

Session 4.1 – Selecting channels, methods and materials for communication

Aim

To develop skills in using communication methods and channels that reach the intended target groups.

Learning objectives

At the end of this session participants will be able to:

- List advantages and disadvantages of different methods of communication
- Understand how to establish which channels and methods of communication are suited for the message and for the intended target audience
- Understand that channels and methods of communication as well as messages have to be tested
- Understand how to develop core messages for each of the key behaviours for the target groups

Key points

1. The assessment of the target group also needs to include what the most effective channels of communication are for different messages
2. Communication materials and methods have to be tested before they are multiplied
3. To be effective, core education messages need to be explicit and targetted specifically at the primary target groups
4. Messages always have to be made positive (never use scare tactics) and simple.

Materials and handouts

- 4.4.1 Handout on selecting channels, methods and materials for communication
- 4.4.2 Worksheet on selecting channels, methods and materials for communication
- 4.4.3 Presentation
- 4.4.4 Example of core education message for IDU

Handout 4.1.1– Selecting channels, methods and materials for communication

Channels of communication are the routes that are used to get the behaviour change messages across. They include:

- Printed materials: brochures, leaflets, posters, picture codes
- Popular media: stories, songs, drama, role playing, riddles, proverbs
- Electronic media: video, television, film; Radio, cassettes; computer
- Others: games, demonstrations, festivals, live music, t-shirts, buttons.

Channels of communication can be divided into three types:

- One-to-one
- Group
- Mass

While one-to-one communication between skilled communicators and target audiences are probably the most effective way of getting a message across, they are likely to be very time consuming and require many people/staff/peer educators. An intermediate solution, possibly less effective (but not if done well) but less costly, is to address groups of target population together at meetings and special events and using participatory methods to discuss behaviours and changes in behaviour. Interactive, participatory methods help best in empowering the target audience and helping them define what behaviours are feasible and what support is needed for such behaviours. In peer education, drama and songs have proven to be very effective if the message is clear. Mass communication such as radio and tv are used more and more and though they can reach many people at lower per capita cost, they have a lower capacity to affect behaviour. Generally these media are more used to raise awareness and give information than to change behaviour.

The communication strategy that is based on the situation assessment, needs to balance coverage and cost effectiveness. To do this, you need to find out how the target audiences communicate and on the basis of this you can estimate the reach of each potential channel of communication. For instance if you find out that your target group is not able to read, written messages will not be effective.

The best communication methods and materials are:

- Appropriate for your aim
- Culturally appropriate
- Feasible
- Relevant for the target group
- One message for one situation
- Up to date information
- Attractive
- Use local idiom
- Are repetitive

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- Are easy to understand
- Are participatory
- Are provocative
- Show by example

Give the tasks to designing the materials to small groups that include members of the target group, peer educators, and creative people such as musicians, theatre writers or artists. Brainstorm lots of ideas and then work the best up into detailed scenarios or images. Keep a close track on your core messages and how you 'sell' them (keep it positive).

Testing communication materials is always necessary because you do not know if everyone understands the message in the same way. Untested messages may convey an unintended message that you are not aware of.

Worksheet 4.1.2– Selecting channels, methods and materials for communication for target groups

Target groups: FSW/ IDU/ Vulnerable youth/ Truckers

(Sub) Primary Target group	Core message	Materials	Channel/method of communication
(Sub) Secondary Target group	Core message	Materials	Channel/method of communication

Steps in the strategy:

Step 1:

Step 2:

Etc.

Session 4.2 – Selecting and training peer educators

Aim

To develop skills in recruiting appropriate peer educators.

Learning objectives

At the end of this session participants will be able to:

- Define the qualifications that peer educators need to have
- Know what questions to ask in the recruitment process
- Understand what motivates people to become peer educators and what are barriers to become peer educators
- Assess training needs of peer educators

Key points

1. The most important point for a peer educators is credibility with the specific target group
2. Selection criteria have to be developed before recruitment takes place
3. Training needs have to be assessed at regular intervals and refresher training has to take place. Whenever possible learning visits to other peer educators should be organised as this is a powerful mechanism for motivation

Materials and handouts

Selecting peer educators

Handout 4.2.1– Selecting and training peer educators

Selecting and recruiting peer educators

Recruiting peer educators is perhaps the most difficult step for those initiating projects. There are three main factors to think about when recruiting people as peer educators:

They must be acceptable to the target group

Their personality must be conducive to training and the work they will be doing

They must have the proper motivation or incentives to become and stay involved.

