



HEALTH CARE EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

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Planning Easy-to-Read Materials

If you fail to plan, you plan to fail

Step 1: Decide the purpose of the material:

- What is the purpose of the material?
- How will the information be used?
- Who needs to know the information & why?
- When will they need to know it?
- What do you expect your audience to know and do?

Step 2: Identify your audience(s) *(Goal is to learn how the audience thinks and feels about your topic or issue)*

- Will you segment the audience into a select group or whole population?
- Who is the primary target audience?
- Who is the secondary target audience?

- Describe what you know about your audience with regard to your topic:**
 - Demographic characteristics?
 - How do they think and feel about the topic?
 - What is their experience on the topic?
 - What are the current beliefs, attitudes, & behaviors with regard to the topic?
 - What's the level of interest and perceived risk of being affected?
 - What would your audience say are the potential benefits and barriers to the action(s) recommended?
 - What would audience like to know more about?

- How can you find out more about your audience?**

Step 3: Decide what is essential content

- Research the content to become well versed in the current information about the topic.
- Develop a mind map of the material's content (*see written information on how to do a mind map*)

□ **Organize and prioritize the content:**

- Compare the ideas on the mind map with what audience wants to know and might be willing to do

- What information on the mind map overlaps or shows differences with audience?

- Group together ideas on the mind map

- Identify “need to know” content and cross out ideas that don’t fit or are “nice to know”

- Create headings for major content areas

- Sequence the headings and develop key supporting points under each heading (*Consider the audience and use of the information*)

Step 4: Decide how to present the message and write a mock up
(*Goal is to design a cognitive and affective framework for the key message so it’s compelling*)

□ **Design the core message** (*Placed at the beginning*)

- Rethink focus of content from an action or behavioral change point of view

- Includes expected results based on audience beliefs / values

- Stress the benefits, address the barriers, and minimize risk and fear

- Present key facts to make message credible

- Blend what you want to tell with audience needs, wants, and readiness
- Consider emotional appeal. What's the appropriate tone? What's the image being created?

Write the core message:

- Reframe content headings from mind map exercise to blend what you want to say with audience point of view in words that make sense to them. Remember, these are the 3-5 key points that expand and support the core message (why, how, what to do, etc.)

Mind map Headers Reworded Headers New Sequence #

1.		1.
2.		2.
3.		3.
4.		4.
5.		5.

- Sequence new headers from perspective of how audience views topic and how they will use information
- Add small amounts of text to explain the key points
 - Write the text as if you are explaining the points to the audience and write it, as they would talk it
 - Use friendly, conversational tone with pronouns
 - Choose familiar words and phrases (try to keep words at 1-2 syllables)
 - Avoid abstract ideas and idioms
 - Avoid jargon and technical language
 - Avoid nouns made from verbs
 - Avoid long sentences (keep average length 15-20 words)
 - Use questions, lists, bullets, and numbered points to organize information
 - Use active instead of passive voice
 - Use examples to illustrate points
 - Use parallel construction

- Introduce only one piece of information per sentence
- Put subject and verb at beginning of sentence and in usual English order (S,V,O)
- Context precedes new information

Step 5: Plan design and layout

Consider how the material will be used when deciding on a format and design

- Who will need to be contacted early to help plan layout and design?
- Will the material stand-alone or be part of a larger information initiative?
- What will the final format look like? (pamphlet, one page fact sheet, poster, newsletter, booklet, palm card, magnet, etc.) Does the form fit the purpose / function?
- Where will you position the core message and key supporting points in the document?
- Choose font type and size that is clear and easy to read. Do not use all caps or italics
- Think visually! What kind of pictures will help the reader understand the text or even substitute for text?
- Consider length of the lines, justification of margins, and spacing
- What impact will marketing and distribution have on the size, shape, appearance, etc. of the material?
- What are the budget and priorities for spending? (design, printing, paper quality, color, marketing, distribution, etc.)

Step 6: Testing, revision, and print

Who will review and approve drafts during material development?

- ➡ Peers / other professionals (help with content):

- ➡ Managers / committees (final approval):

- ➡ Medical review:

- ➡ Legal review (protect organization):

- ➡ Marketing review:

- ➡ Target audience (field testing to provide essential feedback):