

Community Action Toolkit

A Guide to Planning, Promoting and Evaluating
HIV/AIDS Activities for Community-based Organizations



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Canadian HIV/AIDS Information Centre
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If you have any questions, please call us at 1-877-999-7740, or visit our web site at www.aidsida.cpha.ca.

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Canadian HIV/AIDS Awareness Week (CHAAW) and World AIDS Day (WAD) are not isolated events. They are milestones in our efforts to provide prevention messages about HIV and to provide good care and support to people living with HIV and AIDS (PHAs) in Canada.

From November 24th through December 1st, we have the opportunity to focus the public's attention and deepen their understanding of the work we do and why it is important.

Canadians need to know that HIV/AIDS is an ongoing crisis. CHAAW is one opportunity for Canadians to examine the health, social, political, legal and economic realities of HIV/AIDS. By involving the community in our awareness efforts and by reminding the public that HIV/AIDS is a real and complex issue in Canada, we will encourage new and better HIV/AIDS prevention programs and promote understanding and support for those who are infected with or affected by HIV/AIDS.

Campaign Theme

“Stigma and Discrimination”, the theme of the 2003 Canadian HIV/AIDS Social Marketing Campaign (SMC 2003), reinforces the work of the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) through its 2003-2004 World AIDS Campaign. Like HIV/AIDS, stigma and discrimination are universal, meaning every person living with HIV and AIDS – as well as their family, friends and health care providers – may have to deal with the destructive nature of stigma and discrimination. Two decades into the epidemic, we know that stigma and discrimination are the greatest barriers to:

- ⌘ preventing further infections
- ⌘ providing adequate care, support and treatment, and
- ⌘ easing the impacts of HIV/AIDS.

What are Stigma and Stigmatization?

Stigma is applied to a feature or characteristic of a person or a group of people (for instance, someone’s skin colour, speech, behaviour, ethnic origin) in order to discredit, devalue or reject the individual or the group.

Stigmatization means focusing on a trait or behaviour of someone else and judging that trait or behaviour as bad, wrong or of no value. Stigmatization is harmful. It often makes people feel shamed, deviant, discredited or penalized.

What is Discrimination?

Discrimination follows stigmatization. When a stigma is applied to an individual or a group, the individuals are then treated differently and unfairly. In other words, some people discriminate against people living with HIV/AIDS by saying, “They got AIDS because of who they are, and they deserve it.” Discrimination causes the loss of jobs, partners, homes, medical coverage, insurance and other basic life needs.

HIV/AIDS-related stigma and discrimination lead to the violation of **human rights**, and hinder our ability to:

- ⌘ prevent new infections
- ⌘ provide good care, support and treatment, and
- ⌘ lessen the associated burdens of living with HIV/AIDS.

Freedom from discrimination is a fundamental human right. The theme of SMC 2003 reminds us of our rights and responsibilities as members of the human community.

AIDS attacks the body; prejudice attacks the spirit. One is caused by a virus; one is caused by ignorance. Both can kill.

- New Zealand AIDS Foundation

Planning Your Campaign

Here are basic guidelines that will help you make your HIV prevention and/or AIDS awareness campaign(s) a success. These planning, coordinating and evaluating tips will help carry your message(s) throughout the year and assist you to improve and enhance your events for future campaigns.

Getting Started...

