Communicating with Communities during COVID Crisis Toolkit

Building on the existing MDH communications resources to create a communications tool for the COVID-19 crisis to provide a resource that identifies tools, resources and methods used by institutions and community-based organizations to inform individuals of testing and vaccination opportunities at the same rate as primarily English-speaking individuals.

Target Audience
- Local public health department
- SEOC
- Community partners/community leaders
- Clinics/ Health care systems
- Community Based Organizations
- Religious institutions, schools, restaurants, community gathering locations
- Anyone who wants to facilitate a testing event

> **Keep your messaging…**
>
> **SHORT:** one page, 90 sec max
>
> **CLEAR:** 2-3 key points, no typos, accurate translation
>
> **TRUSTED:** Local cultural leaders, values driven, relevant
>
> **FUN:** culturally appropriate art forms: song, dance, poetry, art

Things to consider

1. **Message:** Create an effective message that resonates with the target population.
    --culturally appropriate; free from errors/typos; short, clear and attention grabbing

2. **Medium:** Utilize the best format/tools/form of communication for the group
    -Frequently utilized: television, radio, newspaper. Consider transition of message from social media and other forms to word of mouth. Consider time/effort needed based on format.

3. **Messengers:** Ensure you have right people delivering the message
    -Trusted Messengers and Influencers: Respected elders and leaders, young people as social connectors/educators

Questions to Ask

Who: Who is your target audience? Who are the influencers, trusted sources, and gateway providers for that community?

What: What is the message you want to share? How does it connect with the cultural values and beliefs of the community you want to reach?

Where: Where does the target audience get information? Which platforms/mediums are best suited to reaching this community/population? Do different groups within the population have different sources? (consider age, gender, religion, occupation, hobbies)

When: What timing of messaging (time of day, date of release) is most appropriate and effective? What is the appropriate timeframe for creation, feedback, dispersal?
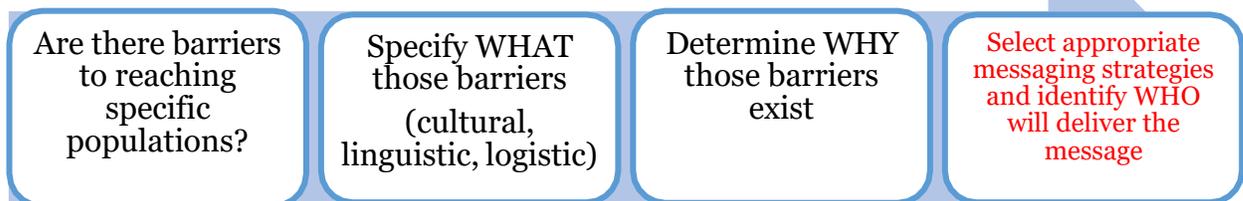
How: How will you implement this communication campaign? What needs to be in place for it to be successful? Who do you need at the table? How to communicate and coordinate efforts effectively? What potential costs exist and what funds are available?

Why: Why is testing important to families and communities? Why is this in alignment with community beliefs and values? What concerns and fears need to be addressed?

Implementation Strategies

- Utilize MDH communication strategies

    - o **Community Partner Contracts** A diverse, community based collection of partners and organizations working with MDH to share COVID information, including policies and recommendations **https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/equity/funding/covidcontracts.html**

    - o **MDH community coordinators initiative**. Hired in October 2020 to improve communication and connection between partners and MDH https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/equity/funding/ccc.html

- Organize a BOARD/COMMITTEE which *reflects the diversity of decision-makers* within the community so that all voices are heard

    - o Consider **LOCAL** community-specific influencers (religious leaders, business owners, public personalities, artists, young people on social media) who are engaged on a local level.
    - o Consider **LOCAL** healthcare providers (primary care providers, public health/school nurses, dentists, pharmacists, mental health providers, interpreters) who have established relationships in the community.

