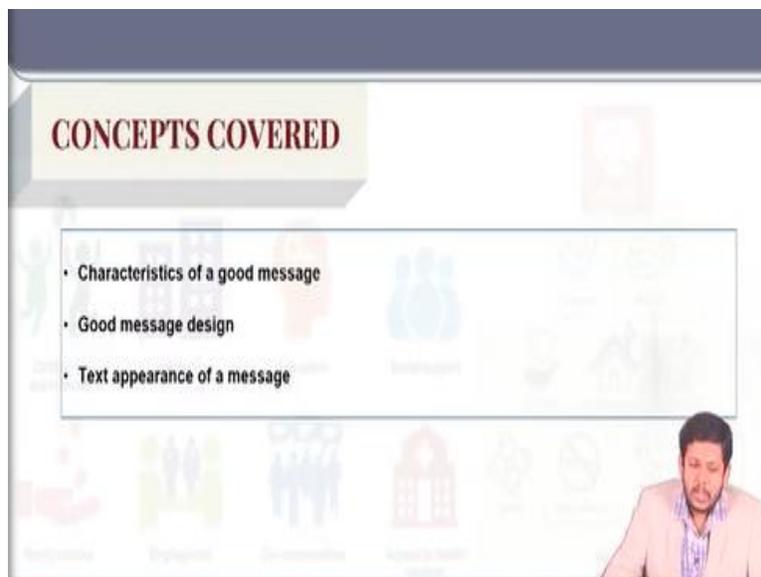


Basics of Health Promotion and Education Intervention
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Lecture - 26
Principles of Designing Messages

So, in this journey of basics of health promotion education intervention, messages play a key role. Because without messages we cannot continue with any communication because every communication should have some sort of message. So, when we are planning to develop some HP intervention the message has to be solid and it has to convey certain things. In this course while we discuss what are the basic ideas behind developing a message and how to develop message, how to pre-test ... these issues, we also discuss how to develop message in proper way in terms of its design and in terms of its applicability and acceptability to the audience in terms of its visual appealing. In this lecture we will be discussing about those principles of designing. We will focus only on the design aspects of message and its principles in this lecture.

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So, the concepts that will be covering are basically the characteristics of a good message. See, then we will be discussing about the good message design how appropriate a message design can be and lastly, we will be discussing a bit about text appearance of a message. Because most of the messages most of the IEC materials whatever we see during HPE intervention discussion or even in the field also they have certain text forms in it.

And for that text appears to be perhaps the most important part of a good message and we must discuss what are the design contexts in response to text part.

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So, now let us start our discussion on the characteristics of a good message. See, here I have laid down certain points based on which we can assess whether the message that has been designed is accurate or not or whether it is appropriate or not. It is better to say appropriate or not because accuracy as you can see is one of the key points to understand the appropriateness or whether the message is good enough or not.

So, we first decide whether the message is accurate then we decide whether it focuses on a few key points in this regard as we have seen during our discussion on communication parts on the basics or the principles of health communication that the whatever we want to convey to our audience it must be properly nested within facts and scientific truth. And also, it must be brief or it must be devised in such a way that it focuses on certain highlight areas.

Because you do not want to bombard your audience with a lot of knowledge or a lot of information. You must provide certain or few information that will be retained. So, retention is another key part for which we tend to focus on few key points. Also, we discussed during those

lectures that a communication material it must be specific so same applies for a good message, it must be clear should be devoid of any kind of ambiguity.

Then it should use uncomplicated languages. Because if you use too much of jargon or too much of a complicated language what happens is that this message that has been already devised for a certain target audience – it gets distorted. Because the interpretation or the understanding of the jargon or what you can say those complicated languages are not same throughout perhaps the educational status, throughout the cultural backgrounds the interpretation may vary.

But if you put certain simple languages which are easily understood then the next part comes in. So, uncomplicated language basically facilitates in a message being simple to understand. So, this is another virtue which anyone designing a message must follow and while we discussed that the health communication any kind of health communication should be scientifically accurate should be nested within certain scientific basis it also must be relevant.

So, ‘message’ whatever we devise for our HPE intervention or health promotion education intervention it also must be relevant to the context. And you must remember that by the term relevant always you should keep in mind the context of the intervention, because without the context you cannot assess relevance. Then as we just discussed that a message – a complicated message may not be acceptable or may not be understood by different cultural backgrounds and different other social democracy factors.