- ❑ Bring your staff and volunteers together for a planning day or series of meetings to:
- ❑ **ESTABLISH** a planning committee that will brainstorm, assign tasks, monitor progress, trouble-shoot, participate in and evaluate activities and products;
- ❑ **IDENTIFY** your partners – those individuals and organizations that would be interested in planning with you (e.g., your health department, other advocacy groups, schools, churches, businesses, community leaders, politicians, clinics, youth groups, libraries, civic organizations, government departments);
- ❑ **DEFINE WHAT** you want to provide to your community during your campaign and throughout the year (these are your GOALS);
- ❑ **DEFINE WHO** you want to reach (these are your AUDIENCES);
- ❑ **CHOOSE** activities/events/products to meet your goals and target your audiences;
- ❑ **DEFINE** the **OBJECTIVES** and **MESSAGES** for each activity/event/product;
- ❑ **CHOOSE** the means to evaluate each activity/event/product against your defined objectives and overall goals (*Hint: How will you know that you have succeeded?*);
- ❑ **ASSIGN** a spokesperson and support/train that individual;
- ❑ **INCLUDE** the media to better promote your messages through print (newspapers, magazines), and broadcast (television and radio);
- ❑ **CREATE A WORKPLAN** to set timelines for every step in developing, running and evaluating each activity/event/product, and to assign tasks and responsibilities among staff and volunteers;
- ❑ **ESTABLISH A BUDGET** and the means to monitor it throughout the project (*Hint: Make sure someone is assigned to keep “the books” up to date with all revenue and expenses. Have regular budget reports throughout your planning and delivery phases. This will make it easier to do your accounting at the campaign’s end.*);
- ❑ **OBTAIN RESOURCES** that will include the people power as well as the necessary funds to run your campaign; and
- ❑ **EVALUATE** your activities during the planning, delivery and post-campaign phases.

Key Messages

- ✘ HIV/AIDS continues to pose a serious health threat to Canadians. But because HIV/AIDS is not getting the media attention it received during the 1980s and early 1990s, the public has a false impression that the crisis is over.
- ✘ Health Canada reports that as many as 50,000 Canadians are living with HIV/AIDS, of which nearly one-third (about 15,000 individuals) do not know they have HIV. Worldwide, UNAIDS reports that at the end of 2001, 40 million people were living with HIV/AIDS, and 14 million children were orphaned as a result of HIV/AIDS.
- ✘ Use this year's theme of stigma and discrimination to highlight how people can respond to the ongoing crisis of HIV/AIDS. Tailor your key messages to reflect what you want people in your community to take away with them after your event or after reading or seeing one of your products.

Some stigma and discrimination messages you can use include:

- ✘ **COMMUNICATION AND EDUCATION:** Increase the general public's understanding and awareness of HIV/AIDS.
- ✘ **ACTION AND INTERVENTION:** Increase commitment from local leaders, politicians and government to prevent and cure HIV/AIDS. Mobilize new groups and individuals to help in your efforts to address HIV/AIDS issues.
- ✘ **LEGAL CHALLENGE:** Balance unequal power relations, social inequality and exclusion of those living with and affected by HIV/AIDS.

When designing your messages, consider the following formats and approaches to engage the public about HIV/AIDS-related stigma and discrimination:

- ✘ **The "problem" approach:** State the extent and effects of stigma and discrimination.
- ✘ **Success stories format:** Showcase what has been done to correct or address stigma and discrimination.
- ✘ **Human interest stories:** Profile the real people behind the stigma and discrimination news stories.
- ✘ **Change:** Focus on what's different today about stigma and discrimination compared to the past.
- ✘ **Conflict:** Make clear the differences of opinion between groups and individuals involved in or affected by stigma and discrimination.
- ✘ **"Firsts":** Highlight stigma- and discrimination-related events or situations that have never happened before.
- ✘ **Local angle:** Engage people by telling them about local events and stories around them that have a stigma and discrimination angle.

Activity and Event Ideas

You don't have to reinvent the wheel! Lots of great ideas and materials for campaign events already exist. Stay focused on the theme and your goals and objectives, plan early, and contact the Canadian HIV/AIDS Information Centre to discover other campaign activities and products.

Here are some ideas to get you thinking:

