Preparation

Create your partnership

There may be several individuals and organizations that can assist you in the design, plan and implementation (or putting into action) of your campaign and promotional activities. Campaigns and promotions have been implemented with the assistance of a wide range of partners.

Example partners to help design and implement your campaign or promotion:

- health educators
- mass communication experts
- behavioral psychology
- TV stations
- businesses- gyms, fitness clubs
- media networks
- magazine distributors
- local community organizations
- faith-based organizations
- national health foundations (e.g., American Heart Association)
- health departments
- newspapers
- sports/outdoor organizations
- hospitals
- local work places
- universities
- local health clinics
- schools
- parks and recreation

Try to think of partners that can serve a variety of roles. For example, you may need certain partners to help you create your campaign messages (e.g., local health clinics, schools), while some partners may be more helpful in distributing your campaign messages (e.g., media networks, newspapers). It is important to maintain input of these partners from the beginning of idea development through implementation of the campaign.

Anyone can create some of the less expensive forms of campaigns and promotions. Newsletters, posters, flyers in grocery store bags, public service announcements and other forms of printed materials are all very inexpensive ways to communicate campaign messages to large groups. Unfortunately, we don't always hear about these interventions because they have seldom been evaluated. To evaluate a campaign or promotion, it is often useful to seek out technical assistance from local colleges, universities or others with this experience. Alternately, some types of media campaigns, such as television spots, can be quite costly. It is useful to work with experts in the area of media development and health education to seek funding and develop the materials and messages needed for these types of campaigns.

For more information on engaging partners, go to Partnerships.

Identify your population

Typically physical activity campaigns and promotions have targeted increasing physical activity in the general population or on specific populations (e.g., mothers, children or adolescents, or individuals with existing health conditions such as obesity, high blood pressure, or high cholesterol). However, several campaigns have translated messages to suit the needs of various subgroups with regard to gender, race/ethnicity, age, or other sociodemographic characteristics.

As you start to consider your own population, it will be important to identify important aspects of your population, such as:

- Define your population. (e.g., an organization, an internet community)
- Are there subgroups within this population?
- What are the geographic boundaries?
- What are the shared social and cultural characteristics of this community?

For more information on identifying your population, go to Assessment and Prioritization and Physical Activity in Different Populations.

Once you have identified your population you will need to consider what may be the best communication channels to reach your population (e.g., television, radio, newspaper, billboards, posters, flyers, computer kiosk, video, table tents and tray liners, bus stop shelter displays, bus signs, grocery cart displays, or signs). Some communities may utilize different media channels than others or use some channels more than others (e.g., prefer radio to television or vice versa). Similarly, attention should be paid to where these media should be placed, as appropriate, to gain the attention of community members of interest (e.g., schools, worksites, shopping malls). In some cases, you may want to host or have an event to be the source of media attention (e.g., a taste test, a community walk-a-thon).

Campaigns and promotions have been implemented in a variety of settings including: schools, communities, health care facilities, recreational facilities, and worksites. For more information on settings for physical activity interventions, go to Physical Activity in Different Settings.

Example campaign and promotion strategies used by other communities:

- prerecorded public service announcements
- distribution of informational and self help booklets, flyers, brochures (direct mail, in grocery store bags, in pay checks, at health care centers, door to door)
- newsletters
- speaking tours by individuals who get frequent physical activity, experts in physical activity education
- paid and unpaid television, radio and newspaper/print advertisements (multilingual)
- special reports on local news
- magazine articles targeting various populations (e.g., teens, families, African Americans, parents)
- websites or interactive media
- email

- school vehicles including school newspapers, school planners or book covers
- cultural festivals
- talk radio with health experts
- newspaper column for health questions and responses
- special newspaper supplements
- weekly press conferences
- posters displayed in worksites, community buildings, health care facilities
- church bulletins
- billboards
- reduced fees at recreational facilities
- lotteries for successful lifestyle change
- t-shirts

Record your intervention goals and objectives

If you and your partnership have not formed your intervention goals and objectives, you will need to work with your partners to do so. Although you may refine your goals and objectives, it is important to start with some idea of what you want to accomplish for this intervention.

