

TIPS FOR BROADENING THE REACH OF CULTURALLY SENSITIVE TOBACCO PREVENTION MESSAGES

- ✦ **Federal and state agencies must first understand and respect cultural diversity.** Cultural sensitivity starts with becoming aware that we all live and function within a culture of our own and that our identity is shaped by it, and then accepting the validity of others' cultures.
- ✦ **Agencies need to assess their programs and identify practices which may be limiting access to services.** Institutional barriers such as program location or hours, culturally inappropriate materials, messages, and approaches, and stringent eligibility criteria may be inadvertently hindering service delivery.
- ✦ **Learn about the community you are trying to reach.** Specific knowledge of cultural characteristics, values, and attitudes which may affect outreach and service delivery to the population is critical.
- ✦ **Use appropriate language.** In developing materials and messages, use the community's language and the appropriate comprehension level.
- ✦ **Combine media and interpersonal strategies.** Because all communities and individuals are different, there is no one perfect channel for reaching Hispanics/Latinos. Supplementing mass media outreach with interpersonal

communication allows the communicator (the federal agency) to make the information more relevant to the individual. There is also some evidence that interpersonal approaches may be especially important in conveying messages to Hispanics/Latinos, especially when these messages come from a familiar, credible, trusted source.

- ✦ **Use targeted media outlets.** If information is only placed in mainstream media, it will not reach significant segments of the intended audience.
- ✦ **Emphasize positive behavior and current rewards, not distant negative consequences.** The intended audience may be alienated or become defensive if they feel that they are being stigmatized or blamed for their health problems. But emphasizing positive behaviors that they are already practicing or can practice, especially positive actions by parents, can be effective in gaining their attention. Build your message around the concept that we place great value on the health and well-being of our children, that we are already taking precautions and doing positive things to help them stay healthy, and that there are other simple, practical things that families can do together towards that end.

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Culturally Sensitive Tobacco Prevention Messages



SABEMOS



INTRODUCTION

To effectively reach Hispanics/Latinos, federal and state agencies need to target their outreach. When reaching out to the Hispanic/Latino community, it is important to keep in mind that the “one size fits all” Model does not apply here. Although there are many cultural similarities across Hispanic subgroups, there is no one Hispanic culture. Cultural sensitivity towards Hispanics/Latinos means becoming knowledgeable about the demographics, attitudes, beliefs, and values of each of these subgroups.

COMMUNITY-BASED ORGANIZATIONS

Federal and state agencies need to work with Hispanic/Latino community-based organizations (CBOs). These CBOs are already working with Latinos on a range of local issues. They have a proven capacity to reach Hispanics/

Latinos and to mobilize them to address identified community needs and concerns. Collaborating with Hispanic/Latino CBOs means working with the leaders and representatives of these organizations in a way which continually demonstrates respect for their culture and their individual differences, and a genuine desire to collaborate with them as equals. To be successful, collaborative efforts must display, not only respect, but also reciprocity.

TRUSTED COMMUNITY LEADERS

Like CBOs, trusted community leaders can play an extremely valuable role in obtaining community buy-in with an outside agency’s activities. These leaders have the advantages of having access to the intended audience and, most importantly, having credibility with the community.

MEDIA AND COMMUNICATIONS MATERIALS

Having program staff who come from and identify with the intended audience helps tremendously in gaining acceptance. The presence of such staff is also essential in designing and delivering culturally appropriate messages. The use of Spanish-language media is critical. Use the language of the intended audience – the language that is understood by the community. This involves, not just using Spanish, but using the specific variety or dialect of Spanish that is appropriate, including using the appropriate literacy level. In some cases, it may involve using simple English instead. People tend to be more satisfied when they receive messages in their language. The intended audience must be able to relate to and understand the language. Is it acceptable to Hispanics/

Latinos? Remember that images convey messages – if no Hispanics/Latinos appear in your agency’s outreach materials, they may assume that you are not interested in them. It is also important to avoid inadvertently using offensive images or language. The best safeguard here is to have members of the intended audience review materials and messages early in the development process, and again before they are finalized. This can be done in a variety of ways, some formal and some less so, including various types of focus groups.