- ✘ **Information tables, displays and open houses** in cafeterias, lounges, classrooms, conference centres, malls, churches, schools, parks, health centres, recreation centres, daycare centres, libraries, college and university pubs and dorms, and hospitals.
- ✘ Run an "HIV/AIDS in Our World" event by partnering with multi-cultural agencies and organizations working in the developing world. Offer open houses in their various offices. Focus on concrete stories of stigma and discrimination that occur locally and invite the media to attend.
- ✘ Develop interfaith services and candlelight prayer vigils to support people living with HIV/AIDS around the world. Partner with the various faith organizations to advertise the event in their communications with parishioners.
- ✘ Organize a Canadian HIV/AIDS Awareness Week brunch or wine and cheese cocktail at City Hall. Invite and interview local politicians about their views for your own press release. Invite the media to cover the story.
- ✘ **In-school education, community panel discussions, workshops, discussion groups** involving HIV-positive individuals as speakers, organizers, moderators.
 - ✘ Set up a moderated discussion group entitled "Life in the Age of AIDS: The Stigma and Discrimination". Try to book a local human rights specialist (lawyer) or therapist to discuss the effects and impacts of stigma and discrimination. Approach the media about covering the event.
 - ✘ Invite a local AIDS organization to set up on campuses during the campaign to pass out information to students.
- ✘ **Games and contests**
 - ✘ In addition to a Poster Contest, run a Button Contest, Rap Song or Comic Strip Contest. These are smaller mediums and can be more popular with youth. Approach your local media outlets for coverage about the lead-up to the contest and the winner(s).
 - ✘ Organize a "Celebrity Sports Game", calling on your local radio and TV announcers, politicians and high-profile business people to participate. Approach the media with photo opportunities of the event.

Music and the arts

-  Local playwrights and dramatic arts groups can write and perform short vignettes on stigma and discrimination. Invite your local media/entertainment critic to attend.
-  Film or video festivals with discussion groups.
-  Invite or commission a local artist or sculptor to create a work using condoms. Clothing designers can also be invited to design and produce condom clothes and accessories. Invite your local media fine art or fashion columnist to host an award ceremony.
-  Organize an AIDS memorial quilt display and vigil based on the stigma and discrimination theme.
-  Get local clubs and discos to give a dollar off the cover/admission charge for customers who show up wearing AIDS Red Ribbons, which you have distributed around the community in advance.

Advocacy events

-  Bring attention to a law or policy that infringes on the rights of people living with HIV/AIDS, or other high-risk populations such as:
 -  gays, lesbians and bisexuals
 -  women
 -  Aboriginal peoples
 -  members of an ethnocultural minority or
 -  injection drug users.
-  Write to MPPs and MPs asking them to mention your campaign in the legislature.
-  Meet local, regional and provincial leaders one on one to discuss HIV/AIDS-related stigma and discrimination issues.

Fundraising

-  Set up AIDS Walks/Runs as well as Red Ribbon campaigns and AIDS Dance-a-thons in local bars, college and university pubs, high schools, shopping malls, and pharmacies.
-  Organize a volunteer recognition day and fundraiser. Make it a thank-you and benefit celebration for your organization's workers. Get a local business to sponsor and donate the award gifts.

Getting Attention

Advertising can contribute to your campaign events and activities, but it can't do the whole job of promoting your events. Advertising should be part of a larger **communications plan** to build interest within your community before and during your campaign.

Here are some guidelines for a communications plan:

- ❑ **Start early** on your communications strategy, at least at the same time as you develop specific activities/events/products. Consider a mix of mass media vehicles (e.g., print, TV and radio) and interpersonal communications techniques (e.g., training programs, shopping mall kiosks, classroom seminars/talks, workplace presentations) for your campaign.
- ❑ Refer to your campaign work plan to **identify goals, objectives and audiences** for each activity, together with **timelines and resources** needed. These will assist you in determining how and where you want to advertise and seek media coverage.
- ❑ **Network and partner** with others in your community on your planned events, resources, timelines and audiences.
- ❑ Choose a **spokesperson**. Ensure that he/she is available and prepared. Remember media deadlines are tight. When delivering a message about a specific group, consider choosing a person from that group.
- ❑ Develop a local and **relevant “angle” or “hook”** before you pitch your idea for coverage to the media – Is your story fresh, new, important? Focus on the human story behind the facts and figures.
- ❑ Make your events **visual**; think about good photo opportunities with local celebrities, politicians, and business leaders.
- ❑ Prepare **media handouts** – news releases, backgrounders, factsheets and speaker profiles. Take a look at the other SMC 2003 resources available online at <http://www.aidsida.cpha.ca>
- ❑ **Advertise** in your local media and other communication vehicles (like school newspapers, pharmacy flyers, service organizations' newsletters).
- ❑ **Contact** and invite local print and broadcast media in advance of your campaign and in advance of each activity/event.

