Messages that Resonate: Communicating the Value of Injury and Violence Prevention to the Media

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Agenda

- Target Audiences
- Message Development
- Media Engagement
Who is a Target Audience?
Opinion Makers

- Elected officials
- Appointed officials (ie: city managers)
- Business and community partners
- Public health thought leaders (ie: foundations, think tanks)
- Media
Engaging the Media

• The media can help you:
  -- Reach important audiences with valuable information
  -- Educate policymakers, community partners and the public
  -- Position you as an expert resource
  -- Raise the visibility and perceived value of your LHD

• Get to know local reporters

• Work with PIO to develop press materials

• Be prepared!
What’s in a Message?
Messages that Resonate

- Tailored for different target audiences
- Dynamic, memorable, and local
- Less is more
- Convey a complete idea and satisfy these criteria:
  -- Define an issue in a specific way
  -- Identify the cause of a problem
  -- Be short and easy to understand
  -- Indicate a course of action
  -- Is linked to something that’s already in the news
  -- Is intriguing to your neighbor
Define Your Message

• Frame messages to answer “So what?”
• Don’t bury your message in details or jargon
• Stories are better than statistics
• Use stories to illustrate what you seek to achieve
  -- Success stories substantiate continued investment
  -- Innovative stories demonstrate public health’s ability to adapt to challenges
  -- Hardship stories reinforce when you are forced to do “less with less”
Stories Define Messages

• Which message is more memorable?
  1. “It is imperative that innovative and effective injury and violence prevention programs work to prevent premature deaths, particularly among vulnerable populations of children, young families, and older adults.”
  2. “Individuals can live healthier, safer, and more fulfilling lives by taking steps to protect themselves from injuries and prevent violence from occurring.”
Messages on Injury and Violence Prevention

- Principles of messaging apply to any public policy area
- Do not dwell on the problem. People want to know about solutions, what will be accomplished, and how much it will cost.
- Describe LHD’s role in IVP:

  When local health departments join forces with community leaders and individuals to implement violence prevention measures, we can help more people live fulfilling lives, safe from hurt and harm.
Got News?
Newsworthy Messages

• Not all news is the same
• You might have news if your program, project, report, or event:
  -- Is something different today than yesterday
  -- Is surprising, unexpected, counterintuitive
  -- Is the first, biggest, most comprehensive
  -- Raises new issues, problems, solutions
  -- Is linked to something that is already in the news
  -- Is intriguing to your neighbor
Media 101

• The media must find your news compelling
• Choose the appropriate message delivery tool
  -- Press release
  -- Press statement
  -- Media advisory
• Plan your messages prior to an interview
• Practice!
Message Delivery Tools

• **Press release** – written material directed at the news media to announce something newsworthy; provides reporters with basics needed to develop a news story to generate a feature story.

• **Press statement** – an official announcement, commendation, or account of a news story issued to news media for them to make your position known to the public.

• **Media advisory** – invites journalists to an event that may or may not be public, with the aim of having the event, or the information released during the event, covered by the news media
  -- Provides Who?, What?, When?, Where?, and Why?
  -- Not meant for public eyes
NACCHO Contact Information

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NACCHO Resources

- www.naccho.org/advocacy/LHDcommunications/media.cfm
- www.naccho.org/pressroom
- http://www.naccho.org/topics/HPDP/injuryprevention/Index.cfm