

Appendix E

What's a Key Message?

Key messages help the First Nations Health Council and Community Engagement Hubs control communications and enhance relationships with their intended audience. Effective key messages enable your Community Engagement Hubs to communicate what you want, what you are working towards and how you plan to implement your initiatives. They are developed by keeping in mind the Community Engagement Hub objectives, and they headline your initiatives so that your audience can read your core messages and understand what kind of work your Community Engagement Hub is involved with. A key message is strategic in the sense that the audience becomes curious enough to ask “Why?” and “How?” and builds a bridge between what the audience already knows and what you need them to know.

It helps create a point of access for your community to understand what kind of work you are doing and how they might get involved with your Community Engagement Hub.

A key message is:

- Believable – supported with evidence.
- Understandable – reflects stakeholders’ understanding.
- Agreed – accepted as part of the FNHC and Community Engagement Hub strategies.
- Delivered with credibility – facts are known and delivered by a respected spokesperson.
- Drives your agenda.
- Avoids negativity & enhances positivity.

During the session, several ideas for key messages were developed; they have been condensed to capture the key elements. They are:

- Concise – avoids jargon and acronyms.
- Active – every sentence is active.
- Positive – focuses on what one can do, not what cannot.
- Short – written in one memorable sentence that takes about 10 to 15 seconds to say.
- Specific – addresses a particular challenge and audience.

Key Messages Can Strengthen your Collaboration

Use your key messages to better explain the work of your Community Engagement Hub and also to gain attention and engagement from your community.

In addition to this, local organizations, health authorities and governments may not have time to fully learn about all of the work other groups are doing regarding health initiatives. It is common for organizations to view key messages of other groups in considering future partnerships. If a group’s own key messages and values are aligned with another organization/group doing similar work, this helps signify a possible opportunity for collaboration.