1. Acceptable to the group

The 'ideal' peer educator is a person who is liked by his peers, has a wide social network, is trustworthy, credible, and someone other people turn naturally to for advice. They should be innovative in the sense that they are used to bringing new ideas and practices into the peer group, but at the same time not so 'radical' or outside the group that other people won't listen to them. This type of person is usually called a 'natural opinion leader'. The importance of using natural opinion leaders depends upon the approach used. If the project relies on social diffusion for its effect, opinion leaders are more likely to diffuse information and change than other members of the target group.

2. Personal characteristics

Besides being opinion leaders, there is no real agreement on the personality attributes most conducive to being a peer educator. However, the following characteristics are often used:

Communication abilities and assertiveness

An innovative mind and an openness toward change

An ability to work in groups and as a team member

A respect for other people and for confidentiality

An interest in the topic of the project or in specific types of interventions (i.e. video production, drama, etc.)

What the target group thinks and feels about their peer educators is a crucial factor - this should be the focus during recruitment. Since proper peer education has a strong focus on peer educator self-development, many of these characteristics can be developed. If those recruited feel they do not fit into the project or lose interest, they should be allowed to drop out without a sense of guilt or shame.

3. Motivation and incentives

Experience has shown that peer educators who stay with projects often joined for altruistic reasons and want to inform their peers about HIV and other health issues. Peer education can offer the opportunity to develop social skills or specific skills in subjects such as media, public speaking and drama. Once a project is running, the friendships among the peer educators and their social activities will be important incentives. In some projects, being a peer educator brings increased popularity and

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status. Other incentives can be provided, such as learning trips to other similar peer educators, invitations to workshops.

The characteristics of the staff working in the project are very important. In the well-functioning projects, these staff are seen by the peer educators as trustworthy, credible, 'one of them', and someone they could turn to for help and advice. In addition, the way in which the peer educators are treated and co-operated with by the staff is important.

At initial recruitment, most projects attempt to begin with equal proportions of men and women (if applicable), but the general trend is for more males to drop out. The primary reason is that females are often more concerned about the issues at hand, find it easier to discuss issues like relationships, emotions, love, sex and HIV and (for young people) peer education often offers a way to get out of the house and household tasks.

The success of a peer education project will usually depend upon creating a good and easy-going atmosphere, providing the opportunity for self-development, utilising interesting learning techniques, and providing empathic support from the staff.

4. Using payment as an incentive

The use of money as an incentive is controversial among those working in peer education. Some believe that 'true' peer education is grassroots volunteerism and should not involve monetary reimbursement. The other argument is that the peer educators are doing the agency a service and should consequently be reimbursed or that the peer educators lose the opportunity to make money when they are engaged in peer education.

5. Peer educator self-determination and empowerment

The peer educators should be allowed to influence the content and course of the project from the recruitment stage onwards. 'Self-determination' does not, in this context, mean total peer educator control. It describes the degree of empowerment given by the staff in the project. The process should increase the peer educators' decision-making skills, self-esteem, motivation and command of their project responsibilities. This approach requires the staff to view every person as unique, with valid experience regardless of their age. From then on, the staff builds a relationship with the peer educators and acts as teacher, coach, mentor, and someone to turn to. People of all ages have valid experience to share, but may not be aware of what they know or what they need to know. Working with peer educators will mean to value their experience and stimulate the desire and motivation to learn in them. This is done by creating a supportive atmosphere that encourages inquiry, discussion and self-reflection. Staff should resist providing solutions. Instead, they should point to a variety of possible solutions in a way that allows the peer educators to choose on their own. The empowering process of inquiry, learning, discussion and pursuing objectives as a member of a team strengthens the peer educators abilities as critical thinkers and their confidence in being able to bring about constructive change. For the target group, it may be a step toward slowing the spread of HIV through a grassroots approach, giving information in a way that is adapted to suit their values, needs and lifestyle.

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6. Training

The essence of peer education training is to equip people with the knowledge, understanding, skills and motivation to carry out prevention activities. The staff and trainers should meet with the peer educators recruited before the training begins to allow them to give their input to the programme and gain a sense of ownership from the earliest stage. This meeting would include a presentation of the project outline, its goals, and an explanation of peer education. It could also include a presentation on HIV and its prevention, demonstration of interactive games and exercises, group discussions, and brainstorming. The amount of time and commitment that the project requires should be made clear to the peer educators during the meeting. If the project is the first of its kind in the area, peer educators from other similar projects can be invited in to talk.

