

**Basics of Health Promotion and Education Intervention**  
**Dr. Arista Lahiri**  
**Dr. B C Roy Multi Speciality Medical Research Centre**  
**Indian Institute of Technology, Kharagpur**

**Lecture - 27**  
**Processes and Approaches of Designing Messages: Part I**

So, in the previous lecture we discussed about the principles of designing good messages. Now in this lecture we will be discussing about the processes and the approaches of designing a message. Now the processes and approaches we have divided into two lectures, two different lectures basically this one and the next one.

**(Refer Slide Time: 00:37)**

**CONCEPTS COVERED**

- Approaches in message design
- Content generation for designing message
- Clarity of messages
- Use of illustrations and visuals

Child separation, Education, Social support, Family income, Employment, Our communities, Access to health services

Indian Institute of Technology Kharagpur

But in this part one – in this first lecture we will be covering these two aspects; we will be covering the approaches in message design will be I mean the overall approaches of the broad areas, then will be covering the content generation for designing good message these two will be covering in this lecture and these two the clarity and use of illustrations and visuals like this. These stuffs will be discussed in the next lecture.

**(Refer Slide Time: 01:01)**

## Approach

### Informative

- The message creates awareness about a new idea and makes it familiar to people.
- Mass media is mostly used for wide coverage and reaching a large audience.
- Print materials and interpersonal communication are used to reinforce mass media messages and inform people in more detail.

### Educating

- The new idea is explained including its strengths and weaknesses. This approach is used when people are already aware but need more information or clarification.
- Interpersonal communication with individuals or small groups is probably the most appropriate way to provide more detailed information, and can be reinforced by print material such as books, pamphlets and other multi-media approaches such as films, slide shows and videos.



Indian Institute of Technology Kharagpur

So, let us start discussing about the approaches in designing a good message. Now you have certain different ways to look at it how to design a message. Now these different ways they are basically your approaches for designing a message. Like you have one approach is informative approach. Then you have ‘educating’ your target audience – so another approach may be an educational part then you have a persuasive approach for this.

You have a prompting approach for this and also you have an entertaining approach for designing a message. So, basically the approaches they tell you what are your objectives for designing the message, having said that consider that any health promotion education as a whole will have certain change objective, how the behaviour change is going to happen or what kind of behaviour change are we expecting.

So, essentially your approach should be dictated by that change objective because that change objective is the core of your whole hpe intervention. And by default, that will ultimately be the core of how are you going to induce that change or why are you going to/ are you willing to bring the change... - this sort of questions; so that is why the basic objective of your hpe intervention the basic change objective will be defining factor for your approach of designing a proper message.

So, what happens with informative approach this message creates awareness about a new idea and makes it familiar to the people. For example, let us consider what happened during the early days of the COVID-19 pandemic. When it hit India, the different messages there were - certain posters were there like I remember the government used to spread the posters to its districts. I mean just putting up the posters in different walls in different easily visualizable areas where people were visiting.

And also, the propaganda or the communications over phone over social media all were there. But, just remember, just revisit, all those days – what happened with those messages, is because the situation was a very novel one, a very new set of events occurred. So, the informative approach of designing the message helped us. We were the audiences for the messages that were given to get aware of what is actually happening.

Remember there were certain - how many covid cases were there in a day, how many people recovered, the number of deaths, - all these generated an awareness about the situation – this is a way of an informative message. As I have said mass media is mostly used for wide coverage and reading for a large audience. So, informative way is a very linked way with mass media.

Then print materials and interpersonal communications are used to reinforce these mass media messages and inform people in more detail because, if you see a broad heading coming across your social media page you will be aware of the situation but certain questions will still be there in your mind. So, to answer those we have certain leaflets, we have certain brochures or perhaps a more detailed digital material.

That is how individual communication or I mean one-on-one communication will help in getting detailed understanding. But then again, those materials will also be an informative material. Then you can approach it as an educational point like in educating approach the new idea is explained including its strength and weaknesses. This approach is used when people are already aware but need more information and clarification.

See this part, this educating part is more linked with this people in more details. The only difference here is that here you are providing awareness all together in more detail but in educating approach people are already aware of certain things they know about the issues but they are not sure about its strengths and weaknesses. So, these detailed informations to an aware audience, you are providing through an educational approach.

