

Step Eight

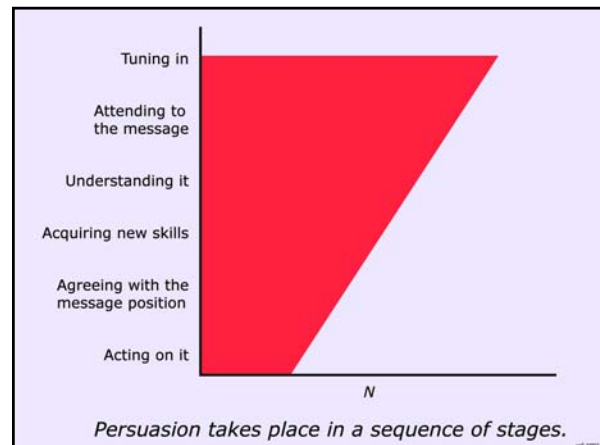
Message Development

McGuire's Hierarchy

- Truly persuasive health communication messages are difficult to create
- Behaviour change is most difficult.
- McGuire's Hierarchy is one theory that helps explain why messages fail or succeed.

McGuire's: Before taking action audiences must:

- Tune in (exposure)
- Attend to the message
- Like it, maintain interest
- Understand it
- Generate related cognitions
- Acquire relevant skills
- Agree with the message position (attitude change)
- Store new position in memory
- Retrieve of the new position from memory when relevant
- Decide to act on the basis of retrieved position
- Act on it
- Integrate behaviour into lifestyle
- Recruit others to behave likewise



Input communication variables

- Successfully accomplishing these steps depends variables such as:
 - » characteristics of the message source (e.g. *demographics, attractiveness, credibility*).
 - » design of the message (e.g. *appeal used, organization, style, repetitiveness*);
 - » channel characteristics (e.g. *context, directness*); and
 - » characteristics of the person who receives the message (e.g. *demographics, ability, personality, lifestyle, etc.*).

THCU Message Review Tool

12 Effective Message Criteria



- Various communication variables and what we know about their ability to impact on behaviour change.
- This is not an exact science. What increases success of reaching one step, may decrease success at another step.
 - » For example, fast paced, flashy messages may grab attention, but hinder understanding.

Health Communication Message Review Tool				
	Excellent	Very Good	Fair	Poor
1. The messages will get and maintain the attention of the audience.				
2. The strongest points are given at the beginning of the message.				
3. The message is clear (i.e. it should be easy for the audience to point out the actions you are asking them to take. How? What the incentive or reasons for taking those actions as well as the evidence for the incentives and any background information or definitions).				
4. The actions you are asking the audience to take is reasonably easy.				
5. The messages use incentive effectively (incentives are type of incentive used, the audience can do the incentive presented and the audience thinks the incentives are realistic and likely).				
6. Good evidence for, strength, and benefits is provided.				
7. The messages are seen as a credible source of information.				
8. Messages are believable.				
9. The messages use an appropriate tone for the audience (for example, funny, serious, dramatic).				
10. The messages use an appeal that is appropriate for the audience (i.e. rational or emotional). These appeals are used, the audience is provided with an easy solution.				
11. The messages will not harm or be offensive to people who see it. This includes avoiding 'victim blaming'.				
12. Clarity is displayed throughout.				

FINAL DECISION

☐ Use
☐ Lose
☐ Adapt

i. The message is clearly linked to a behavioural goal



- Average effect of a large, well-researched campaign is 5% behaviour change
- Study of 37 fruit and vegetable campaigns found average 8%
- Campaigns in schools are generally more successful (up to 25% behaviour change)
- Canadian knowledge is already quite high – awareness is not the problem

Behaviour change examples



- Check your BMI
- Track your television viewing
- Take the stairs
- Drink chocolate milk instead of pop



Criteria 1: The message must get and maintain attention



- If you don't capture and maintain attention, you cannot be effective!
- Different techniques will capture different audiences – messages must always be tested.



