

**Research Methods in Health Promotion**  
**Dr. Arista Lahiri**  
**Dr. B.C. Roy Multi-Speciality Medical Research Centre,**  
**Indian Institute of Technology Kharagpur**  
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**Lecture 37: Designing messages (Part – II)**

Welcome back to our discussion on the designing of messages for health promotion intervention that we were going to implement as part of our health promotion research. This is the part 2 of our discussion. Here we will be discussing the different contents that are generated for you know the designing of messages how exactly do we generate the content, what are the different criteria for generating the content for health promotion research. We focus mostly on the clarity of the messages in this lecture we discuss that clarity of the promotion message is very much important while designing your health promotion intervention I mean as a whole. Illustrations and the photographs that we use as part of our message they are very important component of our of our health promotion intervention package and as a whole for example, if you are using a poster of this kind and we are putting a illustration over here that happens is this helps people to understand. So, the whole intervention package that you are going to implement may be in terms of the print media.

Your illustrations, the photographs, overall the visuals that you have they are going to play a very important role that is why we will be discussing a bit about how do we select appropriate visuals, how the illustrations should be placed in your in your health promotion intervention material in this lecture. Now, how do we really generate the content of the health promotion intervention? See the content it should it should focus on these aspects how we want our audience to see or to understand the material that we are providing to them. It can be emotional or rational a content particularly it can appeal to the emotion of the individuals or it can be appealing to the reasoning of those individuals. Now, an example may be for example, I mean we can consider the situation of say again the COVID 19 prevention.

During the pandemic there were different messages that you should care for care for your near and dear ones. Similarly, for the road traffic accidents related health promotion messages they also say that you should care for the near and dear ones someone else is waiting for you at your in in in home like this. Now, see what what happens over here is it creates an emotional ah you know appeal to the beneficiary this is the emotional content of it. Now, in this case you are not appealing to the reason why you should not drive ah fast or why you should not drive above the speed limit you are not providing reasons of it or why you should protect yourself from COVID 19 when you are not providing any any reason for this. What you are doing is you are just simply appealing to the emotion of those individuals this can be one approach and on the other side you can simply put the reasons of why certain things should be done and why certain things should not be done.

Say for example, driving fast or above the speed limit you can just simply mention that above the driving above the speed limits it will cause problem for example, to the other drivers in the lane or it will cause a problem to your car or it will cause a problem to the road itself let alone this the probability of accident. You can simply say that the probability of accident if someone is driving well above the speed limit it increases by say 3 or 4 folds you can simply put that it it appeals to the reason that ok this happens this is the outcome people can understand this can happen. In COVID 19 pandemic also why you should protect yourself it is not because only you have to you have to protect the the family members or like that. It is also because if you are infected with the COVID 19 pandemic you can spread the disease or you yourself can eventually get even killed due to the disease we have seen the situation during ah during the different pandemic waves. So, these are the different reasoning aspects where people understand the reason of performing certain things.

So, your content can directly deal with the reasons or it can deal with the emotion emotional aspect of it. In a way if you can device the contents that can appeal to the emotion as well as the reason it is a very good content and usually it engages a broader spectrum of people. What happens is the emotional nature of the content it appeals to the general audience and the rational nature of the content it appeals to the more ah technical or people or those who are more into logic and stuff ok. How your message is devised either it may be a positive message or it may be a negative message the this content particularly it is very much important. See why because if you are planning on providing a very positive kind of a message.

For example, if you take the COVID 19 vaccine then you are protected from the from the disease or something like that. Now this is a very positive kind of a message this is one way of framing it. Another way of framing it may be the content may be if you do not take the COVID 19 vaccine then you may get the disease and you may die in in this way. Now what happens is in the negative way you are eliciting the fear of the disease or you are leveraging the threat perception of the individuals by framing the whole thing in a negative direction. But what happens in the positive way is you are in the in a positive message you are providing hope to the participant and you are simply stating these are the benefits.

