

ATSDR Task Order 15-4 Storyboard Testing

Attachment 1

Background Information

Objectives

The mission of the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) is to protect the public's health from harmful chemical exposure. ATSDR scientists have worked in more than 8,000 U.S. communities assessing health risks from hazardous exposures.

ATSDR determines health risks associated with exposure to toxic substances and physical hazards at Superfund and CERCLA sites around the nation. Although access is often restricted, trespassing still occurs at some of these sites. Those who trespass on these sites are in danger of coming in contact with both physical and chemical hazards that can harm their health. In some cases, individuals may not be aware of hazards that can be present at these sites.

In order to help prevent or reduce harmful exposures to hazards at abandoned sites—especially among children, ATSDR has contracted with a health communication firm, CommunicateHealth, to develop a new media campaign. The campaign is entitled “No Trespassing Means No Trespassing” and will consist of video and radio public service announcements (PSAs) and key messages. The campaign is designed to educate kids and parents about the consequences of playing or hanging out in abandoned buildings or facilities, and to help keep kids away from these areas.

CommunicateHealth will evaluate PSA storyboards and key messages in order to improve them through focus groups with representatives of 2 key ATSDR target audiences:

- Tweens (children ages 10 to 13 years old)
- Parents of tweens

Specifically, ATSDR wants to learn:

1. Which PSA storyboards and messages do participants like best? Why?
2. Which storyboards and messages do participants dislike? Why?
3. What aspects of the PSA storyboards and messages do participants find confusing or difficult to understand?

4. What could be changed about the storyboards and messages to make them more understandable and engaging?
5. Which media channels do participants prefer for receiving information about abandoned sites?

CommunicateHealth will deliver a topline summary of the focus group findings and recommendations. ATSDR will not receive audiotapes or transcripts from the focus groups.

Participants

CommunicateHealth will conduct 3 focus groups, with 24 total participants. Focus group composition will reflect key target audiences as follows:

- 2 groups with 8 tweens each (16 total) ages 10 to 13
- 1 group with 8 parents of a tween

Tween participants will represent a mix of the following characteristics:

- **Age:** 10 to 13 years old
- **Gender:** Mixed
- **Education Level:** Less than high school
- **Income:** Mixed
- **Race/Ethnicity:** Mixed
- **Geographic Location:** Western Massachusetts

Parent participants will represent a mix of the following characteristics:

- **Gender:** Mixed
- **Education Level:** Mixed (At least half of the participants will cite high school as the highest level of education completed)
- **Income:** Mixed
- **Race/Ethnicity:** Mixed
- **Special Group Status:** Consumers
- **Geographic Location:** Western Massachusetts

Recruitment

CommunicateHealth will work with a professional recruitment firm in the Boston, MA area, Fieldwork Boston, Inc., to recruit participants with a mix of demographic characteristics including income and education levels.

Methods

Focus groups will be held in-person in Holyoke, Massachusetts. Each focus group session will last approximately 1.5 hours and will include a moderator and a note taker. Focus groups will be audio recorded to assist with analyzing participant feedback and in writing the report. Audio recordings will not be shared with ATSDR.

The moderator will follow a standard protocol for the focus group that draws questions from the CDC Health Message Testing System (HMTS). The protocol will include:

- Welcome, opening remarks, and ground rules
- Explanation of the purpose of the focus group
- Consent and assent forms
 - o Parents of tween participants will consent them to the feedback session. Tween participants will sign an assent form.
 - o Parent participants will sign a consent form.
- Reviewing and giving feedback on PSA storyboards
- Wrap-up questions
- Tokens of appreciation to focus group participants:
 - o Tweens participating in the focus group will be offered \$45 as a token of appreciation
 - o Parents participating in the focus group will be offered \$45 as a token of appreciation

Tweens will be offered a \$45 cash gift in appreciation of their participation. This amount has been successful in recruiting participants for similar studies in the past. This amount has also been shown to be the minimum required incentive to offset the challenges for participating in a focus group outside of their regular school hours in the western Massachusetts area. Challenges include arranging transportation for parent and tween, cost of gas, childcare for other children, and time spent. Incentive amounts lower than this make it difficult to recruit this audience.

Parents will be offered a \$45 cash gift in appreciation of their participation. This amount is consistent with the standard practice for qualitative data collection efforts and our experience from previous ATSDR projects with this population. The focus group for parents will require participants to travel and participate outside of regular work hours in the western Massachusetts and arrange for childcare. Additionally, this amount has been shown to lead to good recruitment and retention for the tasks required to enable the successful completion of the project.

Based on our market research with recruitment firms in this area, firms will not be able to conduct the recruit for less than \$45.

Handling of Data and Records

No individually identifiable information is being collected in this feedback session. The

proposed data collection will have little or no effect on the participants' privacy. Only comments, quotes, and responses from participants will be noted and used as feedback to inform revisions to the messages being tested. ATSDR will not receive audiotapes or transcripts from the focus groups. Notes will not have participants' names on them, they will be titled "Focus Group 1: Parents", "Focus Group 2: Tweens", etc. Only CommunicateHealth will have access to the notes. All documentation such as notes and consent forms (attachments 6 through 8) will be filed in a locked file cabinet in the CommunicateHealth office in Northampton, MA. CommunicateHealth will destroy the notes when this project ends in March 2015. Consent forms will be kept in the locked file cabinet for 1 year.

Top-Line Report

CommunicateHealth will analyze feedback from the focus groups to identify important themes, preferences, and communication needs from the 2 target audiences. Focus group findings will be summarized in a top-line report and will guide the revisions to ATSDR PSAs and inform recommendations on how to improve and expand upon ATSDR's communication language and materials.