Phase 4: Intervention Design

This module describes phase 4 of the social marketing planning process, intervention design. On average, it takes people 25-30 minutes to complete this module. The time you need will depend on your pace and how much you explore the resources and supplemental materials.

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Learning Objectives

After completing this module, you will be able to

- Develop a detailed intervention design based on chosen strategies and audience research.
- Identify partners needed to implement program and discuss how to work with them.
- Analyze and list details that need to be accomplished to complete intervention activities.
- Revise a logic model to include intervention activities and desired outcomes.
- Define process and outcome objectives.
- Discuss planning issues including budgets and program timeline.
- Describe the importance of pre-testing and appropriate times to use it.

Introduction

This phase of the social marketing process is the time to begin planning what the intervention will actually look like. This is the phase where planners choose and develop activities, products, messages, materials, distribution channels, supporting services, and so forth to put the marketing strategy designed in phase 3 to work.

This module and the next two modules focus on the unique contributions of social marketing to the design and implementation of an intervention. By completing phases 1—3, you are in a much stronger position to create an intervention than if you were starting from scratch. Remember your focus on the audience and their point of view. Keep yourself from reverting to the activities you've always done or the ideas you had at the beginning if they are not supported by what you've learned about your audience.

This is the time to be very specific about what you will actually do with your intervention.

Big Picture Alert

Phase 4 is closely connected to phase 5, evaluation. You will likely be planning your intervention's details and the evaluation at the same time.

In phase 3, you learned how to develop your marketing strategy and make final decisions about an audience segment, behavior, and the 4 P's. Now, in phase 4, you will learn how to choose intervention activities or components and choose the details that will allow you to implement those activities. See the example below.

Strategy	Activities	Details
Teach cooking skills to parents so they'll know how to make healthy family meals.	Cooking classes at the local YMCA while children are playing (supervised by YMCA staff).	Cooking class curriculum or lesson plans.
		Agreement with YMCA to provide kitchen facility and space for classes.
		YMCA staff agree to supervise children.
	Weekly cooking demonstrations with all ingredients on hand at local grocery stores.	Demonstration supplies.
		Demonstrator.
		Agreement with grocery stores to hold demonstrations.
	Recipe cards for healthy, easy, and kid-friendly meals.	Recipes for cards.
		Criteria for "healthy" meals.
		Distribution channels for cards and coordination with cooking classes.

Choose Intervention Activities or Components

Once you have made the main strategy decisions in phase 3, you will have a framework by which to develop the components or activities of your intervention. Each activity should be connected with the overall marketing strategy and behavioral objectives you have laid out and should help your audience adopt the behavior(s). Having a clearly defined strategy will help you eliminate lots of activities that won't fit, and can help you reject proposed activities that may not suit the audience. Take a look at your available resources and partnerships, and decide what activities or program components you can use to fulfill the marketing strategy

There is no magic formula or process for choosing intervention activities or components. Like creating a marketing strategy, this process is meant to be exciting and creative, yet for those same reasons, it can be difficult as well. You could start by mapping out what you have learned and decided up to this point. Decide who will need to be involved in your program or intervention. Look at the benefits and barriers you've identified. Brainstorm ways of reducing the barriers and increasing the benefits. Also, you may want to look for existing activities or programs that you can adapt which will help you fulfill your marketing strategy.

See the table in Phase 3 for ideas to organize data and results with marketing strategy ideas.

Example Activities

The following are some examples of activities to give you an idea of the different types of activities in each of the 4 P's. This is certainly not a comprehensive list and there are plenty of other ideas. You may see an activity listed under one "P" that looks like it could belong with a different "P." The 4 P's tend to interrelate. It isn't as important for you to choose which "P" an activity belongs to, but that you look at all four as you plan.

These activities are listed as examples to spur thoughts and ideas. Remember that the activities you choose should be based on your program's strategy and research results, not because you see something you like here.

Sample Product-Related Activities

- Training (skill-building workshops, parent trainings, establish groups to provide social support, customer service training for front-line staff, develop or modify existing curriculum).
- Services (improve hours, provide more convenient locations, improve services provided by lactation consultants).
- Produce toolkit or resource guide.
- Construct a Web site to track behaviors.
- Develop a new product or redesign an existing product (new packaging for fruits and vegetables, pedometers for physical activity, TV-time tracking devices).

