

Role of Health Education and Communication

Part 5

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Content

Part 1

1. Introduction
2. Health
3. Health Education – introduction
4. Health Promotion
5. Perception

Part 2

6. Health Behaviour
7. Learning
8. Attribution

2

Content

Part 3

9. Theory of Planned Behaviour
10. Social Influence
11. Health Communication
12. Media and Methods of health Communication

Part 4

13. Designing Health Education and Health Promotion

Part 5

14. Traditional Communication Technique
15. Contemporary Approach to Health Communication
16. Bibliography

3

Traditional Communication technique

4

Traditional Methods of health Communication

- Many methods of health communication are being practiced since long. Some of these are:
 - **Distribution of materials**
 - It provides the backbone of health communication
 - Printed materials were being used most often
 - These are increasingly being supplemented by audio and video materials
 - Now the internet has become a major channel of distributing health communication material

5

Traditional -----

- **Information and Referral**
 - Some organisations exist solely for the purpose of providing information on healthcare programmes
 - They direct interested individuals to appropriate services
 - Information may be provided in person, by telephone, by mail
 - These are the most straightforward communication techniques

6

Traditional -----

- **Public Relation**
 - It makes use of publicity and other non-paid forms of promotion and information
 - The purpose is to influence feelings, opinions or beliefs about the organisation and its services
 - Public relation may involve press releases, press conferences, distribution of feature stories
 - Other public-oriented activities include materials distributed to the media, public service announcements etc

7

Traditional -----

- **Formal Communication Functions**
 - Organisations usually have mechanisms to communicate with their internal and external public
 - Materials are developed for dissemination to public and employees
 - Print was the medium of choice for communication previously
 - Inspire of internet the print media still used extensively

8

Traditional -----

- **Community Outreach**
 - This may involve episodic activities like health fairs, or educational programmes for community residents
 - This function may also be delivered through some ongoing activities through outreach workers
 - These workers are visible in the community periodically
 - This activity demonstrates the organisation's commitment to the community
 - This is also a marketing activity and indirectly helps in getting customers

9

Traditional -----

- **Government Relations**
 - State regulates the activities of the healthcare organisations
 - Government sometimes grant the health organisation concessional land, concessional customs duty etc
 - The organisations need to demonstrate their continued commitment to the Government programmes, their micro insurance plans and so on
 - Organisations regularly submit various reports to government
 - Also for meaningful relation some personal contacts are als necessary

10

Traditional -----

- **Networking**
 - This involves developing and nurturing relationships with organisations and individuals
 - Mutually beneficial transactions are carried out with them
 - It may take many forms, such as:
 - Arranging activities that bring together various parties
 - Some form of networking is used to communicate to selected audiences
 - Most networking is informal in nature

11

Traditional -----

- **Sales Promotion**
 - This involves an activity or material that acts as a direct inducement to consumers
 - This offers added value to a product or incentives for resellers, salespersons or consumers
 - Sales promotions are more likely to be associated with consumer health products or business to business healthcare sales than with promotion of health services
 - This may involve:
 - Fairs and Tradeshow, exhibits, demonstration, contests and games, premium and gifts, rebates, low-interest financing
 - Sales promotion is typically associated with for-profit organisations

12

Traditional -----

- Advertising
 - This refers to any paid form of non-personal presentation and promotion of ideas, goods or services
 - The sponsor transmits them to mass media
 - The purpose is for achieving marketing objectives
 - Advertising mix may take many forms, such as:
 - Print advertising, electronic advertising, mailings, catalogues, brochures, outdoor ads and displays
 - Healthcare organisation may use innovative approach like use of helmets, stroke prevention, blood sugar monitoring and so on

13

Combination or Integrated Communication

- A one dimensional activity is insufficient to reach entire target population and produce intended result
- Successful health promotion rely on multidimensional interventions t
 - This is to reach diverse audience about complex health concerns
- Health communications are most effective when multiple channels are used
- It can also use repetition of messages
 - That will improve the likelihood for the audience to absorb the message

