



Using Holistic and Integrated Communication Strategies to Expand Addiction Treatment: Implications and Lessons Learned

Laura S. Lorenz, PhD, MEd

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Institute for Behavioral Health, Schneider Institutes for Health Policy, The Heller School for Social Policy and Management, Brandeis University





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1 - Introduction/Background

The CATG national office has encouraged sites to create holistic, integrated communications strategies that drive and inform advocacy and education strategies and mission at the state level.

- Advocacy is the active support of a cause, idea, or policy
- Communications is the ACT and MEANS of advocacy:
 - The strategies, messages, products, and methods used to connect with target audiences



- CATG sites provide good models of different ways to use communications to support advocacy effectively.
- The sites are using communications to shape the **POLICY IMAGE** of addiction treatment (ATX), and how ATX is understood and discussed in:
 - Policy arenas
 - The media
 - Service organizations
 - Homes and communities



2 - Conceptual Framework

Prior research indicates that an effective **POLICY IMAGE**:

- Is **simple** and **justifies** a policy approach
- Is a mixture of **empirical** info and **emotive** appeals
- Links **private problems** to **public causes**
- Suggests **government solutions**
- Affects both **mass and elite opinion**
- Varies approach for **different venues** (& audiences)
- Generates **new** policy initiatives

Sources: Baumgartner and Jones, 2009; Hornik, 2002



3 - Communications Assessment Focus

- What are the sites' communication strategies, activities, messages, and approaches?
- How did their activities work to influence the policy image of ATX in their context?
- What 'portable' lessons can be learned?
 - How have the sites gotten things done?
 - What types of 'delivery channels' have they used, and to what extent?
 - How are they shifting what communications they do to reach different audiences?
 - What are some lessons about communication 'campaigns' learned to inform ongoing and future initiatives?



4 - Data and Methods

- Data reviewed for Communications Assessment:
 - Communications strategy
 - Quarterly Reports prepared by site
 - Web presence
 - Communications products
 - Media articles
- Narrative analysis methods:
 - Thematic Analysis: Looking for themes across sites and products
 - Structural Analysis: Looking at the structure of communications products and their explicit and implicit messages



5 - Brief Preliminary Findings

CATG sites have developed strategies that use:

- Both rational and emotive appeals:
 - Data are incorporated on problem and gaps
 - Polling data showing positive attitudes towards providing ATX services
 - Recovery stories
- A range of channels and tools:

Websites, Press releases, Radio interviews and panels, Symposium Series, Outreach to media, e-Newsletters, Social media, and Links to related sites/partners



6 – Example: Assessment of One Activity and Related Product – (WI MATI)

Making Parity Real (MPR)

The [Wisconsin Parity Act](#) will require most group health plans in Wisconsin to provide mental health and substance abuse disorder benefits at parity levels, increasing treatment for hundreds of thousands of people in Wisconsin, saving lives and lowering costs.

- A statewide series of symposia
- Designed to shape the future of addiction and mental health treatment in Wisconsin
- Featuring moderated dialogue among state policymakers and northcentral Wisconsin stakeholders
- Providing updates on the *Paul Wellstone and Pete Domenici Mental Health Parity and Addiction Equity Act of 2008 (P.L. 110-343)*, and emerging Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services regulations on addiction and mental health treatment.



Application of Framework



- Approach
- Appeals
- Linking
- Government solutions
- Mass & elite audiences
- Varies approach
- Leading to new initiatives

ADDICTION IS A DISEASE. LET'S TREAT IT THAT WAY.



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Media Contact: Jason Brame (jasonb@communityadvocates.net); (414) 270-2951

EAU CLAIRE EXPERTS TO DISCUSS MENTAL HEALTH, SUBSTANCE USE DISORDER TREATMENT DURING FREE SYMPOSIUM, OCT. 13

Registration Required by Oct. 11 at www.MakingParityReal.org

Milwaukee (Sept. 16, 2010)—Untreated mental illnesses and substance use disorders are taking a tremendous toll on residents of Wisconsin and Eau Claire, in both lives and money.

In 2008, 737 Wisconsin residents took their own lives, the highest suicide level in at least 20 years, according to a report by the Wisconsin Center for Investigative Journalism. From 1999-2008, Eau Claire County's suicide rate was 11.8 (111 deaths), slightly higher than the state average of 11.6. Experts point to lack of available mental health care, a high rate of binge drinking and easy access to firearms.

Additionally, drug and alcohol use accounts for more than 2,100 deaths every year in Wisconsin, and more than \$4.6 billion in associated costs, according to the Wisconsin Department of Health Services.

A panel of leading experts from the Eau Claire area will discuss the major statewide policy changes needed to improve mental health and substance use disorder treatment in the state during a free symposium. **Making Parity Real will be held from 1-5:30 p.m. Wednesday, Oct. 13 at Chippewa Valley Technical College (Commons, Room 101, at the Manufacturing and Technology Center—2320 Alpine Rd.) in Eau Claire. Attendance is free; registration is required by Monday, Oct. 11. For more information and to register, visit www.MakingParityReal.org.**

Discussion by local experts will explore the changes that can be made to state laws, budgets, rules and regulations, and standards to increase access to mental health and substance use disorder treatment, including:

- The quantity, cultural competency and location of providers.
- The adequacy of public and private funding sources.
- The ability of non-medical providers to administer treatment.
- Strategies to reduce stigma.
- Other non-financial barriers to receiving treatment services.