The cultural appropriateness itself is another characteristic that we must abide by when we devise our new message and from cultural appropriateness we also come across the acceptable part of a message. Because a culturally appropriate message will in itself become acceptable to that community. Last but not the least, a good message must emphasize on options it must have practical actions and solutions that are possible.

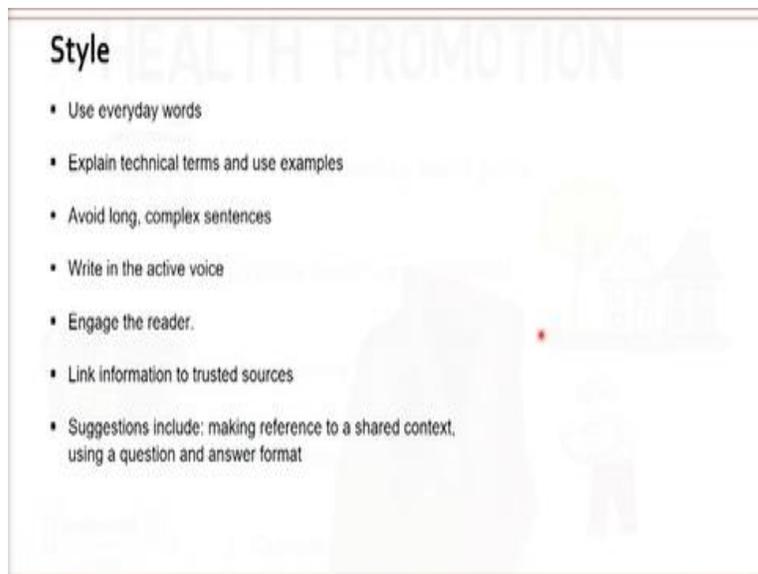
See here we have a call to an action. In our discussions in this course, you have come across and you will subsequently come across this call to an action part repeatedly. So, the basis of this call to an action part, why we are focusing on this call to an action so much is because that without

any proper ‘cue’ or without any proper call to an action our health promotion education intervention will not be complete.

So, a good message that forms basically the core or the heart of the educational intervention or health education intervention as you can say; the characteristic should be that it should emphasize on the options and the practical actions. These two form the calls to action part and by these two I mean options and also the practical actions and solutions. Because without the actions and their solutions you cannot really devise a call to action.

What should the people do or what should any audience of your health education program do if your problem or if your situation does not have any solution to act upon. So, this part is basically focus on the calls to action.

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Now we move on to the design aspects of different messages. So, first we discuss about the style of a message. Remember when we are discussing about the design aspect of the message it more or less focuses, I mean it more has its emphasis on the appearance, - on the visualization of these kinds of issues – the ‘proper designing’ as we say. So, a key component of a design issue is the style. So, what do we have here?

For style aspect or for a message to have a good style it must use the everyday words. See here we emphasized on the issue of uncomplicated language. So, if the style it uses the everyday words or the colloquial terminologies then obviously it avoids the problem of having a complicated language. Because everyday words it will ultimately lead to an uncomplicated language a simple language in other words and it may also become more clear to the audience.

Then it must explain the technical terms as you can see and also use certain examples. Now the technical terms – it basically helps a message to be rooted in a scientific basis and using examples basically helps it to be; I mean convey a clear message to the audience. So, with the help of these two, you must also remember the third point. Avoid writing long and complex sentences because again the focus is on this part. Use uncomplicated language and simple to understand.

So, if you write long and complex sentences like I mean in kind of you know high end literature kind of material, then the problem here is that not many people will be able to understand your message and thus your health promotion education intervention will ultimately fail. So, in order to avoid that you should first avoid writing long and complex sentences, – keep it short and simple. And also make it clear because otherwise all these points will not be taken care of.

Try to write in active voice it is better to say what to do rather than what should we do – I mean in a passive tone. By writing an active voice it also helps in engaging the reader because ultimately your objective is to engage the reader in understanding the message. Because if the reader is not concentrating on the message if the reader is not seeing what the message is really all about, you cannot engage the reader.

