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Testing Materials and Activities

6 TESTING

Before deciding to reproduce, distribute and use the product of a creative activity with another group, community, or school, materials should be tested. People are different, learn differently, and have different experiences. What worked very well for an initial group may not work with another one, and vice versa.

TESTING EDUCATIONAL MATERIALS

All of the materials produced should be tested prior to their widespread distribution. Drafts of posters, pamphlets, comic books, flipcharts, radio and television programmes, and other materials are shown to members of the target audience who are then invited to comment on them.

WHY?

Testing is a cost-effective means of identifying whether materials are appropriate, understood, appealing, before more resources are spent on reproducing them.

WHAT TO TEST

Verify whether:

- the materials are relevant,
- the materials attract attention,
- the materials convey the message clearly,
- the information is retained,
- the materials make the target audience feel involved in the issue,
- the materials are acceptable within the culture.

Materials and Activities

Also, after the initial discussions, the material or activity might be conveying the wrong health-related messages, and thus cannot be distributed. Furthermore, while the message may have been understood by the group after one or more group discussions, it may not be comprehensible to another audience.

- HOW TO TEST**
- Select a group which represents the target audience, e.g., 20-30 individuals from youth groups of similar age range, sex, and sociocultural background.
 - Use focus group discussions to get feedback from individuals in smaller groups, one at a time.
 - Separate boys from girls, if necessary.
 - Emphasize that the goal is not to test their level of knowledge but to test the materials.
 - Make sure all members of the test group take an active part.
 - If the majority of the young people understand the materials and enjoy them, the process may proceed while continuing to improve them on the basis of the suggestions made.
 - Ideally, any materials that are changed should be tested again on a group mixed with people who were and were not members of the first testing group.

The test results can also be useful in convincing decision-makers and managers that a certain approach is likely to be the most effective.

EXAMPLE OF QUESTIONNAIRE FOR USE IN TESTING*

Communication/ comprehension of the main idea

- What is the main idea this message is trying to get across to you?
- What action, if any, is the message recommending that people take? (Probe: what other action?)
- In your opinion, is there anything in the message that is confusing?
- Which of these phrases best describes the message?
 - Easy to understand
 - Hard to understand

Likes/dislikes

In your opinion, is there anything in particular that is worth remembering about the message?

What, if anything, do you particularly like about the message?

Is there anything in the message that you particularly dislike or that bothers you? If yes, what?

Credibility

In your opinion, is there anything in the message that is hard to believe? If yes, what?

Which of these words or phrases best describes how you feel about the message?

- Believable
- Unbelievable

In your opinion, which of these phrases best describes the type of person this message is aimed at?

- Someone like me
- Someone else, not me

Personal relevance/ interest

Is the message aimed at:

- All people?
- All people, but especially young people?
- Only young people?

Which of these words or phrases best describes what you feel about the message:

- Interesting
- Not interesting
- Informative
- Not informative

Did you learn anything new about... with this message? If yes, what? What does it make you think, feel, want to do/ not do?

Assessment of artwork

Just looking at the drawing (or picture), what do you think the message is?

Is there anything in the drawing (or picture) that would bother or offend people you know?

Impressions of presenter

Please select the one answer from each pair of phrases that describes your feelings about the presenter:

- Believable
- Not believable
- Appropriate to the message
- Not appropriate to the message
- Gets the message across
- Does not get the message across

Testing can be conducted by youth workers in the community. For example the workers can discuss drawings and slogans with young people. Young people can also be asked to watch a videotape.

* Adapted from: Guide for developing health promotion projects for AIDS prevention among out-of-school youth. WHO/GPA 1991

