

Communication & Behavior Change – Making A Difference

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Both Seek to Change Behavior and/or Social Norms



For an uncertain event





Social Science to Improve
Fuels Management: A
Synthesis of Research
Relevant to Communicating
with Homeowners About
Fuels Management



Wildland Fire Behavior & Forest Structure
Environmental Consequences
Economics
Social Concerns

Social Marketing

Environmental
Education

Natural Hazards



◆ Info = awareness

◆ Awareness ~~≠~~ Behavior Change



What can help?

- ◆ **Education** can help lay a foundation of greater awareness and knowledge
- ◆ **Persuasive communication** campaigns can prompt action
- ◆ **Social marketing strategies** can reduce barriers, change perceptions, build a new social norm



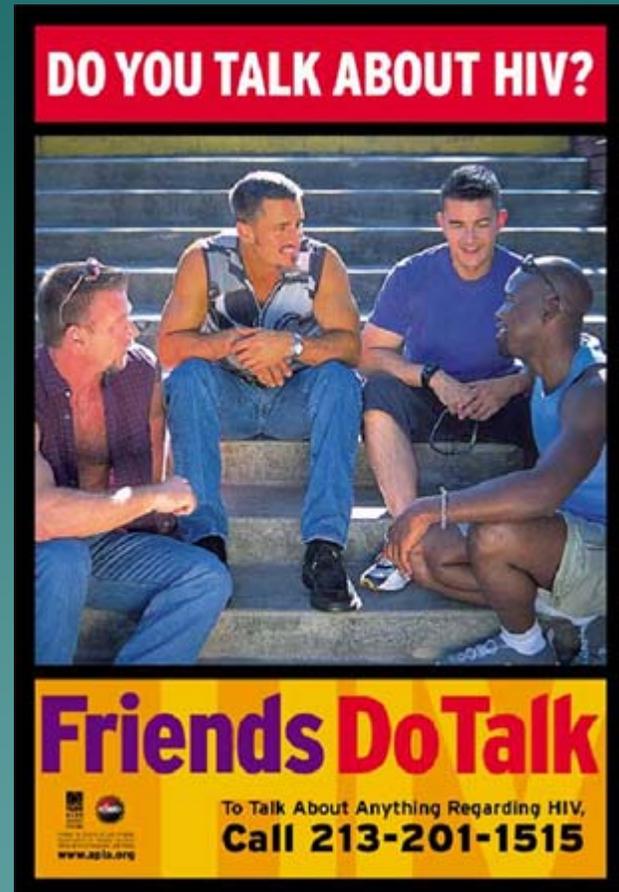
Social marketing

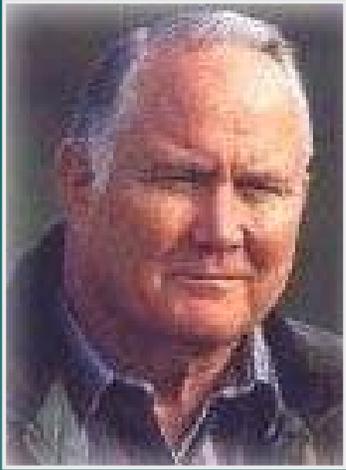
- ◆ Using product-marketing strategies to promote ideas like health and conservation
- ◆ Influencing a target audience to voluntarily accept, reject, or modify an action
- ◆ For the benefit of individuals, groups, or society as a whole



Common Examples

- ◆ Drunk driving
- ◆ Drug usage
- ◆ Smoking
- ◆ HIV/AIDS
- ◆ Child immunization





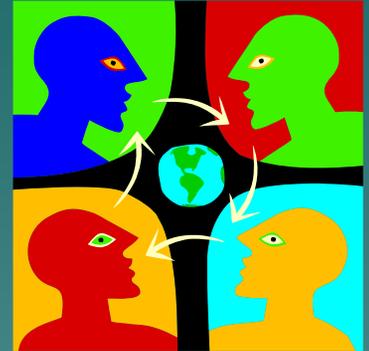
Be Bear Aware

- ◆ Increasing knowledge and awareness
- ◆ Changing behavior
 - Storing and putting out trash for pickup
 - ◆ Better garbage cans
 - Storing pet food
 - Fencing



What helps you change a behavior?

