



Strategic Communications

How to Communicate About Health

Danville Health Collaborative Meeting

July 19, 2017

Sarah Moore

Communications and
Marketing Manager



Warm Up Question

What is most challenging for you when it comes to communicating about the Health Collaborative?



HC Communications Guide

HC Communications Guide



Communications Guidelines

Internal Use Only
2017

Welcome to the Health Collaborative!

We are excited to have your perspectives, assets, and skills become part of our efforts to improve community-wide health in the Dan River Region. We look forward to collaborating with you! We are sharing these Communications Guidelines to support your contribution to helping advance the Collaborative's goals and ensure that we are working toward our mission in every corner of the region.

Please review these Guidelines and contact Elyse Jardine at ejardine@institutephi.org if you have any questions. Thank you!

About the Health Collaborative

The Health Collaborative unites organizations and creates action to support health for all in the Dan River Region. Like many communities across the country, the Dan River Region faces high rates of poverty and preventable chronic disease. What is unique to us, however, is the dedication of many organizations, residents, and community groups working together to improve the region's health. Recognizing that our challenges are too complex for anyone to solve alone, a group of passionate professionals from different sectors have joined the Health Collaborative in order to create a set of shared goals, strategies, and actionable steps to improve community-wide health.

This involves a focus on integrated strategies that make the places where people live, work, learn, and play healthier. These strategies can include short-term promotions and programs and longer-term strategies like changing policies, reshaping the built environment, and improving systems that shape our lives, like the education system, parks system, and housing system, among others.

The Health Collaborative is promoting action to support health for all by working in four main areas:

- Active Living
- Healthy Eating
- Access to Health Care
- Healthy Spaces

To learn more about the Health Collaborative's goals, read our [Health for All Action Plan](#).

Mission

The mission statement defines our Collaborative. It explains what we are, what we do, and for whom. It serves as the foundation of our work and how we share that work with others. It is also a frame for how the Health Collaborative thinks about itself internally and lays the groundwork for an effective communications strategy externally. The Health Collaborative's mission statement is:

The Health Collaborative unites organizations and creates action to support health for all in the Dan River Region.

In addition to a mission statement, it is helpful for organizations to have a supporting "stairway pitch" paragraph that expands upon the shorter statement. This allows us to address some of the nuances of our work. The Health Collaborative's stairway pitch is:

Each organization in the Dan River Region has the potential to improve community-wide health. And when communities thrive, the region thrives. By combining the strengths of organizations from multiple sectors, the Health Collaborative identifies, deepens, and expands local strategies that work to improve the lives of all people who live here. Together, we are creating a greater impact on the region than each of us could make on our own.

This statement does not need to be memorized, but the overall message should be familiar, as it could naturally lead into calls to action to the Health Collaborative's focus audiences. Please see the 2017 Health Collaborative Communication Plan for examples.

Communications Procedure

As the Health Collaborative expands its impact in the Dan River Region, it is important to maintain the Collaborative's reputation by ensuring that communications activities, types of events, and brand recognition are consistent and aligned with the Collaborative's goals. This consistency will allow us to be more effective at achieving our mission. In addition, using the Health Collaborative name or logo in unapproved ways may cause confusion in the community and result in less resident engagement and reduced organizational effectiveness.

To make sure that all the activities of Collaborative members are aligned and that our efforts are best serving our mission, please follow the procedure below when developing an initiative, project, event, or printed or digital material that reflects on or is associated with the Health Collaborative. We appreciate your help in maintaining a well-recognized and trusted Health Collaborative brand!

1. Review this Communications Guidelines document.
2. Read the [Action Plan](#) for a deeper understanding of the Collaborative's goals.

HC Communications Guide

3. Before launching a new initiative, project, or event, share the idea with your Collaborative action team to ensure that it is on-message and furthers the goals of the Health Collaborative. In the conversation, ask yourselves the following questions:

- Does this idea focus on changing policies, systems, or physical characteristics of a community, *rather than* only changing the choices of individual people?
- Is this an idea that could affect longer-term outcomes, or is it a one-time event? Focus on long-term solutions when possible.
- Does this idea leave out certain members of the community, like people with disabilities, people with low incomes, people of color, people who are learning English, or older or younger people? If so, how you can make sure that their challenges are addressed and that their perspectives are part of the idea?
- Do residents have the opportunity to participate in designing and leading this initiative, project or event?
- Does this project help residents build skills to advocate for healthy living opportunities where they live, work or play?
- Does this project address access? Are you going to residents or requiring them to come to you?