Sample Price-Related Activities

- Reduce monetary cost of products (lower costs of healthy items in vending machines, subsidize costs of fruits and vegetables, reduce cost of after-school programs that provide physical activity).
- Reduce non-monetary costs (provide exercise classes at work, provide childcare at activities, provide easy and convenient transportation to and from activities, make fruits and vegetables available nearby).
- Increase cost of competitive products (add tax to soft drinks, increase costs of unhealthy items in workplace cafeteria, establish a fine for daycares showing more than a limited amount of TV).
- Make the desired behavior easier to do (provide a treadmill in the workplace; have healthy options in the snack machine).
- Advocate for policy changes that reduce barriers (add sidewalks to neighborhoods to make walking easier, pay for increased security at community parks, flexible schedules to allow for physical activity in work sites, remove free formula and take home bags from maternity floors).

Sample Place-Related Activities

- Arrange for better or more convenient distribution of a product (farmer's markets or grocery stores in low-income neighborhoods).
- Improve accessibility to a product (salad bars in school lunchrooms).
- Make environmental changes (add trails and sidewalks, fruits and vegetables prepared and ready to eat in the refrigerator, no televisions in children's bedrooms).
- New or improved distribution channels (getting produce for school lunches from local farmers, produce stands at work sites).

Sample Promotion-Related Activities

- Design messages (taglines, program names, key messages).
- Produce materials (brochures, tip sheets, content for Web sites).
- Plan advertising (advertise program to potential participants, write letters to editorial staff of newspapers, encourage media to cover stories, develop newspaper or radio ads).
- Provide incentives.
- Identify and work with champions from partner organizations who can provide support or promote the program.
- Facilitate word-of-mouth publicity.

Resources

- The Pink Book
  National Cancer Institute

Coordinate All Activities

Once you have chosen the activities you want to implement, you'll need to make sure that all of your activities coordinate with each other and fit into the strategies outlined in phase 3. Take a moment to look at your complete program.

Ask yourself

- Together, do these activities address the barriers and benefits to change that your audience identified?
- Do the activities support each other?
- Does each activity coordinate with your overall marketing strategy?
- Do you have the resources available to implement all of the activities you have described?
- Are any important components missing?
- Together, do your activities address the relevant constructs you identified from behavioral theory?
- Together, are these activities likely to have the intended effects? Are they sufficient to change the complex behaviors you're trying to change?
- Will the members of your target audience receive sufficient "dose" to enable behavior change?

Develop Intervention Details

Once you have an idea about the activities or program components, the next part of the intervention design phase is to address any details that need to be in place before you can start implementing the program. Spend some time thinking about the details and logistics that are needed to implement the activities or program components you have selected.

This includes any

- Partnerships or agreements with organizations or people.
- New or modified services that will be offered (including staff, training).
- Lesson plans or curricula for training, skill-building, or courses.
- Messages or materials needed to communicate with the audience.
- Incentives for the target audience to participate.

This step is where you map out the details necessary to bring your strategy to life. It may be easy to create a strategy and choose activities that sound fun and exiting, but it can be hard to turn those promises into reality. For example, if your strategy is to position a cooking class as "easy" and "convenient," you need to figure out how you will actually make it easy and convenient. How will you ensure the potential participants know about and perceive those attributes?

You may want to create a detailed flow chart that helps you to organize your activities and each of the details that must be in place before the activities can begin. This can prevent assumptions from being made about how something is done or who is responsible. Another option is to create a detailed work plan that shows who is responsible for leading each component of the intervention and the resources needed. Some components will need to be completed before others, and this is a good time to work out those details.

Let's look at each of the categories mentioned earlier in more detail.

Partnerships and Agreements

As you shift from planning the broad strategy of the intervention to developing activities and planning the details, you may need to look at your current partnerships and planning teams. Do you still have the right people? You may need to add partners with different skills or resources, such as organizations that can help with implementation or planning team members who can help you with the logistical details.

Treat new partners (and existing ones) as audiences. Think about what the benefits of partnering with you might be from their perspective. You want them to do something for you, so what can you provide in return?

- Can you provide credibility to their organizations?
- What about access or visibility to a new group of customers or potential donors?
- Can you share advertising costs, or increase exposure of their name?
- What do you have that they want?

If you don't know what they might want, you can always ask. Promise meaningful benefits and then deliver on them.

Any commercial partner is likely to be concerned about cost and profit. If you can show evidence that partnering with you will increase their business or their profits, you have a strong case. At the very least, make sure you won't decrease sales or profits.