Then the interpersonal communication with individuals... (let me get it in laser mode). So interpersonal communication with individuals or small groups is probably the most appropriate way to provide more detailed information. So, here also when you are giving more detailed information you are trying to go for a one-on-one communication on an individual approach. So, in this case also you are using the interpersonal communication part.

Or you are using very small group related advocacy components say or awareness campaigns or like this for this education component as well. Now certain examples of reinforcement are provided these are like you can use books you can use pamphlets any other multimedia approaches like even films short films or even videos. They may be used as an educational tool and also a reinforcement tool.

**(Refer Slide Time: 06:41)**

**Approach**

**Persuasive :**

- The message promotes a positive change in behaviour and attitudes which encourages the audience to accept the new idea.
- This approach to message development involves finding out what most appeals to a particular audience.
- Persuasive approaches are more effective than coercive approaches in achieving behaviour change.
- Interpersonal communication is the most effective way to get across persuasive messages. Other persuasive methods include radio spots, advertisements and posters

**Prompting:**

- Messages are designed so that they are not easily ignored or forgotten, or to remind the audience about something and reinforce earlier messages.

**Entertaining:**

- The attention of the audience is drawn to the new idea by using messages which entertain, for example, posters, songs, humour, puppets or film.

Indian Institute of Technology Kharagpur

Then we discussed that there may be certain persuasive components as well. See here with the persuasive approach what happens the message promotes a positive change in behaviour and

attitudes which encourages the audience to accept the new idea. Remember or just think what happened during the earlier covid 19 days, the messages were persuasive. Persuasion in terms of it had certain, you know, incentives; incentives are those - what gain objectives you can say.

They used to say if you follow this behaviour then you will gain this by gaining this means you will be protected from the disease – like this. So, in that case these messages promoted a positive change in behaviour. So, what happens actually with persuasive approach is that this approach in particular focuses on the change objective. Now here change objective is very explicitly stated. See in informative and educating approach here change objective was present but they were more of an implicit in nature.

But in persuasive technique the change objectives are kind of explicit because the message promotes a positive change that is what the behaviour change intervention is all about. Now again this approach to develop message/ develop approach to message development involves finding out what most happens to particular audience because that is the incentive that we are / you are going to provide.

Then the persuasive approaches are often more effective than the coercive approaches in achieving behaviour change. And in this case, you just can, I mean, think that there are certain punitive, you know, ‘punitive incentives’ – should not call them incentives or the negative incentives as we can say. For example, certain fines if you break the traffic law there are certain fines imposed; now this is a punitive measure.

What happens is I mean this is several literatures are there and this is kind of a theory that if you apply positive interventions or positive change objectives or positive calls to actions. The outcome is often better than if you pressure someone in doing something. When by pressuring someone in doing something, I mean if you use these punitive methods for inducing the behaviour change.

Because what happens then the change/ the behaviour change may not be lasting for long and even the reinforcement you may need several other reinforcement phenomena, just remember

that using seat belts while there were certain punitive measures and in fact there are certain punitive measures in place. The awareness and the use of using seat belt basically increased as the people gradually understood that by not using seat belt this many numbers of accidental deaths are occurring.

So, we can just prevent those deaths or we can just prevent those damages by just wearing the simple seat belt. So, this is, see..., a positive feedback mechanism a positive reinforcement as you can say or in fact a true incentive a true behavioural incentive that people are now trying to avoid the negative outcome. So, it is not only about the punitive measure it is also about the positive thing or the incentive that is being given.

That is why I have mentioned over here that the persuasive approaches are more effective because persuasive approaches use the incentives or the positive incentives you can say as its go to strategy. You must use IPC or interpersonal communication in this case because in order to persuade a people in doing something you must have built a good rapport and in short you must have a good interpersonal communication with that person.

So, just till this part just keep in mind that interpersonal communication is already there in all the points.

Then you have your 'prompting' – this is another approach – messages are designed in a way so that they are not easily ignored or forgotten or I mean you know to remind the audience about something and reinforce the earlier message. Because if you are prompting the people to say something then when the people or the audience says those things again and again although through your prompt, but that keeps on getting registered in the mind, it is not only I mean prompting it does not necessarily mean that you have to say anything it is just for an example. But the basic idea of prompting people in understanding something says that it is best to understand prompting through the particular word we call 'cue' because see in health behaviour models we have certain cues to action.

