

COMMUNICATIONS



AREA OF EXPERTISE FOCUS:



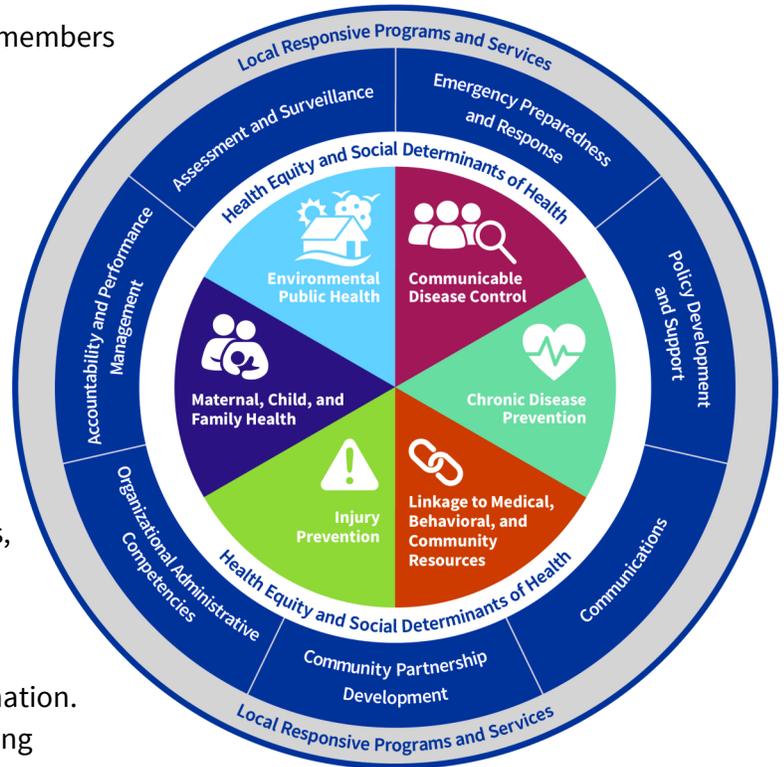
Review health disparities data (sources on pg 4) among different demographic groups, related to this area of expertise. Then use the discussion prompts and resources below to identify action steps to increase capacity in the intersect between this capability and area of expertise.

Communication is vital to assuring all community members can access, understand, and act on important health information to protect themselves and their families.

Communication involves sharing, receiving, and interpreting messages through a number of different techniques and pathways. Messages, materials, and dissemination channels should be tailored to specific audiences in order to meet people where they are. Public health agencies must be able to write and implement an effective communication plan, execute risk communication strategies, and engage in two-way communication with all audiences, including media.

Successful public health outcomes depend on an agency’s ability to clearly communicate health information. #HealthierMO recommends four key steps for increasing capacity in communication.

- Analyze:** Effective communication must be grounded in an understanding of the audience you want to communicate with.
- Create:** Messages and materials must be tailored to fit each audience, taking into consideration factors such as language, cultural nuances, and imagery.
- Disseminate:** Think creatively about pathways to reach audiences where they are.
- Evaluate and Adjust:** Measure communication efforts in order to determine if the audience is receiving the information and taking the desired action. If they are not, you may need to make adjustments.



INFUSING HEALTH EQUITY

Messages and materials should connect with the full array of diverse audiences in our communities. Graphics, colors, wording, and other nuances should be tailored to specific communities. Work with community members and partners to develop and test communication products before sharing them with audiences.



Spotlight

Kayla Klein, Taney County Health Department

“With the COVID-19 pandemic, we recognized early on the need to get urgent public health information to these populations quickly. Unfortunately, some of these populations experience barriers to accessing various forms of media, internet being one of them, and so we’ve really had to work diligently to get information and messaging to them to keep them informed during the process.”

ANALYZE

People seek out and receive information from different sources. Communicators must identify a wide range of pathways to deliver information that meets people where they are. **Audience analysis** is key to understanding how to deliver messages to each audience, which messages will be more likely to resonate, and what language or message framing will motivate desired attitude and behavior changes.

[How to Do an Audience Analysis](#), Compass

Follow this step-by-step process to better understand your audience’s attitudes, beliefs, behaviors, and communication needs. Record the audience characteristics you uncover using the embedded tools or this [template](#). Use your findings to answer the discussion prompts below.

1. Who are the different audiences we should consider in this area of expertise?

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2. What were the findings from our audience analysis on each audience?

[Empty yellow response box]





CREATE

One broad message will likely not resonate with every audience. Messages need to be tailored to each audience. Start by developing a set of **key messages** with supporting statements that answer the questions your audiences will be most likely to ask. Incorporate the key messages into a variety of communication products, such as printed flyers or posters, news releases, social media content, videos, etc. **Tailor** messages and materials to fit each audience. Use **health literacy principles** to ensure information is accessible, understandable, and actionable for every community member.