Now this is useful whenever you know I mean depends on the level of understanding of the audience. In some way or in certain regulatory situations you may need to provide the negative messages so that people can understand what can go wrong and they should stop doing that. Say for example, you have seen that there are different degrees of you know fines for traffic violation. Now if you provide a message like this if you do not follow this paid limit you will be fined this much amount. Now again the fined this much amount is again a very I mean it is a punishment of sort.

So, this negative message it leverages the threat perception that I want to avoid getting fined or getting this amount of punishment like this. I mean see this is again a regulatory approach because who will ultimately fine say for example, the traffic police. Now they are implementing

this speed limit through a regulatory approach and your message in this situation is framed in a negative way that is how your content generation should match the context of it ok. Whether it is appealing to a mass or it is focusing on an individual appeal. See in the in the previous lecture we discussed on the different approaches of our health promotion intervention.

We understood that the approach that the different approaches like educating and also persuasion it it it focuses on interpersonal communication or say for for that matter it focuses on individual communication. In that situation the message that you generate may be more in depth and it may be more focused on the individuals with whom you are going to participate that means, you need more and more analysis of your audience to generate the individual appeal that means, your the appeal of the message is focused on a particular individual. Say for example, as a general rule if people are having elderly elderly individuals in their in their homes you can say that if you are if you do not use the mask if you get covid you might be protected from the disease because you are young, but the elder ones in the home may not be protected from the region may get severe diseases. Now, this kind of a message there are different aspects of individual appeal, but this is one way of explaining it. Now, this kind of a message it will appeal to the individual who really have elderly people in their homes, but for those who are living alone it is not really that much of an important issue because we are living alone and they do not have an individual.

So, this message will not really appeal to them. Similarly for a mass appeal what you need to do is you need to understand the audience in a larger way say in terms of as a as a whole as a group as a community there only you can there only you can implement the the mass appeal. Also you can try to find out certain humorous or serious appeals again as we discussed earlier humor it it needs to be taken cautiously because not all the people not all the all the communities they take humors on different aspects in a similar way. So, it does not have a single size that fits all. Again one sided or two sided arguments that means, whether only you are delivering the message or they can interact with you in that way you can device your content because if you are the only one delivering the message it should be thorough and you should provide the key points key action areas in a in a greater detail and specified format.

So, that people can ultimately take those actions after listening to you and if it is a two-sided argument then you should more focus on keeping the contents open. So, that people can ask questions and you can dig deeper with further discussions. Whether it is direct or indirect so, you should focus it is always better to have a direct message clearly stating what you should do and directly mentioning in an active voice. Whether it is a repeated or a one time appeal whether you are going to implement the particular intervention for only a single time or you are going to repeat it because see what happens is if you are providing a single intervention people may tend to forget, but if you are repeating the intervention what happens is you know it helps in reinforcing the change objective that you have focused on. So, again that is important whether you want the reinforcement or not whether the reinforcement is part of your study objective or not these are all the factors that the help you determine how you should device your content of your health promotion message.

Then definite conclusion or an open conclusion, open conclusion means you can let the people or the audience guess on what should be the conclusion and often through the open conclusions people interact with the with the speakers and definite conclusion means you clearly state ok this is what I want and this is how you should do it. We discussed that the good message it should focus on clarity it should be clear enough so, that all the people can understand not only you can read if people should understand ok. Now, again in this discussion we focus on what are the aspects of clarity that we can consider while designing our own health promotion intervention message. Firstly, give the most information first the first point should be the basic thing that you want your audience to do. For example, if you are promoting COVID pandemic prevention preventive behaviors maybe the first thing that I want our audience to do is to use face mask.

