

Implementation Capacities: *Media & Networking Systems*

Background

What are Media & Networking Systems?

Media and networking systems support behavior change and shared understanding by using communication, media, and relationships to spread information, reinforce implementation, and connect people across settings. A robust media and networking system includes a communication plan, multiple media strategies, networking strategies, and the use of data to drive improvements.

These systems complement direct service interventions and change efforts by helping to ensure that the goals, benefits and practices of a program are understood, accessible, and reinforced across the broader community.

What do Media & Networking Systems look like when it is working well?

A strong media and networking system includes:

- A written communication plan with clear goals, measurable objectives, identified strategies, and designated leads
- Staff, teams, and software in place to create and disseminate messages and share content
- Messages that are consistent, tailored for intended audiences, and shared across multiple channels
- Data, such as analytics and feedback, that are used to drive learning and improvements to dissemination strategies and communication plans
- Relationships across organizations and community partners that are actively leveraged to extend reach and trust



Why are Media & Networking Systems important?

Media and networking systems connect people across systems, helping communicate program benefits to diverse audiences. Media strategies build awareness and support behavior change, extending the reach of direct services to people who may never access them. Networking strategies draw on existing relationships among organizations, partners, and community leaders to increase reach and speed spread, and to inform communication planning, media messaging, and content creation.

Media & Networking Systems Best Practices

The following best practices help guide effective media and networking systems when implementing a program, practice, or policy:

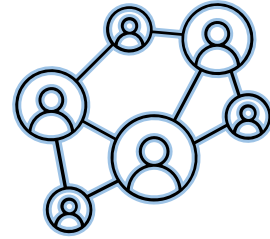
Intentional Communication Planning

- A written communication plan is created or adapted

- Media/communication leads with dedicated time and resources are clearly identified and accountable for managing the implementation of the communication plan
- The communication plan includes goals linked to desired outcomes for changes in attitudes, skills and knowledge, or behaviors

Strategic Use of Media

- Messaging promotes shared understanding, accessibility, and awareness about the program or change effort being implemented
- Multiple platforms and formats are used to reach different audiences across communities
- Media strategies effectively communicate the impact and benefits of the program



Purposeful Networking

- Existing relationships and networks are leveraged to inform media activities and messaging and accelerate the spread and reach of information
- Feedback flows both ways (bidirectional) between the community and implementation team/organization

Use of Data for Learning

- Data is collected, reviewed, and used to improve the effectiveness of media and networking

Important Knowledge & Skills

- Understanding the role of media and networking in implementation compared to traditional methods of diffusion or dissemination to spread innovations.
- Understanding the goals of media, messaging, and public communication to support implementation efforts
- How to select and use media channels effectively
- How to communicate program impact and benefits clearly
- Understanding of the role and practices of social network analysis
- Understanding of how media and networking systems integrate with other implementation capacity areas

Resources & Tools

Build Up Web Hub > Learn Implementation: <https://buildup.fpg.unc.edu/learn-implementation/>

Build Up Microlearning > Media & Networking Systems in Implementation:
<https://buildup.fpg.unc.edu/resource/media-and-networking-systems-in-implementation/>

What Does Capacity-Building for Media & Networking Systems Look Like Across Implementation Stages?

The aspects of media and networking systems described above take place across stages of implementation. Below, we use three functional stages of implementation to outline some questions that can guide the work of building media and networking capacity. *Please know* - each stage of implementation does not discreetly end as another begins. As we engage in the work of a certain stage (and learn), we might find the need to go back to address an issue that we missed previously or delve deeper into another issue that needs more attention.

Assessment, Exploration, & Readiness <i>From where are we starting? What are our strengths and areas of development?</i>	Installation <i>How can we develop, acquire, repurpose, and strengthen resources for “what it takes” to effectively support this program?</i>	Initial Implementation <i>How are we doing now that the program is being delivered? What are we seeing, what are we learning?</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Who is accountable for this role? ▪ What knowledge and skills are needed to create and manage communication efforts? ▪ What existing networks, partnerships, or informal channels already exist? ▪ What tools, software, and policies are currently in place to support communication activities? ▪ Who provides feedback and guidance, local knowledge, and community perspective? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Have media/communication lead(s) been identified or hired? ▪ Is there a communication plan in place with measurable objectives and clear strategies? ▪ What professional development and learning supports are needed to successfully apply network data and implement a communication plan? ▪ What tools, platforms, or resources must be acquired or strengthened to produce and disseminate communication? ▪ What type of data will we collect (e.g., analytics, network summaries) and how will we use this data? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Is the communication plan being implemented as intended? ▪ Are media and networking strategies informed by data? ▪ Are messages being adapted in response to data and feedback? ▪ Has our media lead(s) participated in PD as planned and ongoing? ▪ Do our media lead(s) feel supported technically and socially? ▪ What early signs suggest strategies are supporting implementation?