Review the following resources to gain a better understanding of how to create communication products that will be clear and easy for every community member to understand.

[Message Mapping Guide](#), from [COVID-19: Simple Answers to Top Questions](#) (March 2020), ASTHO

This tool offers principles and guidance for outlining key messages that will answer the most common questions people have about any issue.

[Simply Put](#), CDC

This guide offers universal health literacy principles and tips to help you create communication materials that are clear and easy for all audiences to understand.

[PHRASES Frame Elements](#), FrameWorks Institute

Use these tested communication devices (frames) to inform the development of communication pieces specifically for non-public health partners.

3. What literacy level should we use with each audience, and how will that inform product creation?

4. What communication products do we need to find or develop for each audience regarding this area of expertise?

5. Which message frames should we use to communicate with each audience about this area of expertise?



DISSEMINATE

Today’s audiences demand information when they want it and in a format they prefer. Public health agencies can no longer just depend on traditional media to help disseminate information. The audience analysis you conducted earlier will help you identify the most effective **pathways** to communicate with individual audiences. Consider **partnering** with local organizations and trusted community members to help share and amplify your messages. Effective communication is a **two-way process**, so be prepared to listen to your audiences as well as sharing information with them.

[Dissemination Strategies](#), Global Partnership for Education

Use this simple tool to strategize and track communication messages and materials disseminated to various audiences.

6. How will we communicate with each audience we have identified? In what ways can we improve two-way communication with our audiences?

7. Who are trusted messengers in our community? How can we partner with them to improve communication with shared audiences, especially those who have been historically disengaged?

8. How can we improve our working relationship with local and regional media to reach the full range of our diverse audiences?





EVALUATE AND ADJUST

Communication should always have a **purpose** and **objectives** – why you are communicating and what you hope to gain from it. Evaluating communication efforts and outcomes allows you to measure whether or not your audience is receiving the messages and taking the desired actions in alignment with your objectives. Evaluation allows you to make **course corrections** in a timely manner, in order to better ensure your communication is effective. Evaluation also informs improvements in future communication efforts.

9. How are we building two-way feedback into our communication evaluation process? How might we more effectively evaluate and adjust communication strategies?

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10. Which tools or training would lead to increased skill in communications?

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TRAINING RESOURCES

[Health Literacy for Public Health Professionals](#), CDC TRAIN

[Using the PHRASES Framing Tools](#), FrameWorks Institute



Spotlight

Kelley Vollmar, Jefferson County Health Department

“Prior to COVID, public health really didn’t have a voice in the community. We were in the background, and somewhat invisible. As we moved through COVID we found that we had a place at the table and we were very visible to the community, but I still don’t think the public really understood what public health does and how we help in the background to keep their communities safe.

As we move out of the pandemic, I think we have a fantastic opportunity to really be able to engage our communities and help them to understand what public health does, help them become part of that process, and to really move public health forward in terms of creating healthier communities.”

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COMMUNICATIONS: OUTCOMES AND ACTION STEPS (PG 1 OF 2)

Included in the Potential Outcomes column below are the capacities required to fully assure this foundational capability. Refer to your Capacity Assessment Snapshot or Toolkit reports to review your agency’s most recent self-assessment findings. Then use the table below to identify action steps you will take to close gaps and achieve full capacity to assure the FPHS model in your community. Edit the table or use your own planning tool to prioritize next steps. Refer back to tools provided in this workbook to support action steps.

Potential Outcome	Action Steps	Timeline	Resources	Assigned To
We communicate about specific public health issues on a 24/7 basis through condensed written communications, public speaking, and electronic communication tools				
We develop and implement a strategic communications plan to articulate the agency’s mission, vision, values, roles, and responsibilities to the community				
We develop and implement a communication strategy to identify a specific public health issue and communicate risk				
We provide information on health risks, healthy behaviors, and disease prevention in culturally and linguistically appropriate formats for the communities served				
We transmit timely, accurate, and credible routine communications to the public on a 24/7 basis				
We address health literacy concerns in culturally and linguistically appropriate formats so information is accessible, understandable, and actionable for the communities served				
We communicate the role of public health to the public and to policymakers				



COMMUNICATIONS: OUTCOMES AND ACTION STEPS (PG 2 OF 2)

Potential Outcome	Action Steps	Timeline	Resources	Assigned To
We maintain ongoing relationships with local and state media outlets				
We develop and implement a proactive health education strategy				
We receive routine communications from the public on a 24/7 basis				
We routinely communicate in culturally and linguistically appropriate formats for the communities served				

RESOURCES

[Fillable Logic Model template](#)

[Sustainability Tool](#), Brown School at Washington University, St Louis

Take 15 minutes to evaluate your proposed activity across eight domains in order to gauge its capacity for sustainability. Registration is required to use this free tool.