Example of a physical activity campaign or promotion intervention goal and objective:

- Goal: Increase the proportion of children in your community who meet physical activity recommendations.
- Objective: Increase time spent in classrooms discussing physical activity by 10%.

It may be helpful to create a logic model to organize your goals, objectives and the action steps to meet your goals and objectives. Some funding sources have very specific logic models for your partnership to use, so be aware of different requirements. For more information on developing goals and objectives, visit Preparing for Your Intervention in Readiness and Preparation.

In order to meet your goals and objectives, you may choose a campaigns or promotion as your intervention strategy to educate the public about physical activity in your community.

Example campaign and promotions channels:

- television advertisements
- newspapers
- posters
- billboards
- brochures
- other communication channels.

Assess your community capacity and needed resources

Campaigns and promotions come in a variety of shapes and sizes. Large scale, intense media campaigns involving a variety of messages, communication channels and distribution points may require a variety of different resources. The specific resources required may depend on the medium chosen for implementation of the campaign or promotion. For example, a copy machine or access to a printing facility is required for brochures and other print campaigns. Similarly, access to billboards or other locations to post messages may be required. Various audio and video equipment may be necessary for other forms of media production. You may also consider creating a resource management plan, in which you review your current resources and resource requirements and identify at what points in the intervention you will need these specific resources. As you develop your budget, be sure to incorporate the costs for these types of resources. In general, campaigns can be costly so it will be important to develop a budget and estimate costs of creating the campaign or promotion and maintaining it over time.

Campaigns and promotions may also require certain skill sets depending on the specific strategies used. For example, it may be necessary to have skills at designing messages for print, billboards, radio, or TV. Others have found it useful to get assistance from communication specialists to ensure that the message is conveyed in a simple yet complete fashion. It might also be useful to get graphic design or other forms of technical assistance depending on the medium used to transmit the message (i.e., print, video etc.). You may want to have your staff participate in some type of training to build capacity within your organization to design, develop or deliver campaign messages.

Likewise, evaluation of campaigns and promotions can be complex and may require assistance from researchers and other partners who have experience with study design, measurement development, data collection, data analysis or translation of research findings into practical implications for your community.

The Readiness and Preparation and Capacity sections provide information and resources to help you think about the resources you might need for your intervention. For specific examples of tools and resources for physical activity that have been created and used by other communities, visit Tools and Resources for Physical Activity Campaigns and Promotions.

Design your intervention activities

- *Consider your campaign messages*

Think about what you want to prompt people to get from the campaign messages and how you would like them to respond. For example, you may want people to get more physical activity or lose weight. Alternately, you may want to increase knowledge of the benefits of physical activity or ongoing contact with health care providers. These campaigns are most effective when characteristics of your population are taken into consideration and framed in a positive rather than negative way (see Assessment and Prioritization). Many different types of media strategies have been used by others (go to Tools and Resources for Physical Activity to see how these have been used).

Example media strategies:

- **Media Alert:** A short description of an upcoming event sent to media representatives 3-4 weeks before the event.
- **Letters to the Editor:** A letter to the editor of the local newspaper describing the physical activity message.
- **Radio and Television Public Service Announcements (PSA):** A public service announcement on a radio or television station can be free of charge (usually 10-second but can be a 30-second message about the benefits of physical activity).
- **Press Release:** A press release includes about 2 pages of facts about your event or announcement to grab the readers' attention; it is usually delivered about 2 weeks beforehand.
- **Press Conference:** A press conference involves about 10 minutes of information about physical activity followed by 20 minutes of questions from media representatives. The story line and responses to questions should be well-rehearsed and handouts should be available.
- **Billboards**
- **Printed materials (e.g., newsletters, brochures, posters)**
- **Signs encouraging healthy behavior**

- *Create a media list*

Once you have decided on the appropriate communication channels for your campaign or promotion, begin to list out the contact people and their information for each media outlet. Check at your local library to see if you are able to purchase a media list that has already been assembled.

