

Evaluation

It is important to evaluate your communications activity and there are a number of elements you can consider to determine the success of your campaign.

It is worthwhile asking yourself questions around the following two areas:

- **Outputs** i.e. the actual deliverables of the campaign
- **Outcomes** i.e. success in changing attitude and behaviour

Outputs

- **Media coverage:** How many people did you reach? What is the total circulation of the coverage you generated? How much of your media coverage contained one or all of your agreed key messages? Was the coverage positive or negative? Remember to consider any broadcast and website coverage as well as newspaper cuttings
- **Stakeholder support:** How successful were you in establishing new relationships or securing support from existing stakeholder groups? Do these stakeholder groups want to continue working with you? How many more people have you reached by partnering with these organisations?
- **Educational material distribution:** How much literature did you distribute (particularly as a direct result of an event or newspaper article)? Was any feedback you received positive or negative? Was there demand for more literature?
- **Web hits/chatter:** Was your profile increased online? Did you generate online discussion on mental health issues? Did you increase the number of online requests for information?
- **Numbers involved in debate:** Either at events or via web links or phone enquiries – did you notice an increase in people discussing or enquiring about your service/offer?

Outcomes

- **Target group awareness of campaign:** Have you seen and measured an increased demand for support, increased requests for information from a specific community group, or increased number of appointments being made?
- **Target group change in behaviour to accessing services:** Has there been an increase in the number of people accessing services? An increase in family support? More willingness to ask for help?
- **Decline in number of individuals being re-admitted for mental ill health to hospital:** Do statistics suggest that through increased awareness, people are getting the help they need before having to be re-admitted?

Whilst it is vital to evaluate at the end of a campaign, it can also be very helpful to ask these questions at a mid-way point – then if the results are not as you had hoped, you have an opportunity to make changes which will impact the second half of the campaign.

And remember, change happens over time. You are tackling sensitive issues and attitudes will not transform over night – keep plugging away.

Tips

Be honest

- What could you do differently?
- What could you improve?

Look for opportunities

- What next? Keep up the momentum!
- How can you develop a stakeholder partnership further?
- What other groups can you get involved with?

Be brave

- Ask for feedback from partners, service users and the media – their honest views can make a real difference to your future plans

For more information on evaluation, see How To Guides Two and Three available at www.drenetwork.org