- Work *collaboratively* in message creation to ensure each message is short, clear, accurate, and informed by cultural practices

    - o Consider utilizing an electronic community board/landing page.
    - o Develop a system for edits, revision, and updates
    - o Create a uniform training and evaluation tool to fine tune messages and ensure messages are reaching appropriate audiences
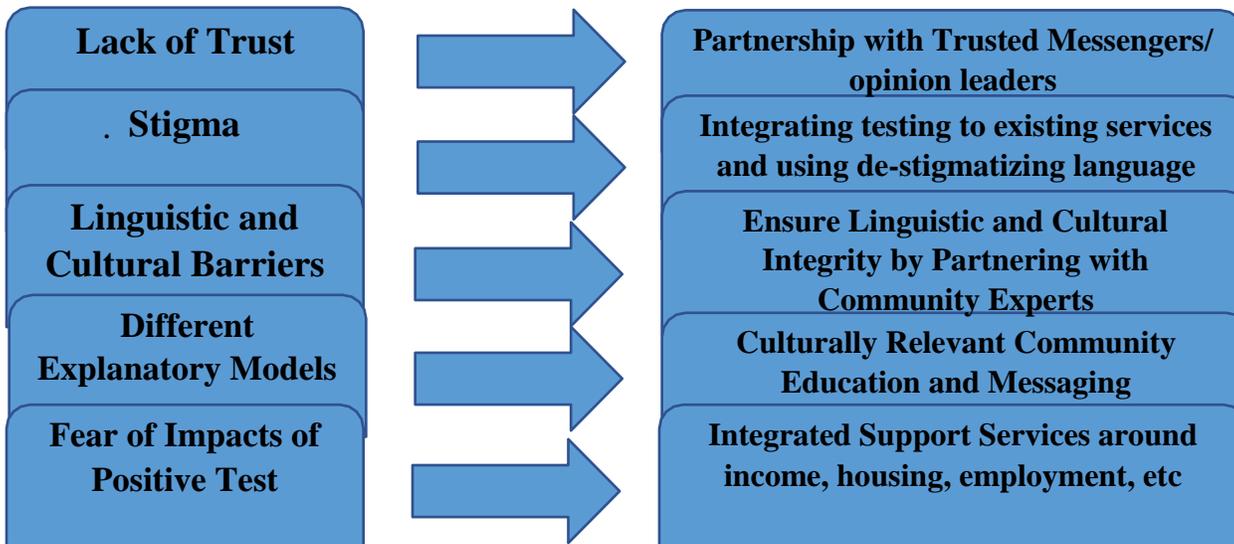   Consider alignment of messaging across communities and platforms

Are there barriers to reaching specific populations?	Specify WHAT those barriers (cultural, linguistic, logistic)	Determine WHY those barriers exist	Select appropriate messaging strategies and identify WHO will deliver the message

Create a Quality Check mechanism: Collaborate, Train, Implement, Evaluate

A Good Model to Follow (Coping with Stress From NCTSN)
- Get information out in a timely manner
- Get information out to the people that need it
- Get information out that folks can access, understand, and trust

Barrier to Engagement

| Lack of Trust |
| . Stigma |
| Linguistic and Cultural Barriers |
| Different Explanatory Models |
| Fear of Impacts of Positive Test |

Communication Strategy

| Partnership with Trusted Messengers/ opinion leaders |
| Integrating testing to existing services and using de-stigmatizing language |
| Ensure Linguistic and Cultural Integrity by Partnering with Community Experts |
| Culturally Relevant Community Education and Messaging |
| Integrated Support Services around income, housing, employment, etc |

Adapted from: Ellis, B. H., Abdi, S. M., & Winer, J. P. (2020). *Mental health practice with immigrant and refugee youth: A socioecological framework*. American Psychological Association

Example of Targeted Messaging (Somali):

Population	Barriers	Message	Medium	Messenger
Somali-Everyone	*Lack of Trust Different Explanatory Models*	*Religious sermon*	*Mosques Telephone rooms WhatsApp TV/Online*	*Religious leaders*
Somali speaking culturally connected Elders	*Cultural Linguistic*	*Gabay/Buranbur Spoken Word, songs*	*WhatsApp/TV Online*	*Poets/Artists*
Somali, young social media users	*Cultural Stigma*	*Diverse depending on messenger*	*Snapchat TikTok, Youtube Instagram*	*Social Media Influencers*
Somali-Everyone	*Stigma Linguistic*	*Infographic, emoji's, culturally Relevant images*	*Mosques ECBOs,etc Shopping Centers, Schools*	*Community leaders/institutions*