Social Marketing for Systems of Care Communities

New York State Success Systems of Care Expansion Grant

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This resource is designed to build the capacity of change agents in Systems of Care communities to increase their reach to New York State families and children in need and positively impact their lives. It suggests ways in which individuals and organizations can use social marketing to raise awareness about programs, organizations and events aimed at improving lives. This tool is an introduction to social marketing information, materials, resources, and guidance on effective social marketing efforts.

INTRODUCTION TO SOCIAL MARKETING

“Social Marketing is the systematic application of marketing along with other concepts and techniques to achieve specific behavioral goals for a social good, which involves defining barriers to a behavior in order to effect change.” (Philip Kolter, Social Marketing: Influencing Behaviors for Good)

Marketing once belonged only to the retail world and was not seen as a benefit to nonprofit, health, or social service organizations. In 1951, social marketing began as a way for marketers to “sell” change for society’s benefit. The goal is to create positive behavior change over the long-term using messaging backed by a program, not just one or the other. Whether you are asking people to buckle their seatbelt, quit smoking, or recycle, you are asking them to change their behavior.

While social marketing is relatively new to the health field, it creates a framework where your organization can positively impact individuals and society. Alan R. Andreasen, Executive Director of Georgetown University’s Social Marketing Institute, describes it as the application of commercial marketing principles and techniques to the “selling” of ideas, attitudes, and behaviors that benefit the audience and society as a whole. Social Marketing is an approach that integrates various elements to inform and influence behaviors that benefit communities, while using marketing concepts for communication of a social message. Today, as the science of marketing has evolved, social marketing has come to play an
important role in health and social service efforts. It is an organized effort to develop a framework that will influence behavior.

Social marketing can offer tools and techniques that Systems of Care communities can use to help improve engagement in their communities. If the appropriate steps are followed, social marketing can be a useful tool for Systems of Care counties to create healthier communities. Social marketing can be summed up in one key point – commercial marketing tries to change people’s behavior for the benefit of the marketer; social marketing tries to change people’s behavior for the benefit of the consumer, or society as a whole.

One example of a successful large-scale social marketing campaign is Click it or Ticket, this national campaign was launched in 1993 to increase seatbelt usage among adults and children. Click it or Ticket, is an effort that combines program and message to increase seatbelt use and driver safety.

The program component was the involvement of law enforcement ('Ticket'). The messaging included community outreach and a marketing campaign. The campaign’s success is contributed to combining periodic waves of increased law enforcement of seat belt and child passenger safety laws (program) along with public messaging to highlight the efforts of police and benefits to individuals (message).

When the program was evaluated, it showed impressive results when both messaging and a program were combined into a single strategy. During the campaign, adult seatbelt use increasing from 61% when the campaign began in 1993 to 79% in 2003. In this same time period, child restraint use rose from 85% to 99%. As further support for the effectiveness of the campaign, when the messaging was stopped but enforcement continued, seatbelt use declined. Once the communication piece was reinstated, compliance once again increased.

An example of a successful local social marketing campaign highlighted by SAMHSA’s 2016 ECCO (Excellence in Community Communication and Outreach) Awards is work done by Madison School District. Their campaign, Madison Cares, is a suicide
prevention and awareness campaign that included a newspaper series, town hall meeting, and concert aimed at parents and caregivers. The campaign educated the community about signs that someone may be at risk of suicide and how to connect with both local and national resources. They used existing programs, then created events and messaging to raise awareness with adults who interact with children on a daily basis. Check out all the details at http://www.mymadisoncares.com/

**Given the limited time, funds, and capacity of organizations and individuals involved with Systems of Care – What makes social marketing worth your time, effort and money?**

Many health and social causes have successfully used social marketing to raise awareness and produce behavior change. Social marketing techniques have been used effectively in the fields of alcohol and other drug prevention, disease prevention, and energy conservation. With social marketing you are able to reach your target audience (those you want to impact most), create custom messages that will resonate with your target audience, which will enable your organization to produce positive behavior change for those that need it most.