Ways to capture attention



- To make ads
 - » Attractive
 - » Interesting
 - » Entertaining
 - » Stimulating
- Consider using
 - » Parody
 - » Suspense
 - » Word play
 - » Sensuality
 - » Emotionally involving scenes
 - » Humour
 - » Vivid visuals
 - » Striking statements
 - » Lively language
 - » Fascinating facts
 - » Memorable slogans
- Use high quality creative (text, graphics, visuals)

On the media environment and obesity



- Media saturation
- Sophisticated food company marketing
- Exposure is key

Apply it!

- build partnership, perhaps with private sector
- emphasize new information
- acquire donated time
- reconsider mass media if you can't achieve good exposure

Criteria 2: Put strongest points at beginning of message



- Position most critical information early in the message.
- Audiences who lose interest or become distracted will still process key points.



Apply it!

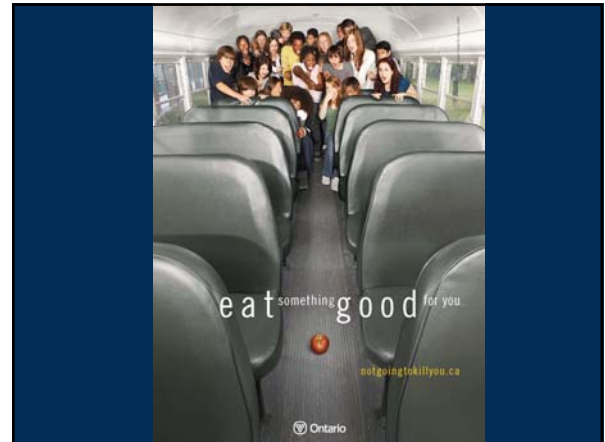


- Focus test
- Ask what people remember
- Ask about gut reaction.

Criteria 3: The message must be clear



- Can the audience identify the main message points?
 - » Now What
 - » So What
 - » What



Elements that can help or hinder clarity



- language and reading level;
- pace/speed;
- amount of content;
- statistics;
- background (text, graphics, music, etc.); and
- repetition.

On obesity



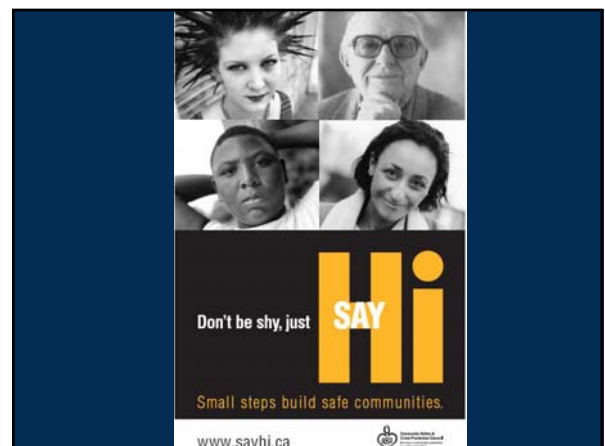
- Jury is out about whether simple or more complex is better when it comes to nutrition
- There is great confusion about nutrition and nutrition claims
- Focus on food, rather than nutrients
- Understand of the message has been found to be the most critical factor in effectiveness of mass media physical activity campaigns

Criteria 4: The action you are requesting is reasonably easy (1)



- Sometimes behaviour takes too much effort and sacrifice.
- This can be overcome with easy and appealing baby steps.
- Per Witte's EPPM, likely to increase self-efficacy

From Atkin, C. Theory and Principles of Media Health Campaigns. In Rice, R. & Atkin, C. (Ed.). Public Communication Campaigns. 3rd Ed. 2001.



Criteria 4: The action you are requesting is reasonably easy (2)



- Be aware that target behaviours can be arranged along a continuum according to:
 - » degree of time,
 - » effort,
 - » money,
 - » psychological, and
 - » social costs.