If the reader is not engaged in the content of the message, you really cannot expect behaviour change to occur and thus ultimately the inevitable will happen the inevitable being failure of your HPE intervention. So, for engaging the reader your style must be, ... I mean there is no hard and fast rule on how to engage your reader. Sometimes you may consider/ you can consider giving certain explanations or giving certain examples even putting up certain illustrations.

And then providing the message from there on, this might be engaging for in case of certain situations and for some audiences. But some audience might find this boring, some audience might find this too mentally taxing, some audience may not be so much educated or their literacy status may be such that they are not able to even follow the illustration or whatever is your messages. So, there is no hard and fast rule for engaging / how to engage the reader.

But the key point is you have to try to engage the reader, like when we, you know, when we teach or when we go for pedagogy or andragogy like this sort of exercises, we do certain set induction kind of thing that is how we induct our audience into our topic. A very loose way of saying it is like you lure your audience into your content. This is a very loose way but the concept remains the same that is what we do with engaging the reader.

But since we do not have any hard and fast rule we must and must and must do a pre testing for this engagement part also. We will be discussing the pre testing components later on. But this is again a take home message that in pre-testing we pre-test all the aspects of a message that includes its design also. What we have stated in this second point that explain technical terms and use examples we link this to this point.

This says that link information to trusted sources like not only we have to nest our information in a technically relevant or scientifically relevant basis. And obviously we have to explain that with certain examples that are relatable to the audience we must link those with the information from trusted sources. A very good way to look at it is how we use the references in our scientific literature. The references give us certain basis of or it in fact supports the data that we provide.

It in fact, supports what literature we have used in our article perhaps. In a similar way for our HPE intervention, we have to link all those things with the trusted source. Because then only the people will have confidence in it and then only the people can I mean try to change the behaviour based on the information provided. See all these information these come under the style guidelines. And also, you have suggestions to include I mean these are the suggestions like making reference to a shared context using a question-and-answer format.

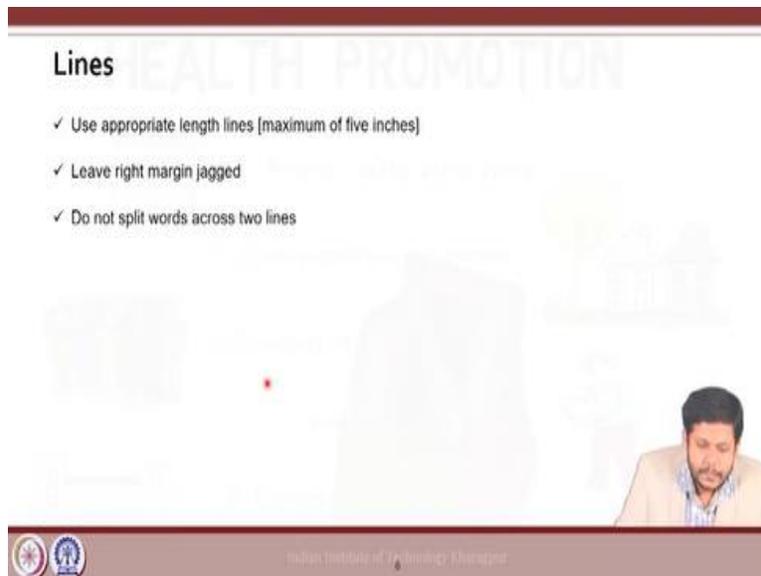
I mean see these are all kind of style guidelines but these are not anyhow proper rules because you do not have any rule as I have already emphasized. What happens if you make reference to a shared context see you take care of this part link information to the trusted source because the audience has a shared knowledge of the certain things. Suppose something that you yourself has experienced and the audience has also experienced the same thing.

Now this becomes a shared content or a shared context or shared event whatever you can call it. Now if you use this example then the audience can relate then it helps to link the information to this trusted source because people usually trust I mean they trust themselves. Then what happens is because it is already experienced and it is kind of a lived experience as we say it engages the reader. So, one important aspect is you can use the lived experiences for engaging the readers.

Perhaps a very common use of using this lived experience is you know when you try to communicate or try to relate with any unknown situation or any unknown population, I mean what you basically try to do is you try to keep the conversation going on by using certain relatable experiences. So, another option may be to use a question-and-answer format. The typical use of question answer format is, in this context. Because usually in question-and-answer format intervention you have avoided certain long and complex sentences. You keep it short and simple you often write in active voices and you use the local and the colloquial terminologies which help in making the message very crisp and clear. So, these are just two examples that I have mentioned I mean you can devise certain other style guides on yourself also.