Scenario 29

Rosa: "We have some new partners. I thought it was a little early to bring them on because we're hoping they can help us with implementation. But the planning team thought they could provide input into the program while we're still in the planning stage, which might help them feel ownership.

So we met this week and they had a lot of great ideas, although some are making me a little nervous – they didn't quite match up with our audience research. I don't want to criticize them though; we really need to keep good relationships with these partners. I have a feeling we may need them down the road. How should I handle this predicament?"

What would you advise Rosa to do? Check all that apply.

1. Set up a meeting with the purpose of bringing the new partners up to speed. Walk them through the decisions you've made and the reasons behind them.
2. Tell the partners that you don't need their help.
3. Accept that you may have to do some activities that aren't specific to the marketing strategy. Just make sure you do them in addition to activities based on your marketing strategy.
4. Ask the partners to provide a rationale for their choice of activity based on the formative research. Explain that this is the way you've decided to make decisions and you'd be happy to support their activity, but only if it is supported by research.

Feedback:

1. This would be **good advice**. Anytime you bring someone new into the decision-making process, it is a good idea to share with them, and remind everyone else where you have been and that you had reasons for making the decisions you made.
2. This would be **poor advice**. Partnerships are important and you should try everything you can to allow them to have ownership of your plan, but not to the detriment of the target audience.
3. This would be **poor advice**. You should make every effort to keep the planning group on strategy. If they want to go ahead with their plans, you probably can’t stop them, but you should try to convince them there is a more effective way to use their money.
4. This would be **good advice**, especially if you have an existing relationship with the partners and feel comfortable asking for this.

Develop Intervention Details (cont.)

Services or Training

Another detail that you may need to include in your intervention planning is any services that should be developed or modified and any staff training that goes along with new services. For example, you may want to provide cooking classes to build skills in cooking healthy meals, or improve the front-line service at a local WIC clinic. Think about the benefits that you want to provide to your audience. How can this service make the behavior easier and more convenient for the target audience? How will you communicate those benefits to the audience? Staff who interact with the target audience on a consistent basis can be a great pathway to communicate information and benefits. Do you need to conduct training with staff so that they know the right information to tell the target audience?

Lessons or Curricula

You may choose to develop or adapt lesson plans or curricula as part of your intervention. If you go with already existing materials, look at them with a critical eye. Do they fit with your strategy? If not, can you modify them? Just because you have an existing curriculum, it doesn't mean that it will meet your needs. Read through it to determine if it asks for a similar behavior change and provides information relating to the benefits you want to promote and the barriers you want to reduce. If it doesn't and you aren't able to modify it, then look for something else to use. Whatever you choose, it is important to pretest with your audience.
Pretesting is covered in more detail later.

Messages and Materials

Any messages and materials that you develop have to follow through with communicating the benefits you promise in your strategy and reducing barriers that you know the audience has. If you develop or modify materials or messages, pretesting them with the audience before you release them is critical.

Resources[1]

Resources for developing communication messages and materials include the following:

- The Pink Book
  National Cancer Institute

Media Advocacy Resources

- Community Tool Box chapter on Media Advocacy
  University of Kansas
- APHA Media Advocacy Manual (PDF-76k)
- Book: *Media Advocacy and Public Health: Power for Potential*
- Simply Put (PDF-2.74Mb)

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[1] Resources that are not hyperlinked can be found at:
http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa/socialmarketing/training/resources.htm

Incentives

Think carefully about any incentives you offer for participating in your program. Sometimes incentives are used to get people to pay attention to what you are doing. Ideally, though, you should use incentives or motivators that will help people change their behavior, not just participate in your program. If you decide to use prizes or other tangible incentives, make sure they are ones that the audience segment would actually want and are relevant to the desired behavior change. No matter what type of incentives you use, they should not make up your entire promotional plan.

Work through any rules that you will need about who can win prizes or receive incentives before the program starts. You may need to think of many possible contingencies, for example, whether someone who completes half of the program is eligible for an incentive or not.

Example

In Arkansas, state employees participated in a worksite wellness program. They could earn points for prizes or paid time off work. One creative prize was a set of bracelets that people could wear. Each time they ate a serving of fruits or vegetables they could transfer a bracelet from one wrist to the other. At the end of the day, they could easily track how many servings of fruits and vegetables they had eaten. While more of a gimmick or prize, the bracelets supported behavior change and allowed participants to easily track their behavior.

