidence, enlisting Champions to make the case to them.

As for the **Avoiders**, you may first begin by “avoiding” them as well, and then as your campaign builds support and momentum, try to enlist their passive support, with the aid of your champions.

15. Profiling your audience – Developing an Avatar -During the large group breakout session, which will follow this exercise, you might want to take this audience mapping further, by developing a “persona” for a member of your target audience, such as a key policymaker, to whom you might want to appeal, and even “play act” those roles. By putting yourself into his or her shoes, you can find points of common concern, as well as places where views may definitely diverge.

For instance, many influential policymakers may be quite remote from the people that they serve and protected from common health risks that others face. However, that does not mean they are entirely immune. Air pollution affects the growing lungs of children – and while the poor may be more exposed, the harm extends to the families of more privileged groups as well.

Most recently, in the case of the COVID-19 pandemic, we have seen that top echelons of government and society, from prime ministers to as well as the poor.

OPTIONAL GROUP ACTIVITY: MAP TARGET AUDIENCE

15 mins

Now, for the SOCO that you devised before, please map your target audience, using the same grid in the handout, by listing the groups that might fit into each box.

Handout 2 – Target Audience Profiling

Blockers	Champions
Avoiders	Silent Boosters

II. Building Key Messages

Notes to presenter: In this part of the session, we will drill down more into the elements that make up effective key messages for your campaign. For professionals trained as social or health sciences, this is particularly important, to help “shift” their mindset into very simple, but accurate communications.

PowerPoint Presentation 2 can accompany this part of the lecture and lead into the penultimate group activity.

Recommended Reading: Heath, C., & Heath, D. (2007). [*Made to stick: Why some ideas survive, and others die.*](#) New York: Random House.

Introducing the “Inverted Paragraph”: Scientists and experts are trained to build a systematic argument, beginning with the hypotheses or rationale, describing the methods of exploration of an issue, and then concluding with their findings.

In fact, the order of communicating to politicians and the general public is the opposite of the scientific method. The main message is first. Everything else follows. Along with this, we will introduce many

other tools and tactics for shaping effective messages. These are based on some fundamentals about how our brain works.

- **Shrinking attention span.** In the age of social media, our attention span has shrunk dramatically. You must get your main message across within the first 9 seconds of reading, watching or hearing your comms message, or risk losing your audience all together.
- **We are wired to forget** – most of what you say will be forgotten just 20 minutes later. If your message is effective, some part of it, however, 30% will be retained for a day and about 20% may be retained for as long as a month, giving you time to reinforce your message with further outreach.
- **People are more likely to remember the beginning and end of your message** – not the middle – which in the brain tends to tumble into a “vast cognitive wasteland”
- **SUCCEs Model of Communication.** This is a model of communication developed Chip and Dan Heath in the book, [Made to stick: Why some ideas survive and others die](#). It explores the idea of "stickiness", also explored by [Malcolm Gladwell](#) in [The Tipping Point](#). It explores what makes an idea or concept memorable or interesting.

The acronym "SUCCEs" (with the last s omitted), is used to describe the theory, with each letter referring to a characteristic that can help make an idea "sticky":

- **Simple** – find the core of any idea
- **Unexpected** – grab people's attention by surprising them
- **Concrete** – make sure an idea can be grasped and remembered later
- **Credible** – give an idea believability
- **Emotional** – help people see the importance of an idea
- **Stories** – empower people to use an idea through narrative

These six principles of the SUCCEs model will help to make our messages more memorable. When we communicate, we want people to remember what we said. This is especially important in public health when it is important for our audience to follow our advice so they can protect themselves and their loved ones' health and safety. WHO has adopted this model into its communications training, as a mainstay of developing effective key messages?

Notes to Presenter: Slides 8-13 articulate further each individual message.

Final Principles to Keep in Mind

- **Avoid jargons and acronyms.** Most of our academic institutions, government agencies as well as the UN have their own inside lingo and pet acronyms that are essentially vague terms, or that no one else will understand. If you are going to speak to a wider audience, you will need to start looking for those words, and thinking about how to clean them out of your messages.

- **Break Numbers down into Soundbites as well.** If you cite a number, try to break it down or think of something familiar to which you can compare it, so that people can digest it more easily. It may make the number very memorable too! One example - **7 million people a year die from Air pollution.** *That's 800 people and hour.*

OPTIONAL GROUP ACTIVITY: DEVELOP EFFECTIVE KEY MESSAGES

Handout 1– SOCO & Key Message Grid

SOCO _____

	Key Message 1	Key Message 2
Emotional appeal Supporting facts/data		

GROUP ACTIVITY – PREPARING A PUBLIC HEALTH CAMPAIGN

60 mins

Notes to Presenter: The aim of this breakout group exercise is to provide participants with the opportunity to work through the steps that would be needed to build a model public health campaign on an HiAP issue that they regard as a priority.

Air Pollution and urban environmental risks have been used in this module as illustrative examples. Breakout groups can, however, adapt the same principles to other HiAP issues, as already discussed. The principles and the building blocks are essentially the same – as is the goal, to empower health professionals to lead and shape policy changes in other sectors, which benefit public health priorities and objectives.