You can consider them as prompting as well so through prompting approach reinforcement is best achieved. And there is this eternal approach of entertainment what happens through this is

the attention of the audience is drawn to the new idea by using messages with entertain for example it may be short film it may be a film it maybe you can say it may be a drama like this. You must come across certain videos that have been I mean there you know to promote breastfeeding.

And like this or certain healthy behaviours those are basically using the entertainment approach and also combining the educational approach together to bring about a good message.

**(Refer Slide Time: 12:24)**

**Content**

**Emotional or rational:**

- Most messages either appeal to people's emotions or provide rational reasons why they should or should not do something.
- Emotional appeals stimulate basic human emotions, such as love, fear, hate, anxiety, security.
- Rational appeals make the case for doing something using logical arguments and supporting evidence.
- Emotional appeals are better at attracting attention to the message and provide an incentive to read or listen to it. Any appeal which involves the audience emotionally is likely to be better remembered than a non-emotional one.
- However, messages which create a lot of fear do not bring about permanent behaviour change. Those who may be at risk will reject the message and those who are not at risk become unnecessarily anxious and worried, so messages based on fear should be avoided.
- Rational appeals are usually more convincing. A combination of emotional and rational appeal, which gets people's attention, convinces and promotes action is usually most effective.

Now this brings us to the issue of content. Now there are several materials on proper content or a good content for designing a good message. What I will do here is I will just highlight what are the key issues that you must keep in mind when deciding on the content. See one issue one design related issue we discussed in the principles part that you should devise content in such a way that all the style related issues are in proper sink.

Because if you give too much of content then you may not achieve all those 1.5 line space or a 5 inches line or a properly visual legible material. So, you must think of content in such a way that it fits the scope of your HPE intervention material. So, how to, decide on how much content to give and what content exactly to give. You first have emotional or rational the decision is based on whether it is emotional or rational.

See what I have written here is most messages either appeal to the people's emotion or simply provide rational reasons why they should or should not do something. For example, if you remember certain health promotion advices or certain health promotion propaganda as you can say. One advice is that please drive with responsibility because someone is waiting for you at your home.

This appeals to your emotion that be responsible, while driving do not do rash driving, do not over speed like this because you want to go back to someone in your home maybe your mother may be your wife may be your children so this is an emotional appeal. Or else it may so happen that the message in particular can convey certain rational things what happens do's and don'ts. Usually, you remember we have said that the messages can be designed in a question-and-answer format.

So, when we design a messaging question and answer format, we tend to provide certain rational reasons. What happens if you drive safely, you avoid accidents. Now here the rationality is that I know accidents are bad so I am if I am to avoid accidents, I have to drive safely what happens. If you use it well if you use seat belt you tend to get less injured even if you meet with certain accidents.

So, these are appealing to your rationality how to reduce harm and harm reduction is another important part in appealing to logical or rational behaviour of individuals.

**(Refer Slide Time: 15:14)**

## Content

### Positive or negative

- Negative or threatening messages are a form of emotional appeal. These can include messages which suggest that unfavourable consequences will occur if the receiver of the message does not follow the course of action recommended.
- People may view "that won't happen to me or my family" or as not of immediate concern "it might happen sometime but there is no need to worry about it now" or as not very significant "if it happens it won't make much difference".
- People tend to ignore potential threats or negative appeals for as long as possible and it takes a lot of convincing evidence before people take threats seriously. Most people regard themselves as being personally exempt from danger.
- In general, more positive appeals are more effective, especially those which provide people with options, because they make people feel that they are in control and able to make choices.



Indian Institute of Technology Kharagpur



So, now the next part is whether it is positive or negative, now see I have put certain underlines. Although in the previous lecture you have seen or I have I mean I have said that do not use too much of italics and underlines but still I have provided certain underlines. Now just follow these underlines because these are what we call a verbatim or what people say or peoples view. A people may view that that would not happen to me or my family certain bad things or a certain risk.