Revise Logic Model

Your next step in this phase is to work through the program's final touches, including revising the logic model. If you started working on a logic model in the problem description, take a look at it again now. You will probably want to add the activities and inputs you have selected to the model at this time. The logic model can be a helpful tool for seeing how each activity is tied to the rest and how you plan for them to impact behavior.

The Physical Activity Evaluation Handbook describes two approaches to create a logic model:

1. The "right-to-left" approach starting with the desired outcomes and working backwards to develop inputs and activities.
2. The "left-to-right" approach starting with the program's inputs and activities and working towards outcomes.

The handbook also has several examples of logic models.

There are many ways to organize a logic model and no particular method is necessarily best. Regardless of the method you choose or the terms you use, your logic model should include

- Desired outcomes (both short- and long-term).
- Activities that would lead to those outcomes.
- How you expect that process to work.

This logic model will help in your plan for monitoring and evaluation which will be covered during phase 5. If you are bringing in new partners, the process of working out the logic model is a good way to get everyone on the same page and promote buy in. This will keep everyone focused on where you're going with the intervention and why.

Tip

Include all activities beyond just promotion in your logic model. Your logic model and objectives should reflect the path that you believe people will take towards behavior change and you should make sure all steps are included.

Write Process and Outcome Objectives

Write process objectives for each of the activities you develop. This does not need to be a complicated process, but it is important so you know what each activity should accomplish. For example: in the next eight weeks two meetings will be scheduled with each legislator who currently opposes the bill providing tax incentives to grocery stores who locate in low-income neighborhoods. As you write these objectives, make sure you'll be able to recognize success.

Once you write the process objectives for each activity, you may want to write some outcome objectives for the whole program. Start with the behavioral objectives from phase 3. These objectives are likely the long-term changes that you would like to see (with health status changes probably coming even further in the future). Address any other changes (in attitudes, beliefs, knowledge, policies, or the environment) you found in earlier phases that should occur before behavior change. These changes can become your short-term outcome objectives. Remember, all objectives should be written in SMART format.

Different types of objectives can be confusing. In this course we talk about SMART objectives, behavioral objectives, process objectives, and outcome objectives.

SMART objectives refers to the method by which objectives are written. They should be specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-specific. All objectives should be written in SMART format.

Behavioral objectives are written to set a clear goal of the specific behavior you want the target audience to adopt. They are usually written in phase 3, strategy development. Both process and outcome objectives are written in phases 4 and 5.

Type of Objective	Purpose	Sample
Process	To determine if the program or intervention is implemented as designed.	In the first semester of Kids Walk-to-School, 20 community volunteers will commit to participating in organized walks to school.[2]
Outcome	To determine if the program or intervention has the intended effects. They can be short-term, mid-term, or long-term. Behavioral objectives can be a type of outcome objective. Long-term outcomes can go beyond measuring behavior change to measuring health status.	By the end of this school semester, the number of students walking to school will increase by 20%.[3]

Need to Review? See Phase 3: Write Behavioral Objectives.

[2] From *Physical Activity Evaluation Handbook*, p. 47
[3] From *Physical Activity Evaluation Handbook*, p. 47

Pretesting

As you design your intervention's activities and components, continue getting audience feedback about your choices. It is easy to veer off track, and checking in with the audience is helpful. Pretesting is something that you should think about throughout phase 4. You may want to start pretesting when you develop your initial plans for your program's activities, or you may want to wait until you have more concrete plans for where and when activities will take place.

If you have a budget for formative research, you may want to reserve a portion of it for pretesting. Once you have an idea about what your program or materials will look like, it is no time to start ignoring the opinions and feedback of the audience. Pretesting is just as important as formative research, and can even be viewed as a continuation of your formative research.

Tip

No matter how well you pretest, you won't have it perfect the first time. But, learn from your mistakes, fix them, and keep improving what you offer the target audience. It may never be perfect, but will be more effective each time if you listen and respond. On a long-term basis, pretesting can become part of your process evaluation plan.

How to Pretest

Pretesting can be done in a variety of ways, depending on the level of resources you have. You may want to set up an "advisory group" made up of members of your audience segment who can give you clear and honest feedback about the components you are proposing. You could also try to find an existing group of target audience members. Maybe they are part of a school PTA or a church group. See if you can have some time at one of their meetings to get feedback.