- ◆ If others do it too?
- ◆ If you have enough information?
- ◆ If someone asks you to?
- ◆ If you know your effort will be effective?
- ◆ If you care about it?



Which factors are more important and does that change with the behavior?



So what matters?

- ◆ What people know about behavior & consequences
- ◆ How they feel about behavior & consequences
- ◆ What “important others” think about the behavior and how much they matter
- ◆ Perceptions of whether I can do it, and do it well enough

Information

Prompts

Opinion Leaders

Interaction with
Others

Stories

Models



Good communication

- ◆ Build understanding
- ◆ Engage community members
- ◆ Convey trust and relevant expertise
- ◆ Use appropriate language
- ◆ Use relevant examples
- ◆ Listen and respond to misconceptions



Important techniques, but hard to accomplish

- ◆ Avoid saying what audience already knows
- ◆ Relate to what audience cares about and is interested in
- ◆ Deliver message through medium that audience uses



And so we need to understand the audience!



Consider the audience



Understand your audience

- ◆ Multiple audiences
 - Tailor info for them
 - Avoid preconcieved notions
- ◆ Address conflicting attitudes
- ◆ Available resources



Deal with Misconceptions

When a deeply held notion
prevents someone from
understanding your message

WORKS BOTH WAYS!!!



People may not understand

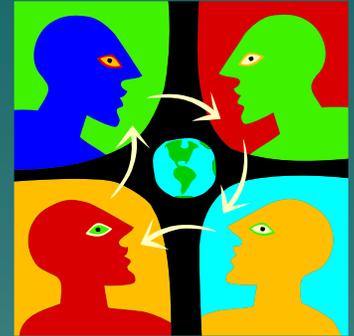
- ◆ They don't share your background
- ◆ They have made sense out of experiences
- ◆ That shapes how they accept new information
- ◆ Their understanding is different from yours!



 It depends on what they know and how they think



Key Questions



- ◆ Who is your audience?
- ◆ What do they care about?
- ◆ What do they already know about the issue?
- ◆ What values are important?
- ◆ Where do they go for information?
- ◆ Who do they trust?



What do they care about?

1. Ask them
2. Check the literature
3. Some things are universal:
 - Children, health, quality family time
4. Some things are cultural:
 - Privacy, community, convenience, future, frugality
5. Community leaders may have concerns:
 - Fiscal responsibility, election, media coverage



Consider the message



Ideal Message

- ◆ Use simple language
- ◆ Be consistent
- ◆ Three topics
 - Potential losses
 - Chances of losses over specific time period
 - Ways to cut losses
- ◆ Say who is at risk



Make the text interesting

- ◆ Active voice
- ◆ Action verbs
- ◆ Concrete examples
- ◆ Short sentences
- ◆ Common words
- ◆ Organizing statements
- ◆ Interesting topics



Boring
brochure?



Language

- ◆ Translate materials to their language
- ◆ Technical jargon may be a barrier to your audience
- ◆ Ask them what they understand
- ◆ What ideas do the words convey?

?

BOLE

?

SPECIES

PATHOGEN

STAND

?

PLANT

UNDERSTORY

?



The language of conservation

Public opinion research suggests that some phrases resonate better than others and are better at communicating a conservation message

Not “endangered species”

But “wildlife protection”

Not “open space”

But “natural areas”

Not “easement”

But “agreement”



Locally Relevant

- ◆ Ecosystem
- ◆ Culture
- ◆ History



Use all the good reasons

- ◆ One reason to change a behavior is not better than others
- ◆ Different people care about different reasons



Plant native plants:

- ◆ Good for hummingbirds, good for water quality, good for ecosystem, good for family, pretty to look at ...



Using values



For people to do the hard work of building a mental model out of your information, they need to know the information will be relevant, meaningful, useful.

