

Appendix G

Creating a Community Newsletter: Start Small

If this is your first venture into creating a community newsletter, then an important thing to keep in mind is to start small. Your newsletter can be anywhere from 1-2 pages long and still contain lots of information that will be useful for your community.

Some Tips:

- ✓ Consult with your community to discover what kind of information people want to hear about. (ie. seasonal health tips, local community events, medical services for elders/families, upcoming meetings and gatherings etc.)
- ✓ Will your newsletter be sent by email (in PDF format), formatted into an online blog, printed on your office printer, faxed to remote community members, or professionally printed? If you are printing your newsletter, remember your newsletter does not have to be expensive; sometimes the best idea is to start off with photocopies and build from there.
- ✓ Ensure that the writing in your newsletter is clear and easy-to-read. People are busy, and don't have time to read lots of information. Try and break down each thought to its essentials. Also, keep in mind that your readership might include people who have reading challenges or poor eyesight. Keep your text at a good size and avoid using overly detailed fonts.
- ✓ Encourage participation of community members; ask for feedback. Look for community members who could potentially write for your newsletter; create an editorial section or a youth/elder column. Ask for the community to submit photos or ideas of good health practices. When a community owns a newsletter, there are more chances to engage with the information provided.
- ✓ Edit, Edit, Edit. Material edits are typically looked over by newsletter staff/volunteers before the written material goes to copy-edit. This is important because additional editors can help point out aspects of your content that may have been overlooked. Making the effort to create readable material helps ensure that your material gets read. Also, be sure to find someone to copy-edit your work, a copy-editor is someone who reads through written material to check for spelling mistakes, spacing errors, misplaced punctuation and basic grammar edits.
- ✓ Look at magazines, newspapers and other newsletters to find ideas. A good design rule is to keep it simple and try and decide on only 3-4 fonts that will be used throughout your newsletter/document. If you are photocopying your newsletter in black & white, make sure that your design is clear and high contrast so that all of your text shows up (ie. black text on a grey background is probably not a great idea if you're planning on photocopying or faxing your newsletter).
- ✓ Use your youth! If you'd like your newsletter to have a website or blog, and you're finding this troublesome or complicated, ask your local youth to help out. Young people are computer savvy, and are often under utilized in regards to their experience and knowledge of social media platforms.