Apply it to obesity



- Choose small steps
- Find specific areas of misunderstanding through formative research
- Consider supportive policies
- Choose initiatives that make it social
- Help people make their own environments supportive – e.g. avoid distracted eating, eat with people, make a pact with a friend
- Show how others have done it – give them a face and be specific

Criteria 5: Make effective use of incentives



- Changing behaviour is more than just asking
- Must be a reason why they should care (So What)
- Different kinds of incentives:
 - » Physical
 - » Economic
 - » Psychological
 - » Moral-Legal
 - » Social.
- For or against/Why or why not
- Severity and Susceptibility (Kim Witte, EPPM)

5. Ways to Maximize Effectiveness of Incentives (2)



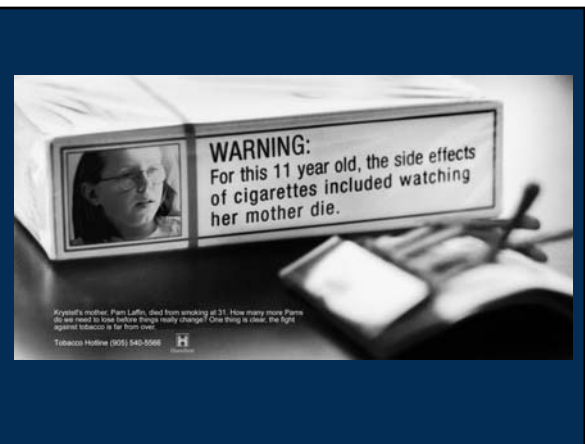
- Use both positive and negatives incentives.
- Try to use more than one incentive per message.
- Use multiple appeals across a series of messages.
- Based on content presented by Dr. Charles Atkin and 2000 Special Topics, THCU Workshop.

5. Ways to Maximize Effectiveness of Incentives (3)



- Use new appeals for familiar subjects.
- Make sure that all incentives build on the existing values of the audience.
 - » Does the audience care about the incentive you are using?
 - » Is it relevant to them?
 - » Is it applicable to their situation and needs?
 - » (Rather than just your priorities and needs!)

- Based on content presented by Dr. Charles Atkin and 2000 Special Topics, THCU Workshop.



Apply it to obesity




- Health outcomes are often not the best incentive
- Be sure of the barriers of your audience – e.g. time; skills; family time

Criteria 6: Provide good evidence for threats and benefits (1)



- You must provide credible evidence that threats and benefits are *real and likely*.
- They must also be convinced that the behaviour you recommend will actually alleviate the threat discussed (I.e. Response Efficacy)

IN 2004, GUNS MURDERED
5 PEOPLE IN NEW ZEALAND
37 IN SWEDEN
56 IN AUSTRALIA
73 IN ENGLAND AND WALES
184 IN CANADA
AND 11,344 IN THE UNITED STATES
GOD BLESS AMERICA.



Brady Campaign
To Prevent Gun Violence
www.bradycampaign.org

Want to make a difference? Join www.bradycampaign.org

Apply it to obesity



- Many consumers don't believe that small steps are easy, or effective

Criteria 7: The messenger must be a credible source



- The messenger is the model appearing in message who delivers information, demonstrates behavior, or provides a testimonial.
- The source messenger is helpful in:
 - » attracting attention,
 - » personalizing by modeling actions and consequences, and
 - » making message memorable.
- Above information presented by Dr. Chuck Atkin at 2000 Special Topics, THCU workshop).

Credibility



- Messenger credibility is enhanced by:
 - » Power
 - » Perceived expertise
 - » Perceived honesty
 - » Attractiveness
 - » Being similar to the target audience

Selection of Messengers



- In selecting the appropriate messenger, the crucial factor is which component of influence model needs a boost. For example
 - » celebrities help draw attention to a dull topic,
 - » experts enhance response efficacy,
 - » ordinary people heighten self-efficacy,
 - » victims convey the severity of harmful outcomes, and
 - » victims who share similar characteristics of the audience should augment susceptibility claims.
- Atkin (1994) provides an elaborate discussion of strengths and weaknesses of various types of messengers
- Above information presented by Dr. Chuck Atkin at 2000 Special Topics, THCU workshop).