 Connect your message to things they care about



Stories and examples

- ◆ Stories and examples
 - Provide concrete imagery
 - Explain how to do a task
 - Explain how to overcome problems
 - Demonstrate that real people can do it

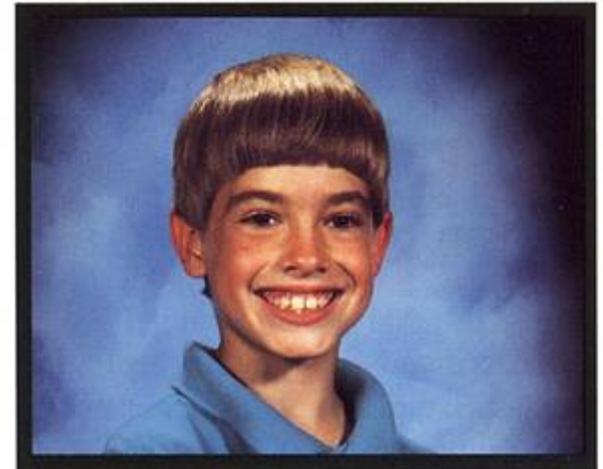


Extremely helpful elements of effective communication



Threat and fear can backfire

**JET SKIER KILLS
BOY SCOUT !**



**GRANDPARENTS'
OUTING TURNS
TRAGIC**

Make sure the message includes how to prevent the problem with reasonable easy steps. Don't paralyze people with guilt or fear.



Don't preach

- ◆ People don't like being told what to do
 - “You should ...”
- ◆ People respond to threats by retreating or defending themselves
 - “If you don't do ... bad things will happen”
- ◆ Guilt is not a motivator for most

 They need to figure out the right answer



Consider Delivery Approach



Delivery Approach

- ◆ Appropriate to Audience
- ◆ Use an Information Stream
- ◆ Diverse Methods
- ◆ Use Partnerships
- ◆ Sources People Can Trust



Partnerships

- ◆ Varied Sources
- ◆ Different Trust/Credibility Levels
 - Consistent message important



Earning trust

- ◆ Agency materials should
 - make a point of acknowledging and addressing questions and complaints
 - demonstrate how prior activity supports a partnership
 - offer to continue the conversation
- ◆ Consider using a partner that is trusted



Ask for commitment

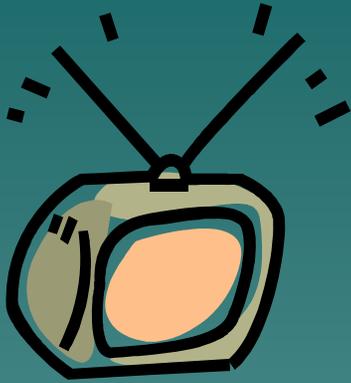
- ◆ People who make a commitment to take an action are more likely to do so.
- ◆ They need to understand why and agree that it is worth doing.



Provide information and then ask for their participation!



Delivery mediums



Delivery mediums

- ◆ Mass media?
 - Most effective for raising awareness levels
 - Brochures?
 - ◆ effective if combined with other methods – provides people with something to refer to when interested



Delivery mediums

- ◆ Interpersonal communication
 - Most effective for promoting behavior change
 - Particularly with expert info sources



Engaging adults



- ◆ Adult audiences may respond well to questions that get them to think and share their ideas.
- ◆ The right series of questions can lead the audience to realizing new ideas, without you telling them!



Engaging youth



- ◆ Youth audiences can be engaged by an exercise or worksheet.
- ◆ Discovering, matching, naming, counting, and competing with other groups can be effective.



Opinion leaders

- ◆ Finding and promoting can be key to success
 - Expands number of communicators
 - Shown to have positive effect on adoption of new practices
- ◆ How identify?
 - Key informants
 - Who turn to for advice
 - Ask if they are?
 - Observe



Prompts



- ◆ If people understand the issue and want to make a change, but just forget
- ◆ Provide a short phrase at the point where they need the reminder
 - Stickers
 - Signs
 - Magnets



Festivals

Riverlink uses a downtown fountain in Asheville NC to give raft rides for children while parents pick up information about river health and quality.



Media event

TNC invited local TV and newspaper journalists to a prescribed fire, gave them suits, and provided information.



Roadside signs



Drivers are reminded of land managed with prescribed fire, even after the area was burned.



