IECMHC Cog 4: Motivating Concerns

It is important to remember that people will respond to a new program, such as IECMHC, in their own unique way. For any audience, their place along the Stages of Change continuum; their knowledge, attitudes, and beliefs; and their stage within Diffusion of Innovation Theory operate in combination with one another. In sum, these factors all jointly contribute to an audience's motivating concerns —in other words, what motivates your audience to take action. Framing your communications around these motivating concerns will help guide you to an effective and meaningful message.

Take a moment to step back and take a bird's-eye view of your audience. At the end of the day, what makes them tick—and why should they care about what you have to say? Here are some touchpoints to consider when assessing the motivating concerns of your intended audience:

♦ Demographics

  o What are the demographics of your intended audience (e.g., age range, gender, ethnic/cultural backgrounds, etc.)?

♦ Language

  o What are the primary languages spoken among your intended audience?

  o What types of professional vocabulary will they best understand? For example, the social work field may have a field of terminology that resonates with them. Similarly, the language you use for medical personnel would be different from that used with law enforcement. If your audience is more general, however, you want to use language that will be more universally understood.

♦ Knowledge, attitudes and beliefs

  o What are the knowledge, attitudes and beliefs of your intended audience around the topic of infant and early childhood mental health?

♦ Readiness for behavior change

  o What is your intended audience's readiness for behavior change? Are they predominantly in the stage of pre-contemplation, contemplation, preparation, action, or maintenance?

♦ Diffusion of innovation

  o Which of the five groups in the Diffusion of Innovation Theory best describes your audience? Are they predominantly innovators, early adopters, early majority, late majority, or laggards?

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♦ Credible sources

   o What information sources does your intended audience see as credible?

A consideration of these questions above can lead to a fuller, more detailed understanding of what motivates your intended audience. That fuller understanding can go a long way in designing effective communications. That way, you'll be able to craft a meaningful message about IECMHC that really resonates—and sticks—with your community.

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