4. After finalizing an idea, share it with Elyse Jardine (ejardine@institutephi.org) for approval before developing additional materials.
5. All communications related to the Health Collaborative should use the correct logo, font, colors, and other templates that have been provided to Collaborative members. These are linked in the "Visual Branding" section of this document.
6. Please do not create new logos, icons, graphics, or other collateral that do not follow the Health Collaborative Brand Guide (linked in the Visual Branding section of this document). Please send any materials you create to Elyse Jardine for review before publishing or distributing. This provides an opportunity for a "fresh pair of eyes" to catch typos or formatting errors.
7. If you are contacted by the media to discuss the Health Collaborative and/or your contribution to it, please alert Elyse. This ensures that:
 - Media exposure is leveraged for collective goals.
 - Health Collaborative staff can cross-promote your efforts.
 - Communications policies of the Danville Regional Foundation, which provides funding for the Health Collaborative, are met.
8. For questions about issues related to marketing, messaging, or communications in general, contact Elyse Jardine.

Messaging Tips for Talking about Community Health

One of the biggest challenges facing community health advocates is changing people's understanding of health and what causes or prevents it. The dominant cultural narrative about health is that it is part genetics, part personal responsibility, and part health care. The general public understands preventive healthcare, but does so primarily when talking about the outbreak of contagious disease. In the cases of preventable chronic diseases like obesity and diabetes, people primarily associate health outcomes with individuals' choices.

However, we know that where we live affects our health in profound ways. The Health Collaborative wants to shift the conversation about community health in the Dan River Region toward one that includes ways to make places healthier to live in—thus improving the health of far more people at a time. This will require an ability to know which words, phrases, and frames of thinking to use and which to avoid. And when communicating with the general public, there are other things to take into consideration, like reading levels and language barriers.

Shifting the health conversation toward an integrated approach that includes policies, systems, environments, and supportive programming is not easy! And finding the right message depends on communication goals, audiences' values and beliefs, and their lived experiences. Finding the right message is a process that occurs during ongoing dialogue and relationship-building.

The following resources and tips are listed as references to support Collaborative members in starting this process. Example messages are also listed below as a start. While they reflect current messaging best practices, they have not been tested in your community and with your key audiences. Over time, they will inevitably change as your work has an impact on the Dan River Region.

- [Tips for Effective Messaging to Support Public Policy Change](#) — This resource provides tips that not only apply to messaging around policy change, but can be applied to systems change and built environment changes, too. The resource outlines which phrases and terms to use, and which to avoid.
- [Messaging for Food and Activity Environments](#) — Berkeley Media Studies Group provides a wealth of information around healthy community messaging, messaging examples, and resources on a variety of health strategy areas.
- [Talking about rural issues and community health](#) — The Frameworks Institute conducts cutting-edge research into the cultural frames that influence people's responses to messaging. Reviewing these will be helpful as you begin to talk with elected officials, decision makers, and community residents and leaders about the Health Collaborative's work.
- Another helpful resource is [What Is Policy, Systems and Environmental \(PSE\) Change?](#)
- Avoid technical terms and jargon. For more on communicating with clarity, see [How Changing Your Writing Style Can Improve Community Engagement](#).
- Use examples with familiar situations (hypothetical if necessary) with every-day language. For example, when explaining policy or environmental change to someone new to the idea, you could say,

HC Communications Guide



Messaging Tips for Talking about the Health Collaborative

While the Mission statement is the easiest way to tell others about what the Collaborative does, there will be many times when more detail is needed. The following talking points are examples of how you can go into more detail about the Health Collaborative's work. It is important to note that they are written in a casual, conversational style when possible. In conversation, this will feel much more natural. Instead of saying, "The Collaborative incorporates multisector perspectives, including the business and faith communities" you would probably sound more natural if you said, "The Collaborative draws on the perspectives of so many different types of people—like business owners and church groups."

The Health Collaborative's Impacts:

- Collaborative members created the region's first Community Health Needs Assessment and Health Equity Report. We now have enough data to understand what is making us unhealthy and how to start changing those things.
- A new youth agriculture and entrepreneurship program teaches young people about how our food system affects our health while giving them skills that increase their ability to tackle challenges.
- When the Collaborative hosted its first Health Summit, members learned about the region's health challenges and realistic ways to solve them. "You don't know what to fix unless you know what's broken!"
- Some city employees are Collaborative members, and they are working to create opportunities for the Health Collaborative to have conversations with policy makers.
- The Collaborative's Community Health Worker Initiative has helped to connect residents to healthcare options that they didn't know about before, and tackle social and economic barriers to healthy living.
- One important part of being a Collaborative member is how we are learning from inspiring examples. We recently took a trip to a community in North Carolina similar to ours that has improved community-wide health by improving their community's access to healthy food. We were able to bring those lessons back home with us.

