

## Strategic Communication Workshop Series Session 1 Notes

May 14, 2018

**Topic:** Laying the Foundation – Strategies for Effective Communication

**Meeting Recording:** <http://edc.adobeconnect.com/p3sl8ah9rxfm/>

**Main Takeaways from the meeting (full notes below the table):**

Topic	Takeaways	Contact
Welcome	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We have such a diverse group participating in this workshop series. We have 41% Campus Garrett Lee Smith Grantees, 22% State Garrett Lee Smith Grantees, 11% Tribal Garrett Lee Smith Grantees, 8% National Strategy for Suicide Prevention Grantees, 11% State Coordinators. Learn more about your peers in the online supplement, <a href="http://go.edc.org/commworkshop">http://go.edc.org/commworkshop</a></li> <li>• The principles and concepts of effective communication will be relevant across various settings and we will try our best to highlight a diverse group of presenters to cater to your specific setting.</li> </ul>	Ashleigh Husbands ( <a href="mailto:achusbands@edc.org">achusbands@edc.org</a> ) or Irene Cho ( <a href="mailto:icho@edc.org">icho@edc.org</a> )
Group Norms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We have many experts in the room and the more we engage with each other, the richer the learning experience will be. Thanks for staying engaged throughout the session.</li> <li>• Review the supplemental activity before each session. You can review Get Ready for Session 2 <a href="#">here</a>.</li> <li>• If you have any more suggestions for group norms, please send an email to Ashleigh or Irene.</li> </ul>	Ashleigh Husbands ( <a href="mailto:achusbands@edc.org">achusbands@edc.org</a> ) or Irene Cho ( <a href="mailto:icho@edc.org">icho@edc.org</a> )
Laying the foundation – strategies for effective communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focusing on prevention messages that focus on hope, recovery, and resilience</li> <li>• Features of successful communication materials               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Systematically planned</li> <li>○ Communication tied to overall strategy</li> <li>○ Clear audiences and goals                   <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Clear call to action</li> </ul> </li> <li>○ Pre-tested</li> <li>○ Evaluated</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Moving beyond awareness into action</li> </ul>	Kerri Nickerson ( <a href="mailto:knickerson@edc.org">knickerson@edc.org</a> )
Discussion – Key Takeaway	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clearly defining the communication goal</li> <li>• Narrowing down on the target audience</li> <li>• Engaging the target audience early on to develop your messaging</li> </ul>	Ashleigh Husbands ( <a href="mailto:achusbands@edc.org">achusbands@edc.org</a> ) or Irene Cho ( <a href="mailto:icho@edc.org">icho@edc.org</a> )

## Laying the foundation: strategies for effective communication

- **Current Messaging**
  - An expert panel was convened by the Action Alliance to discuss their goal of changing the public conversation about suicide and a few themes became clear. Currently, the field of suicide prevention and those working in mental health promotion focus heavily on problem severity when communicating about suicide. In doing this, we are collectively adding to the negative narrative about suicide being an epidemic that we cannot seem to find the means to prevent.
  - **Proactively shaping the conversation to include more prevention messages that focus on hope, recovery, and resilience.** Check out the closing plenary from 2018 Garrett Lee Smith Grantee Meeting – [Changing the Conversation from Suicide to Suicide Prevention](#) if you haven't yet.
- **National Action Alliance for Suicide Prevention [Framework for Successful Messaging](#)**



Strategy is front and center in the model. We want strategy to be at the heart of our communications planning. So the very first question should be whether it makes sense to use communication as part of our suicide prevention strategy in the first place. You may find that your suicide prevention goals focus around something that communication might not really suit. Communication work can also take up a lot of time and resources, so it's important to think through how best to use your limited resources.

- Review the [key planning steps](#) from the Framework if you haven't yet. This will be a great guide to plot out your communication work.
- **Clarify your audience**
  - Narrow down your audience based on whose behavior you hope to change!
- **Set communication objectives**
  - What do you want the audience to do? (Making sure you are incorporating a clear call to action)
    - What exactly do you want them to change?

## Discussion

- **Strategies on how the participants have overcome some of the identified common challenges** (i.e., audience engagement, lack of resources)
  - Katey Parsons, Red Rocks Community College: We have a Peer Counseling Program, which is where we ran things past students and received feedback before going forward with messaging. This saved us some effort into areas student were not engaged in, like Facebook, etc.
  - Robin Hetzler, Maine CDC: Collaborating with multiple partners to share the burden of cost for communication messaging, seeking in-kind services.