

# Developing and Implementing a Research Based Public Awareness Program at the Local Level

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# Thank You...

- SPRC and in particular Katie Wootten and Anara Guard for their excellent work and consultation on this topic
- Resources and references at end of presentation

# What is Social Marketing?

“Social marketing is the use of marketing principles and techniques to influence a target audience to voluntarily accept, reject, modify, or abandon a behavior for the benefit of individuals, groups or society as a whole.”

- *Kotler & Lee, 2002. Social Marketing.*

# In Plain English...

- Social marketing uses commercial marketing techniques that are based in science and driven by the audience to influence a person, group or society.

# Commercial vs. Social Marketing

Anara Guard-SPRC

## Commercial Marketing

- Benefit for seller or producer
- Tangible products
- Examples:
  - Buy pizza-Dominos
  - Buy tickets to a movie-AMC Theater
  - Sign up with this bank-US Bank

## Social Marketing

- Benefit for society or a select group
- Changes something, idea, attitude, behavior
- Examples:
  - Aging-eat calcium
  - Heart-exercise
  - Health-wash hands

# So what is it that you really want to do?

- Effect behavior or attitude change (primary) and fit with your mission (secondary)
- The question is: Can this be done for suicide prevention and, if so, how?

# Public Awareness and Suicide Prevention Efforts Include

- Universal
  - Universal preventions have been used with the aim of shifting risk and protective factors across a whole population and involve the cooperation of the community and/or the media.
- Selective
- Indicated
- Clinical interventions

# Public Awareness Campaigns: Logic Model

1. Define the problem
2. Chose your strategy
3. Define the target audience
4. Determine what is the desired behavior change
5. Engage partners
6. Develop the message
7. Define the media vehicles/channels
8. Evaluate results/impact



# SAVE's Public Awareness

- History
- Types of campaigns (local, national)
- Media used
- Research (U of MN, 2007)
- Case example

# Billboard Messaging

- With regard to public service announcements (PSAs), the billboard format provides a particularly novel approach to suicide prevention.
  - Like most other types of PSAs...
    - it is difficult to study real-world exposure
    - it is difficult to control the dosage of exposure (e.g., driving by the billboard daily for some vs. once in a lifetime for others)
    - the message needs to be provocative enough to capture the attention of the intended audience
  - Unlike most other types of PSAs...
    - the information provided must be extremely limited so the viewer can comprehend and retain the information

# Past Research on Universal Prevention

- Suicide education and awareness programs are rarely empirically validated.
  - Some research has found improvements in knowledge about suicide, mental health referral sources, coping, etc.
- There is only one study that found the rates of suicide attempts were lower in the prevention group in contrast to a comparison group.
  - SOS; Aseeltine & DeMartino, 2004
- There has been a range of explanations for the paucity of positive findings for the effects of suicide prevention programs.
  - e.g., low dosage of program, low rates of suicidality

# Additional Potential Risks

- Some (Chambers et al, 2005) have suggested that it is important for billboards to avoid the impression...
  - that suicide is common (normative) and thus a viable option
  - that depression and suicide are always linked
- *Suicide prevention efforts may not always serve their intended goals. Well-intended efforts to prevent suicide may regrettably in some cases heighten the risk of suicide. It is incumbent upon us to prevent potential pitfalls.*

# Ohio Awareness Campaign

- Looked at calls to crisis center
- Buses, billboard, kiosks, radio PSA
- Baseline 12/03-12/05 (23.1 calls per 100,000 residents)
- Phase 1 3/05-6/05 (29.9)
- Lapse 7/05-10/05 (26.8)
- Phase 2 11/05-3/06 (30.8)

Suicide and Life-Threatening Behavior 38(2) April 2008, 245-249

So you still want to develop  
and implement a public  
awareness campaign to  
prevent suicide???

Here's how you can do it!

# Development of a Public Awareness Campaign for Suicide Prevention

- Step 1: Community Needs Assessment
- Step 2: Community Readiness Assessment
- Step 3: Creating a Media Plan