Bottom line: social marketing can work to create the behavior change you want to see in your Systems of Care community... now, let's get started.
KEY PARTS OF SOCIAL MARKETING

Social marketing draws on the use of marketing principles to influence human behavior in order to improve health or benefit society. Social marketers “package” the behavior they want to “sell” so that it resonates with those they want to impact. You do NOT have to have a marketing degree or hire a marketing expert to run a successful social marketing campaign.

When planning a social media campaign, organizations plan their efforts much the same as retail marketers. In the planning phase, organizations need to:

Step #1: Identify your purpose and goals (and how you’ll know if you got there)

What are you trying to accomplish? What is the behavior change you seek? The identification of a purpose and specific call to action for the people you are trying to reach will create an impact. Consider, is your purpose to:

- raise awareness of your organization in the community?
- educate the public about your cause?
- register participants for a program or event?
- recruit volunteers?
- solicit donations to support your work?
- get the public to support legislation for your cause?

Now, set the goal(s) for the social marketing campaign and decide how impact will be measured. By establishing your evaluation methods early on, it will help inform the process, collect the necessary data, and include the right people on the campaign.

As SAMHSA states, “establishing a direct correlation between the campaign and any observed outcomes may be difficult because a communications campaign does not exist in a vacuum. However, it’s possible to evaluate broader, population-level changes in behavior and compare them to a baseline before the marketing campaign began.” One example, when conducting a social marketing campaign would be how many people are registered for a program before and after a campaign.
Step #2: Identify and analyze the target audience

The core of social marketing - Know your audience! The success of social marketing depends on your understanding of the individuals or groups you want to inform and impact. Throughout the process, the decision-making and identification of barriers to the behavior change you are seeking should all be considered through their lens.

The first step is determining who you wish to reach and what you are telling them to do – once this is solidified, your message and how it will be communicated can be designed to have the largest impact. While the initial feeling around target audiences is the inclination to include as many people or groups as possible to amplify your impact, this is actually counter-productive. When you attempt to speak to everyone with a single message, your organization is not really speaking directly to anyone. The more specific you can be about who you are speaking to, the better the outcome.

Ask: Who needs to choose us so we can meet our goal?

You cannot be all things to all people, so discuss who must choose you for the organization to achieve its mission and the desired behavior change.

Questions to consider when identifying your target audience:

1. **What is the desired action of your target audience?** What do you want people to do?
2. **What demographic groups are most likely to take the desired action?** Indicators you may consider are age, gender, location, marital status, education level, income level, health, and occupation.
3. **How do they think?** What are their collective personality types, values, attitudes, interests, lifestyle, and behaviors?
4. **What needs, challenges, and frustrations do they have?** What are their barriers to behavior change?
5. **How does your idea, service, or product help your target audience?** What problem does it solve?
6. **What drives them to make a decision?** What influences them to take that final step? What obstacles might be in their way?
7. **What media do they currently use and trust?** How can you best reach your target audience with information and message? Where are they most likely to see the message during their daily lives? How can you best reach your target audience?

*Reminder: Your target audience for who you serve, and who you need to communicate with may be different.*

One note on choosing your target audience, while your first inclination will be to make those you directly serve your target population, at times, it is appropriate for your target audience to be those that interact with the population you are looking to impact. When influencing a population, you may need to inform those they interact with to create the desired change. For example, when making a behavior change with children and teens, you may need to engage those they interact with daily to accomplish your goal - teachers, faith community, coaches, or community leaders, to name a few.

In Penn Yan, New York there was a need to help children in the poor and underserved population of Yates County. Millie’s Pantry purchases, packs, and distributes food to children to eat over the weekend when they are not fed at school. The Weekend Back Pack Program target audience for who they serve is children, but their target audience for messaging is those they need to achieve their mission – concerned citizens. The citizens are who are able to donate, volunteer, and spread the word will continue to make the program viable.