Roadside signs



The Roadside “Fire Danger Rating” Signs are well recognized – and people pay attention to them



Modeling is effective

- ◆ Models help people
 - Know that others are doing the behavior
 - See how the behavior could be done
 - Realize the results



Use demonstration areas, testimonials, case studies, and examples to model new ideas



7 Laws of Effective Communication

- Be clear in your message

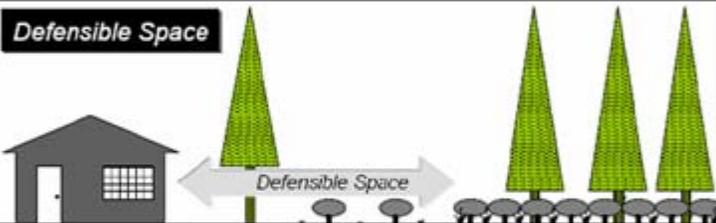
- ✓ Avoid technical terms
- ✓ Use experts to craft messages that are clear to the public

Living With Fire

Fuel Management Terms for Homeowners

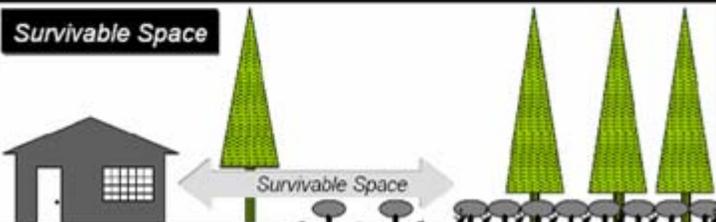
Ed Smith, Natural Resource Specialist
University of Nevada Cooperative Extension

Defensible Space



This is an area between a house and an on coming wildfire where the vegetation has been managed to reduce the wildfire threat and allow firefighters to safely defend the house.

Survivable Space

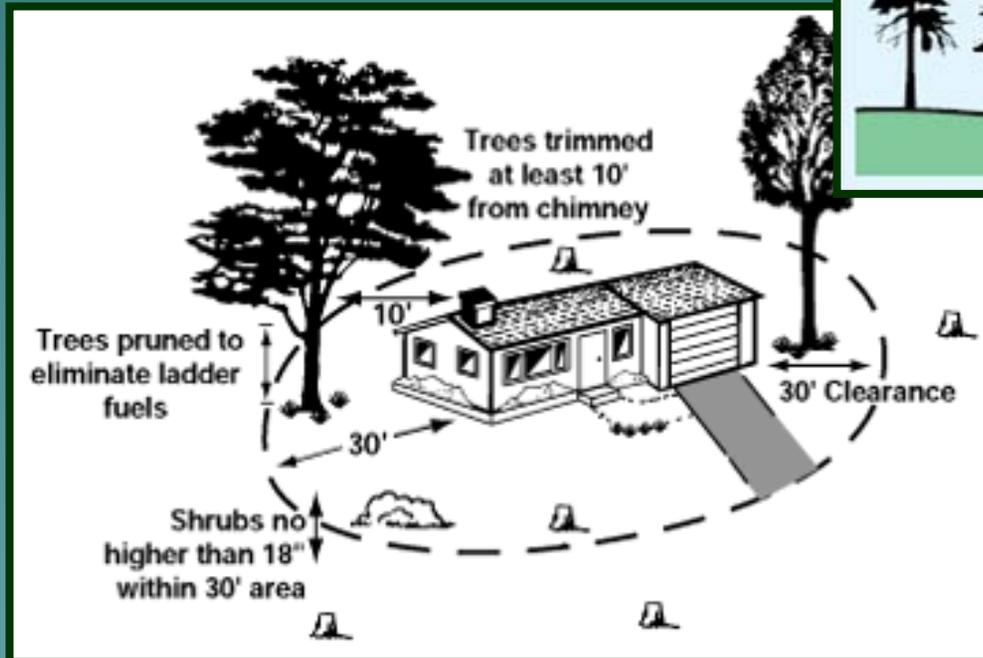
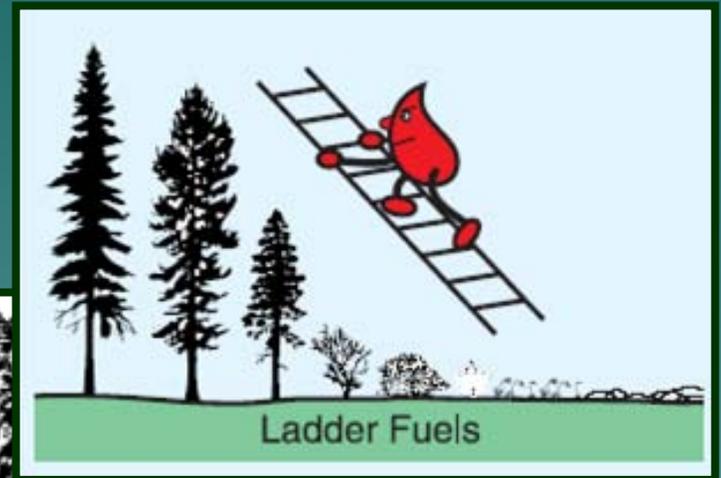


Survivable space is similar in concept to defensible space, except it emphasizes the house surviving a wildfire without significant firefighter or homeowner assistance.