# Why do a Community Needs Assessment?

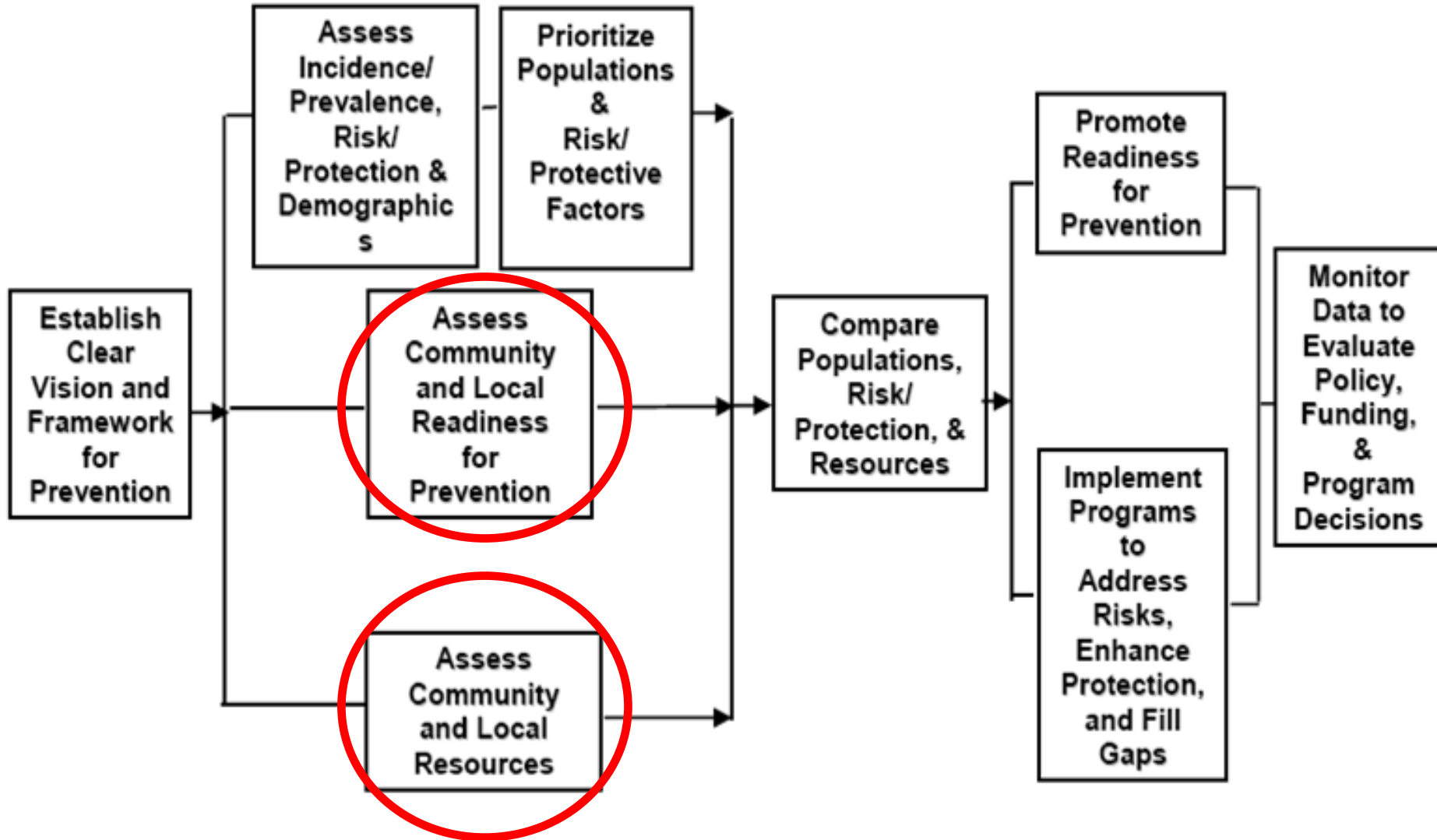
- Like other needs assessment surveys and strategic planning, gives you a window into the community
- Tells you not if you can do it, but what you need to know before you do it (helps you proceed, or not)
- Begins a dialogue, brings in partners, builds energy and momentum



# What's Involved in a Community Assessment

- Determine your vision, goals, objectives
- Gathering data (compare to what's known)
- Find out who knows has the information you want to know in your area
- Develop a plan, resources to implement plan

Assessing Community Needs and Resources (Nagy, K. & Schulz, J. (ed),  
KU Community Tool Box, <http://ctb.ku.edu>



