

Attachment 3
SAMHSA Agency-wide Strategic Communication Plan:
Key Informant Interview Guide

OMB No. 0930-0196
Expiration Date: 09/30/2013

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Background

The following is the interview guide for Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) interviews to inform the agency's Communication Strategy. We have developed a list of traditional and innovative organizations, including organizations that have not collaborated with SAMHSA but have common missions and reach to the agency's audiences, and that represent service providers, public/consumer audiences, government/policymakers, and businesses/insurance and quality providers. We will interview approximately 44 organizations.

The interview objectives are to understand what information these organizations want and need about behavioral health and how SAMHSA can communicate most effectively with them. The interviews will:

- Discover what information, products, and services these organizations want regarding behavioral health that SAMHSA could provide;
- Determine familiarity with SAMHSA and experience with its product/services and communications;
- Learn how SAMHSA can best reach them through identifying their communications channel preferences; and
- Seek recommendations on how SAMHSA can more effectively meet their needs.

We will identify points of contact among the leadership involved with behavioral health issues at each organization. SAMHSA will send a letter/email to the contact requesting their participation in a 30-minute interview. Contract staff will follow up with the contact to schedule and conduct the interviews. It is anticipated that the interviews will take place by phone. A note taker will be provided, as needed, to support each call. Information from the interviews will be kept private; names will not be associated with the information provided. Upon completion of all interviews, a summary report will be prepared analyzing the interview results for agency use in formulating its communications activities.

1. Introduction

Thank you for your time today and agreeing to participate in this interview. My name is [insert name] and I am from Abt Associates, a research and consulting firm [or insert Edelman, a PR firm or Tom Backer, a senior communications consultant] working with the Federal Government. We are interviewing leadership from many different organizations to inform the planning of a communication strategy for SAMHSA, the public health agency charged with advancing the behavioral health of the nation. *Behavioral health* refers to problems that include substance abuse or misuse, alcohol and drug addiction, serious psychological distress, suicide, and mental and substance use disorders (Source: SAMHSA web site- *Leading Change: A Plan for SAMHSA's Roles and Actions 2011-2014*). Specifically, we would appreciate your input on several areas:

- To discover where you and your [organization/agency] seek information, products and services around behavioral health topics;
- To learn how about your experience with SAMHSA's and other organizations' and agencies' products, services and communications;
- To identify what information, products and services you need and your preferred communication channels; and
- To seek recommendations on how SAMHSA can best meet your informational needs.

Your responses will be recorded in our notes and used in a summary report to the agency. All responses will be kept private; your name will not be referenced with your responses. The summary report will be used as an internal report only.

I anticipate this discussion will take about 30 minutes. Does this scheduled time to talk still work for you? [If "yes," continue; if "no," reschedule] Let's begin.

- a. How long have you been with your [organization/agency]?
- b. What is your role with the organization?

2. Behavioral Health and Your Organization

- a. What do you think are the biggest issues in behavioral health that will affect your organization over the next five years?

3. Sources of Information about Behavioral Health

- a. What organizations come to mind when you seek behavioral health information and what types of information do you seek? [Probe: materials and information for providers/consumers, e.g., reports, websites, products, data, best practices]? [Probe for 3 or more]

- b. What Federal agencies provide optimal communication resources that your organization uses? Why? *[Probe: what types of products/resources from that agency do you use?]*

4. Familiarity and Satisfaction with SAMHSA Products and Communications

For the next few questions, I'd like to focus on SAMHSA. [If the interviewee did not mention SAMHSA in question 3b, provide a description of SAMHSA with information relevant to their organization.]

SAMHSA Description: The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) is the agency within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services that leads public health efforts to advance the behavioral health of the nation. SAMHSA's mission is to reduce the impact of substance abuse and mental illness on America's communities. SAMHSA provides leadership and devotes its resources that include programs, policies, information and data, contracts and grants, toward helping the nation act on the knowledge that:

- Behavioral Health is essential for health;
- Prevention works;
- Treatment is effective; and
- People recover from mental and substance use disorders.

(Source: SAMHSA Website-About Us/Mission/Vision)

- a. What information, products and services does SAMHSA provide that helps you in your behavioral health related work? **[If none, SKIP to Q4b]**
- i. How useful do you find these products/information? Please rate them as either very useful, somewhat useful, not very useful or, not at all useful.
1. If positive, what they do well? *[Probe: language, useful content, easy to understand, etc.]*
 2. If negative, what they could improve?
 3. Is there anything SAMHSA can do with its formatting, presentation of information, etc. that would be effective in supporting your program efforts?
- b. What resources would you like SAMHSA to develop for you and/or your audiences/constituents? *[Probe: What kind of information do you need? For what purposes? For which audiences?]*

5. Preferred Communication Channels

- a. Do you currently receive information or communication from SAMHSA?
- i. Yes [Go on to 5b]
 - ii. No [**Skip to Q6**]

- b. How do you currently receive information about SAMHSA's activities and products/services that may be of interest to your organization? Check off on the list below; Probe, but DO NOT READ:
- i. SAMHSA Eblasts
 - ii. Press Releases
 - iii. SAMSHA News
 - iv. SAMHSA Headlines
 - v. Targeted emails and other communication specifically aimed at you or your organization directly from SAMHSA staff
 - vi. Presentations/exhibits at conferences/meetings
 - vii. Websites of other organizations (name)
 - viii. Trade newsletters (Mental Health Weekly, Alcoholism and Drug Abuse Weekly)
 - ix. Blogs (SAMHSA blog?)
 - x. Facebook
 - xi. Twitter
 - xii. You Tube
- c. How do you use the information you get from SAMHSA? [*Probe: Do you pass along the information to others? To whom and how?*]
- d. What's the best way to let you know about new information, products, and services that may be of interest?

6. Close/Thank you

- a. What ideas can you recommend for SAMHSA to reach a larger audience with its information/products/services about behavioral health? [*Probe: media, advocacy or community organizations, social media partners, etc.; if not already*]
- b. Would you recommend any other organizations that I should contact?
- c. Is there anything I haven't covered that you would like SAMSHA to know about behavioral health communications?

Thank you and if you would like more information or have additional comments, please email or call me.