- *Design your media messages*

Several different types of messages can be used to grab people's attention and encourage them to increase their physical activity. Make sure to decide not only WHAT you want to communicate but also HOW it should be presented. Consider addressing the following: who you are representing (partnership, organization), what you are doing, when, where, how and why. When possible, build your message around nationally recognized "health" days or months, local events in the community, or new events or changes to the environment.

Previous interventions have found that general or "one size fits all" messages may not be as useful in improving physical activity as targeted messages. Targeted messages are created to serve a particular group characteristic (e.g., age, gender, etc.). You may want to work with your partners to target the campaign messages to your community. Consider what messages have worked well in your community for other campaigns (health-related or not).

Campaign messages often work best when they involve multiple rather than single messages. Tie your messages together in some way so that the effects of the overall campaign or promotion can be tracked. For instance, if there are multiple public service announcements, it is helpful to develop a mechanism to tie them all together either by using the same sponsor name or by naming the campaign and indicating this theme in all of the communications. For tracking purposes, it may also be helpful to identify two or three core messages that are transmitted consistently across a variety of media venues. Support ideas from your partners with facts and figures.

Types of campaign messages you may want to include the following in your messages:

- the benefits of physical activity (see Physical Activity for the health benefits)
- the relation of physical activity to behaviors and associated health risks in the population
- the benefits of changes to the environment, policies, or increases in social support in encouraging physical activity

Go to Tools and Resources to see examples of what others have used.

- *Create a timeline and assign roles and responsibilities*

Work with your partners to decide on the timeline for the intervention as well as who will be responsible for carrying out the intervention activities. Be very specific about roles, tasks and timelines to ensure that the intervention is implemented successfully. Include information about when your message will be distributed and by what communication channels.

Identify potential barriers

Think about the potential barriers that may be encountered along the way and prepare your reaction to these barriers.

Some barriers to implementing your physical activity intervention that you might encounter:

- cost – develop a budget and estimate costs, both for developing and sustaining your campaign;
- resources – whether your partnership has members experienced in creating media messages or existing relationships with media representatives who can assist in message development;
- media representatives – be persistent in trying to get the attention of media representatives and be sure that they communicate your messages as intended;
- accessibility – ensure that most, if not all, individuals from the population will be exposed to the messages at one time or another;
- availability of media - it may be difficult to obtain radio and television buy-in to air media messages regarding physical activity. The amount of consumer information that can be given in a public service ad is severely limited by the air time or print space. Often free advertising time slots on television and radio occur when there are few viewers or listeners available; therefore, efforts to take advantage of these lower cost alternatives may not reach the your population. Lastly, challenges may exist with regard to the “priority” of television and radio stations to air physical activity education messages, if sudden news events emerge that diverts attention away from airing the health promotion messages;
- setting - conducting media campaigns at schools to promote health and resist social influences to behave in an unhealthy way may have limited impact if other sources of socialization (i.e., parents, siblings or the larger community culture) are delivering a contrasting message;

- cultural competency - campaign messages may not be culturally appropriate, and thus not fully adopted by some subgroups of the population.

Barriers that have been encountered in other campaigns or promotions, and steps to prepare for these barriers are summarized below:

- Some programs have had a difficult time obtaining approval for the specific messages that they would like to air. Working with a coalition of people to frame the message in ways that are acceptable to a wide audience can certainly assist in overcoming this barrier.
- Another potential barrier is that it is often difficult to develop the right phrasing that will result in a very short and succinct statement influencing desired attitudes or behaviors. Working with partners who have had previous media experience can assist in this regard.
- Previous programs have found that mass media campaigns are particularly useful in stimulating behavior change and creating change in public opinion as part of a broader health promotion strategy. However, by themselves, campaigns and promotions can assist in increasing the intention to get physical activity, but not necessarily the skills or access to certain necessary resources that are needed to do so. Some have suggested, therefore, that campaigns and promotions be combined with other strategies such as social support, environment and policy changes, or individual skill development.
- It is difficult to know if the information was received or read. Make sure that the medium used is accessible to the intended audience. For example, web-based materials will only be accessible to those with computers or in areas where there are public use computers.
- The specific message that is most effective or important in helping individuals to increase physical activity is not yet clear.