To summarise, training programmes should include the following elements:

- The preparatory meeting and a training residential
- The imparting of formal knowledge on HIV and related subjects
- A focus on personal development and cultural issues
- Skills training
- Continuing support, supplementary training and assistance.

The training programme

It is recommended that training begins with a residential weekend to allow the peer educators to get to know each other and to start working with project staff. The weekend shouldn't be over-structured, but provide time and an appropriate environment for the sharing of experiences and discussion. It could include:

- Warm-up and ice-breaking exercises
- Brainstorming and group discussion
- Role-play and interactive games
- Lectures and presentations
- Question-and-answer sessions that focused on young people's way of thinking

The core of the training is usually based on interactive learning exercises, with ample time for feedback and discussion.

Knowledge component

The length and intensity of the knowledge component depends on the aims and approach of the project. General health promotion projects can cover a range of topics other than HIV, including alcohol and tobacco use, safe driving, nutrition, and the prevention of other diseases. In these types of projects, the people being trained are sometimes referred to as 'health promoters' rather than peer educators.

Sexual education projects cover topics such as sexuality, sexual relationships, safer sex, reproduction, contraceptives, gender roles, the spectrum of sexuality, sexual development, and so forth.

HIV-related drug projects include information about various drugs and drug use. As well as information about HIV, training programmes should include information about the various sexually transmitted diseases (STD), their prevalence, symptoms, risks, and treatment.

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Be careful not to drift from the problems and concerns that people experience. Begin from their age-related experience and what they already know, though repetition may be necessary to allow for proper understanding and to dispel myths or misinformation. Lastly, take care not to overload them with information, creating expectations of expertise beyond their present capacity.

It is recommended that the HIV/AIDS knowledge component covers the topics given below:

- The history of the epidemic
- The epidemiology of the infection, locally and global
- The virological aspects including modes of transmission
- Behaviours leading to transmission and their risks
- Knowledge and understanding of the clinical development of HIV to AIDS and treatment -'
- HIV testing and its issues
- Philosophy of how to care for someone with HIV/AIDS
- Social issues raised by HIV
- Legal and legislative issues
- Methods of protection
- Basic sexuality, depending on age and earlier sexual education
- Various drugs and drug use.

Because the peer educators will provide information and answer questions from their peers, they will need to have correct knowledge and be secure in their role as peer experts. The use of interactive games, role-play and feedback sessions can help them sharpen their skills in 'talking on their feet'.

7. Personal development and cultural issues

HIV/AIDS and the topics related to its transmission are closely associated with personal and cultural values. The issues surrounding HIV can touch upon the deepest of human concerns. This is well illustrated in the irrational fear of and discrimination shown towards people with HIV. Moreover, topics related to sexual risks touch upon personal and cultural issues surrounding relationships, sexuality, religious faith, gender roles, the spectrum of sexuality, and family.

In this component, the training takes up and explores these issues. There will be wide variations in the attitudes and beliefs held by people in any target group, and it is therefore important that the peer educators gain knowledge and an appreciation of differences in values, lifestyle and beliefs. In the projects examined, it was not unusual to find peer educators with opposing views on sexuality working harmoniously together.

This appreciation of difference can be gained through discussions and interactive exercises, where the peer educators learn from each other's experience. However, there should be a ground rule that no-one ought to feel compelled to share their thoughts or participate in exercises if they don't wish to. This is both ethically correct and an exercise in accepting difference. A second ground rule is confidentiality concerning conversations during the training. This applies equally well to the private

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conversations the peer educators will have with other young people in their later work except when support and expertise is needed from the project group. They will need to learn this ethic and continue to keep quiet about what they have heard even after they leave the project.

The goal of this training component is to provide the peer educators with a greater understanding of themselves, their work, and of others. It is done in an empowering way that strengthens and motivates them in their role as peer educators. Topics that can be included are: health and prevention, values, gender, sexuality, HIV positive people, drugs and drug use, sexual orientation, decision making and risks.

