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This has been the best training I have done in years. Practical, real life benefits, work benefits... so many applications. It was much harder than I first anticipated, but I feel like our group (who knew each other well) reached a place we had been struggling with for years.

Masterclass participant

Values Based Messaging Training

In 2019 VicHealth released the resource *Healthy Persuasions: an invaluable toolkit* for health promotion practitioners to apply a values-based messaging approach to their primary prevention work. This approach was born of several key recognitions - that traditional health promotion interventions often rely heavily on data and statistics and negative or 'shock tactics' ultimately produce diminishing returns when trying to shift unhealthy behaviours. Ultimately, people become desensitised to them. Values-based messaging seeks to engage people around what matters to them: their values and emotions and the things they care about most.

When you recollect the last time you saw an advertisement for a soft drink, there's a good chance it wasn't about the flavour or the ingredients in the product. Rather, it showed scenes at a beach with friends and family connecting, partying and having fun around the advertised product. It isn't being sold to you based on its components, but on the values and emotions it might elicit in you. As a simple example of values-based messaging, the concepts aren't new; advertisers and large corporations have been using them for some time.

Recognising the value of *Healthy Persuasions*, the Outer East PCP approached VicHealth about the possibility of running a series of workshops that would create an opportunity to work directly with practitioners and explore how the resource and its associated tools could be implemented at a grassroots level across the Eastern Metropolitan Region.

The first of these workshops, *An Introduction to Values Based Messaging* was sold out with more than 90 practitioners from across the region in attendance. The response was so positive that a subsequent series of masterclasses were held. The first of these focused specifically on values-based messaging related to tackling obesity with a subsequent session looking more broadly at health promotion priorities from across the region.

These sessions were facilitated by Common Cause Australia and delivered collaboratively by the Inner East and Outer East PCPs.

These workshops were highly successful in upskilling and strengthening local health promotion work and lead to significant conversations about other topics where the approach could be applied. Throughout the masterclasses, practitioners expressed how challenging it could be to promote concepts of gender equity at a grass roots level. It was through these conversations that Framing Gender Equality, another highly successful initiative was born. ●

www.oepcp.org.au

www.vichealth.vic.gov.au/media-and-resources/hpcomms#



Project highlights

Strengthening local health promotion work through the application of Values Based Messaging (VBM) to local health issues.

Key outcomes

- VBM has contributed to a shared understanding and common language across sectors
- Masterclass sessions enabled practitioners to upskill and learn together to put VBM theory into practice.