

# Enhancing Health Communications to Empower Your Outreach

CHOICES Community of Practice  
Coffee Chat



May 23, 2024


***Welcome!***

***Please share your name, title, & organization in the chat.***

# Disclaimer & Funding

- The CHOICES Project engages in research and education. The information presented in this discussion today is for educational purposes only and does not necessarily represent the position of any CHOICES Project funders.
- This event is intended to provide information, tools, and resources to inform and educate the audience, and is not an attempt to influence any specific legislation.
- Our guest speakers have been invited to share their personal perspectives and do not speak for Harvard.

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**The CHOICES Community of Practice includes people whose work focuses on advancing obesity prevention, healthy eating, and active living, and want to learn more about how cost-effectiveness analysis can advance their efforts and address health equity.**

# Enhancing Health Communications to Empower Your Outreach



## Andrea Grenadier

Senior Marketing & Communications Specialist at the National Association of County and City Health Officials

**Poll: How important is communications to you in your work?**

# How We Talk About Healthy Lifestyles

This is an issue with a lot of facets. Current narratives include:

- The body positivity movement
- Focus on individual health, personal choice
- Empowering people to care about their health
- Sensitivity of the language we use when we talking about weight, diet, disordered eating, and exercise
- Acknowledgement of the inability of people to afford a healthy diet and food insecurity
- The role of health departments in encouraging healthy eating and exercise
- Accessibility issues and barriers to movement for those with different abilities or other constraints (financial, environmental)

# Move Your Way®

The second edition of the Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans provides evidence-based recommendations for adults and youth ages 3–17 to safely get the physical activity they need to stay healthy.

Supported by:

- 50 tools and resources, including a comprehensive *Community Playbook*
- Materials in both Spanish and English
- Posters, fact sheets, videos, social media graphics, messaging, and a website



**Move Your Way Community Playbook**  
Guiding Models of Move Your Way

<https://health.gov/our-work/nutrition-physical-activity/move-your-way-community-resources>

# Health Department Strategies: Move Your Way®

## Mississippi State Department of Health – Jackson County



### Snapshot of Pilot Activities

- **12** community events reaching over **3,240** community members
- **1,952** Move Your Way® materials distributed
- **16,898** people reached by social media messages with 611 engagements
- **42** partners supporting the campaign
- **10,546,797** ad impressions of Move Your Way® social media advertisements
- **3,739,600** earned media impressions



# Move Your Way®

## The Walk Cabarrus Community Challenge

In 2021, through partnerships and coalitions, organizations implementing the Move Your Way® campaign hosted and supported events designed to create opportunities for physical activity:

- Disseminated materials and messages to educate the community about the *Physical Activity Guidelines*
- Engaged local radio, television, news, social media, and a paid advertising buy to promote the campaign
- Used tools from the Move Your Way® Community Playbook to track progress and evaluate success.



# Effective Health Communication...

- Engages across communities to share information, resources, and support
- Meets people where they are
- Uses empathy, shared experiences, and active listening to build relationships and understanding
- Delivers messages that are simple, consistent, and clearly conveyed

## Trust is the key. It is built on...

- **Understanding:** Empathize, consider another perspective, listen
- **Conveying:** Science-based, accurate information with foundations in effective/established practices
- **Informing:** Have the facts, keep it simple and clear
- **Connecting:** Share stories
- **Showing and Proving:** Be out there in your community outreach to build trust in person

# Building a Communications Plan: The Basics

Who needs the information, and what do they need to know?

- **Know Your Audience:** Understand who you're communicating with – their needs, preferences, and interests.
- **Clear and Disciplined Messaging:** Keep your message concise, focused, and easy to understand.
- **Use Multiple Channels:** Use various communication channels such as social media, email, newsletters, and in-person events to reach different segments of your audience.
- **Consistency is Key:** Maintain consistency in your messaging across all channels to reinforce your brand identity.
- **Two-Way Communication:** Encourage feedback and engage in conversations with your audience.

