

**Cancer Pain Education for Patients and the Public**  
**Module IV**  
**Public Education for Pain Management**

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## **Introduction**

The 16 steps outlined below can help you plan, develop and implement a successful public education program on cancer pain management. Most of the suggestions provide guidance for putting on a specific activity or event, but the principles apply equally to a public education initiative that would include a series of activities over time.

Like any other project, a successful public education effort needs advance thought and planning. Whatever approach you take in organizing your plan – checklist, flow chart, detailed description of each activity, or any other – the process of sitting down and putting your ideas on paper can be a significant help in determining if your plan is realistic and what you must do to make it happen.

### **1. Identify Your Goals**

Work through and write down, as clearly and briefly as you can, the most basic goals of your public education project. Why do you want to do a public education program? What do you hope to accomplish? What results would you consider a success? This “mission statement” will be a reference point as you work through your plan and make decisions. Sometimes it’s easy to lose sight of original goals in the excitement of preparing for a particular event or activity if those goals have not been clearly agreed upon and stated in advance.

### **2. Target Your Audience**

- Who is your audience? Whom do you most want to reach with your educational messages about cancer pain? (E.g., family caregivers, older adults, aging baby boomers, nursing home personnel, hospice workers, social workers, etc.)
- What do you know about your audience?
- Why do you want to reach this particular audience?
- How would it advance the stated mission of your public education program to communicate with this audience?
- Is it realistic to think that you can in fact reach this audience?
- What are alternative audiences and why is the audience you have selected the most appropriate target for your program?

### **3. Determine Your Overall Message**

What is the most important information you need to share with your audience? Try to formulate the main points you want to get across. Identify the message or messages you want program participants to go away with (e.g., pain can be controlled, myths about cancer pain, opioids are not addicting, how to talk to your doctor about pain, expect and demand that your pain be controlled, etc).

It's useful to identify the overall theme or themes for the substantive content of your project, and to ask yourself what are the two or three most important things you want your audience to remember when it is over. This will guide the kind of project you select, whom you use as educators, what you produce for handouts, and how you shape your message throughout implementation of the project.

As a reality check, ask yourself if the message or messages you have identified will be of interest to and resonate with the target audience you have identified. And will the communication of these messages advance your stated mission. Ideally you will talk with some people in the audience you have targeted and ask them what information they need and want and what would be the best way to communicate it. Too many experts assume they know what the audience wants rather than asking the audience itself.

### **4. Assess Your Resources**

Who else is likely to be willing, able and reliable in helping with a cancer pain education project – and what particular skills and strengths would they bring? Check with your immediate colleagues and others to be sure you make a realistic assessment of their interest level and availability to help. What other resources will be available from your own organization or other sources? What about speakers and presenters, space, logistics, administrative support, printing and duplicating, mailings, PR activities, ability to reach and recruit your target audience, etc.?

If possible, a good way to work is to pull together a small multi-disciplinary committee – people who work well together and are able to take responsibility for different parts of the project. One person should be clearly designated to handle the coordination.

If you are located at a university or a hospital, or are closely affiliated with another organization, you may have access to a PR, community relations or marketing department that will be able to offer you excellent support and experience with the project. If this is the case, it's to your advantage to begin working with them as early as possible.

What about money? Who will provide financial support, and how much? Tell people what you're thinking about and ask them up front how much they would be likely to contribute to the project – before you decide to go ahead with the project.

## 5. Select Type of Activity

A public education program on cancer pain management can be as simple or as comprehensive as you like. You can choose to display patient-public education materials in hospitals or office waiting rooms. You can invite a pain management expert to give a presentation followed by a group discussion or a question-and-answer session. Or you may want to plan a program for an existing patient support group, for example a program at a Wellness Community or other local support group. You can plan an even larger program by arranging for several pain management experts to speak on a panel.

You could address the Rotary Club, speak at a meeting of the American Association of University Women, participate at a health fair, speak at a wellness program by a local employer, distribute literature through the Meals on Wheels lunch delivery program for senior citizens, give luncheon talks at senior citizen centers, have a pain information meeting sponsored by the local library, etc.

You could prepare simple brochures or pamphlets or informational posters to be distributed at pharmacies, through mailings of community groups, on community bulletin boards, at senior citizen centers, in other public places or places where members of your targeted audience tend to gather. You can arrange for op-ed pieces in your local newspaper, get included in the mailings or newsletters or websites of various membership organizations in your community.