Because you see you do not have any certain bounds but remember before you finally unleash your material on your population or on your study population, I must say you should pretest it.

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Now what about the lines? We often see the newspapers - there are printed lines. We often see our text books - there are printed lines; even here in this presentation you have certain lines written here. So, what are the line guidelines for your HPE intervention properly. I mean you have, say a poster so what are the line guidelines for them. These are, I mean, loosely, but these are very commonly used guidelines.

See use of appropriate length in lines, I mean, your lines should be in such a way that it should be maximum 5 inches in it. You can consider it as a rule of thumb but these are bit arbitrary. But it should not be like that the guideline here says suppose five inches and you produce a line of one inch then the difference is huge. So, what you can try is you can try to avoid these by guidelines and it will ultimately produce a good well visualized message.

You have to leave the right margin jagged. So, what do we mean by the right margin jagged? You should not justify your text, justify means all the lines like they will be having the same length. See what happens in this slide you have the first line then you have the second line then you have the third line. See here the left margin this is the left margin this is properly justified. Because this is in the same line but this third this right margin the three lines, they are not justified them.

That means these lines are not of same length. So, for a good message you must keep it like this way only. Just keep it jagged because what happens if you have a similar length line in spite of having different word counts it may induce certain monotony in itself. So, must keep it in mind. Then do not split words across two lines. For example, suppose you are using the word understand like take example of this word appropriate.

Now if I am writing this word in two lines suppose 'apro' then hyphen ate and last in 'priate'. Then it is very difficult to understand for the population. Then it is very difficult for your target audience to get hold of what is actually written. So, avoid doing this kind of splitting suppose if your line is ending here is your margin and you cannot accommodate the whole word within that margin then just avoid writing that word within that margin just put the word in the next line.

This way you are avoiding splitting the words and keeping a whole word in a next line it helps the audience to properly see and properly understand and properly, I mean, process it in the brains of themselves. So, this is also another very important part you should keep in mind.

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So, what about the overall design of a proper message? It must be consistent; overall design structure should be in such a way that the first half of the message is designed in a certain way and the next part of the message is designed in certain other way or a certain other style. Then it

confuses the people - then it confuses your audience. Because see when we are looking into an object in a certain way.

Suppose I am looking in this slide and see I have used this kind of bullet marks like this arrow over here for preparing this slide. Now if I prepare suppose first suppose this is an HP intervention material now if I prepare this part only with this kind of bullet and then I make these letters and the sentences in bold phase and we keep these this part as it is or maybe we can use certain other forms of bullet.

What happens here is the design of the upper part and the design of the next part it varies and it may so happen that the audience may feel that why the design is varying. If the audience is able to read the whole thing or if the audience is able to properly visualize the whole thing the audience may think that ok the first part is more emphasize because you have presented in a bold-face and the second part is in normal-face, not in bold-face, then audience may realize that, these parts are the more important parts (bold-face) and these are not that much important part (normal-face). If you remember when I was presenting the previous issues or discussing our previous lectures, I presented some keywords in bold face. In those lectures what happened those are the key areas that I wanted to emphasize. So, if that is your objective then it is fine to differentiate the designs. But that differentiation should also, must be I mean it should be consistent again. Because you cannot use like - you cannot bold a certain word for its emphasis and then again if another word is emphasized you just keep it in normal phase you do not bold it then again, the confusion will arise. Because your audience will think that this part is important and this part is not. So, this way your message will ultimately get lost. So, it is important to be consistent when you are devising a message or you are using certain styles.

You have to avoid the clutter you must avoid putting in too many words together and that it not only confuses the people it actually I mean it is a bit problematic for the audience to get hold of what is actually going on what is presented in the poster or the health promotion material itself. So, keep it distinct, keep it crisp, keep it short and keep it clear. Also provide guide for finding the key information like I was discussing the words in bold face.

You should also indicate that the words in bold face are your key areas or you can say the key words that will help in the population in understanding what are the basic key areas that we are going to focus. So, this is also an important issue then clearly label all the illustrations and charts because in your text message or in your message overall you will not be using only the text component.