That is not applicable to me or that will not happen to me, this may be a people's view. It might happen sometime but there is no need to worry about it now. So, see all in all these things these are about how your target audience is approaching a particular situation based on this your content will be modified. Because if the audience is approaching it in a very positive mindset and I mean then the behaviour change will occur frequently or I mean or very easily. And if the audience is approaching that situation with a very negative mindset, then it is very difficult to induce a behaviour change.

So, what happens is positive or negative or threatening messages are a form of emotional appeal and these can include messages which suggest that unfavourable consequences will occur if the receiver of the message does not follow the course of action recommended.

Based on this the people's views may be like this; the people may react to the negative messages in this way that if you meet with an accident, you will get hurt people will view it like this way

that but I will not meet with an accident. But then you have your scope to reinforce the behaviour or a good healthy habit by saying that you are true that you will not meet with an accident but for that you have to maintain all these behaviours.

Now that again is the positive message, so this is how you tend to mix the negative and the positive messages while we all try to devise these health promotion education interventions there should be a proper mixture of these kind of messages there should be a proper mixture of emotional and rational areas.

**(Refer Slide Time: 17:41)**

**Content**

**Mass or individual appeals**

- A commonly used form of appeal is the mass appeal "Everyone is doing it so why don't you too".
- Social pressure can result in an individual adopting a behaviour even if they are not convinced about the reasons why they should.
- The individual appeal should be used for issues where social pressure and approval are not so important.

**Humorous or serious appeals**

- Humour can increase the effectiveness of communication if it helps to gain attention and the use of humour is consistent with the basic message.
- When used creatively, humour can help to communicate messages about issues, products or services that are not easy to discuss, such as personal or domestic hygiene or sexual behaviour.
- However, humour needs to be used carefully, to make sure it is acceptable to groups or communities and does not offend people.

Indian Institute of Technology Kharagpur

Now mass or individual appeal. See a commonly used form of appeal is the master field that everyone is doing it so why do not you because we tend to belong to certain groups and there is another cognitive bias like a socially desirable device because we tend to be desirable by our society. To use this particular cognitive influence, you can devise a plan or you can devise a message in certain way that you are saying that everyone is doing it so why do not you.

See certain you know advertisements/ product advertisements. They use these things they place certain community members or certain famous persona and say that these people are using why not why you are not using this. In a similar way when we are thinking about health promotion education interventions, we can use this mass approach that your whole community is using this, so please adopt this behaviour.

Then I mean as I was discussing there may be social pressure that will result in individual in taking up those behaviours and the individual appeal should be used for issues with social pressure and approval are not so important. Like in the case of addiction have with the social pressure or the after social approval these are all important. And that is why people may take up or may leave those addictions.

But there are certain issues whereas the social norms or the social approval, these systems may not be very much important. Also, these parts may vary from individual to individual because some people tend to be less affected by the society or the societal norms for them you have to devise an individual approach. That is one on one approach you can resort to the interpersonal communication approach.

The message should be precise and you know kind of this lays the backdrop for a precision public health message because that should be individually tailored. Next question is whether to go for a humorous or a serious appeal for a message. See humorous messages they sometimes have certain drawbacks because obviously there I mean you know kind of what we say the word pretty because they tend to make you laugh and by making you laugh these messages get registered in your brain.

But at the same time the message which is making you laugh may not be similarly enjoyable to any other person. Because see cultural differences are there and that is why when we are devising certain messages if we devise a message in a certain humorous way, it may often certain other cultures. So, we better refrain ourselves from devising humorous messages as core public health interventions.

We can try or I mean we can develop certain interventions like a humorous play suppose as a public health intervention or as a part of public health interventions. But that should be again pre-tested on that culture, we do not want these kinds of complications like we are giving an intervention and that intervention is hurting the people's culture or the people's beliefs and ultimately, they are not taking up those behaviours or the intervention.

This will ultimately defeat the whole objective of doing an HPE intervention so it is better to go for a more serious or more professional kind of appeal. It may be a logical appeal it may be emotional appeal but the tone should be very serious in nature because the matters that we want to ensure are in fact serious.