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- Be clear in your message
- Use great graphics



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- Tell people what to do
 - Procedural
 - Explanatory
 - Impact



Before, During and After Wildfire



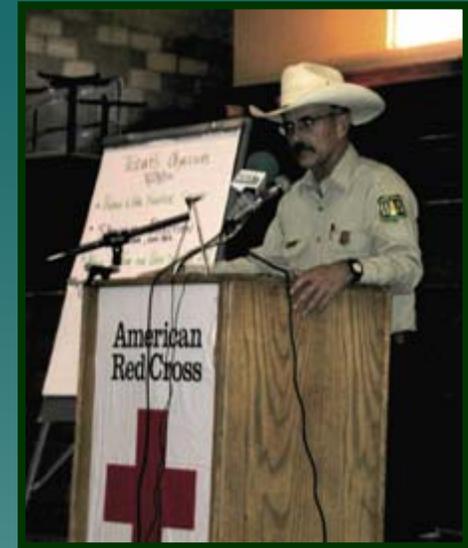
What to do BEFORE a wildland fire:

- Adhere to all local fire and building codes and weed abatement ordinances.
- Use approved fire resistant materials when building, renovating or retrofitting structures. (This is extremely important for roofing materials).
- Install electrical lines underground if possible.
- Be sure your house numbers show clearly from the street, both day and night.
- Create defensible space – separate your home from flammable vegetation and materials (minimum 30' – PRC 4251).
- Keep all trees and shrub limbs trimmed so they do not come into contact with electrical wires or overhang your chimney. (Do not trim around live powerlines yourself, call a professional).
- Prune all lower branches 8 feet from the ground.
- Keep trees adjacent to buildings free of dead or dying branches.



7 Laws of Effective Communication

- Be clear in your message
- Use great graphics
- Be consistent and repeat often
- Tell people what to do
- Use varied sources



7 Laws of Effective Communication

- Be clear in your message
- Use great graphics
- Be consistent and repeat often
- Tell people what to do
- Use varied sources

- Use a stream of communication

TV

Radio

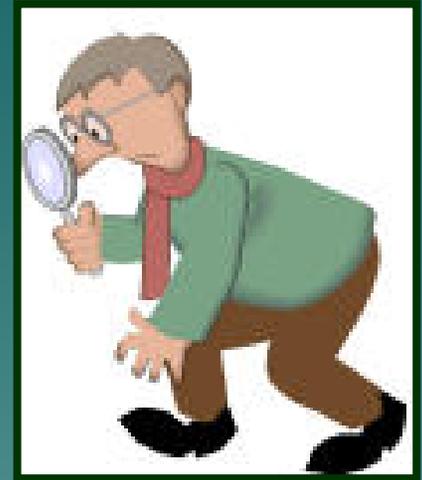
Demonstration sites

Mailing



7 Laws of Effective Communication

- Be clear in your message
 - Use great graphics
 - Be consistent and repeat often
 - Tell people what to do
 - Use varied sources
 - Use a stream of communication
-
- Support people in their search for more information



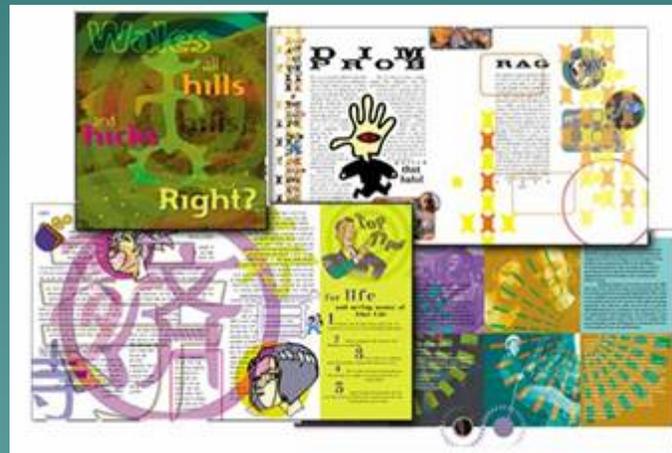
The Golden Rule of Effective Communication

