Developing and Marketing Your Suicide Prevention Message: A Strategic Approach

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This presentation will cover:

- Defining social marketing and strategic message development
- Social marketing principles
- A strategic planning model
- How is suicide prevention unique?
- Examining some examples
- Group discussion and questions
What is Social Marketing?

Commercial marketing principles and techniques used to create messages designed to bring about social change.

“…not a science, but rather a professional craft…that targets complex, often socially controversial behaviors, with delayed and distant behaviors, to audiences who often do not recognize they have a problem, much less are looking for a solution.”

William Smith, 2006
Social marketing???

Social Marketing is NOT

- NOT public awareness campaign
- NOT branding
- NOT cause marketing
- NOT advertising
- NOT simply education
# Commercial vs. Social Marketing

## Commercial Marketing
- Benefit for seller
- Tangible products
- Examples:
  - Buy milk
  - Join a gym
  - Buy soap

## Social Marketing
- Benefit for society*
- Behavior change
- Examples:
  - Eat calcium
  - Exercise
  - Wash hands

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### Strategic message development...

Helps you reach identified audiences with messages that are designed...

...to affect specific behaviors

...in engaging, safe and effective ways, and

...that fit your overall program strategy.
Questions to consider

- What are you trying to change?
- Who is your target audience?
- What does your target audience currently think or believe?
- What impact do you want your message to have?
- What measures can you use?

A Planning Model

In Order to Help:

(A specific target audience)

To DO:

(A specific behavior)

We Will Address:

(Specific factors that could influence that behavior)

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Where will you get info?

- Information sources to help design an effective social marketing campaign:
  - Focus groups
  - Interviews with target audience
  - Surveys
  - Polls re: attitudes and behaviors of target population
  - Literature*

“Price”

- What the consumer must pay to obtain the product:
  - Time  Effort  Risk
  - An exchange of value
- To sell: benefit > cost. How will you overcome the barriers? You must see them from the audience’s perspective…
Two out of three…

Make the behavior

“Fun” – target audience gets some benefit

“Easy” – remove barriers

“Popular” – others in the target audience are doing it

Special considerations for suicide prevention messaging…
Safe and Effective Messaging

- Emphasize help-seeking
- Provide information on finding help
- Emphasize prevention
- List the warning signs of suicide
- List risk and protective factors
- Highlight effective treatment for mental health problems

Safe and Effective Messaging, SPRC, 2006

Don’t “normalize” suicide
  - It is muddled to say that a behavior “is socially disapproved but widespread”
- Don’t glamorize or sensationalize
- Don’t present suicide as a common event
- Don’t present it as inexplicable
- Don’t present it as a result of stress only

Safe and Effective Messaging, SPRC, 2006
Reducing Stigma

- Is stigma truly a barrier to the behaviors you are trying to change?
- Is the stigma about mental illness? Depression? Help-seeking? Your on-campus service?
- Three strategies to counter stigma:
  - Protest
  - Education
  - Contact

Messages that “stick”

- Simple – use analogies
- Unexpected – develop jarring, unexpected messages
- Concrete – use specific language and details
- Credentialed – rely on authorities or testable ideas
- Emotional – tap into negative or positive feelings
- Stories – tell stories about real people
Other considerations

- Localized information
- Culturally appropriate
- Timing
- Dosage – repetition of message
- Credible messenger
- Credible channels

Measure your results

- What behavior do you want to change?
- How will you know if it did?
- Something tangible—calls to a hotline, donations
- Can be a proxy for the real results you want to know
Feeling Blue?

Reach out to others.
The University Counseling Center can help.