Advantages to Being a Health Collaborative Member:

- Your perspective is important. You can be a part of imagining the future of health in the Dan River Region by leading the people you know through changes that will make us all healthier. The Collaborative will support you with proven strategies through that process.
- The Collaborative draws on perspectives from so many different types of people in the community, like business owners, church groups, local organizations, and residents. We want to hear your perspective, too.
- The Health Collaborative is a group of passionate people from the Dan River Region working for the Dan River Region. It's truly a community-led effort.
- We're not just talking about what health looks like—we're uniting community-wide ideas and assets to make those ideas a reality where you live.

Visual Branding

While the name, logo, and design elements form a basic identity for an organization, the real purpose of branding is to establish and maintain a particular reputation. Branding has just as much to do with the logo as it does with defining an organization's mission, establishing its messages and tone, and continually adapting in response to changing conversations within the field. The mission statement and some key messages have already been covered in this document, so this section will focus on the visual brand.

A number of documents have been created for Collaborative members to help them create materials that align with the brand design:

- [Health Collaborative Brand Guide](#)
- [HC Theme Creation](#) (Word Template)
- [HC PowerPoint Theme & Opening Presentation from 2016 Health Summit](#)

Logo files and social media images can be found here.

Font:

The Health Collaborative uses two fonts in its communications: Perpetua for titles, headlines, and accents like quotes or graphic headings, and Corbel for paragraph and footnote text. An example of this pairing is shown below:

Welcome to the Health Collaborative!

We are excited to have your perspectives, assets, and skills become part of our efforts to improve community-wide health in the Dan River Region. We look forward to collaborating with you!

(Perpetua headline, Corbel body)

Audiences

Over the course of the next year, the Health Collaborative will focus on two key audiences in order to achieve its goals:

1. Elected officials and other decision-making leaders
2. Residents of the Dan River Region

For communications goals, strategies, and actions, please see the 2017 Health Collaborative Communications Plan.

Social Media

The Health Collaborative has two social media profiles, which are managed by Elyse Jardine:

Appendix

Healthy Eating Example:

- Most people already know¹ that fresh fruits and vegetables are healthier than junk food.
- But they might live in places where healthy food² is too expensive, too far away, or even impossible to find.
- And when one person lives in a place where it is hard to find healthy food, it means that all their neighbors do, too³.
- So if we want to improve health for everyone, then changing community-wide qualities⁴ should be our goal—it's not effective to tell someone to buy more fresh food if that food is too expensive or too far away for them.
- Some ways to bring more healthy food to a neighborhood are to change policies so that it is easier to sell fresh food and to launch projects like a local farmers' market that support nutrition assistance programs. These kinds of changes make sure that healthy food is available and affordable for everyone⁵.
- The Health Collaborative was created to make it easier to be healthy here.⁶ By collaborating with residents and leaders and using strategies like the one I just described, we're making sure that everyone in the Dan River Region can have a healthier life.



Questions?



What Is *Strategic* Communication?



“Being strategic [is] the difference between doing communications ‘stuff,’ and doing the *right* communications stuff.”