Plan your evaluation methods and measures

- *Pre-test your media messages*

Use focus groups or individual interviews with community members to ensure the message is appropriate for the intended audience. When testing the messages, consider how well the message is understood as intended, whether the information is clearly stated, whether the information is perceived as useful and how well the information is recalled or remembered. Work with members of the population to develop the messages through participatory approaches or focus groups. This can assist in ensuring that the messages are conveying what you intended to be conveyed.

- *Consider your evaluation strategy*

In order to determine if your campaign or promotion is working, you will need to evaluate your efforts. It is important to prepare for your evaluation early on because you need to be able to assess change in your population in order to measure the impact of your campaign messages.

As with all interventions, it is useful to consider process, impact and outcome evaluation. Process evaluation enables you to assess if your program is being implemented as intended. Campaigns and promotions might include an assessment

of how frequently the messages were run (i.e., number of times the media channel played the media spot), when they were run, and if the actual messages fit with what was intended when the messaged were developed. With campaign and promotion interventions, it may also be useful to assess the process used to develop and plan the campaign activities. This may include an assessment of the coalition processes (e.g., decision making, conflict management) and well as specific logistics (e.g., time of meeting, adequate day care, location of meeting).

Impact evaluation enables you to determine if you are achieving your intermediate objectives. Campaigns and promotion surveys can be used to measure changes knowledge, attitudes, or behaviors. It may be helpful to combine these with observations and non-intrusive assessments. Alternately, it may be useful to determine whether the number of community events or attendance at events offered in the community has increased as a result of the media messages. This might involve conducting interviews with representatives of the organizations who are hosting these events or tracking how individuals learned about the event. For campaigns or promotions, as with other types of interventions, it is also important to assess exposure to the intervention. This can be done for example through a telephone survey to the targeted audience to ask if they remember specific media messages created for the campaign or promotion. Alternately, some have met face-to-face with members of the target audience and shown the participants media messages to assess familiarity with the campaign or promotion. The latter may be a better indicator of exposure, and the former attentiveness to the media.

Remember it is important to focus the evaluation on the objectives of the campaign. If the objective was to increase knowledge, it is important to assess knowledge. Alternatively, if the intent was to improve attitudes about the disease, then it is important to assess attitudes. Similarly, it may be useful to assess if the campaign or promotion influenced readiness to change.

If you are using a comparison group, it may be particularly important to assess exposure to the campaign or promotion among both the intervention and comparison group. In addition, it may be helpful to attempt to find and use media that have identifiable limits to their range of distribution.

- *Challenges to evaluating campaigns and promotions*

There are several challenges in evaluating campaigns and promotions that should be considered:

- With campaigns and promotions, it is often difficult to establish causality (e.g., the media message caused fifty individuals to increase their physical activity). Some individuals may have changed their behaviors on their own, and other individuals may have been influenced by a friend, a co-worker, or another campaign in their area. Therefore, it is important to get as much information as possible about the reason for the behavior change. Comparison with other communities may also be helpful, and assessing why individuals decided to change their physical activity behaviors, and the association of these reasons with the specific messages conveyed in your media campaign, may be helpful.
- The exact number of media messages necessary to create change or reach the intervention objectives is not known; and it is not really feasible to

document exposure to specific messages or a total number of messages. Individuals may have difficulty remembering whether or not they have seen a message, let alone multiple messages with a similar look and feel to them.

- When the media strategy is used along with other strategies (the most effective way to create change), it is difficult to figure out which intervention strategies led to the changes that were observed in the evaluation.