USE WINDOWS OF OPPORTUNITY



Put it all together

Start by thinking about your situation, the audience, and the purpose of the program

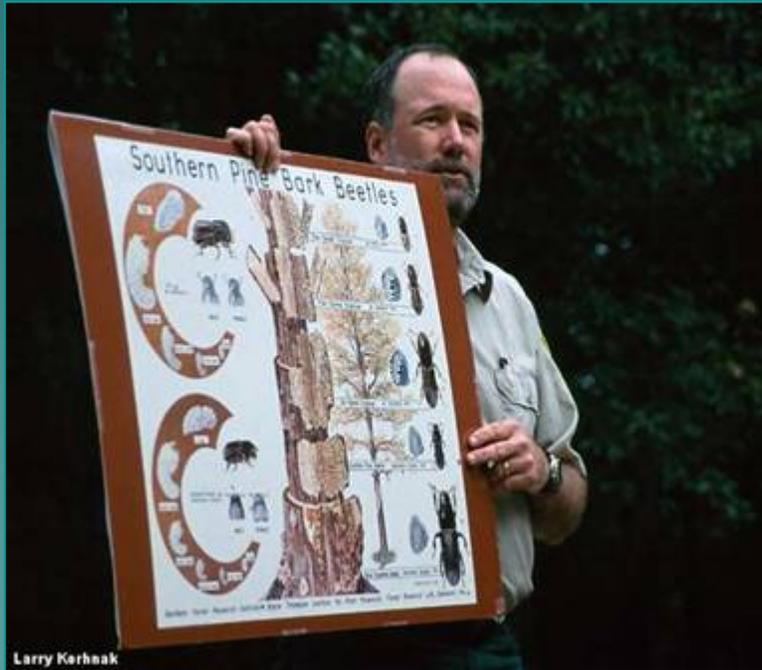


Techniques to gather data

- ◆ Conversations
- ◆ Exercises
- ◆ Interviews
- ◆ Focus Groups
- ◆ Observation
- ◆ Surveys



Easy strategies to improve communication

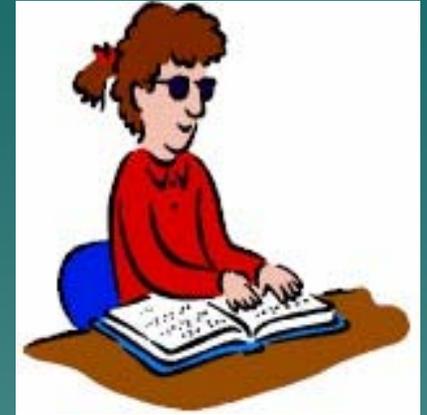


- ◆ Choose an appropriate, well respected authority on topic as “sender”
- ◆ Create a message that is easy to understand; use appropriate language
- ◆ Make the receiver comfortable



Common barriers to effectiveness

- ◆ Transmission
 - Sender not credible or trustworthy
- ◆ Reception
 - Message lacks clarity (language or speed)
 - Receiver has experience, prior knowledge
 - Receiver beliefs and attitudes conflict
- ◆ Input to mental structures
 - Message is irrelevant
 - Receiver is not listening



If people aren't listening



- ◆ Explore their existing understandings
- ◆ Ask about constraints and barriers
- ◆ Explore their attitudes and opinions
- ◆ Win their trust
- ◆ Use their interests to win their attention



Good communicators

- ◆ Trustworthy
- ◆ Engaging
- ◆ Care about what the audience cares about
- ◆ Accessible



Elementary students watch their computer screen to learn about this turtle



The process

- ◆ Select behavior and audience
- ◆ Understand barriers and attitudes
- ◆ Develop messages and reduce barriers
- ◆ Build effective partnerships and identify ways for each to have a role in the program
- ◆ Pilot test messages
- ◆ Implement and monitor



With community participation