Your Spokesperson

It is essential to an effective communications plan that you choose a spokesperson who can comfortably and consistently work with print and broadcast media representatives.

Your spokesperson will:

- ✘ take the lead on delivering your key messages,
- ✘ ensure your messages are consistent, and
- ✘ remain your “one point of contact” for the media before, during and after the campaign.

You may also need to identify other individuals to act as subject specialists or area experts on legal, economic or technical aspects of your message or your work.

Your spokesperson can be chosen from your among your staff, your advisory committee or board of directors, or among your volunteers. The individual should have an interest and skill in public speaking and community relations. You may wish to choose an individual from within your organization or your community who is well known and respected, and can bring positive attention to stigma and discrimination issues related to HIV/AIDS. A human rights lawyer and a celebrity committed to HIV/AIDS issues are two good choices for consideration, given this year’s theme.

If you’ve got it, flaunt it...

...and educate the public about HIV/AIDS at the same time!

Keep in mind that CHAAW and World AIDS Day are media events.

Seize the opportunity and turn your community’s attention to:

- ✘ the good work of your organization,
- ✘ your local HIV/AIDS situation, and
- ✘ what individuals can do to prevent HIV/AIDS and HIV/AIDS-related stigma and discrimination.

The Media

A key component of public relations is **media relations**. You need to make your news events and stories work for the people who have to package them for print (e.g., newspapers and news magazines) and broadcast (e.g., TV and radio) media. Good media relations will help you create or increase your organization’s profile, and will raise awareness of your message, issue or point of view.

Start by thinking of the various products you could produce to convey your messages and information to the media. For instance, your organization could produce:

- ✂ news articles
- ✂ community cable shows
- ✂ op-eds
- ✂ feature stories
- ✂ news releases
- ✂ backgrounders
- ✂ speaking notes
- ✂ community notices
- ✂ news conferences
- ✂ quotes and sound bites
- ✂ photo captions
- ✂ radio talk show scripts
- ✂ media kits
- ✂ TV interview notes
- ✂ media advisories
- ✂ radio interviews
- ✂ PSAs
- ✂ letters to the editor

Check out the web site for the Canadian HIV/AIDS Information Centre (<http://www.aidssida.cpha.ca>) for resources like these than you can adapt to use in your community.

Public service announcements (PSAs) work well and are easier to produce for radio than television. To get a public service announcement on broadcast media, call the stations first to get their requirements. Keep in mind the reading time of your PSA:

- 10 seconds = 25 words
- 20 seconds = 40 words
- 30 seconds = 80 words

There are lots of useful **media guides** that can give you more details on making the news, producing a news release, holding a news conference, interview techniques, challenging the opposition and feature writing. Take a look at the Reference section of this Toolkit for more information.

Transform statistics into hard-hitting messages and stories

Use local or regional statistics to develop a list of key messages and stories. The stories should call attention to the issue, point out successes, identify the gaps in what remains to be done, and set out next steps. For instance, 15,000 Canadians do not know they are HIV positive. The implication is that they are at grave risk of severe illness, and they may be putting others at risk as well. Could this be due to the fear of being stigmatized? Stigmatization has a very real impact on individuals, just like HIV.

Did you get media coverage?

You will want to evaluate the success of the media component of your campaign as the events occur. To do so, begin by designating someone to keep a media log of all coverage in print and broadcast vehicles. Here are some points to consider capturing in your media log:

DATE: When did the coverage appear?

OUTLET: What station, newspaper, news magazine, TV station covered your event?

REPORTER: Who covered the story and for which media outlet?

FORMAT/MEDIUM: Was the coverage a front-page cover story or an eight-second reference on the late evening news?

CONTENT: Were the facts mentioned and were they correct?

CONTEXT: Did your issue get addressed in the way that met your goals?

TONE: Did the reporter use positive or negative words when referring to your organization?

