Disseminating Program Achievements and Evaluation Findings to Garner Support

Many programs collect valuable and informative data on their programs and services but they may not know how to share the data with the public and with influential people at the local and state levels to ensure that the findings will be used and that programmatic approaches and interventions can be replicated. This **Brief** defines dissemination; reasons to disseminate information; channels and formats to use in dissemination; what information to disseminate; how to match information to particular audiences; and the timing of dissemination.

Definition of Dissemination

Dissemination is making information available and usable to various audiences through a wide variety of channels or formats. A channel is a route of communication such as a news conference or posters. A format refers to the actual layout for communicating the information. Information can be communicated through both oral and written formats.

Reasons to Disseminate

There are a number of reasons to disseminate your program information to different audiences. Your program or initiative may: make clear the health issues your program addresses and what kind of support would be useful; create positive publicity and render your organization more competitive in acquiring financial and inkind resources; and ultimately, influence change in programs, policies, or practices.

Channels and Formats to Be Used

Both the channels and the formats to disseminate information should take into account the needs of different audiences, the type of information you wish to provide, and its purpose. Print formats, such as brochures, onepage descriptions, newsletters, executive summaries, or technical reports can be used to reach the public, conference and workshop participants, or policymakers and donors. Channels that work well in disseminating evaluation results to the public include slide presentations; news releases or press conferences; radio and television coverage; and public meetings to educate attendees. Oral presentations, videos, and displays can often be more memorable and effective than written reports and can also encourage full discussion.

Email listservs and webbased resources are useful in reaching stakeholders and others who share the same interests and concerns as your program staff.

Deciding What Information to Disseminate

The type of data and information you decide to disseminate depends on your audience; their needs, time, and ability to understand the information; and the intended uses. Examples of information that can be disseminated to various audiences include 5year program logic models to visually illustrate your program activities, outputs, outcomes, and 5-year goals; and descriptive information on the activities and program strategies you are using to reach these 5-year goals.

An example of evaluation data that should be disseminated includes the **Indicators for School Health Programs (Indicators)**, which describe the extent to which you have reached the groups you intended to (participants, schools, districts, external partners, and regional support units).

The **Indicators** or other process data can be used to show improvement in the level of outputs (services or products produced) or shortterm outcomes, such as increased knowledge, more positive attitudes, or healthy behavior change based on questionnaires or assessments administered before and after events.

Matching Information to Particular Audiences

Communication is important throughout and following the completion of your program. Very early in the process, you should decide who needs to be informed of the outcomes of your evaluation and how you will report the information to them.

Answers to the questions below can assist you in planning your dissemination efforts.

- Who is your audience? (e.g., directors and staff at the State Board of Education)

- What does your audience need to know or what are their specific interests? (e.g., improvement in outcomes, such as increased knowledge, more positive attitudes, or healthy behavior change)

- What do you hope to gain by disseminating this information or these results? (e.g., to justify the existence of the program or to leverage additional funding)

- How will you communicate about the ongoing program? (e.g., briefings at board meetings, progress reports with a summary, and verbal presentations)

- How will you communicate about the program upon its completion? (e.g., final written report with a summary, verbal debriefing, videos, and oral presentations).

These questions need to be answered for all audiences that your program may wish to reach, such as parents, directors of other agencies, policymakers, and statelevel legislators.

When to Disseminate Information

Information should be disseminated to the community throughout the 5-year project period. However, some particularly appropriate points occur at the time of special events or critical junctures for your organization such as a new achievement, recognitions or an award, or in the midst of a fundraising campaign.

Alternatively, you might time dissemination to coincide with events that relate to the issues that you are addressing, for example, notice of a medical breakthrough in HIV prevention or release of the results of a large survey, such as your Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS), on the population you are reaching in your own program.

Resources

Brief 11: Preparing an Evaluation Report. Available at http://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/evaluation/pdf/brief11.pdf

University of Kansas. Community Toolbox. *Chapter 6 Promoting Interest in Community Issues*. Available at https://ctb.ku.edu/en/table-of-contents/participation/promoting-interest

For further information or assistance, contact the Evaluation Research Team at ert@cdc.gov. You can also contact us via our website: http://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/evaluation/index.htm.