

Starting a Media Campaign: Recommendations from **MANAGING THE MEDIA MONSTER**

Use Theory to Design, Implement, and Evaluate

Theory can be helpful especially when used as a blueprint to guide the planning process. In particular, theory can be used to identify factors that should be addressed through your media campaign in an effort to encourage healthy sexual behavior among the target audience. Theory can help you decide what behaviors to focus on, the potential target group for your intervention, and the key pathways and/or barriers to achieving your target outcomes. Theory is also very helpful for developing the evaluation of your campaign. Some examples of key behavioral theories include the Theory of Planned Behavior, and the Stages of Change Model. A more thorough description of these theories and a list of additional resources on behavior theories are available in the appendix of the [Managing the Media Monster report](#).

Know and Involve the Target Audience

Learning about your target audience is a key step in designing your media campaign. After you have identified your target audience it is important to get to know them. What matters most to them? What kind of media do they consume? What barriers might they face if they make the behavioral changes your campaign suggests? There are many different ways to learn about your target audience including one-on-one interviews, focus groups, and analysis of existing surveys. You might also consider involving members of the target audience in the planning and implementation phases of your campaign.

Use Multiple Media Channels As Well As Interpersonal Communication

The interventions reviewed and discussed in the *Managing the Media Monster* report suggest that increasing exposure to your media campaign is important for its success. While studies in the United States have indicated that this can be done using one media channel, the most successful international intervention used more than one media channel to reach their audiences. In a media environment where multi-tasking is quickly becoming the norm among teens (e.g. using computer, TV, music, and cell phone at the same time), using multiple channels might increase the likelihood that your message will reach the target audience.

Moreover, media campaigns that generate communication among the target audience tend to be more effective. Consider how to increase interpersonal communication either through the media campaign directly, or as an additional component of the campaign. For example, you could partner with an organization in your community who works with youth and design specific interpersonal activities that incorporate aspects of your media campaign.



Strive for Long-Term Exposure and Sustainability

As is usually the case with other interventions, a media campaign's chance for success increases when it reaches the target audience multiple times with clear, consistent messages. Consider using multiple media channels to reach your audience more than one time, and plan your campaign to last several months or longer. While it can be costly to run some types of media campaigns for a long time (e.g. TV), other ways to reach teens might offer an opportunity for longer exposure (e.g. TV plus an Internet intervention).

Focus on the Environment as Well as Individuals

Long-term behavioral change will be more likely if teens are in an environment that is supportive of the messages of your media campaign. Youth need support from parents, peers, and partners

to make healthy decisions about sex. Consider collaborating with other organizations in your community who work with youth and/or their parents. Consider reaching out to local officials, policy-makers, and the community more broadly for their buy-in and support.

Evaluate Your Efforts

Evaluation at all steps of your intervention is critical for learning about what went well and what didn't work. Although much has been learned about how to plan effective media campaigns, many questions remain unanswered. Despite the somewhat daunting task of evaluation it is important for learning more about how media campaigns can effectively change teen sexual behavior. Consider evaluation from the beginning of your campaign, and choose an evaluation plan that fits your campaign and is feasible.