# Look to Your Partners for Promotional Toolkits

In this case, the CDC – for toolkits that you can use to promote observances that focus on health and physical activity. This year's theme — **Prevent Drowning: Swim Lessons Save Lives** — focuses on the crucial role basic swimming and water safety skills training plays in keeping children and adults safe around water.



# Build Trust into Your Outreach

- Take history and experience into account when reaching out to your diverse communities
- Listen to community voices
- Transcend possible language barriers by providing translated materials
- Find people in your communities to serve as trusted messengers of vital information
- Bridge the gap between information and action by telling culturally relevant stories that will resonate with your community. Stories:
  - Can create emotional connection
  - Can convey complex information clearly and help to reduce stigma
  - Can evoke emotions and empathy, making health information more personally relevant
  - Can build community by building a sense of solidarity and support, fostering an environment where people can share experiences, advice, and resources.

# Key Communications Strategies to Address Healthy Lifestyles

- **Clear and Accessible Messaging:** Ensure that communication materials are easy to understand and accessible to your target audience.
- **Visual Content:** Use visually appealing content such as infographics, videos, and images to convey key messages about healthy eating and exercise.
- **Social Media Campaigns:** Leverage your social media platforms to reach a wide audience and promote healthy eating and exercise habits.
- **Influencer Partnerships:** To reach a broader audience, collaborate with influencers or public figures who are passionate about health and wellness. Influencers can help amplify your messages and make them more relatable.
- **Community Engagement and Meeting People Where They Are:** Engage with local communities through events, workshops, and partnerships with schools, workplaces, and community organizations.

# Key Communications Strategies to Address Healthy Lifestyles

- **Behavioral Nudges:** Use behavioral science principles to encourage behavior change, such as setting small, achievable goals and providing incentives for healthy behaviors.
- **Personalization:** Tailor communications to the individual preferences and needs of your audience.
- **Education and Awareness:** Provide accurate information about the benefits of healthy eating and exercise.
- **Long-Term Support:** Offer ongoing support and resources to help individuals maintain healthy habits over time. This could include follow-up communications, online communities, or coaching programs.
- **Celebrate Successes:** Highlight success stories and achievements to inspire and motivate others to adopt healthier habits. Recognize and celebrate progress, no matter how small, to reinforce positive behaviors.

# Promoting Evidence-Based Strategies

**Evidence-Based Strategies:** There are several strategies that have strong scientific evidence that they will benefit health (e.g., increasing physical activity, decreasing sugary drink consumption, & improving diet quality). Focus communications on strategies that are evidence-based.



Relevant resource: **Investing in Prevention: A Messaging Guide (CHOICES)**

[choicesproject.org/publications/investing-in-prevention-a-messaging-guide](https://choicesproject.org/publications/investing-in-prevention-a-messaging-guide)

CHOICES NATIONAL  
ACTION KIT 2.0

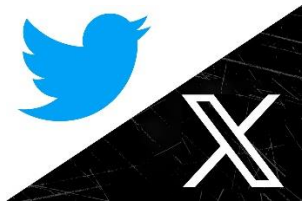
Use the CHOICES National Action Kit 2.0 to explore & compare effective policies and programs that can be used in schools, early care and education and out-of-school settings, communities, and clinics to promote nutrition, physical activity, & healthy weight.

[choicesproject.org/actionkit](https://choicesproject.org/actionkit)



**Poll: How many of you are using social media on a daily basis?**

# Social Media is Your Friend (Most of the Time)



- Twitter/X
- Facebook
- Instagram
- TikTok

- LinkedIn
- Pinterest
- YouTube
- Blogs



**Poll: Where do you typically go for communications guidance or resources?**

**Questions?**

# THANK

# YOU

What's next? →

**Join us on June 4 from 1:00pm – 2:00pm ET for a webinar with the CDC Prevention Research Centers Program and the National Association of County and City Health Officials**



## CONTACT US

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Register to join at  
[choicesproject.org/comm-of-practice](https://choicesproject.org/comm-of-practice)