

Principles for knowing with whom you should communicate

It is very hard to communicate unless you know to whom you are communicating to. Knowing who your audience is makes it possible to plan your communication in a logical way. You will need different messages for different groups. You will also need different channels and methods for different groups (Reynolds, 2004).

In knowing with whom you should communicate, it is important to ask the following questions.

Who is my audience?

Why do I want to communicate to this audience?

What are the priorities and interests of my audience?

Why might they want to listen to me?

What is my message to this audience?

How will my message reach this audience?

There are many different ways to think about your audience and ways they could best be contacted. Firstly, you need to know which group(s) you need to focus on. You can group your audience according to different characteristics such as:

Demographics- for example; gender, age, ethnic and racial background, income, etc.

Geography- focusing on a whole town or region?

Employment – your audience might be people in a particular line of work or people who are unemployed

Health – e.g. people who might be at risk for experiencing a particular condition

Behaviour – you may be targeting your message to smokers

Attitudes – are you trying to change people's mind?

Another aspect of the audience to consider is whether you should direct your communication to those whose behaviour, knowledge, or condition you wish to affect or whether you should

focus on people who have the power to make decision such as community leaders, politician. Sometimes, it is better to aim people on power in order to influence the whole population.

Reference List

Reynolds, Barbara S., Julia Hunter Galdo, and Lynn Sokler. *Crisis and emergency risk communication*. School of Public Health, University at Albany, 2004.

http://www.interact-eu.net/comm_strategy/comm_strategy/355/5205