So, the first point will be use of face mask that is the main thing that I want the audience to do and that is the main thing that I want to deliver through my for example, the promotion message that is the first thing that is what I provide in the beginning. Limit the number of messages, we were discussing that it should focus on certain key objectives certain only a few key things. So, what should be a what should be an optimum number? Typically, they say that 3 to 7 items with bullets or it should be ideal, but from the experience in different populations you should consider limiting the different messages to 3 to 5 at max. The audience should be should be told what exactly you need them to do that is the call to an action and that should be in an active voice it should be a direct kind of a delivery. You should tell your audience what they will gain that means, their benefit from doing it because people often try to understand from doing every action what they stand to lose and what they stand to gain and that is the way the mental computing works and people ultimately perform a certain behavior or they decide otherwise.

You should clear should be very clear to mention what they stand to gain from practicing this behavior. Now, what in this situation what they will gain the issue of rational and emotional things come in. See you can discuss about the emotional aspects of doing certain behaviors for example, quitting tobacco often what happens is people understand that this is a very bad thing, but still since they are dependent on tobacco they fail to quit that particular behavior, but if you can appeal to them that if you if you continue smoking tobacco then your children will see you smoke tobacco and they will also take up this behavior like this. So, that is that is the basic essence where you appeal to the emotion of the people or else what you can do you can simply put what are the benefits and what are the what are the disadvantages what they stand to lose everything and they can make a rational choice. So, that is how you can explain them what they stand to gain from doing a particular behavior.

Again you have to choose your words carefully. Why because since the beginning of the discussion on designing messages we were discussing that it is very important to make your message in a way acceptable to the community because it is the community that is going to act on the message. So, each and every word it matters not only the humors or your presentation

whether that should be acceptable culturally or not also each and every word apart from simply putting forward a humor it matters. You should not use certain words that is not really accepted or that is considered a bad word in a community. Even situations happen where you know the one message devised in a particular language is carrying a word which which has another meaning in a similar kind of language.

This is this is very very common thing. Here what is needed is here in this situation you need to devise the message in all of these similar languages. So, that people from whichever language is reading that particular message is not confused as what exactly you want to say and is not anguished by the by the choice of your words ok. So, you have to be very careful you have to keep it short you have to engage people and you have to encourage them in taking up the the change behaviors. It should be free from jargons and unambiguous that means, should be put simply you should not use too much technical terms you should use the terms that people really understand the words that are used in a day to day basis.

And unambiguous means it should not have two meanings it should be clearly stating only the the or the objective that you want them to perform in a way it should not be vague as well. Limit use of statistics and use general words like most many half etcetera. For example, if if I continue to again we take the example of this poster here is illustration and here is the text and in this text if I continue mentioning 18 percent, 20 percent, 30 percent, 40 percent for different issues people it will not engage them properly and they will get confused it will not clearly show them exactly what I want them to do. Definitely it will it will depict the different statistics or the different proportions that I have, but it will not clearly demonstrate why I am mentioning these proportions. Instead if I am using the terms like most many most of the people are doing this despite not mentioning the proportions people will understand that ok most of the people are nowadays quitting tobacco for example, now that gives them a perspective of why you want them to perform the behavior in this way ok.

That is why limiting the use of statistics is important in making the message the whole delivery of a message more clear make it more relatable to the people so that they can understand. Again use of symbols it should also be limited because not all the people are aware of all the symbols that are there similarly for the abbreviations. If abbreviations are to be used you should be very very sure to explain the abbreviations what does what does the abbreviations mean. See for us the abbreviation WHO may simply mean World Health Organization, but for a lay person use of abbreviation WHO simply may mean who. So, the context it matters and that is why you should use the the symbols abbreviations limitingly.

Also use the use the quotation marks sparingly because if you use too many quotation marks then again your text will be jumbled up and people will fail to understand exactly which portion is the key message that you want them to perform and what what are the different quotations that you have put in or or the statements from different sources that you have mentioned. It is always better to remove the quotations and frame the sentences in such a way that it really

really puts the whole message that you are giving to be to your audience in a particular perspective. Next we come to the very important issue of how do we use the visuals for health promotion interventions. Now we will be discussing about the different different topics that are related to the visuals. For example, how do we choose the visuals for our intervention material that is again a very important question these are the things that we that we will discuss when we discuss using the visuals.

