COVID-19 Communications in Indian Country

Utilizing best practices and methods based approaches to culturally competent health communication strategies

Jennifer Wolf (Ponca/Ojibwe/Santee), MPH, Native American Community Health Strategic Planner
COVID-19 Communications in Indian Country

Acknowledgements/Resources

- Health Communication Theory and Practice, Gary L. Kreps, Barbara C. Thornton
- Health Behavior and Health Education Theory, Research and Practice, Karen Glanz
- Observed social media best practices including:
  - Southern Ute Indian Tribe
  - Weenuchee Smoke Signals (Ute Mt. Ute)
  - Denver Indian Health and Family Services
  - Denver Indian Center, Inc.
  - Denver Indian Family Resource Center
  - American Indian Academy of Denver
  - Four Winds American Indian Council
  - National Council of Urban Indian Health
  - Urban Indian Health Institute
  - Johns Hopkins Center for American Indian Health
  - Indian Health Service, Echo Clinic webinar series
  - Illuminatives.org
  - Indian Country Today
  - National Congress of American Indians
  - American Indian COVID-19 Resources & Responses Facebook Group
  - NativeAlliance.org
  - BAY AREA Indigenous Peoples & Allies Facebook Group
  - Tribal Websites and Social Media feeds (Choctaw, Chicksaw, Makah, Cow Creek Band of the Umpqua’s, Seldovia Village Tribe, NANA coalition of Iñupiat people, Lummi Nation, Navajo Nation)
  - Urban Health Clinics and Health Boards, EpiCenters ((Northwest Portland Area Indian Health Board, Seattle Indian Health Board)
  - Urban Indian Centers (Minneapolis American Indian Center, Southern California Indian Center, Segorega Te Land Trust/Oakland, Urban Indian Center of Salt Lake)
  - Tribal Health Clinics (Sophie Trettevick Indian Health Center)
  - Creative Approaches (Red Planet Comics, 1491s, Tonia Jo Hall)
  - Talia Quandelacy, Twitter @NMrelleno, Harvard Epidemiology Native American graduate student
  - Thrive Unltd., Instagram @ThriveUnltd, Indigenous healing, social justice advocacy
  - WeRNative
  - Other Health Organizations (American Indian Cancer Foundation, Native American Cancer Research, Bristol Bay Area Health Corporation, White Bison)
The need for a strategized external communications approach

- Urban NA communities, multi-tribal decentralized population
- Lack of coordinated comprehensive clearinghouse of information in urban NA communities
- History of institutional mistrust
- Reduce fear and spread of “fake news”
- Build community, take care of our people as a united effort
- Opportunity to leverage cultural strengths
- Establish new norms of behavior, consistent with our culture

EXERCISE SAFE SWEATS
Anecdotal evidence for consistent communication
Anecdotal evidence for consistent communication

Cases/100,000 people by county
San Juan County, UT 3,819
Utah DoH
Apache County, AZ 4,101
Adzhs.gov
San Juan County, NM 2,350
NM DoH

Cases/100,000 people by county
Total Cases
La Plata 102
Montezuma 188
7/28/20
CDPHE
Anecdotal evidence for communication: NEVER TOO LATE

New reported cases by day on Navajo Nation

"If the Navajo Nation is to be a case study, we had a fast increase in cases ... but wearing masks has flattened our numbers."

The Navajo Nation president on how his tribe slowed one of the worst Covid-19 outbreaks

From the Navajo Times, 7/28/20
Native American COVID-19 Communications

How worried are you about the impact of coronavirus on the tribe or organization you work for?

In general, how easy or difficult is it for the tribe or organization you work for to work effectively these days?
Native American COVID-19 Communications

How easy or difficult is it for the organization you work for to communicate effectively to staff and community stakeholders?

- Very easy: 0%
- Somewhat easy: 25%
- Neither easy nor difficult: 50%
- Somewhat difficult: 75%
- Very difficult: 100%

How often does your tribe/organization communicate coronavirus information to staff and community stakeholders?

- Everyday: 0%
- A few times a week: 20%
- About once a week: 40%
- A few times a month: 60%
- Once a month: 80%
- Less than once a month: 100%
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What methods does your tribe/organization use to communicate coronavirus information to your members/stakeholders?

Other responses included:
- Zoom
- Facebook and Youtube live streaming
- Paper newsletter/newspaper

59/100 How confident do you think your stakeholders believe in your organization to make the right decisions to manage through this crisis?