Invariably with text you will be using some sort of figure, some sort of illustrations, some sort of diagrams. So, when you are using non-text materials like these that I have already mentioned you must clearly label all those things what are the figures for what do the figures represent. If there are certain indications within the figure like a certain star mark or a certain hash mark you must explain by the title of the figure that what those symbols really mean.

That is, I was saying that offer explanations and offer explanations not only for the figures or the illustrations of our explanation for your text also. Because see if you are using a table for example then again you have to use certain explanations for what this column means or what the statistics or what the data that is provided it actually means you have to give some sort of explanation.

You have to make the legends clear like if you are using a pi diagram or a bar diagram or whatever kind of statistical representation of data, often, we get to come across certain legends. So, you have to make those legends I mean the interpretation of what the shaded portion means or what the coloured portion means like this you have to make it very much clear. Then you have to place the charts as closely as possible to the explanatory text.

Because in your material the chart that is flexed very next to your text that explains the chart it helps people to relate those two. I mean you can easily understand that when we read articles. And in article suppose the in the results part it is written that please refer to table number this. We suddenly move on and we keep on searching where is the table and for that purpose the articles usually place or the editorial office.

They place it in such a way that we can easily find those tables or figures. We have to adopt same strategy for devising our HP intervention package itself. But here we usually do not have the luxury to place those tables or figures or illustration somewhere else other than that poster only or that printed material only or the material that we are using. We have to place it there only and we also have to place it very close to the text that explains.

Suppose the data that is written in text format and the table that basically is the basis for that written text keep those two close. So that the people will understand, ok this means this sometimes you can also put a box or outline for those two things together. Because this will then indicate this, the text and the table or the figure they are together like this way. Then use consistent and easily recognized headings.

Again, the issue of consistency I mean the consistency is not only in terms of style of the intervention material itself but also, each aspect of the intervention material has to be consistent the style has to be followed and your headings must be easily recognized. Then you have to signal the main points with bold or highlights. Now if you just go back see here in the characteristic of a good message you have focus on a few key points.

Now relate this part with this point signal main points with bold or highlights that is the basis for having the key focus of the HPE intervention itself.

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Text Appearance

Font size:

- Use font sizes between 12 and 14 points
- Anything less than 12 points can be too small to read for many audiences.
- Older people and people who have trouble reading or seeing may require larger print.
- For headings, use a font size at least 2 points larger than the main text size

Examples of font sizes:

This is 8 point.
This is 10 point.
This is 12 point.
This is 14 point.
This is 16 point.
This is 18 point.



Now we come to the discussion of our last part of this lecture that is the text appearance. Now we do not have really much to discuss about it but I have given you certain guidelines like you have a guideline for your font size of the text. Then you have your guideline for the type and spacing for this text. And then again you have certain issues regarding the font size like serif and sans serif and I am coming in a while.

Regarding the font size it is advisable that you use a font between 12 and 14 fonts points. Because a font size below 12 point it will ultimately render the text very difficult to reach. Just follow this part, where see this point this is written in eight points, this is in ten points, twelve points, fourteen point, sixteen points and eighteen points. So, most commonly readable part is this part this twelve-point parts and also this fourteen-point part.

Just try to maintain your font size in between these two and for headings you use a font at least two points larger than what you have used in text. For example, if you have used 12-point in your text in headings you use a 14-point size. If you have used fourteen-point in the text the heading should be in sixteen point like this.

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Now before we move on to our font style part what happens with types and spacing. Because it is not only about the size of the font it is also about how we space the lines like we had our guideline that the line should be five inches I mean in dimension like this. So, what happens with type and spacing? You have to use the appropriate space between the lines usually 1.15 to 1.5 that is the standard space is provided in your day I mean word processing software whichever software you are going to use.

So, you have to keep in mind then provide good contrast between paper and the text and do not print words on shaded or patterned background again keep it clear. Because you see it is often very difficult to read words in a very dark background even if the words are printed in on a light scale. But still it is very difficult to read words in, suppose words written in white from a black background rather it is easier if you just put it like this in a white background you have words in deep colour like in black.

So, this is another go to strategy, keep using the upper case and lower case and include ample white spaces. See these parts will also come across in several of other lectures. But these are the more emphasized areas and this is how you can devise a very good message because these are the areas which you should remember when you are deciding on the content of the message. Because the more information you want to provide it may so happen that you may lose your white space.