# Step 1: Community Needs Assessment

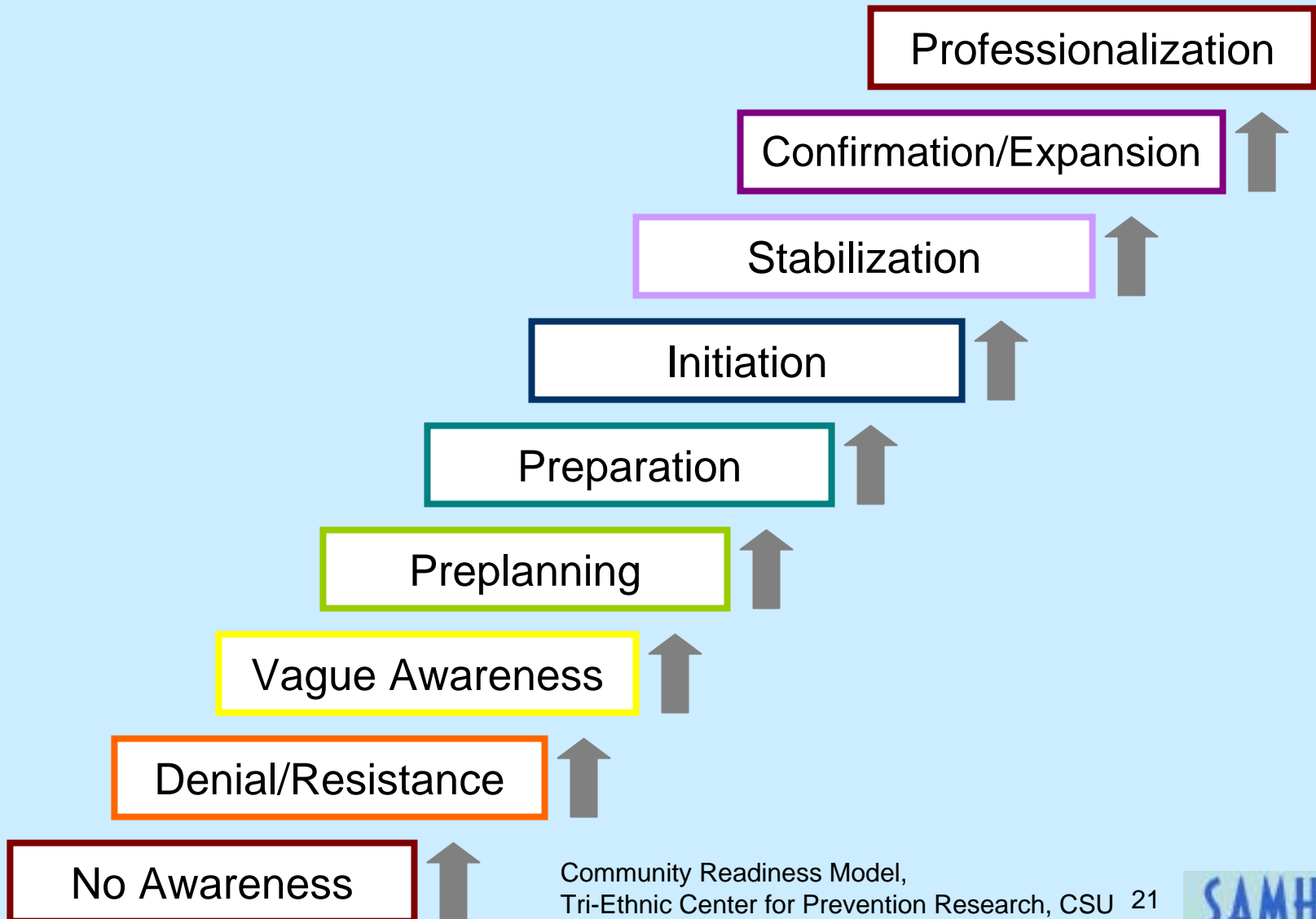
- Assess the situation
  - What is the **specific problem** that you want to address
  - What are the **specific issues** regarding this problem (and **cultural factors**)
  - What **data/research** exists to help you analyze the problem
  - Determine **what is the need** (what do you want?)

# Step 2: Community Readiness Assessment

- Assess the community (are they or could they be ready?)
- Assess the communities and partner's readiness (are the resources available?)
- What is going on already (culture specific and non-specific)?
- What does the community know?
- Who in your community knows about this?
- Are there resources to support your goal?