First let us choose the best type of visual for your material what do you mean by best type of visual. These the highlighted portions they explain what do we mean by the best type of visuals. For example, photographs they work best for showing the real life events the people the emotion instead of using certain line diagrams or charts it is always better to showcase some real life events so that the people can understand what is actually going on. For example, for vaccination if you can use a photograph of a child being actively vaccinated it typically if you remember during the Pulse Polio campaigns this was a very this was a very common poster the people a child is getting the a drop of Pulse Polio. So, this is one way of putting it this is this is suiting the need of the situation in a best way.

Now the simple illustrations or line drawings they may be useful in some in some instances not always though. For example, you know when you are showing a procedure for example, you are you are making your audience understand how a particular procedure is done in that situation it is very helpful when you use the line drawings. Then use simple drawings and avoid unnecessary details even if you are putting forward a real life photograph or a line drawing it is always better to avoid the unnecessary details like whoever the person is in that photograph. If your situation demands to identify that person then it is you can mention the particular person. For example, now if if your photograph is showing a very famous person and you know that most of the people is aware they are aware of who that particular individual is in that case you may not write the name of the individual at the bottom of the of the photograph.

Instead you can simply just state what this photograph is about if you write the name of that particular individual in the in the bottom of the photograph that means, you are putting in certain unnecessary details because people already know or if you provide certain information that is not directly related to the the change objecting that you are talking about again it becomes an unnecessary detail you should also avoid that as part of your visual. Cartoons may be you know they may be good to convey humor and make the things a bit more casual, but you also should again consider using the cartoons based on the cultural appropriateness. Again to reemphasize not all the people and not all the community take the same drawing or the same cartoon or even the same humor in the same way and there may be certain strenuous situations arising of the use of a simple cartoon. So, you should do a bit of groundwork before actually putting a cartoon or certain humorous things in your photograph it should not hurt the sentiments of the people. Next is use visuals to help communicate your message.

So, first was you have to choose the best type of visual that fits your material, next you have to choose the visuals to help communicate your message. Your material should be suited the visual should suit your material and then next the visual actually should communicate the message that you are trying to convey. Present one message per visual if you provide a photograph that depicts one too many messages people will find it difficult to understand exactly what you are trying to tell through that particular picture then you may have to put in a lot of large paragraphs to explain what are the different aspects of that message. Instead you provide simple photographs for example, the vaccination example the the the picture of a child taking a drop of pulse polio that simply says that ok what we want you to understand is pulse polio is a very good thing and your child should also take part in the pulse polio campaign like this. Now label the visual with the captions it should be clearly depicted what exactly you are trying to convey through the visual it may be a photograph it may be line drawing, but you should be very clear on what you are actually conveying.

Use visuals that help emphasize or explain the text. So, a way of looking at your poster is this is the this is the visual for example, and this is your text. Earlier what we discussed is your text should be placed very close to the explanation of the of the visual sorry the visual should be placed closely with the explanation that we have provided in the text. Here see you use visuals that help emphasize or explain the text. So, that means, use of photographs and the materials in in a particular text they are complementary.

You should have certain text materials that explain the visuals and also the visual in in other way it should explain the whole context of the thing right. So, that is the basic essence of using a using a very good visual that suits you know your message. So, the actions that you want your audience to take for example, you can just simply put a poster with the different steps of hand washing that provides the audience with the idea of what exactly you want them to do you mark as 1 2 3 4 5 6 7. You provide a sequence of ideal hand washing steps and you just simply put the poster for example, in the walls of your health center. People will see and understand these are the appropriate steps of hand washing and this is what you want them to perform.