So, these are all important to strike the proper balance between the adequacy of the content and the proper style part.

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Now speaking about styles, you have to understand the font styles of it. For body of the text use the fonts with serif. Now which one is a serif font and which one is a sans serif font. This is a very interesting part because you tend to see say different sans serif font in your word processing software also. So, what happens is serif are the little feet on the letters that is why they are called serif fonts and those which are lacking those feet they are called sans serif fonts.

Those tend to be straightforward like this one and this is a sans serif part. So, when you are providing a material like a leaflet or a poster if you are using the serif fonts it tends to somehow you know the visual appeal of it somewhat decreases. But if you use, I mean if you use a sans serif font sorry if you use a serif font what happens is - the visual appeal - it increases; and the brain quickly recognizes what is written over there or what the material actually tries to convey.

But in those cases, use sans serif fonts in the headings and subheadings because the contrast of the two styles of the forms will make the headings and subheadings stand apart. And it will help you understand what is the main concept that is being conveyed in the paragraph and then you gradually go on reading the paragraph to understand what is actually being said.

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Text Appearance

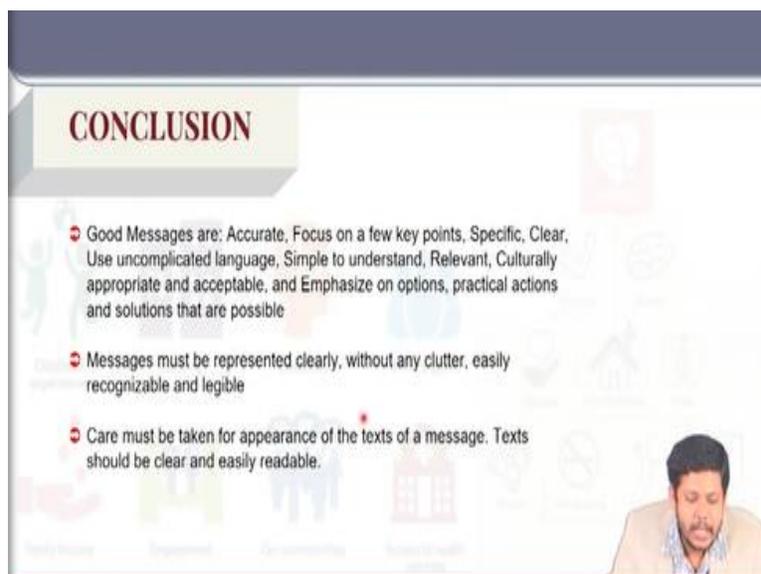
Keep the following style tips in mind:

- Do not use fancy or script lettering.
- Use both upper and lower case letters. Do not use ALL CAPS. ALL CAPS ARE HARD TO READ.
- Use grammatically correct punctuation.
- Use **bold type** to emphasize words or phrases.
- Limit the use of *italics* or underlining. They are hard to read.

Now these are the style tips that you should not use the fancy or the script letters. Avoid using the all-caps letters I mean use bold type only to emphasize any particular word or phrase that I was discussing previously. Avoid using underlines and italics because italics and underlines they tend to confuse the visual appeal, I mean, people tend to confuse the message when you are using too much of italics and underlines.

Because the thrust is usually imparted through bold faces and use of these two also makes the message very hard to read.

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CONCLUSION

- Good Messages are: Accurate, Focus on a few key points, Specific, Clear, Use uncomplicated language, Simple to understand, Relevant, Culturally appropriate and acceptable, and Emphasize on options, practical actions and solutions that are possible
- Messages must be represented clearly, without any clutter, easily recognizable and legible
- Care must be taken for appearance of the texts of a message. Texts should be clear and easily readable.

So, in conclusion we have discussed basically what are the characteristics of a good message. We discussed all these parts in the very first slide or the beginning of our lecture. A message must be represented very clearly without any clutter easily recognizable, readable, in short, it should be kept short and simple. Care must be taken for appearance of the text of a message because those are the text appearance guidelines.

That we were discussing what are the font size, what are the font styles, how a line should be shaped and you should strike a good balance to ensure the text are clear and easily readable.

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So, these are basically the resources that I have used for this lecture you can/please consider going through these resources. You might find certain other important information also but basic information has been provided to you this far. Thank you!