14

Contemporary Approaches to Health Communication

15

Factors Contributing to Emerging Techniques

- In the last two decades, many changes in healthcare has taken place
- This necessitated innovative approaches to communication techniques
- Some of these are:
 - Customer relationship management
 - Direct-to-consumer marketing, and
 - Other emerging techniques
- There is a shift from communication with the "masses" to one on communication with specific segment of the market

16

Factors Contributing to Emerging Techniques

- There is now a shift from image marketing to service marketing
- A number of factors contributed to changing character of healthcare communication
- There are factors that are pushing the field in a new direction
- There are others that are pulling it

17

Emerging Techniques

- Push Factors
 - The factors that have emerged are:
 - Consumerism
 - Consumer has now been "discovered"
 - They were earlier written off as a marketing target
 - A consumer movement in healthcare has emerged due to increasing income and increase in general awareness about healthcare
 - This resulted in stepped-up communication with the consumers
 - They constitute the market

18

Emerging Techniques

- **Growing market orientation**
 - By 1980's healthcare had become increasingly market driven
 - Healthcare providers needed to know what the patient liked and did not like about the services provided
 - Marketing people were required to identify the wants and need of market
 - They were also required to maintain a high level of patient satisfaction
 - The rise of consumerism and growing competition meant that that the market was now driving force for the healthcare services

19

Emerging Techniques

- **Health Disparities**
 - As in India, it is a problem even in the advanced countries like USA
 - Members of some ethnic groups, some minority, elderly and economically disadvantaged face disparities in receiving healthcare services
 - In spite of many measures by the Govt., the problem has not disappeared
 - Part of the lame lies on health communication
 - Gaps remain in many about the knowledge of healthcare in many subgroups and their ability to utilise the system

20

Emerging Techniques

- **The need for social marketing**
 - Public sector organizations have difficulty in getting their message to consumers
 - This is because
 - Lack of resources
 - Low priority
 - Lack of expertise
 - The concept of social marketing arose as public health agencies developed campaigns to inform the public about the dangers of:
 - Smoking and drinking
 - Unprotected sex
 - Formal marketing channel was utilised for disseminating information

21

Emerging Techniques

- **Information requirements**
 - Customers and general public wanted more and more information as the hospitals became complex and more and more services were being offered
 - Information and referral requirements called for more effective approaches to
 - Data management
 - Information dissemination
 - This led to development of more sophisticated technical solutions for generating, processing and dissemination of information

22

Emerging Techniques

- **Population-based Approach**
 - The traditional one-to-one approach to solve health problem failed to achieve the desired result of improving health status of population
 - This situation calls for population-based approach
 - This approach can access a large population
 - The communication methods for population-based approach needs to be different than one-to-one approach

23

Emerging Techniques

- **Pull Factors**
 - **Data Management capabilities**
 - **Development of telecommunication**
 - **Developments in marketing**
 - Marketing has become more sophisticated over the years
 - Many of these capabilities have been adopted by healthcare
 - Health communication can take advantage of these developments

24

The Reorientation of Communication

- Health communication shifted towards more sophisticated approach
- This was necessitated because of a number of developments
- These are as under:
 - **From Episode to Relationship**
 - Emphasis is on long term relationship
 - The relationship goes much beyond prevention
 - It even aims at development of health risk factors

25

The Reorientation of Communication

- **From Knowledge Transfer to Behaviour Change**
 - Communication in healthcare is moving from knowledge transfer to behaviour change
 - Information by itself may not overcome
 - Attitude
 - Perceptions
 - Lack of motivation, and
 - Other barriers to health-seeking behaviour
 - Effective communication must motivate individuals to change their behaviours
 - Also it provides support for overcoming barriers to effective management of health

26

The Reorientation of Communication

- **From Macro to Micro**
 - Health communication earlier adopted a mass marketing approach for dissemination of information
 - There was no variation based on community or population need
 - This approach became increasingly ineffective over time
 - Now, as in marketing, has moved to target marketing and then to micro-marketing
 - This was due to the need of reaching individual audiences
 - Micro-marketing is a form of target marketing