**Step #3: Benefits and Barriers**

*“The exchange principle asserts that in order for people to voluntarily give something up or try something new, they must benefit in some way” – SAMHSA.gov*

Often in Systems of Care communities, organizations offer programs or services that individuals need. But, this is not the way to get people to change behavior – you need to ask, “What do they want?” to achieve the desired results. You want to offer an exchange to your target audience that maximizes the benefits to adopt the behavior change and minimizes any barrier that could create excuses and avoidance.
The barriers are factors that discourage people from taking action, which in the Systems of Care communities could include transportation, discomfort, embarrassment, or uncertainty for how to access the health care system. The message must be compelling enough for your target audience to overcome barriers. To help aid your discussion about barriers, here is a template from SAMHSA. (https://www.samhsa.gov/capt/sites/default/files/resources/session-2-anticipating-barriers.pdf)

**Step #4: Set Message**

“This is a critical step. When creating a message, be very clear about the behavior you want to elicit. Do you want the audience to make a telephone call? Send for information? Stop doing something—like smoking—or start doing something—like talking to their children about alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs? People who see or hear the message must be clear about what is expected of them”. – SAMHSA.gov

Creating the right message is critical to the success of social marketing. The first step in creating a message is asking the questions:

- What do you want to say?
- Who is the message directed at?
- What do you want them to do?
- What do they get when their behavior changes?

Any information that you have learned about your target audience in this process should be applied to create a message that addresses their current state, barriers, understanding, and call to action (what you are asking them to do). The message should focus on the positive by telling the audience what to do, instead of what not to do.

An example from SAMHSA, the message “Use a designated driver” offers people concrete information for how to get home safely, whereas “Don’t Drink and Drive” simply tells people what not to do.

When developing a message, you need to consider language, tone and style. Language not only refers to the actual language spoken by your target audience, but also the culture and age of the group.
For example, a campaign aimed at youth will be written very differently, with youth-centered language, than one aimed at adults.

Tone is less precise, but is very important in a social marketing campaign. When deciding on the tone of your message, consider how you would like your target audience to react. For example, one question to ask is, do you want the message to inform, be humorous, or sadden?

Lastly, consider who the message is coming from and discuss if it resonates with the target audience. Will the message be better received from someone who is perceived as an expert, peer, or trusted individual?

**Step #5: Test and Modify**

Once you have a message, now test it! Engage the “experts” – ask your target audience.

The development of the message is not complete until you have received feedback from your target audiences. This step in the process will be crucial to the success of your work. Feedback from the populations served through Systems of Care is often collected using focus groups or surveys with participants that represent the target audience. Groups should be presented with several options – their reactions and suggestions should be used to rework the message prior to launch. SAMHSA suggests that the message should be tested for “comprehension, attention, and recall; strong and weak points; personal relevance to the target audience; and sensitivity to cultural and/or audience-specific characteristics.”

This is a way to engage partners who work with your target population – ask them to form focus groups or hand out surveys to individuals visiting their location or attending events. Use the information collected to modify your message or how it will be circulated.

In Systems of Care communities, focus groups are often used to obtain information from children and families. Do it the right way and avoid these common mistakes.
Step #6: Get your Message Out

Once you have a message, it is important to carefully consider your channels of communication – you want your message communicated in the right format, on the right channel, at the right time to be as effective as possible.

Ask: What channels are most relevant to your target audience in their daily lives? How does your audience receive information? What sources do they find credible? What is the best channel in which to engage them?

Choose those channels that will have the most impact for your energy and funds. Examples of successful social marketing channels include:

- Posters, flyers, and brochures with contact information placed at locations where your target audience frequents (ex. Health care facilities, schools, libraries)
- Newsletters (decide whether an online or paper format is best for your target audience)
- Social media (select platforms your target audience uses daily – unsure? Check out this article: https://sproutsocial.com/insights/new-social-media-demographics/)
- Your organization’s website
- Letters to the Editor in local papers
- News stories (check local news and radio channels for ‘spotlight’ interviews)
- Press conferences (consider this for a program launch or major event)
- Events with a national following (i.e. Mental Health Awareness Day/Month, Take back the Night, Great American Smoke)
- Promotional giveaway items (ex. T-shirts, USB drives, lanyards)
- Public demonstrations (to bring awareness for needed systems or legislative change)
- Public Service Announcements on Radio and TV
- Movie night (movie viewing that highlights a cause with panel discussion)
- Billboards and transit ads

“The process of heightening awareness, shifting attitudes, and strengthening knowledge is valuable if, and only if, it leads to action. Be clear in what you want your audience to do.”