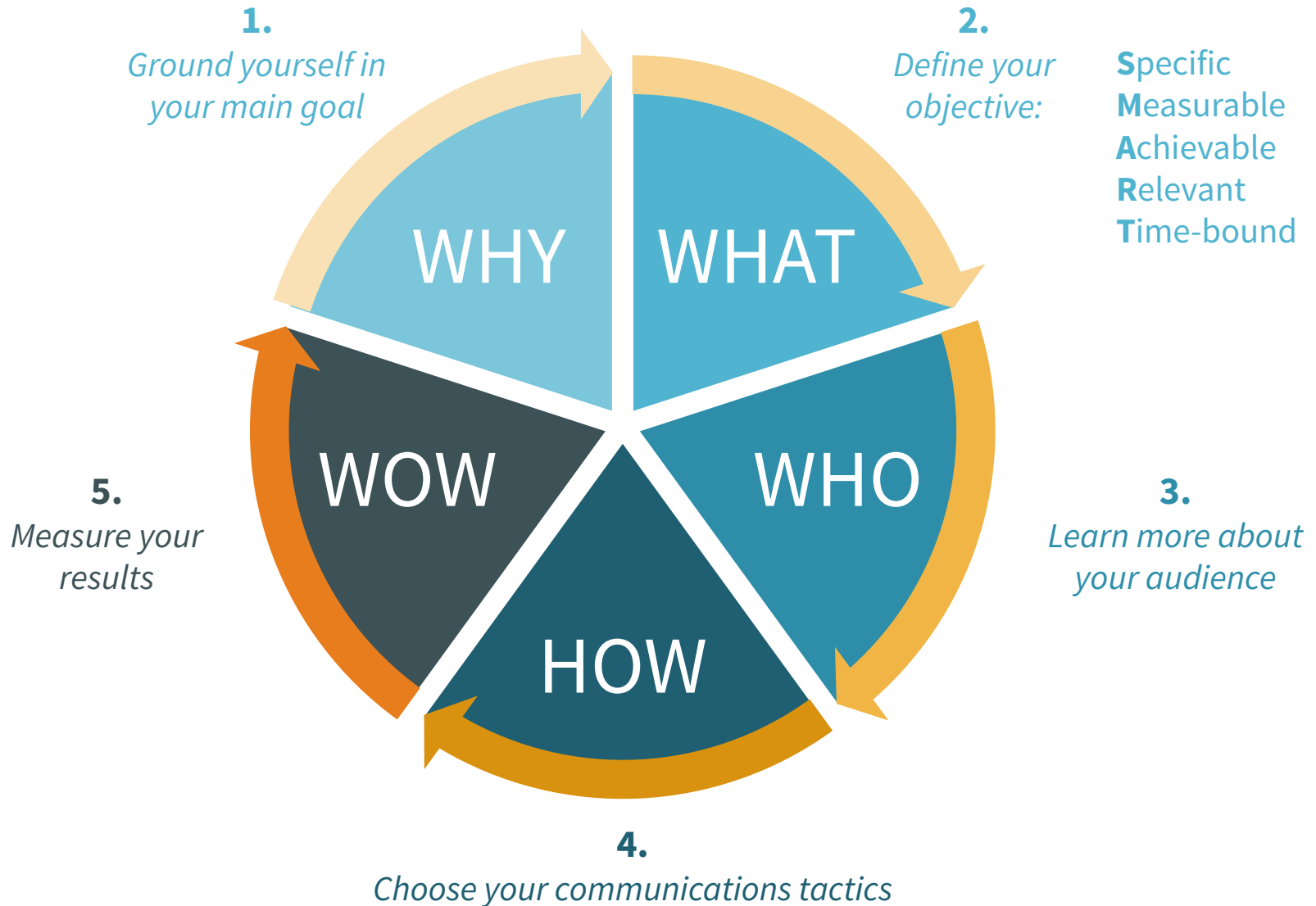
—Shayna Englin

Professor of non-profit and political communications at
Johns Hopkins University

Strategic Communication

- Goal-driven method of communication
- Aligns messages and tactics with communities' priorities and audiences' values
- Recalibrates based on measurable results
- Strives for evolving, two-way dialogue

Strategic Communications Cycle





Strategic Communications Activity

15 minutes

WHAT: Select one community health strategy related to your action team.

WHO: Which people have the power to make it happen? What are their values?

HOW: What message would convince them? How should that message be delivered?



Communications In Action

Giving Presentations

- Present concepts, not information
- Avoid text tsunamis
- Offer immediate action

EXAMPLE

This afternoon, reduce word count in your wordiest slide by half

- Know your stuff, not your lines



Talking to the Media

- View the media as an opportunity
- Core message:
 - Policies and environments affect health—not just genetics and personal choices
- You control the message—so know your stuff *and your lines*



Framing

- “Frames” are mental constructs that shape how we see the world
- Every issue is already framed
- **Avoid individualism**—messages with this frame don’t advance public support for policy, systems, or environmental solutions
- The “right” messaging frames will shift depending on our audience and the problem



Questions?



Stairway Statement Activity

10 minutes

“Can you share an example of one way you’re working to improve community health?”

In groups, brainstorm examples of strategies. Ask each other whether you’ve avoided the “individualism” frame.



Resources:

The Health Collaborative Communications Guide shares additional resources about messaging and how to frame issues related to health.

Stay In Touch!



Facebook—*Like our page for weekly blog posts and more*



Twitter—*Join us in the healthy communities conversation*



LinkedIn—*Network with us and other thought leaders in the healthy communities field*



Healthy Communities monthly newsletter—*Sign up to read our blog right in your inbox*



Visit activelivingbydesign.org to connect on social media



Thank You!

For more information, contact:

Sarah Moore

864.556.9182

sarah_moore@activelivingbydesign.org

Main: 919.843.2523

www.activelivingbydesign.org