Now make the visuals culture is relevant and sensitive again going back to the objective of the discussion of using cartoons, humors and everything whatever picture you use even though it may not be a cartoon or even though it may not be a humorous one you should use it in a more culturally tuned way. So, that people again do not get hurt and the community is not angered by use of that particular visual. Some people a different community may have certain beliefs your visual may not if they are not reflecting the belief you should always consider that they should not hurt those beliefs ok. That is the main reason why the health promotion messages for example, maybe for healthy diet the the same design of the message or a same same infographic that is used in the in the pacific region may not be used in the asian region just simply because it is not considered culturally appropriate visual ok. So, that is the basic essence of it you you should consider using the images and the symbols as a whole the visuals that is more familiar to your audience and they can relate to.

Make the visuals that are easy for your audience to follow and understand because if they are able to understand then only can they can take up the behavior and then only they can perform those. The visuals should be placed nearer to the text that explain them as we have already discussed for the poster they now understand what exactly you want them to do for example, if you if you are if you have made a poster where you have different steps of hand washing for example, I am providing three illustrations and here you have text of exactly what you need to do they are placed close together people are able to understand what exactly you want them to do and how you want them to do it. That is why using brief captions that highlight the key messages is also important and it also may repeat a particular sentence as a heading you know you say one particular aspect is very important in in this whole endeavor. You can repeat that particular sentence as a heading as well. So, it is important to mention all these captions these headings the sequence numbers for example, we discussed that 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 should make them understand what is what is the appropriate sequence you want them to follow.

So, that ultimately the visuals that you use people are able to not only relate to their particular situation or circumstances also they understand what message you are conveying and what change they should bring to their own behaviors. Sometimes drawings alone can help your audience understand you may need not provide any explanation at all. See in the health in the sorry in the hand washing example you can provide simply a picture of the different hand washing steps for example, 1 2 3 4 5 6 these are the six steps of hand washing for example, you may not write anything in this poster as well or you can consider only mentioning a different only a small caption maybe this maybe this it is the situation. People will simply look at the picture and they will understand this is what you want them to do it is simple. Now, when photos these typical photographs they may be certain real life situations or they may be certain illustrations are used they are known as the pictographs and the pictographs are very important when you want to convey your health promotion message because they appeal to the to the individuals in a in a better way.

Next is use realistic images to illustrate the internal body parts or small objects. Whenever you are illustrating certain small objects or certain biological components like this it is better to always use realistic images or the almost real life images. So, that people can actually understand what is there and what you want them to do. Now, using realistic images for this kind of depictions this is again a general good practice for using visual in your own message. It is sometimes you know important to provide a sense of scale.

For example, sometimes you may provide you may draw a mosquito and provide a scale with it because any drawing the mosquito may appear this large, but in reality a mosquito is not that much large. You can simply provide a scale of say a coin for example, to make them understand this is the ratio of it. Now, people understand the the size of the coin of a of a 10 rupee coin perhaps you can put it as a contrast and you can put it as a reference scale. Use the high quality

visuals only. Do not use visuals that is bloody or is having a lower degree of resolution that that you know breaks when they when they enlarge it.

Always use a sharp true colors more engaging and more soothing to the to the eyes the visuals that are more soothing to the eyes. Often the warm images they appeal more to the individuals than the than the images that has more of a blue tinge to it. So, we discussed many things regarding designing a message. We discussed in this particular lecture how good message you know it should be how it should be clear, how it should appeal the different issues like emotion, rational, positive, negative like this we discussed. And also we discussed a little bit about the visuals how to use the images and visuals in your health promotion message.

And the particularly in conclusion what I would again emphasis is this point that visuals form an integral part of a good message. Since you are going to implement your own health promotion research whenever you are providing the intervention health promotion intervention you will find that the interventions will work best if you have meaningful and relatable visuals in your intervention package. So, this is again you have to keep in mind and we discussed the different guidelines or somewhat outlines of how you can prepare your visual for an effective delivery. So, these are the resources for you. Thank you for your patient hearing. Goodbye.