

Promoting healthy behaviours



Healthy Communities Unit

The purpose of this guide is to assist you to promote healthy behaviours with people who access your services or with the broader community.

Communicating with people about how to look after their health is just one part of health promotion. Health promotion:

- Enables people to increase control over and improve their health.
- Involves actions that promote health and prevent ill-health either by working directly with individuals or by changing the environments where people live, learn, work and play.

The focus of this guide is to provide information about how you can work in health promoting ways to communicate with people about what they can do to stay healthy.

CHECKLIST FOR PROMOTING HEALTHY BEHAVIOURS

THE AIM/GOAL



- What health related issue have you identified?
- What health behaviour do you want to change in your target group?

NEEDS IDENTIFICATION



- Is there a need for you to address this issue?
- How do you know there is a need?
- Do you know what is causing the issue?

EXISTING HEALTH PROMOTION RESOURCES



- There are many trusted resources and organisations where you can find health promotion information. Who are the experts in your topic of interest or issue? E.g. Heart Foundation, Diabetes Australia, Nutrition Australia, VicHealth.
- Have you researched where to access evidence informed resources about your topic of interest or issue?

KNOW YOUR COMMUNITY

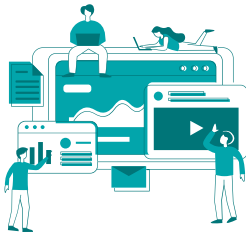
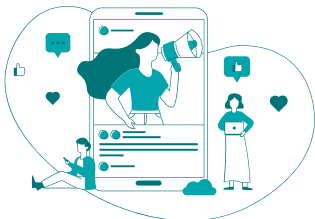


- Who are you trying to reach?
- If there is more than one group of people who are affected by the issue, will you aim to reach everyone or will you start with a specific sub group?
- Are you able to reach your community through the communication channels available to you?
- How does your community like to receive information?

WAYS YOU CAN COMMUNICATE

To help you select appropriate communication methods you need to think about what you are trying to achieve with your strategy, and how and where your community likes to receive information.

How and where will you deliver your message?

Types of communication channel	Purpose of communication channel	Example communication channel
<p>Mass media</p> 	<p>These channels reach large audiences.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Websites • Television • Radio • Newspapers and magazines • Outdoor advertising, billboards
<p>Interpersonal, small group, or local community level campaign</p> 	<p>These channels reach specific groups or individuals based on common interests or demographics.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social media • Newsletter article • Community events and activities • Blogs • Presentation or speech • Brochures • Fact sheets, infographics • Flyers • Posters • Signage - banners, flags • One-on-one conversations • Marketing collateral - drink bottles, tote bags, stickers, badges

COMMUNICATE USING POSITIVE, HEALTH LITERATE LANGUAGE

- Are you using positive language that shifts the focus to the solution not the problem and doesn't blame the individual for their choices?
- Does your information use plain language that is easy to read and avoids complicated language and jargon?
- Have you considered the layout and design of your information so it is easy to read and understand?
- Does your information consider different cultural needs and other information access needs?

WHAT ELSE TO CONSIDER WHEN PROMOTING HEALTHY BEHAVIOURS

EQUITY

- Is the strategy appropriate and accessible for your target audience?
- Are you sure that the strategy won't increase inequities? E.g. is there a cost, is it only accessible to people with reliable internet access?
- Are there opportunities to advocate for or reduce social inequities?
- Does the strategy consider the social determinants of health?