**(Refer Slide Time: 21:22)**

**Content**

**One-sided or two-sided arguments**

- The effectiveness of one-sided or two-sided arguments depends on the target audience.
- One-sided arguments tend to be more effective with target groups which are already favourably disposed towards the point of view being communicated.
- Two-sided arguments are more effective with those who may be opposed. People who have more education are more influenced by messages which put two sides of an argument, while those who are less well educated are influenced more by one-sided arguments.
- An example of a one-sided argument appeal is: "Two is better than too many" the slogan of a family planning campaign carried out through radio, television, posters, advertisements.
- An example of a two-sided argument appeal is: A poster listing the advantages and disadvantages of different methods of family planning, leaving it up to the client to make the decision about what is best for them.

Indian Institute of Technology Kharagpur

Then the question is whether they are one sided or two sided I mean as you can see when we introduce the HPE intervention to any community there tend to be certain arguments about it. So, your message has to be devised in such a way that often there are two sided arguments going on because if you have two sided arguments then you get to improve your intervention and you get to improve your message and you also get the population to avoid any confusion.

So, an example of a one-sided argument just see I will just give you these two examples is two is better than too many. The slogan of a family planning campaign because the family planning campaign focuses on having two children that has been slogan of the family building campaign carried out through the radio television posters and advertisement. Here you see the beneficiaries they do not have any scope to communicate with the original HPE intervention implementer whoever is implementing the community or the government perhaps.

Now consider this example of a two-sided argument where the appeal is a poster listing the advantages and its disadvantages of different methods of family planning leaving it up to the

client to make decision about what is best for them or even in the cafeteria approach. The client is given options about what to choose what not to choose they are given the what are the benefits and what are the I mean what are the do's and don'ts all these information are provided.

And then the clients are the beneficiaries they are provided the freedom to decide on what to do and what not to do. Here the client or the beneficiary is able to interact with the material so, that is how a two-sided argument is helpful because not only you are in a one-sided argument you are just putting something over the beneficiary and this may not be helpful.

**(Refer Slide Time: 23:23)**

**Content**

**Direct or indirect**

- Direct appeals state a message very clearly and specify how people can respond to the message.
- For example: "We plan our families, we know that family planning is safe. Let the family planning centre help you".
- Whereas an example of an indirect appeal around the same idea would be: "Every child a wanted child".

Indian Institute of Technology Kharagpur

Then the question may be whether to go for a direct or an indirect content. See the direct content appeals the state of message very clearly and specify how people can respond to the message. The clarity component is very essential or in fact very important when you discuss about the direct component or direct contents. So, for example we plan our families we know that family planning is safe let the family planning centre help you, so it is 'direct', it is just to the point.

And you know and in an indirect appeal in this context may be every child is a wanted child. I mean not directly related to the family planning but it may be important indirect message in terms of suppose to prevent female feticide. So, see I am saying maybe in terms of female feticide so in the case of indirect messages you can feed those messages in several context also even this context can be placed in the case of family planning programs.

Because if you plan the family then you avoid having those unwanted pregnancies in everything and also then every child will be a wanted child. So, indirect content or indirect appeals they will help you in fitting the slogan or fitting the message in different context but the direct appeal it pinpoints the action. So, in terms of call to action you should go for the direct appeal part when you are devising the content.

**(Refer Slide Time: 25:01)**

**Content**

**Repeated or "one time" appeals**

- Research shows that repetition increases the amount of information that an audience remembers. Hearing messages several times helps people to remember information or ideas.
- Giving people information once does not necessarily mean that they will remember, understand or act on it. Priority messages need to be repeated more often.
- However, after being repeated three or four times, not much additional information is remembered.
- Repetition can have a negative effect if the message is unclear or offensive. Humour also tends to lose its appeal more quickly than other types of appeals when it is repeated.
- If the message is believable, strong and relevant, repetition can increase effectiveness, provided that the way the message is expressed and presented is varied to prevent audience boredom, and the interval between a repetition is increased each time the message is given. For example: once a day for three days, then once a week for three weeks, then once a month.

Indian Institute of Technology Kharagpur  
11

Then the next issue is whether to go for a repeated or a onetime appeal. The basic problem with repeated appeals is that people often get bored with repeated appeals repeated appeals on the same issue. Because if you go on with the same message over and over again. Suppose you go on with the same the covid 19 preventive message over telephone when you are you are trying to call to someone else.

