



A Student Guide to:

# Planning School Awareness Campaigns to Promote Health

## Introduction:

This guide presents several suggestions for planning and implementing school awareness campaigns to promote health or to prevent specific health problems. Normally, such awareness campaign are aimed at the students in the school. But they can also be aimed at reaching school staff, parents and even the agencies that work with and within the school. A school-based awareness campaign can include several communications products and activities to involve the "audiences" you are intending to reach. They include

- posters,
- displays,
- health fairs,
- web pages on school web sites,
- ads/inserts in school handbooks/agendas,
- outreach activities to involve parents,
- special events for the whole school,
- fundraising activities
- presentations to parents,
- presentations to teachers,
- articles in school newspaper,
- articles in local community newspaper

We have also prepared several guides and evaluation criteria for several of these communication tools listed above. Click on those links to learn more about them.

Research on these campaigns shows clearly that these awareness activities need to be linked to actions and other activities that go beyond awareness to providing information, support, guidance, or other resources to members of the intended audience. Your plan for raising awareness needs to be linked to those next steps.

This guide presents several logical steps in planning, implementing and evaluating school-based awareness campaigns. Throughout the text, there are links to other on-line resources and guides. These are presented in a general way here. However, you need to study the health issue or problem that is the subject of your campaign. The content of the issue, the facts that you are trying to communicate and the specific actions you are suggesting to students, staff or parents should guide the development of your campaign.

Most importantly, you need to understand the needs and current interests/concerns of your audience. You need to be able to divide up your audience into "segments" so that they can be reached in different ways, with different words and images. In a school setting, your segmentation might be by age/grade or by their interests such as sports, science/technology, music and involvement in student life. You can even segment your audience by more youthful categories such as "jocks", "nerds", "preppies", "druggies" and other classifiers. The key is to understand your audience segments and tailor your messages to them.

To plan, implement and evaluate your school health awareness campaign, simply follow the steps that follow.

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Planning a School Health Awareness Campaign

Steps	Notes for Your Campaign
1. Investigate the Health Problem	
<p>1.1 Develop an understanding of the long-term health risks/benefits related to the issue.</p> <p>1.2 Also, through research, identify and understand the short-term, social risks/benefits associated with the health issues.</p> <p>1.3 Based on your research, describe exactly what individual students can do to avoid or prevent the problem.</p> <p>1.4 Also through your research, identify the actions that students or others in the school can take to prevent the problem or promote the health of students</p>	
2. Understand the Audiences within the School (Students, Staff or Parents)	
<p>2.1 Identify, describe and select various segments of the school audience, by age/grade, characteristics, activities.</p> <p>2.2 Tailor your messages for these different segments of the school or student population.</p> <p>2.3 List and describe the social, psychological, or physical barriers that prevent individuals from adopting the healthy behaviours.</p> <p>2.4 Identify, list and describe the related interests, concerns and current attitudes of the student audience and tailor your messages to respond to those interests, concerns or current preoccupations.</p>	

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<b>3. Understand the School/Community Context-Find Partners</b>	
<p>3.1 Try to understand the potential and constraints of the school that relate to your health issue. For example, if it is a Catholic school, it may be more difficult to have a campaign on some sexual health issues. Or, in a rural school, it may be less relevant to talk about some city related issues.</p> <p>3.2 Take community, staff or student characteristics into account in the planning of your awareness campaign.</p> <p>3.3 Seek partners within the school and outside the school for your campaign,. In the school, this might include the counselor, PE teacher, school nurse, and Principal. You could work with health agencies, or voluntary community groups as well. Your school campaign could be part of a national week on these health issues and could therefore receive materials and advice on your campaign.</p> <p>3.4 Make sure that you have obtained the necessary formal and informal consent and permissions from the staff within the school, before you get too far in planning your campaign.</p>	
<b>4. Truly Understand the Health Problem</b>	
<p>4.1 Identify, describe the barriers/problems that need to change if the health problem is to be solved.</p> <p>4.2 List the reasons why individuals do not simply change. List why it is difficult to change the school, families or the community to solve this problem.</p>	
<b>5. Select Your Health Messages</b>	
<p>5.1 List things that individuals can do to avoid/prevent the problem. Select the specific action, behaviour, attitude, skill or knowledge for your campaign.</p>	

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6 Select Your Arguments/Facts/Examples	
6.1 Include high-quality arguments, examples or pieces of data to support their campaign. Ensure that you have at least one good argument, example or fact for each action that you are suggesting that people take to prevent the problem.	
7 Decide on Your Campaign Products/Activities, Elements, Timing, Frequency, Duration and Coordination	
7.1 Decide from among this list: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• posters,</li><li>• displays,</li><li>• health fairs,</li><li>• web pages on school web sites,</li><li>• ads/inserts in school handbooks/agendas,</li><li>• outreach activities to involve parents,</li><li>• special events for the whole school,</li><li>• fundraising activities</li><li>• presentations to parents,</li><li>• presentations to teachers,</li><li>• articles in school newspaper,</li><li>• articles in local community newspaper</li></ul> 7.2 Create original, accurate and interesting products such as posters, displays etc. that address the issue. 7.3 Decide if you will organize special events such as health fairs, speakers, shows, fund-raisers etc. 7.4 Make sure that the elements of these products are consistent and that the graphics, messages and look are consistent with each other. 7.5 Ensure that the products/activities are presented in a coordinated way 7.6 Ensure that the timing of the campaign is appropriate. (eg Don't start a few days before a major holiday) 7.7 Ensure that there is sufficient frequency of events and a long enough duration for the audience to notice the campaign	

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<p><b>8. Build-in Links to More information, Support Services</b></p>	
<p>8.1 Ensure that campaign products and activities lead the audience to local or online resources, information.</p> <p>8.2 Ensure that the steps to access this information/support are clearly described or explained in the campaign materials.</p> <p>8.3 Also make sure that the local contact information(telephone, address, URL/web address etc) is clearly stated.</p> <p>8.4 Check with these sources of support/information before designing or launching your awareness campaign.</p>	
<p><b>9. Include Potential More Action and Follow-up</b></p>	
<p>9.1 Include a list and links to additional activities, actions and programs that the organizers and participating students can engage in after the campaign.</p> <p>9.2 Try to have these activities offer the potential for institutionalizing the awareness activity in the regular school day or school year.</p> <p>9.3 Identify, invite and truly welcomed other students to join the campaign or provided a meaningful opportunity to others to volunteer.</p> <p>9.4 Make contact with external groups about their related programs or activities that could follow your awareness campaign.</p>	
<p><b>10. Plan Your Evaluation in Advance</b></p>	
<p>10.1 Make sure that the campaign includes feedback mechanisms such as evaluation forms to be completed after every event.</p> <p>10.2 Begin planning with a survey to help you understand the current level of awareness about the issue.</p> <p>10.3 Conclude the campaign with an evaluation survey similar to the first one to see how well you have raised awareness.</p> <p>10.4 Keep adequate campaign records(eg minutes, timelines, plans) so that you can assess how well you worked together and how your plans worked..</p>	