To structure the discussions, it is suggested that you distribute a guidance with questions for participants to follow (Handouts 3). Given the limited time available and the challenges of brainstorming in a group, you should explain that the exercise is a shortened, and they are expected only to create a concept note of the campaign.

Use the exercises already performed as “building block” for this exercise.

1. Break into groups of 3-5 participants, depending on the class size. Ask participants to bring their worksheets on their **SOCO, Target Audience Mapping** and **Key Messages** to the group.
2. Together the group will choose one SOCO to work on more deeply, in the time available, with reference to polishing the:
 - Single Overarching Communications Outcome (Objective: Policy or behaviour change)
 - Target Audience Mapping – including possible profiling of a Target Audience “Avatar”
 - Key messages / Campaign slogans
3. Moving from the Key Messages, Participants will also develop some
 - Key tactics and tools for the campaign (effective communication channels)

You should remind the groups regularly the time remaining and ask them to nominate a presenter. If possible, it is suggested that you conduct this group activity immediately before an extended break so that groups who have not managed to finish may have slightly more time to prepare.

HANDOUTS FOR GROUP ACTIVITY

Handout 3 – Breakout Group exercise: Build Your Own Model Campaign

Now. Let's test the rapid development of a campaign, using one example chosen by the group, and following the steps we have learned:

1. Select, from the examples your group members developed on their own, an important policy change that you want to champion – in the HiAP arena
2. Finalize the “Single Overarching Communications Objective (SOCO)” – regarding this change.

Hint- make sure it is specific, measurable, time-bound and achievable

Indicative Examples:

- *Beginning in 2019 allocate 10 % of city budget for green space expansion, including arterial parks for walking, cycling to reduce traffic injury.*
- *Beginning in 2019, adopt mandatory training curriculum in the State College system for nurses, doctors and MPH on Air Pollution/ incl. clinical guidance for practitioners*
- *Create a continuous bike loop around the city center, which is well-marked and separated from traffic by 2022.*
- *Get approval for a farmer's market offering healthy, fresh fruits and vegetables every weekend in my city/town.*
- *Get government approval of a policy for front of package labeling of foods, to stimulate healthier foods consumption.*
- *Win municipal support for a campaign to weatherize/improve housing in poor communities to reduce energy costs as well as heat- or cold-related health impacts.*

3. Choose one or at most two “TARGET AUDIENCES” that you want to convince of your aim:

Examples:

- *Policy makers – please define which - city council, mayor, state legislature, transport authority, roads authority, private sector, health care providers, etc.*
- *Students, youth*
- *Parents*
- *School children /School teachers*
- *Small businesses /large companies – please define which, e.g. supermarkets*
- *Health care professionals – please define which, e.g. nurses, pediatricians, etc.*

4. Map your audience in terms of champions, silent boosters, blockers, avoiders

5. **(Optional) Develop your audience “Avatar” a bit further. In order to get yourself into the mindset of your audience, think creatively for a bit about the tastes, preferences and habits of your target audience – e.g. you might ask yourself:**

What work does he/she typically do? What media or TV shows do he/she watch? Where do they shop? What foods do they prefer? What cars do they drive? What priorities do they have for their family/children?

6. **Key messages – work through your key messages using the principles that you learned – and to appeal to the mind as well as the heart. In balancing your messages, however, you can consider, based on your audience analysis, now consider what types of information is most likely to persuade your target group?**

Examples: *public health evidence, economic data, personal stories, emotional messages from famous celebrities, messages from religious leaders, messages that appeal to national pride, etc.*

7. **Tools - What sources of information does this group rely upon most** - colleagues, paper briefings, newspapers, TV (Al Jazeera, BBC, or CNN?), social media (and which, e.g. Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, or Weibo?); Video
8. **Tactics & Settings:** Special settings and events may be used to deliver messages at peak moments. Some of these may include: launch of the event at a prestige location – or a community event, depending on your purpose and audience; professional workshops; film, theatre, music festivals and other cultural events; religious gatherings, school groups, and personal meetings - e.g. with influential politicians.
9. **Based on this consideration of your AIM (SOCO) + Target Audience, complete your initial strategy** to include the components discussed.
10. **FINAL QUESTION** – What would you like your targeted AUDIENCE to think, feel, or say after you deliver your MESSAGE about your AIM, USING your key Tactics & TOOLS? Hint: This relates back to your SOCO.

FINAL Checklist for Presentation

- **SOCO**
- **Target Audience Mapping**
- **Avatar (optional)**
- **KEY Messages**
- **TOOLSs**
- **TACTICS and SETTINGS**
- **What your Audience will think, feel and DO, as a result of your campaign (SOCO)**

GROUP ACTIVITY – CLASS PRESENTATIONS

30 mins

The purpose of this follow-up activity to the development of a public health campaign concept is to allow the participants to share their work and emphasize the need to sometimes add public health campaign into their policy implementation process. It is recommended that you allow each group a maximum of five minutes to present their campaign. After each group presents, you might want to provide some feedback or wait until the end to make general comments.

During the debriefing or as a summary of the module, it is suggested that you re-emphasize the key messages of the module, particularly the importance of defining what is the change that want to be made (policy or behavioral) and delivering a message that conveys a problem, as well as actionable solutions.