Apply it to obesity



- Real people are credible
- Information received from schools are considered very credible to children and parents
- Test the credibility of your organization and sources

Criteria 8: Messages must be believable



- Messages must be realistic.
- They should not make extreme claims or use extreme examples.
- Avoid highly dramatic episodes.
- Do not provide misleading information
- The audience must believe the information is accurate.



Apply it to obesity

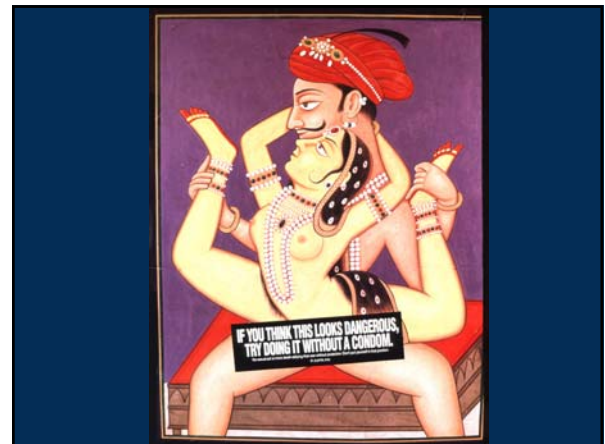


- Avoid inflated claims like:
 - » Losing weight is easy
 - » You'll feel a million times better

Criteria 9: Use an appropriate tone (1)

THE HEALTH COMMUNICATION UNIT
T H C U

Light	Heavy
Humorous	Angry
Whimsical	Outrage
Ironical	Injustice
Cheery	Dramatic



Apply it to obesity

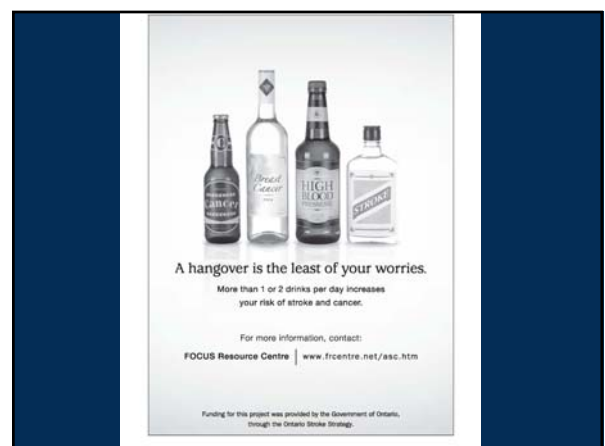
THE HEALTH COMMUNICATION UNIT
T H C U

- Many people already have negative associations with food and physical activity, therefore some studies suggest that a positive, reinforcing tone is best
- Test it!

Criteria 10: Use an appropriate appeal (1)

THE HEALTH COMMUNICATION UNIT
T H C U

- Rational – works best with audiences that are already involved and interested
- Emotional – can get the attention of people who are not already engaged in the topic
- Positive
- Negative



Apply it to obesity

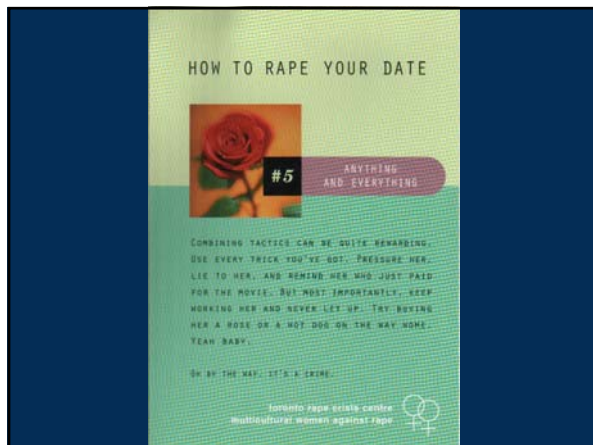


- Segment your audience carefully. Different appeals for different segments may be warranted.
- Consult the literature on fear appeals -

Criteria 11: Do not harm the audience



- Message may unintentionally reach audiences it wasn't intended for.
- Therefore, developers must consider the views of anyone who might encounter the message.
- This is mainly a problem for negative messages that use threats or fear appeals.