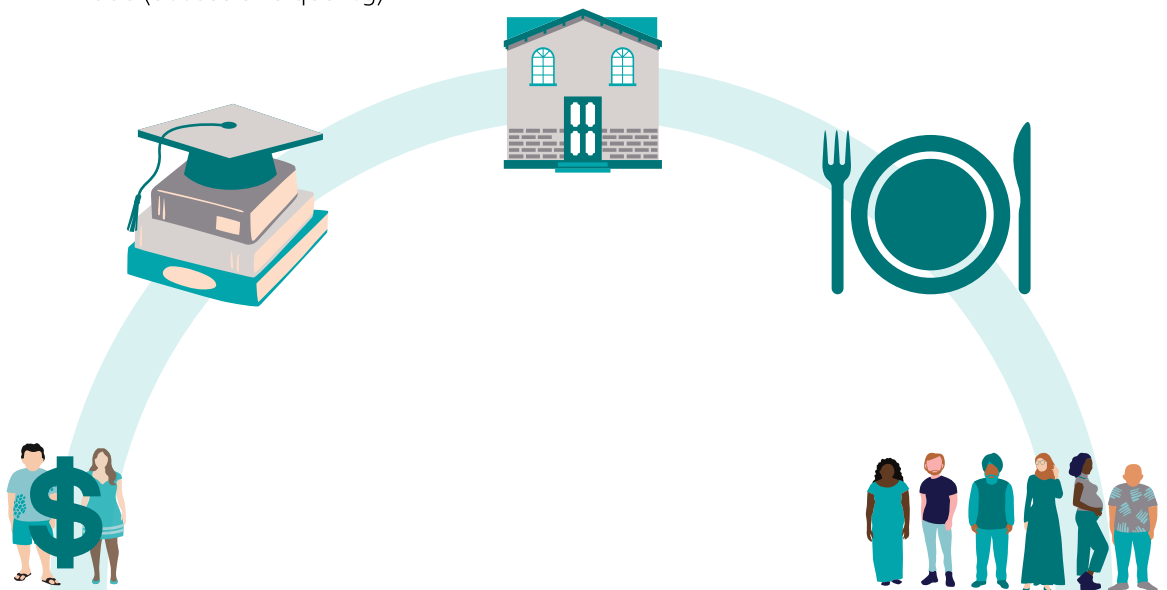


WHY IS IT IMPORTANT TO CONSIDER THE SOCIAL DETERMINANTS OF HEALTH AND HEALTH INEQUITIES?

While individual behaviours such as smoking, diet, exercise and alcohol and drugs are important issues to address, the social conditions in which people live are the most important determinant of good or ill health. These determinants, are responsible for health inequities, which are the unfair and avoidable differences that exist in people's health status. Social determinants can be seen as the 'causes of the causes.' They should be considered in any health promotion work you do.¹

Social determinants can undermine or strengthen the health of individuals. They include but are not limited to:

- Employment
- Housing
- Education
- Transportation
- Socioeconomic status
- Food (access and quality)
- Gender
- Physical environment
- Ethnicity
- Community and social connections
- Literacy, and in turn health literacy



¹ Department of Health Victoria (2021). Retrieved from <https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/public-health/chief-health-officer/cho-publications/your-health-report-2018/health-inequalities/social-determinants-health>

PROJECT MANAGEMENT

- How will your strategy be managed and coordinated?
 - Do you need a project officer, committee or reference group?
 - What is a realistic time frame?
-

READINESS

- Are the people you are intending to reach ready?
 - Do they have other priorities?
-

COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION AND ENGAGEMENT

- How can you engage the community? E.g. working with leaders in culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities to develop messages that are appropriate for them.
-

CAPACITY

- What resources do you have available to implement the strategy including time, skills, funding?
-

COLLABORATION AND WORKING WITH OTHERS

- Who else could you partner or collaborate with?
-

EVALUATION

- How will you know that you have made a difference?
 - How will you share your work with others?
-

THIS RESOURCE WAS PRODUCED BY THE HEALTHY COMMUNITIES UNIT, JULY 2021

The Healthy Communities Unit improves health and wellbeing by building the knowledge and skills of others to work in health promoting ways.

Find out more about the Healthy Communities Unit www.barwonhealth.org.au/healthycommunities or email healthycommunities@barwonhealth.org.au