



Tip Sheet: Assessing Your Audience

If the idea of an in-depth needs assessment is overwhelming and you are tempted to jump right into developing materials, let us reassure you there are quick, easy ways to find the information you need. Even a short survey of your target audience will provide important information such as:

- Basic demographics
- Where they get their health information
- Which formats and styles of design they prefer
- Which messages are compelling to them



Step 1: Review existing literature

This includes a review of research done on your target audience and of material developed for them. Much of this information can be found through a simple Internet search. CTCP-funded projects can also search www.tcsrover.org or contact the TECC Resource Library (tecclibrary@etr.org) to request free research and reference assistance.

Step 2: Create a survey tool

Short in-person or online surveys are great ways to gather additional information directly from your target audience or from those who live or work with them. Your survey will include some general questions and some that are specific to your topic and will vary depending on who you are talking to. It usually makes sense to start with a service provider or community leader to gather basic information that will help you create survey questions for members of the target audience. Below are sample questions, which can be tailored to your audience and your topic.

Sample Questions – Service Provider/Community Leader

1. How common is smoking/chewing tobacco among this group?
2. How much awareness is there about the dangers of smoking and secondhand smoke?
3. What are the main languages spoken? What is the average literacy level?
4. Where do most members of this group get their health information?
5. What barriers might prevent them from getting the help or information they need?
6. What type of message would they respond to best? (*Provide specific examples, if possible, such as “protect your family”, “be a role model”, “protect the environment.”*)
7. What format do you think would be most effective to reach them?
8. Can you tell me about a specific health education material that was very successful with this group? (*Or, offer several to review.*)

Sample Questions - Target Audience

1. Do you smoke or chew tobacco?
2. Does it bother you when others smoke (*litter cigarette butts, sell tobacco to children, etc.*)?
3. If you wanted to get important health information, where would you look?
4. Which of the following resources would be useful to you to get health information: a fact card, a how-to guide, a website? (*List formats you are considering.*)
5. What do you think of these items? (*Show examples of similar materials such as a brochure, poster, ad, and fact card.*) Which do you like best? Why?

Step 3: Find people to survey

Ask local teachers, health care providers, social service providers, church leaders or community leaders if they can take a few minutes to share information with you. Also ask them if they can connect you with a few members of the target audience to talk with. Next, ask everyone you know if they have friends or family in the target audience who would be willing to talk with you. If you have the budget to offer a small gift such as a key chain, gift card or t-shirt you will increase the chances of finding people to speak with. The number of surveys you complete will, of course, depend on your time and budget constraints, however, a general recommendation is to speak with 10-25 people.

Once you have gathered basic information from your target audience, you may decide that you do not need to develop new material or that you can adapt an existing material. If you do adapt or create new material, you will have many great contacts within the target audience to review it as part of your pretesting process.

Resources

The Tobacco Control Evaluation Center <http://tobaccoeval.ucdavis.edu/Resources/>

This CTCP-funded site is a great resource for all aspects of evaluation and planning with excellent tools to help with writing and organizing interview questions, conducting interviews, conducting focus groups, and more.

Clear and Simple <http://www.cancer.gov/cancerinformation/clearandsimple>

A useful guide to all steps in the material development including conducting target audience research.