Using Community-Based Social Marketing (CBSM) to Promote Sustainable Behaviors
“Behavior change is the cornerstone of sustainability.”

- Significant challenges exist to making a community sustainable.
- Technologies and other options only work if people use them.
- Only providing information on an issue is rarely successful.
- People do change their behaviors when the benefit to them outweighs the barrier.

The Alternative: Community-Based Social Marketing (CBSM)

Step 1: Selecting the behaviors to be promoted.

Step 2: Identifying the barriers and benefits to an activity.

Step 3: Developing a strategy that utilizes CBSM tools that have been shown to be effective in changing behavior.

Step 4: Piloting the strategy.

Step 5: Evaluating the strategy once it has been implemented across a community.

Step 1: Selecting Behaviors to Be Promoted

- Determine applicable categories that have the greatest impact on sustainability goal.
- Identify behaviors from the most important categories and how they affect the goal.
- Focus on behaviors with high impact, high probability, and low penetration.
- Identify the audience.
  - Is there a particular group in the population that should be targeted?
  - Example: Target residents with small children to reduce food waste
Step 2: Identifying Barriers and Benefits

- Review relevant articles and studies.
- Observe people engaging in both the behavior to be promoted and the behavior to be discouraged.
- Use focus groups to get detailed input on key benefits and barriers.
- Implement a questionnaire to target audience and analyze the data.
Identifying Barriers and Benefits

- If limited time and money, consider using intercept questionnaires instead of focus groups and full questionnaires.
  - Ask specifically about the barriers and benefits of the behavior.

- Identify the most important barriers and benefits to focus resources on.

- Barriers are behavior-specific and may vary for different individuals.
Step 3: Developing Strategies

- Use the information gather in Steps 1 and 2 to develop the pilot project strategy.

- Choose CBSM tools based on the identified barriers and benefits.
  - ✓ Commitment
  - ✓ Social Norm
  - ✓ Social Diffusion
  - ✓ Prompts
  - ✓ Communication and Messaging
  - ✓ Incentives
  - ✓ Convenience
Strategy Tools: Commitment

❖ If an individual commits to a behavior, they will be more likely to engage in that behavior and continue the behavior over time.

❖ Guidelines:
  ✓ Actively involve the person.
  ✓ Help people see themselves as environmentally concerned.
  ✓ Written, public, and/or group commitments.
  ✓ Commitments should be voluntary.
  ✓ Asking if you can follow-up with the participant increases the likelihood of completing the commitment.
Strategy Tools: Social Norms

❖ Offer information about what behaviors are approved or disapproved.

❖ Promote behaviors that are normally engaged in by others.
  ✓ Example: Turning off lights when leaving a room, taking public transportation.

❖ Guidelines:
  ✓ Make the norm noticeable and present it when/where the targeted behavior occurs.
  ✓ Encourage positive behaviors.
  ✓ Don’t pit norms against each other.
  ✓ Example: Having a sign prohibiting littering with a picture of an area covered in trash.
Strategy Tools: Social Diffusion

- The behaviors of those we have personal relationships with influence our own decisions.

- Visibility is key!

- Guidelines:
  - Creatively post actions or commitments.
  - Use media such as stickers or signs for people to show they participate in the behaviors.
  - Encourage people who engage in the behavior commit to talk to others about it (student group meetings, booths at fairs, residence hall meetings).
Strategy Tools: Prompts

- Remind people to do something they’re already willing to do.
- Focus on what should be done rather than what should not.

Opportunities for prompts:
- Signage, stickers.
- Reminders sent via text, social media, etc.
- Announcements over loudspeaker at appropriate facilities.

Guidelines:
- Noticeable and self-explanatory.
- Put it close to where people need it.
- Encourage positive behaviors.
Strategy Tools: Communication and Messaging

- Go positive.
- Make it memorable and clear.
- Offer personal and community targets or goals.
- Consider the intended audience.
  - Deliver the message from a source that the audience finds credible.
- Provide results feedback.
  - Example: Bottle filling stations (pictured) keep a tally of bottles filled for documenting reduction in plastic bottles used.
Strategy Tools: Incentives

- How will people avoid the incentive?
- Is the incentive temporary?

Guidelines:
- ✔ Financial incentives can motivate people to increase their participation in a behavior.
- ✔ Pair the incentive with the action!
- ✔ Make it visible and closely tied to the behavior.
- ✔ Reward positive behavior; disincentives can be unpredictable.
Strategy Tools: Convenience

- Besides overcoming individual’s internal barriers, address external barriers.
- Using CBSM tools will be less effective if the behavior is inconvenient.

Guidelines:
- Identify, isolate, and address what can be done.
- Study other similar programs to determine the cost-effectiveness of removing the barrier.
- People will see a behavior as more convenient as they gain more experience with it.
Step 4: Piloting the Strategy

- Pilot the strategy in a small portion of the community.
  - Troubleshoot any issues before broad implementation.
  - If necessary, test out different methods and refine the program until effective.

- Use random and independent sampling with both a control and a test group.

- Focus on measuring behavior changes.
Step 5: Implementing and Evaluating

- Collect baseline info on current level of behavior before implementing the strategy.

- Implement the strategy and collect data.
  - Use different time intervals to track long-term impact on behavior and provide ongoing evaluation.

- Guidelines:
  - Use advertising and media to increase awareness of the program.
  - Provide feedback on the program’s success to reinforce the behavioral changes made.
  - Compile and share your findings.
Putting CBSM into Action: Recycling at Fond du Lac Tribal Community College

Step 1. Selecting a behavior to be promoted
✓ Targeted behavior: Increase recycling on campus in common area, classrooms, and dorms

Step 2. Identifying barriers and benefits
✓ Waste characterization and observation
✓ On-line questionnaire distributed to students
✓ Questionnaire Results: Lack of convenience and poor signage was a major barrier
Putting CBSM Into Action

Step 3. Develop strategy effective in changing behavior

- Increase recycling bins and improve locations
  - Bins placed in office areas, commons, conference rooms, every classroom and near trashcans
- Pilot a visually appealing, bilingual recycling bin
- Pilot new bilingual signage and posters that are culturally sensitive and easy to understand
- Expanded outreach at staff and student orientation
- Student workers in charge of collecting recyclables
Putting CBSM Into Action

Step 4. Piloting the strategy

✓ There was a significant decrease in the amount of recyclables found in the college’s trash after two months

✓ Post-Pilot Questionnaire

✓ Strongly agreed or agreed it’s easy to recycle
  Pre-pilot: 62%
  Post-pilot: 90%

✓ Strongly agreed or agreed they understand how and what to recycle on campus
  Pre-pilot: 76%
  Post-pilot: 89%

✓ Always or usually recycle paper
  Pre-pilot: 76%
  Post-pilot: 83%
Final Tips for Implementing CBSM

- Choose an audience and implementable strategy after thoroughly researching the barriers and benefits of a behavior.
- Choose tools that address the barriers and benefits of the behavior as seen by the target audience.
- Use a pilot to ensure project achieves desired behaviors, can be improved and is cost-effective.
- Design the project to measure baseline behaviors and the final behaviors to document results.
- Give positive feedback to participants to reinforce behavioral change.