MEDIA speak... tips for interviews

- ⌘ Be prepared – for the worst possible questions with the best possible answers.
- ⌘ Be yourself – be comfortable, confident, keep cool.
- ⌘ Be honest – admit if you don't know the answer.
- ⌘ Be brief – get to the point.
- ⌘ Use humour when appropriate.
- ⌘ Be personal – use your own stories to be compelling.
- ⌘ Be positive – don't whine or ramble.
- ⌘ Be consistent – know the details of your message well.
- ⌘ Listen carefully, take your time and maintain eye contact with the journalist or interviewer.
- ⌘ Show energy and remain alert.
- ⌘ Thank the journalist, host or interviewer for the opportunity.

More tips for radio and TV:

- ⌘ Ask what the first question will be, to prepare yourself.
- ⌘ Show expression on your face or smile – it will warm your tone.
- ⌘ Talk in quick direct sentences ("sound bites"). Prepare one or two good sound bites.
- ⌘ Give brief answers of 5 to 20 seconds.
- ⌘ Repeat your message in different ways as much as you can to ensure it makes the edited version.
- ⌘ Use visual aids if allowed (posters, large charts).

Evaluating Your Campaign

Finding out how well you did and why, are key elements of a successful campaign. Make sure to include your evaluation strategy at the start of your campaign planning. And then follow these guidelines:

Monitor the campaign as it happens

- ❑ Take minutes at all planning meetings.
- ❑ Take photos, slides or videos of all phases of your campaign events and build a scrap book of the event.
- ❑ Prepare a budget per event and keep all related receipts. Enter expenditures into a spreadsheet to tabulate what the event actually cost against what you had budgeted.
- ❑ For each event, count how many people and how many media representatives attended and note their media outlets (e.g., newspaper, TV station).

Measure your results

- ❑ Measure the outcomes of your event against your objectives. For instance, let's say you want to raise awareness among educators in your community during the campaign. Therefore, you'll want to find out: 1) what participants know before they attend your event and, 2) what they know after your event. Don't forget to capture the basic information as well: how many education-based events you ran, how many people attended, where they were from (e.g., media, students, health care workers).
- ❑ Use a survey to do pre- and post-event assessments of your participants' knowledge and awareness of the subject your event addresses, or use questionnaires and feedback forms to get information about your event from participants.
- ❑ Interview a sample of participants at each of your events.

Follow through at campaign's end

- ❑ Make sure you have a debriefing session with all of your planners and volunteers immediately after the campaign and take minutes. Capture what worked well, what did not work and why, and what was missing.
- ❑ Choose a few funding sources to approach for your next campaign. Find out what information they will require you to have to apply for funds for next year.
- ❑ Make sure to keep copies of your evaluation summary for next year.

To evaluate an activity or event, review your work plan to get an idea of how many and what steps were involved in creating the event. Here are some questions to consider from the beginning of the process through to the event itself:

- Are we on schedule?
- Have invitations gone out in time?
- Are guest speakers/musicians/facilitators confirmed?
- Are we on or under budget? (If we are over budget, what can we do next year to make sure we remain on budget?)
- Which businesses, organizations, individuals have been particularly helpful?
- Are volunteers made to feel helpful?
- What challenges have surfaced?
- How many people attended, and from where?
- What did they know before the event, what did they know after the event?
- What worked well?
- Did we get media coverage? If yes, was the coverage accurate, low or high profile, who was quoted, what was the tone? If not, why not?

Finally, **learn from your successes** as the week unfolds, and build for next year. Review the evaluation with your planning committee to understand what was accomplished, what needs immediate follow-up and what lessons can be learned.

Plan a **“thank-you” event** (e.g., party or social outing) to celebrate and build on your successes. This event can foster future collaborations too.

Remember to distribute your evaluation information quickly and widely among the planning committee, your staff and volunteers, and any partners – it will be very useful for future events. And, it’s never too early to plan for next year!

Resources

Contact the Canadian HIV/AIDS Information Centre for more campaign information and products that will help you have a successful campaign.

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References

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We thank:

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