Principles for effective communications

**COMMUNICATORS SHOULD**

- help decision-makers understand that there is a risk for themselves or for those they care for
- ensure that audiences see the health information, advice or guidance as applicable to them

**IN ORDER TO**

- refer to people’s or communities’ own experiences
- show how the health issue is linked to the personal, community or national values
- encourage decision-makers to undertake the WHO-recommended actions to reduce the risk

**WHAT TO ASK WHEN PLANNING**

- What socio-demographic characteristics of the audience can inform the message design and dissemination plans?
- Do individuals perceive they are at risk? Does that perception correspond to the actual degree of the risk?
- Does the audience have previous experiences with this, or similar health risks or topics, that can be referenced to?
- Do people feel there are steps they can take to reduce the health risk?
- What is the audience hearing from other sources that may affect their understanding of how WHO’s advice applies to them?
- What personal, community or national values related to the health topic should be considered?

**HOW TO MAKE YOUR COMMUNICATIONS RELEVANT?**

**KNOW THE AUDIENCE**

- find useful information about the audience through all available sources
- understand the socio-demographic and cultural characteristics of decision-makers
- recognize current attitudes towards the health risk

**LISTEN TO THE AUDIENCE**

- align your messages and activities with the audiences preferences
- learn by listening
- capture public opinion
- review enquiries and gather feedback
- follow and observe conversations in order to gain insight

**TAILOR THE MESSAGE**

- improve message effectiveness by means of flexible, creative message design
- customize messages and approaches
- focus on the desired outcome

**MOTIVATE THE AUDIENCE**

- build awareness by using simple, easy to recall, repetitive and attention-getting messages
- explain or increase personal relevance for each decision-maker
- promote and reinforce the benefits of the health choice
- nurture and support people’s confidence to act
- spell out possible solutions

**WHO Strategic Communications Framework**