8. Skills development

It is important that peer educators learn their own training skills, along with personal development. Exactly what skills will need to be developed depends on the project model and action plan. The use of drama techniques, the presentation of lecture packages, talking informally to other (young) people about HIV, and the use of various media are examples of useful training skills. In some projects with older people, the peer educators initially develop increasing self-confidence, then concentrate on the developing their own creative activities.

HIV and risk behaviour

This covers specific skills in avoiding HIV infection. The training can cover decision-making and negotiating safer sex, proficiency in condom use, and the safe use of syringes. The peer educators should become familiar with the various models of condoms available, and their specific uses. Training in condom use should not just be technical and didactic, but instead encourage personal and effective responses. This allows the peer educators get over their embarrassment, and helps predict the responses of those they will be instructing themselves.

Communication skills

The peer educators will eventually need to learn how to communicate messages to other young people, to perform in front of groups, and to work with groups. This can require the ability to handle teasing, disorder, and intimate questions. Peer educators learn these skills through coaching from adults and feedback from the other peer educators. The project can invite specialists on drama, speech, media, and sex education to contribute to the training.

9. Support and sources of assistance

After the initial training, the peer educators will embark on a new learning experience and need support and assistance in developing activities and carrying them out. We recommend the use of small supervision groups that meet on a regular basis. These are facilitated by adults experienced in peer education or who are specially trained in this role (for example, school staff). Peer educator self-development and relationships within the project and with intermediaries need special attention. Other forms of assistance can be made available. Where to find the kinds of expertise that, for example, local trainers, intermediaries and medical professionals

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can offer, should be clearly explained to the peer educators. Support can also include supplementary training, use of localities, and local sponsorship.

Peer educator support

The aims of adult peer educator support and supervision are the following:

- To provide information up-dates and access to professional information and advice
- To provide continuing self-development training
- To allow group brainstorming sessions where new implementations can be generated
- To keep the peer educators focused and their feet on the ground when overwhelmed by their own enthusiasm.
- To provide technical support in creating new implementations, i.e. posters, dramas, presentations, etc.
- To make sure the group dynamic are functioning well and help solve problems as they arise
- To provide feedback and encouragement on the work being done and emotional support when it doesn't
- To intervene when there are problems between the peer educators, intermediaries or gatekeepers
- To provide a social programme that keeps the group together.

The support and encouragement of other people is crucial for the peer educators. This includes the project team they work with, the supervision groups and the peer education group as a whole. Networking and exchange with similar peer education projects can be very encouraging and fun as well as facilitate the exchange of ideas and experience. The opinions of friends and peers can be decisive. For this reason, the project needs to maintain a positive profile and an admirable reputation.

Adapted from European guidelines for youth AIDS peer education.

Some other issues:

Hire active IDUs?

If yes, why?

- Part of the drug scene
- Know what is going on, where it is happening and who is involved
- Aware of the rules and rites
- Have frequent contact with other drug users

If not, why?

- No time, lifestyle. Being an active drug user is like having a full time job: little time to do anything else
- Commitment to a job may be impossible due to time demands, unfamiliarity with work norms: this may affect continuity of the project
- Too involved with peers

Session 4.3 – Case study presentation

Aim

To provide participants with a practical example of a peer education intervention.

Learning objectives

At the end of this session participants will be able to:

- Understand how this particular intervention was developed
- Learn how the target groups were approached
- Learn how peer educators are selected, trained and motivated
- Learn how referral systems have been developed

Key points

1. Reaching FSWs needs innovative approaches and the development of trust between the NGO and the target group
2. Selection, training and motivation of peer educators is a continuous process that needs careful monitoring
3. Peer education interventions have to be linked to different services and assist the target group in developing their own strategy for behaviour change.

Materials and handouts

4.3.1 Leaflet on the project

Session 4.4 – Developing linkages and partnerships

Aim

To provide participants with an overview in the steps of mapping a referral and support network (enabling environment and service provision) to support peer education and behaviour change interventions.

Learning objectives

At the end of this session participants will be able to:

- Understand how to develop a data base based on the needs of the target group
- Identify ways to establish linkages for referral
- Understand the obstacles for referral
- Identify gaps in service provision and possible ways to address these

Key points

1. Steps in setting up a referral network are:
 - Determine needs of target group
 - Determine what services are available
 - Discuss with agencies on the possibilities for setting up a referral system
 - Identify gaps in service provision and discuss ways to fill these gaps

Materials and handouts

4.4.1 Venn diagram (see 3.1.1)