Link
The most effective methods of dissemination information are often a combination of efforts. For example, radio ads combined with a social media presence and community event will create a larger impact than just one method alone.

10 strategic questions you can use to help work toward an initial social marketing plan

1. What is the social [or health] problem I want to address?
2. What actions do I believe will best address that problem?
3. Who is being asked to take that action? (Audience)
4. What does the audience want in exchange for adopting this new behavior?
5. Why will the audience believe that anything we offer is real and true?
6. What is the competition offering? Are we offering something the audience wants more?
7. What is the best time and place to reach members of our audience so that they are the most disposed to receiving the intervention?
8. How often, and from whom, does the intervention need to be received if it is to work?
9. How can I integrate a variety of interventions to act, over time, in a coordinated manner, to influence the behavior?
10. Do I have the resources to carry out this strategy alone; and if not, where can I find useful partners?

Step #7: Evaluation

“Establishing a direct correlation between the campaign and any observed outcomes may be difficult because a communications campaign does not exist in a vacuum. However, it’s possible to evaluate broader, population-level changes in behavior and compare them to a baseline before the marketing campaign began.” — SAMHSA.org

Evaluation is often overlooked by busy organizations who want to focus their energies on the people they serve ... not data. Resist the urge to skip this step! It is the most important to your continued success.
Why evaluate?

- It improves the campaign’s credibility for your target audience and funders
- To determine if a project is making progress and has been implemented as planned
- Celebrate what went (or is going) well
- Learn from mistakes or campaigns that underperformed
- Use tracking information to make needed mid-course revisions and identify new problems that require re-planning
- To determine if all of the chosen communication channels are productive, or necessary
- Consider ethical implications of a campaign

The evaluation of social marketing campaigns does not have one single evaluation method. You will evaluate the success of your campaign against the purpose and goals established early in the planning process. Depending on your goal, some social marketing evaluation measures for organizations and programs in Systems of Care may include: program enrollment, event participation, or social media engagement in an effort to raise awareness about children’s mental health care. While there are many data collection methods, most social marketing campaigns benefit from the information collected in focus groups, interviews, and surveys that engage your target audience.

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**Not sure where to get started? Make a plan!**

*New York State Success has a Program Evaluation Basics toolkit with specifics examples and best practice in the most used methods of data collection.*

*The Community Toolbox and SAMHSA websites include sample plans, checklists, examples, resources and tools to walk you through any evaluation.*
Social Marketing for System of Care Communities

Social Media

Social marketing is not the same as social media – but, social media is an effective tool for Systems of Care Communities in your social marketing campaign. In the last several years, the use of social media tools to disseminate important information has grown significantly. Using social media tools has become a cost-effective way for both local and national organizations alike to expand reach, foster engagement, and increase access to information.

Contrary to popular opinion, a social media presence, when done correctly, requires an investment of time, resources, and brainpower to influence your target audience and make progress toward the desired behavior change. When working in Systems of Care, you know that those are the investments that are always stretched the most.

So, why bother with it at all?

- The benefits of social media marketing for Systems of Care communities include:
- Many people will check social media daily, but not websites
- Increase the timely distribution of information
- Leverage audience networks to facilitate information sharing
- Expand “reach” – a broader, more diverse audience will see your information
- Facilitate interactive communication, connection, and public engagement
- Empower people to take action
- It’s FREE!

Best Practices

The 80/20 Rule is a long-standing rule of social media marketing. It states that 80% of your social media posts should inform, educate, inspire, and entertain your audience, while only 20% should directly promote your organization, programs, and events.

Audiences are engaged when provided with interesting content – they react to posts and share them with followers. When planning content, think of the 80% as “gifts” to your followers that provide practical information related to your field, self care tips, news, legislative changes that may impact your target audience, pose
questions, and interesting data. In the 80%, you can also promote your partner organizations by sharing their posts, program information, and accomplishments. This practice gives your organization the opportunity to establish itself as an expert in the field through knowledge shared with your followers.

The remaining 20% is all yours. It should inform your followers about your work, organization, and calls to action. Included in this percentage is your chance to share your programs, services, and events... and tell your followers how great you are.