210 E. Howes NW
Suite 120
(509) 394-3100
psych@geiserhsu.edu
25 ways to blow off steam

1. Let in a round of DDR at MBG. Make fast moves, get attention and laugh at your mistakes.
2. Bake cookies for your floor. This low-stress activity gets people out of their rooms and your mind off your problems.
3. Take a walk around the "Emerald Necklace" along the Charles River and the Boston Esplanade.
4. Ride the T out to somewhere new. No reason, just get off-cameral. Call a friend who's not at MIT. Stay in touch and share the best and worst parts of life at MIT.
5. Grab a hot vanilla from Tocelle. Enjoy the odd music selections.
6. Close your door, turn up the music and sing along. Pretend your neighbors can't hear you; dancing is optional.
7. Collect bubble wrap, Stomp or squeak. Refill Repeal.
8. Take your work elsewhere. Sometimes moving into a lounge or a classroom can help change the mood and make the project go easier.
9. Laaugh. The best sites include Harvard Square and the Boston Common.
10. Work a book. You can leave this world and get wrapped up in another. The Boston Public Library (off the T at Copley) will give you a free account with proof of residence.
11. Get a beer. Whether you feel it or not, sometimes lack of sleep catches up to you.
12. Wash it off with a long hot shower. Try out refreshing soaps, like peppermint or eucalyptus. You'll feel good and smell good.

15. If you need an ear or some sympathy, call home. It may sound silly, but in many cases you're in a position that no one in your family has been in, and you'll be surprised what your family will do to help you through it.
16. Look to the future. That can keep your hopes up when the term is dragging. Daydreaming can be a virtue.
18. Reel to the weight room. Wear yourself out, feel and look better afterward. Rhythm and physical exertion will bring challenges into focus.
19. Sketch out what you know and weigh your options. It works for problem sets, but try it out for people problems, too. Seeing your choices also can help you calm any overwhelming emotions.
20. Find someone else who's been banging their head against some other wall (metaphorically, of course) and head outside for a primal scream. So what if people stare?
21. Write a note. Leave it on someone's desk (at someone's desk, or tell them) and head to the gym or watch a movie. If someone knows what's going on, or tells them, they'll get you down. Read letters make you think harder and put in more effort than a card.
22. Help someone else. Reflect on your life while helping with chores or homework, or just make a good ear for someone else.
23. Don't push things; don't push off. Saying "when the FSE's done, then it's warmer out," then "when I have the money, then I'll camp," means things never get done. Ignore the whenevers and get going. It'll be one less thing on your to-do list.
24. Recheck your priorities. If your work or your relationship is getting you down, is it something you really want to continue? Getting to know yourself better is a big step toward being happy.
25. It's preachy but true: Don't do something you'll regret. Even when things really suck, you don't have to let things get out of control. Making bad choices with your safety, mind-altering substances and your temper can mean own bigger messes.
Real Men Real Depression

“There were days when I thought I’d never be myself again.”

A Planning Model

PLANNING MODEL FOR PREVENTION MARKETING

In Order to Help:

(A specific target audience)

To DO:

(A specific behavior)

We Will Address:

(Specific factors that could influence that behavior)

Academy for Educational Development
Resources

- Social Marketing Toolkit
  www.SoundPartners.org
- “Why Bad Ads Happen to Good Causes”
  www.agoodmanonline.com
- Suicide Prevention Resource Center
  www.sprc.org Search for: Social Marketing
- MIT’s campaign //web.mit.edu/savetfp/

References

  Available fulltext free online at http://www.atypon-link.com/GPI/doi/pdf/10.1521/suli.35.2.134.62871

Available online at http://www.adscenter.org/archtel_pdfs/StigmaContact.pdf


References

  Available fulltext free online at

More references

- Smith WA. Social marketing: an overview of approach and effects. 2006. *Injury Prevention* 12 (Suppl 1); i38-i43
- Suicide Prevention Resource Center. 2006. *Safe and Effective Messaging for Suicide Prevention*. Available online at
Available from SAMHSA’s National Mental Health Information Center
- National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: Signs of Suicide wallet cards, online at http://www.mentalhealth.samhsa.gov/publications/allpubs/walletcard/engwalletcard.asp
- National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: Assessing Suicide Risk: Initial Tips for Counselors wallet cards, online (item # SVP06-0153) at http://store.mentalhealth.org/publications/ordering.aspx

Van Orden KA, Joiner Jr. TE, Hollar D, Rudd MD, Mandrusiak M, Silverman MM. 2006. A test of the effectiveness of a list of suicide warning signs for the public. SLTB; 36(3): 272-287