And the other side on the other side you hear the voices that do this do that and do not do these kinds of behaviours. Now see some people in I mean invariably they complain to the telecommunication ministry that please stop this we know this and this is really getting bored this is getting distracting us from our work and all the bad stuff. So, repeated messages have I mean it have its own difficult problems or difficulties as you can say.

But one time appeals – their main problem is that they are unable to reinforce the behaviour change or the change objective is not particularly achieved when you giving a message through one time appeal.

**(Refer Slide Time: 26:11)**

**Content**

HEALTH PROMOTION

**Definite conclusion or open conclusion**

- Should the message have a definite conclusion or leave the audience to make up their own mind?
- Drawing a conclusion may offend those who object to having the obvious pointed out to them, and may be particularly counterproductive with better educated audiences who can work it out for themselves.
- Health planners and managers need to decide whether there are audiences where it is appropriate to draw conclusions.

Indian Institute of Technology Kharagpur

So, when we are now going forward with the; definite conclusion or open conclusion part. Here I mean it is kind of related with this repeated directness these parts because see in definite conclusion we provide a specific conclusion. And in open conclusion we let the context of the conclusion open to the beneficiaries. See what I have written: “should the message have a definite conclusion or leave the audience to make up their own minds”.

See like here in direct case the message is direct and the conclusion here is direct that please come to the family planning centre and the family planning centre will help you in planning your family. But here in the indirect message you see: “every child is a wanted child”. Here the individual or the community is now thinking that is true. So, how to ensure this, because we have so much unwanted pregnancies.

Certain people may think that every child is a wanted child, then we should not do the female feticide part or that is a bad practice some people may say for that we must go to the family planning centre there may be so many possibilities. So, the later one is the open conclusion part

because the community is now thinking what conclusion to arrive at. So, the health planners and managers need to decide whether there are audiences where it is appropriate to draw conclusion.

Basically, this is the dilemma that we feel or we face when we devise any health policy or device any health planning. Because whether to let the audience let the beneficiary draw a conclusion or to guide them to a direct conclusion. It is usually based on the culture it is usually based on education cognitive level of the audience the socio demographic factors. So, these should be kept in mind or in one word you should have the audience analysis done before specifically thinking about whether to go for definite conclusion or an open conclusion.

**(Refer Slide Time: 28:20)**

**CONCLUSION**

- There are different practical approaches of message designing for HPE interventions
- Contents of any HPE message should be devised based on several focus areas, e.g., appeals, and arguments, etc.

The slide background features a grid of icons representing various social and health factors: Childhood experiences, Housing, Education, Social support, Home, Environment, Food, Family income, Employment, Our communities, Access to health services, and Health. A small video inset shows a man speaking. The footer includes the Indian Institute of Technology Kharagpur logo and the number 13.

So, in conclusion in this lecture I mean as the first part of our designing messages lecture approaches, we discussed that there are different practical approaches of message designing for HPE interventions. We discussed about the different informative educational prompting these kinds of approaches how we also discussed how persuasive approach is very helpful how positive influences or positive incentives they can help in creating a very good message.

And then bringing about a good behaviour change. We also discussed about the contents of any hpe message that should be devised based on several focus areas like the major focus area should be appeal. Then we should also decide on how the argument should be placed whether it should be one sided, two sided whether it we should allow the population to arrive at a direct conclusion

or we should leave the messages open. So, that the; people can conclude for themselves like this way.

**(Refer Slide Time: 29:22)**

**RESOURCES**

- Dobe M. Health promotion and Education: Foundations for Changing Health Behavior. 1<sup>st</sup> ed. Kolkata: Academic Publishers; 2022.
- Centres for Disease Control and Prevention. *Simply Put A guide for creating easy-to-understand materials*. 3<sup>rd</sup> Ed. Atlanta; 2009.
- Ramchandran L, Dharamlingam T. Health Education: A new approach. Noida: Vikas Publishing House; 2013.

Family income    Employment    Our communities    Access to health services

Indian Institute of Technology Kharagpur

So, these are the resources, the resources will remain same for the next part also. So, see you in the next lecture thank you.