**Quality over quantity!** Master one platform before you add others. While Facebook is certainly the biggest and most popular channel, there may be other great fits for your target audience. Other major platforms to consider include Twitter, LinkedIn, Instagram, YouTube, and Snapchat. All major social media platforms are becoming increasingly more visual; therefore, plan to capture pictures and video whenever and wherever possible.

We need to know A LOT about whom we are trying to target. The lie we often tell ourselves is that our target audience is too busy to be engaged. But, the reality is that when people are not engaging on social media, it means what you are providing is not of value to them. The essential question we need to ask before posting is “will it add value to their lives?” The goal is to add value, not just promote - that means understanding preferences in channels, media types, videos, and formats.

**Plan! Be Consistent!** A goal for beginners should be to post at least three times a week. Be consistent with the frequency of your posts, utilize platforms’ scheduling tools so you can complete posts in advance, and respond to comments and questions in a timely manner. It will help to create an editorial calendar for posts, especially leading up to events (but, keep in mind the 80%/20% rule discussed above).

While an editorial calendar may sound intimidating, it is nothing more than a plan and there are many free online resources to help. (How to build a social media editorial calendar the easy way (free templates), [CoSchedule Blog](https://coschedule.com/blog/social-media-editorial-calendar/).)
Still feeling overwhelmed? Many organizations use chart paper and post-it notes to keep their social media plan in order leading up to an event or launch. The first step would be to create a calendar—give it a try by laying out a month at a time.

**Be Nosy!** The constant gathering of engaging content for your target audience can seem daunting, but this task can be made easier with research of your Systems of Care partners or similar organizations throughout the state that have successful social media accounts. Check out the posts and platforms people are reacting to - this will give you an idea of the content your organization should spend time developing and what you can share from other organizations.

**Like, Share & Ask!** Don’t forget to be a “good social citizen” by liking, sharing and commenting on the content of your community partners. If you promote some of their content and events, they’re more likely to promote yours.

Having a big event? Spreading the word about a new program? Need volunteers? Ask for their social media support by providing the posts (including images and links) you would like them to share with their followers.

If you have a website, there should be icons with links to all social media platforms on your homepage with a call to action for visitors (ex. ‘Like Us on Facebook’).

**FOMO! (Fear of missing out)** Utilize the events feature on Facebook to create pages for each of your events. This allows people to indicate their interest or attendance, which is then visible to their Facebook friends, thereby extending the “reach” of event page. Share photos and videos during and after the event to showcase the attendance, topic of interest, and ask influencers in attendance to push information out on their social media platforms.

If it works with your organization’s structure, consider creating private groups to engage with specific audiences or members of a program. For an organization that works with children, teens, and adults on sensitive subjects related to mental health, people may prefer to find information and support on a private page.

Who do you know?

Influencer: a user on social media who has established credibility in a specific industry. A social media influencer has access to a large audience and can persuade others by virtue of their authenticity and reach. **SAMHSA wants you to find yours.**
Win! Hold periodic social media contests to encourage people to become fans and engage with your content. The prizes do not have to be budget-breaking – You can partner with other organizations (and co-promote) to give away something they provide, swag from your organization, a free service or donated item. For example, hold a drawing for a t-shirt from your organization. Every person that follows you and shares a post to his or her personal account will be entered to win.

Get social! Don’t forget the “social” in social media. It’s not enough to create accounts and post occasionally. You need to look for ways to engage with your audience by encouraging conversations, responding to comments and direct messages, and asking questions.

Check yourself! Most common social media mistakes:

- **Not using an image or the image is the wrong size**
- **Only using social media when you need something – promote others, share information**
- **Have control of your accounts – don’t let the intern pick the password**
- **Too many poorly managed accounts – pick ONE platform and do it well**
- **Don’t just post – Respond! Get Social!**
Paid Advertising

One of the most asked questions about social media is about paid advertising. Facebook can be leveraged for free (aside from the labor investment), however, as with all of the major social media platforms, their goal is to make money. Therefore, Facebook’s algorithm will always favor paid efforts (boosting posts, paid ad campaigns). Facebook has very detailed targeting for paid efforts (age, gender, geographic location, marital status, education level, interests and hobbies). You can target your posts to a very specific audience.