Apply it to obesity

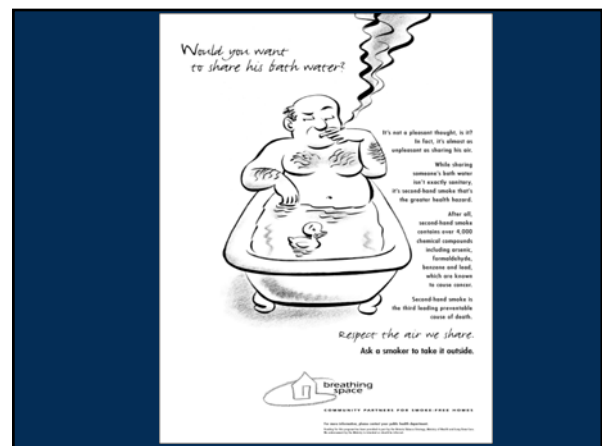


- Be sensitive and responsive to financial and social barriers to your recommended actions
- Be sensitive to stigmatizing and traumatizing people who already have serious problems
- Don't forget supportive environments

Criteria 12: Display identity throughout



- A campaign identity includes
 - » a mission,
 - » vision,
 - » a positioning statement/copy platform,
 - » a slogan,
 - » name,
 - » images,
 - » logo.
- Identity defines, distinguishes, and synergizes.



Apply it to obesity



- The VERB and TRUTH campaigns have many lessons to teach about use of identity for a public health issue

Be consistent

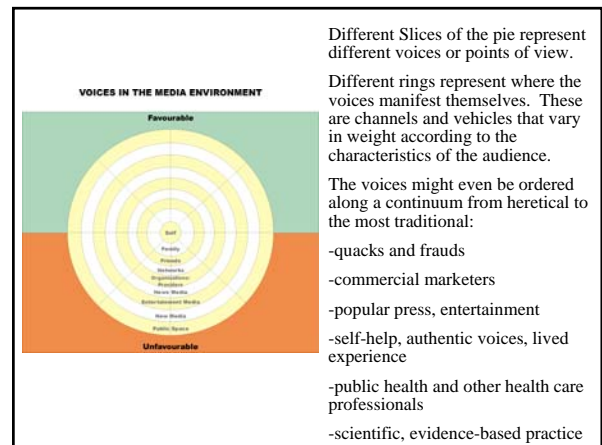


- The message should be consistent with:
 - » other campaign communication,
 - » other related campaigns,
 - » scientific evidence,
 - » well-accepted guidelines

Apply it to obesity



- Scan the environment



- Plan to influence the intended audience in a very strategic way. Look at each 'media voice' and select a method:
 - » Support
 - » Supplement
 - » Sell (new persuasive messages – social marketing)
 - » Shape (collaborate with reporters)
 - » Subvert (e.g. adbusters)
 - » Squash
 - » Shame (denormalization strategies)
 - » Sue

Apply it to obesity



- Work toward standard regional, provincial or national messaging

Resource Rating Task



- Review the resource assigned to your pair.
- Using the message review criteria, rate the resource on the 3 criteria assigned to you.
- Be prepared to give a brief (30 second) report: your bottom line assessment and one or two reasons to support this assessment.
- You have 10 minutes for the task.

Debriefing



- What I learned...
- What I struggled with...
- In 'real life' I would...
- In 'real life' I would not...