—more—



6 – Drilling down

Milwaukee (Sept. 16, 2010)—Untreated mental illnesses and substance use disorders are taking a tremendous toll on residents of Wisconsin and Eau Claire, in both lives and money.

In 2008, 737 Wisconsin residents took their own lives, the highest suicide level in at least 20 years, according to a report by the Wisconsin Center for Investigative Journalism. From 1999-2008, Eau Claire County’s suicide rate was 11.8 (111 deaths), slightly higher than the state average of 11.6. Experts point to lack of available mental health care, a high rate of binge drinking and easy access to firearms.

Additionally, drug and alcohol use accounts for more than 2,100 deaths every year in Wisconsin, and more than \$4.6 billion in associated costs, according to the Wisconsin Department of Health Services.

1) Describing the problem

Creates links between “Private Problems” and “Public Issues” through use of empirical info (data)

Justifies approach by implying that increasing access to services will reduce untimely deaths

Emotive appeal through a focus on suicides and deaths



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2) Program

Varies approach through changing panel of local experts for each forum

Focus on government solutions (policy changes)



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- The ability of non-medical providers to administer treatment.
- Strategies to reduce stigma.
- Other non-financial barriers to receiving treatment services.

3) Topics of discussion

Show potential links to government solutions, e.g. state laws, budgets, rules, regulations, standards

Link private problems to public causes, e.g. cultural competency, stigma

Effort geared toward generating new policy initiatives



“The premise of Making Parity Real is to learn from the providers, advocates and specialists that work in the treatment delivery system what problems must be rectified in order to ensure that appropriate treatment is fully available in appropriate locations in an appropriate amount of time,” said Riemer. “Based on information learned at this symposium and similar symposia in other locations statewide, the Community Advocates Public Policy Institute plans to present state lawmakers and policymakers with recommendations to close Wisconsin’s treatment gaps.”

4) Quote from WI MATI leader

Potential for affecting elite opinion—
consumers, providers, policymakers

Participation in forum will lead to new
policy initiative

MPR premise is to learn from
providers, advocates and specialists—
two way communication



Making Parity Real will also feature updates on national health insurance reform, and federal and state parity laws and regulations, including the *Wisconsin Parity Act* (2009 Wisconsin Act 218), which Gov. Jim Doyle signed into law April 29. The *Wisconsin Parity Act* will require most group health plans in Wisconsin to provide mental health and substance use disorder benefits at parity levels, increasing treatment levels for more than 200,000 Wisconsinites, saving lives and lowering costs.

5) Updates on policy issues

Provides empirical info on policies and includes emotional appeal—save lives and lower costs

Wisconsin Parity Act: Happened faster than expected—so WI MATI adjusted their approach

New policy initiatives—THEY ARE HERE— How realize their promise?



During breakout sessions, all attendees will have the opportunity to join in the discussion of how to improve mental health and substance use disorder treatment in Wisconsin.

6) Breakout sessions

Opportunities to join discussion means **two-way communication**--
You will have a voice in the state's policy direction

Finding brings something **new** to communications thinking, strategies, and models



7 - Discussion

- **MATI** created an **internal team** with **communications experience**
- Team was on board **early on**
- **Internal and external experts** contributed to communications **content** and **strategies**
- Their strategy resulted in **new information from stakeholders**—that the recovery community was not receiving mandated parity with state employee benefits! – led to new policy action



Challenges

- Difficulties engaging people in **recovery** (emotive appeal)
- Ran into **dead ends** on some initiatives
- **Media** was focused on state budget issues
- Multiple **drafts and experts**
- **Level of effort** required by the symposium series

Solutions

- Worked with **Faces & Voices of Recovery**
- Willing to **adjust** and move on
- **Peppered media** with multiple authors & products
- Shared **ownership** and **spotlight** with experts
- **Scaled up** what got out of effort: Used it to set future agenda



7 - Some Lessons Learned

LESSON: SHAPE YOUR POLICY IMAGE WITH DELIBERATION

- **Draw** on **experts** to shape your messages
- **Use** a range of **channels** to reach your audiences
- **Engage** a range of **stakeholders** as advocates and experts
- Point to **public causes** and **specific system solutions**
- **Use rational and emotional appeals:** they are all data!
- Create opportunities for **local participation** and **message targeting**
- **Vary approach** for local audiences;
- ➔ ● Encourage **two-way learning** and communication



LESSON: TAILOR YOUR APPROACH TO YOUR GOALS

When Making Parity Real happened faster than expected, WI MATI expanded the educational approach of their forums--to incorporate a **learning** approach, and **engage audiences** in guiding future directions



8 - Conclusion

- The concept of a “policy image” is a useful framework for assessing (and, potentially, designing) communications strategies and products
- In helping to change the ATX policy image (and encourage policy action), communications can be a key ingredient in policy change

Thank you!