Paid campaigns can be used to increase the number of page fans, drive traffic to your website (pay per click), or boost attendance at events. For a very small investment, you can expand your reach – go check out what your favorite platform has to offer.

Social media is a useful tool in your social marketing campaign to create behavior change. Improve your effectiveness and avoid the most common mistakes by completing research, strategy, and planning first.

Focus on Visual Storytelling

Visual content is the key to social media engagement. One study found that photos on Facebook get 53 percent more likes, 104 percent more comments, and 84 percent more click-throughs than the average post. The “average” post included text and link posts.

Ideas for Visual Content Forms

• Infographics about your fieldwork or mission
• Photos or videos of beneficiaries impacted by your programs
• Vlogs from staff members
• A behind-the-scenes look into your office and its culture
• A simple photo can immediately bring people face-to-face with your work, its heart, and its impact.
IN CLOSING

Is this your first time attempting a social marketing campaign? Congratulations!

For Systems of Care communities, a great place to start is with an Awareness Day or Mental Health Month activity. SAMHSA provides templates, media outreach, event planning checklists, assistance with partner Identification, and examples of successful community activities of all sizes at https://www.samhsa.gov/children/awareness-day-resources

Once you have launched the campaign, continue to evaluate and make changes. Use any data collected to evaluate how the target audience is responding to the message, communication channels, and promotion strategies. Continue (and celebrate!) the parts that are successful and adjust what’s not working so that your time and funds are supporting effective strategies.

Thank you for your interest in this toolkit. For more information on webinars and resources designed to assist your Systems of Care community, please contact us at www.nyssuccess.org.

For more information on social marketing or the information in this toolkit, contact:

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Resources to Get Started or Up Your Game

Included below are resources and examples – with social marketing there is no reason to start from scratch when there are many tools available that assist with the planning, implementation, and evaluation of your social marketing efforts.

Social Marketing and Behavior Change


Success by Design: AKAMSOB (page 9), Pete York [http://www.tccgrp.com/pdfs/7-21_TCC_Briefing_Paper_LR.pdf]

Social Marketing Plan Checklist, National Social Marketing Centre [www.thesmc.com/sites/default/files/Outline_social_marketing_plan_content.doc]

Examples of Successful Social Marketing Campaigns

Center for Disease Control and Prevention, HIV Prevention Campaigns [https://www.cdc.gov/healthcommunication/campaigns/index.html]

50 Stealable Grassroots Marketing Campaigns, Ann Durmondy [http://connectivity.cqrollcall.com/50-grassroots-marketing-campaign-examples/]


**Social Marketing Campaign Planning**

Conducting a Social Marketing Campaign (checklist, information and tools), Community Toolbox [http://ctb.ku.edu/en/table-of-contents/sustain/social-marketing/conduct-campaign/checklist]

Awareness Day/Mental Health Month Resources: Templates, Media Outreach, Event Planning Checklist, Partner Identification and examples of community activities, SAMHSA.gov [https://www.samhsa.gov/children/awareness-day-resources]

**Social Media**

The Ultimate Cheat Sheet of Social Media Photo & Image Sizes, Hubspot [https://blog.hubspot.com/marketing/ultimate-guide-social-media-image-dimensions-infographic#sm.00013v1of0a21d5uv9r241u4l55mh]


How to build a social media editorial calendar the easy way (free templates), CoSchedule Blog [https://coschedule.com/blog/social-media-editorial-calendar-template/]

33 Useful Apps and Online tools for Nonprofits, Nonprofit Tech for Good [http://www.nptechforgood.com/2016/02/28/36-useful-apps-online-tools-for-nonprofits/]

**Evaluation**

National Social Marketing Centre – Evaluation of Social Marketing Video [http://www.thensmc.com/content/evaluation-1]

Developing an evaluation Plan (information, checklist, examples), Community Tool Box [http://ctb.ku.edu/en/table-of-contents/evaluate/evaluation/evaluation-plan/main]

The Social Media Analytics Compass: What and How to Measure, Ian Cleary [http://www.razorsocial.com/social-media-analytics-tools/]

References