Your choice of methods and level of intensity for pretesting should depend on the project and your available resources. For example, you may want to show printed materials to members of the target audience and get their feedback. This can be done informally with individual conversations, or more formally with focus groups.

Another form of pretesting is to pilot your program. This means you put the program into place with a small portion of the audience to see how it is received. If you pilot your program or any part of it, monitor feedback and reactions to make sure the program is performing as intended. Don't be afraid to make any necessary changes. Monitoring and evaluation are discussed further in phase 5.

Limited Resources?

Using existing groups or setting up a volunteer advisory group can be very cost-efficient ways of pretesting. Depending on what and how you're testing, you could also try intercept interviews. Catch people at the grocery store or dropping their kids off at school and ask them a few short, simple questions. If you do this be sure to develop a screener to ensure that you are talking to someone who is part of your audience segment. Also, make sure to get permission from property owners or businesses if you plan to stop people on their property.

What to Pretest

- Overall activities and program ideas.
- Program logistics (including times, locations, how materials should be distributed).
- Messages and materials (Do they make sense? Do they communicate the right message?).

See the *Materials Pretesting Guide* in the *Obesity Prevention Coordinators' Social Marketing Guidebook* for a list of pretesting questions. Even if you are pretesting aspects of your program other than materials, these questions will help you see how specific you should be.

Use the results from your pretesting actions to make changes. You will probably want to include room in the budget and timeline for getting this type of feedback, even after you start implementing.

Resources

- Materials Pretesting Guide (PDF-30k)
- The Pink Book
  National Cancer Institute

Scenario 30

Rosa: "We finally have a list of proposed activities. Now, we want to run some ideas by the target audience before we get too far along. Since we really don't have any money to do any kind of formal pretesting or another focus group, how do we reach our target audience again? We definitely can't hire Wellington Data to do anything else. Do you have any suggestions for ways to pretest our ideas for free?"

Select the option you think would be best for Rosa to explore.

1. See if any of the planning team members have access to an existing group of people who would be in the target audience.
2. Contact university professors and see if their students could give you feedback.
3. Test your ideas with your colleagues and see what they think.

Feedback:

1. This would be **good advice**. Existing groups of people in your target audience provide an opportunity to get feedback from the audience without having to convene a new group.
2. This would be **poor advice**. College students are likely not part of your target audience and therefore won’t provide feedback that the audience might give.
3. This would be **poor advice**. Your colleagues can provide input, but they too are not your target audience and therefore probably have different opinions.

Review Plan with Partners

The last part of the intervention design phase is to review the entire program with your partners. You should be doing this all along, but this is one last chance to make sure that your partners and stakeholders are aware of their responsibilities once the intervention begins. Also, you can ensure that all the activities, messages, materials, and changes you have developed are cohesive and on strategy.

Get together with your partners and spend some time brainstorming what can go wrong and how you will manage setbacks before they occur. This type of conversation allows partners a chance to give their final feedback on implementation, but if you've been working with them throughout the planning process, their feedback should be minimal.

You may want to conduct a "dry run" of implementation where you walk through each step with those persons responsible. You can talk about what might go wrong and how you would handle those situations.

One of the major keys to success for your intervention will be your connection with the people who will be putting it into place. Effective communication with all the partners involved in implementation is crucial. It keeps them well-informed, and can give you a chance to get some first-hand feedback. These people are your "sales force." They are the face of your program to your target audience, so it's vitally important that they understand their role in the program.

Scenario 31

Rosa: "Well, the day care center where Bob's children go has a parents' group that meets occasionally. So Bob asked around and has identified several parents who are interested in helping. Through informal conversations, he's concluded that there are plenty of parents who don't have rules about television and it sounds like they would be willing to give us feedback on our program! We'll probably have to make some changes once we hear from them, but at least we have a way to get feedback now!

We have a draft timeline and budget, which we needed to do anyway for our re-application for the grant money we've been trying to get. Having that done should smooth the application process!"

Summary

You should now be able to

- Develop a detailed intervention design based on chosen strategies and audience research.
- Identify partners needed to implement program and discuss how to work with them.
- Analyze and list details that need to be accomplished to complete intervention activities.
- Revise a logic model to include intervention activities and desired outcomes.
- Define process and outcome objectives.
- Discuss planning issues including budgets and program timeline.
- Describe the importance of pre-testing and appropriate times to use it.

At the end of phase 4, you should be very clear about what your program components are and how you plan to implement them, how long it will take, and how much it will cost.