Tri-Ethnic Center for Prevention Research, Colorado State University  
<http://www.triethniccenter.colostate.edu>

# Stages of Community Readiness



# Step 3: Creating a Media Plan

- **Define your objective** (what are you trying to change?)
  - FOCUS: is the goal realistic, measurable?
  - DEVELOP a realistic timeline-consider frequency, repetition, placement, mediums
- **Identify your target audience:** primary and secondary
  - FOCUS: exactly WHO do you want to reach
  - UNDERSTAND everything you can about them and what's the best way to reach them
  - HOW: surveys, focus groups, 1:1 interviews, internet searches

# Creating a Media Plan-cont.

- **Develop a key message** (are you changing a belief or creating a new one?, consider purity and specificity issues)
  - WHAT do you need to say and what's the most compelling way to say it?
  - Know your secondary message!
  - **Depression can be fatal (primary)**
  - **Everyone with depression may die (secondary)**

# Key Message

- Message should be clear, concise-7 word rule
- Message should be timely-don't use old data
- Message should leave a lasting impression
- Message should be real, tangible (millions mean little to most)
- Message should make sense to target audience



# Key Message

- Should be factual, accurate (avoid myths)
- Should be motivational
- Should promote or validate the need for the behavior or change you are promoting
- Be VERY careful about including data or statistics

# Other Important Considerations

- Cultural relevance: data, language, people, settings, colors, celebrities
- Ease of understanding: concrete is better than abstract

# Important Considerations for the Hispanic Community

- Sometimes “difficult” messages or information is better received when done through a small community effort/program
- Use of an intimate setting can be helpful
- Consider how a public awareness approach might be beneficial
- Use community leaders that are identifiable
- Might be best not to use celebrities
- Highlight the importance of family, faith, group membership (all protective factors in this Hispanic community)
- Best not to tell members of the Hispanic community where to go. Might be best to give a message of hope, sense of belonging.
- Remember there might not be resources, so if using one ensure it exists and is well-known to community.
- Pay attention to stigma for Hispanic Americans. There may be too much stigma to go for help, in particular for males.

# SUCCESS

Made to Stick by Chip and Dan Heath

*“We will put a man on the moon and return him safely by the end of the decade.”*

*—President John Fitzgerald Kennedy*



**Simple:** No mistaking what those words mean.

**Unexpected:** Took the country by surprise.

**Concrete:** We’d meet this goal or we wouldn’t—no in-between.

**Credible:** Delivered by the Nation’s leader.

**Emotional:** Worked on our collective belief: We could achieve anything.

**Story:** We act on the idea; inspiring.

# Media Channels/Vehicles

- Create your media tools/materials (indoor, outdoor, press kit, local, national)
- Mediums should be carefully considered
- Websites, papers, tv, radio, buses, restaurants, health clubs
- Posters, web banners, press releases, flyers, brochures, videos

# Creating a Media Plan: Important Considerations

- Identify a spokesperson: use reliable and recognizable or credentialed people, not necessarily celebrities
- Develop a tracking system (how will you know if it worked?)
- Conduct focus groups, interviews, surveys/polls
- Duration of campaign is important

# Evaluation: pre and post-testing

- Identify flaws, oversights, errors, misperceptions
- Tweak and fine-tune the message(s)
- Consider alternatives (messages, materials)
- Pre-test (when changes can be made)
- Baseline
- Post-test (determine campaigns success)

# Tips for Working with the Media

- Recognize they are in business to make money
- Know that they make far more from a retail giant than from a non-profit agency
- Remember that they know your business is typically time-limited (one campaign) and retail is not
- Always try and get PSAs added to your contract(s)
- Get agreement on tracking exposures early



# Some Do's and Don'ts in Suicide Awareness Media Campaigns-SPRC

## Do

- Promote health, wellness
- Use a strengths-based approach
- Encourage help-seeking
- Promote that help is available
- Share treatment effectiveness and alternatives
- Make your campaign local!
- Consider culturally specific issues

## Don't

- Glorify or romanticize those who died by suicide
- Focus on a particular person
- Normalize the incidence of suicide (it's not common)
- Try to explain the unexplainable
- Relay the details of a death or methods used

# Resources/References

- Suicide Prevention Resource Center  
[www.sprc.org](http://www.sprc.org) (Safe and Effective Messaging for Suicide Prevention)
- Colorado State University:  
<http://triethniccenter.colostate.edu>
- University of Kansas:  
<http://ctb.ku.edu/en>
- The Annenberg Foundation  
[www.annenbergfoundation.org](http://www.annenbergfoundation.org)

# Resources/References

- SAVE: [www.save.org](http://www.save.org)
- Chambers DA, Pearson JL, Lubell K, et al. The science of public messages for suicide prevention: A workshop summary. *SLTB*, 2005; 35(2): 134-145.
- Strategic Message Development, Anara Guard, SPRC
- Klimes-Dougan, B. 2007, Suicide Prevention: Considering Billboards as a Method for Educating the Public.

# Resources/References

- The Science of Public Messages for Suicide Prevention. Knox, K. 2003.