PROJECT MOSAIC CREATING CONNECTIONS
Top three challenges you are currently facing in communicating coronavirus and community information to your tribe/stakeholders:

63% Lack of technology
63% Internet connectivity
37% Don't have access to culturally competent information to share
37% Stakeholders are more concerned with basic needs or economic impact
37% Stakeholders do not know who to trust anymore
26% Don't have a good/up-to-date website
22% Don't have a strong social media presence
11% Don't have current contact information with our members/stakeholders
8% Don't have access to current scientific information to share
4% Other
Elements of an effective COVID-19 Communication Strategy

THE SEVEN C's

- **Coordinated:** Systematic flow of information
- **Criteria:** Established goals to vet what is shared, eliminate redundancy
- **Consistent:** Messaging between stakeholders, frequency of dissemination, role congruence
- **Credible:** Build trust, reduce fear
- **Culturally Competent:** Emphasizing cultural strengths, resilience, protecting our elders (being a good relative), HUMOR
- **Confidential:** Privacy
- **Community Collaboration:** System for feedback, set an expectation of responsiveness
BEFORE YOU SPEAK

T is it true?
H is it helpful?
I is it inspiring?
K is it necessary?
K is it kind?
COVID-19 Communication Considerations

BASIC INFORMATION

Possible inclusions for a social media strategy, email newsletter, central website

- Formal statement of cooperation
- COVID Testing information
- Links to current best available epidemiological data (transparency)
COVID-19 Communication Considerations

BASIC NEEDS

Possible inclusions for a social media strategy, email newsletter, central website

- Food Distribution
- Mental Health Tips, Suicide and Domestic Abuse hotlines
- Social Services, Indian Child Welfare
- Energy Assistance
- Homeless and Housing Insecurity Resources
- Unemployment/Workforce Programs

Addie Roanhorse

Native American COVID-19 Communications
COVID-19 Communication Considerations

COMMUNITY INFORMATION

Possible inclusions for a social media strategy, email newsletter, central website:

- Closures or updated hours for partner organizations
- Cancellation announcements
- Calendar of special events, opportunities, deadlines
- Schedule of regular recurring events

TEAM UP

PROJECT MOSAIC
CREATING CONNECTIONS
COVID-19 Communication Considerations

HEALTH

Possible inclusions for a social media strategy, email newsletter, central website

- Health Behavior (Mask Wearing, Social Distancing, Hand Washing)
- Emphasis on CULTURAL STRENGTHS
- Science Based AND Culturally Competent
- Johns Hopkins Center for American Indian Health
- Traditional Healing Resources
COVID-19 Communication Considerations

MENTAL HEALTH

Possible inclusions for a social media strategy, email newsletter, central website:

- Opportunities to connect, for example, AIAD’s Make It Indigenous webinar
- Community building efforts, elder care packages, Togetherness Campaign
- Substance abuse and addiction tools
- Mental Health Tips, Suicide and Domestic Abuse hotlines
- Funeral, bereavement support

Call a Native Elder Day!

Just because we’re separated, doesn’t mean we can’t stay connected. Make sure to check on your elders and loved ones to let them hear how much you care.

Stay home. Stay safe. Stay connected. #NativeStrongCO
COVID-19 Communication Considerations

RESOURCES

Possible inclusions for a social media strategy, email newsletter, central website

- Business resources
- Legal resources
- State, County and City partnerships, programs, opportunities and resources
- Elder resources
- Mutual Aid Networks
COVID-19 Communication Considerations

Education

Possible inclusions for a social media strategy, email newsletter, website:

- Transparent School Updates
- Senior Shout Outs
- Educational opportunities
- Illuminatives Native Education for All
COVID-19 Communication Considerations
SHARE THE POSITIVE

Possible inclusions for a social media strategy, email newsletter, website

- Fundraisers, e.g. supply drives to support the Navajo Nation
- Encouragement, positive messaging, e.g., Social Distance Powwow, Virtual Indigenous Commencement
- Share good news and role model healthy behavior
- #BeAGoodRelativeCO
- Empowering
COVID-19 Communication Considerations
SHARE THE POSITIVE

Native American COVID-19 Communications

Ricardo Cate'
COVID-19 Communication Strategy

Next Steps

- Form a Communication Team
- Define desired outcomes
- Determine the appropriate structure
- Decide upon information flow strategy
- Information distribution methods (Hylo, SMS, Social Media, Email, Website, Newsletter, Calendar)
- Agree upon vetting criteria
- Determine frequency
- Assign roles and responsibilities (consider content rotation schedule)
- Schedule a process to revisit and revise
- Agree upon termination criteria
According to The Tipping Point by Malcolm Gladwell there are 3 types of people:

**MAVEN**

Understanding who you are can help you become a better communicator.
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42.3% of survey respondents are Mavens
57.6% of survey respondents are Connectors.
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0% of survey respondents are Salespeople

ARE YOU SKILLED AT CHANGING HEARTS AND MINDS THROUGH STORYTELLING?

SALESPEOPLE ARE MASTERS OF PERSUASION

Consider what you are asking your stakeholders to do, and then think about what would motivate them to do that.

PROJECT MOSAIC
CREATING CONNECTIONS
If you are a solo operation, don't be afraid to ask for help. Seek out those strong in other areas.

COMMUNICATION TEAMS

Turn to your Mavens to define the need and goals through information, your Salespeople to craft messages, and your Connectors to decide who to target.

PROJECT MOSAIC
CREATING CONNECTIONS
COVID-19 Communication Strategy
Next Steps

- Form a Communication Team, ask for help
- Define desired outcomes
- Determine the appropriate structure
- Decide upon information flow strategy
- Information distribution methods (current-what’s working, desired-what’s needed)
- Agree upon vetting criteria
- Prioritize messaging
- Determine frequency
- Assign roles and responsibilities (consider content rotation schedule)
- Schedule a process to revisit, revise, and terminate