27

The Reorientation of Communication

- In this form, marketing programme is tailored to the needs and wants of narrower segments of population
- This segmentation is based on geography, demography, psychographic or benefit segments
- Customers are identified at the household or individual level
- This is done to promote goods and services directly to selected targets
- Micromarketing is most effective when consumers with a narrow range of attributes are to be reached
- This ability of "must customisation" approach has changed the nature of health communication

28

The Reorientation of Communication

- **From Individual Focus to Population Focus**
 - Apparently this approach appears to be in contrast with the previous one
 - Community-centered prevention shifts attention from the individual to group-level change
 - This also emphasizes the empowerment of individuals and communities to effect change at multiple levels
 - Communication focuses on community health problems rather than individual problem
 - It is however possible to mass customize messages
 - That way, both individual and community needs may be addressed

29

Emerging Communication Techniques

- The emerging approach has three common characteristics:
 - Use of digital technology
 - Adoption from other industries, and
 - Establishment of relationships
- Digital technology, including the internet, can
 - target audiences,
 - tailor messages, and
 - engage people in interactive ongoing exchanges about health

30

Emerging Communication Techniques

- For reaching people, health education also takes advantage of formal marketing techniques
 - Also the health communication professionals are taking advantages from lessons from other industries
- Relationship development builds a long term relationships through careful attention to customer needs and service delivery
- CRM is characterised by:
 - A focus on customer retention

31

Emerging Communication Techniques

- Orientation towards product benefits rather than product features
- A long term view of the relationship
- Maximum emphasis on customer commitment and contact
- Development of ongoing relationship
- Multiple employee / customer contacts
- An emphasis on key account relationship management, and
- An emphasis on trust
- Health communication techniques can be of two types:
 - Organisational approaches
 - Technology based approaches

32

Emerging Communication Techniques

- Organisational Approaches
 - Direct-to-Consumer Approaches
 - Healthcare industry is becoming more consumer driven
 - DTC marketing is gaining momentum
 - In this form, message can be customised to meet the needs of a small group of defined population
 - Internet has given the capability of implementing this form of marketing
 - Television and print media are also used
 - The need to target a large number of customers has seen enhanced interest in psychographics and other consumer profiling methodologies

33

Emerging Communication Techniques

- Business-to-Business Communication
 - Patient or other end users are the focus of health communication
 - Now because of corporatization of healthcare the healthcare organisations need to develop relationship with other corporate bodies
 - Most corporate healthcare organisation now have a more business like approach to healthcare delivery
 - This has contributed to the growth of B to B marketing
 - The B to B marketing involves building profitable, value-oriented relationship between two businesses and many individuals within them
 - Statistical tool, data mining techniques, and other research that work so well in the realm of consumer marketing can be adopted with fine tuning
 - Business customers are driven by different kind of impulses and respond to different type of appeal

34

Emerging Communication Techniques

- Technology-Based Approach
 - Telemarketing
 - This is a mechanism for directly communicating with the consumers
 - New technologies are now adopted for telemarketing
 - Some telemarketing involves "cold calls" where the customer did not have any previous contact with the caller
 - Telephone numbers that are called may be randomly generated and relate to areas that have the approximate characteristics of the target audience

35

Emerging Communication Techniques

- Database Marketing and CRM
 - This involves the establishment and exploitation of data on past and current customers together
 - Database marketing can be used for any purpose that can benefit from access to customer information
 - These functions involve:
 - Evaluating new prospects
 - Cross-selling related products
 - Launching new products to potential prospects
 - Identifying new distribution channels
 - Building customer loyalty

36

Emerging Communication Techniques

- **Interactive Health communication**
 - This is interaction of an individual with an electronic device or communication technology to access or transmit health information or to receive guidance on health related issues
 - It has several advantages
 - Improved access to personalised information
 - Access to health information, support and services on demand
 - Enhanced ability to distribute materials
 - Just-in-time expert decision support, and
 - More choices for consumers

37

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38

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39

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40

Thank you

41