During National Breast Cancer Awareness Month, you could seek an invitation to speak on pain at functions that local breast cancer organizations organize. Or you can check to see if there are any local prostate cancer chapters and get on their agenda for a meeting. Look into the possibility of speaking at local churches. They are good at bringing people together, and they would care about ways to help others with useful information.

Contact local hospitals and ask to participate in community education programs that many of them have. Consider neighborhood associations, unions, professional associations, service clubs, clergy organizations (on the theory that ministers may be likely to counsel cancer patients), and more. All are potential opportunities to distribute information or speak to groups that have been already gathered by others – depending, of course, on who your target audience is.

I'm a strong believer in what I call the "piggyback approach" to implementing projects. In this case, piggybacking means find someone else who is already communicating with your target audience and get them to communicate your messages through their existing channels. Or if an organization is holding an event or meeting that will bring members of your target audience to the same place, get on the agenda to address the ready-made audience. If there are newsletters that someone else is mailing or distributing, get your

messages into the newsletter. So in selecting a project for your education program, be sure to look for ready-made opportunities.

## **6. Recruit Partners**

Partnerships with other organizations who care about your issues or your target audience can be extraordinarily valuable for all parts of your project – from planning to marketing to implementation to sharing the costs. You will be surprised how many possibilities occur when you stop and think creatively. You can also look specifically for funding partners – a bank or business or HMO or local foundation or hospital or pharmaceutical company or other resource.

For volunteer help, you might consider approaching community groups such as your hospital auxiliary, Junior League, women's club and senior citizens' or retired businesspersons' organizations for help. These groups are often treasure houses of talent, experience and willingness.

## **7. Prepare a Budget and Timeline**

### *Budget*

As you consider the size and shape of your program, you will need to think about probable costs. You may be able to get some of these costs absorbed by your own or some other institution, donated, or contributed in-kind. But be realistic about estimating anticipated costs in advance (round numbers are fine) and keep track as they are incurred. And on the income side, be realistic and conservative about sources of funds to pay for the project.

### *Timeline*

If you are planning an event or activity on a specific date, think about how long it will realistically take to complete preparations up to and through the day of the event or activity. A good tool is a so-called "work back" schedule where you start by thinking of the event itself, when everything comes together, and then work backward thinking of when the various things have to happen along the way to make your project a success. Be sure to give yourself plenty of time to complete all arrangements and attend to all details. Always give yourself more time than you think you will need – you can be sure that unexpected things will happen to throw off your timing no matter how well you plan.

Speaking of dates, try to take a look at what's happening in your community before you set the date. You will need to plan your program around the community happenings or holidays. The Chamber of Commerce or the local newspapers are good sources.

As far as time of day, choose a time that will be convenient for the majority of those persons who you are targeting for your program. Lunchtime programs might be

appropriate in a workplace or for older adults. Evening programs are probably more convenient for the general public. However daytime programs are generally more suitable for older adults.

## **8. Raise Funds**

Be realistic about how much money you need to successfully implement your public education project, and raise the funds early. Sources could include a local family foundation or community foundation, a hospital or group of hospitals, an HMO, the local office of a bank or investment house, pharmaceutical companies, a consortium of your partners, a wealthy former patient, cosponsors like a local radio or TV station, etc. Think creatively about possible funding sources, and don't be bashful about asking.

## **9. Arrange for Presenters**

If you are organizing a meeting-type event, you should be able to locate a speaker through a professional nursing or medical group or other contacts you have. You want to ensure that the speaker you choose is an expert in pain management and will provide useful and accurate information. You also want to be sure that they can explain things in simple, straightforward language that the layperson can understand.

Contact proposed speakers early. Many popular speakers are booked 6 to 12 months in advance. Identify the speaker's fee, if any. If there is a fee, you will need to identify who will pay it. Send confirmation letters that include (a) program date and time, (b) topic, (c) target audience, (d) location, and (e) fee, if applicable. If the speaker is unfamiliar with the meeting place, provide directions to the building and to the room, as well as parking instructions.

In the confirmation letters, ask speakers, to (a) identify their audio visual needs, e.g. slide projector, slide carousel, overhead projector, (b) provide you with a brief introduction, (c) provide you with clean copies of their handouts.

## **10. Market to Potential Participants**

You have identified who your target audience is. Now ask yourself how to reach them:

- Where is your audience?
- What do members of your audience have in common?
- What are their sources of information?
- Who is in regular touch with your audience?
- What channels already exist that can reach the audience with information about your public awareness event or activity?

If you or some organization you partner with has mailings or a mailing list to members of our target audience, you can market to them directly. Send them a nice invitation to your event or activity that tells them clearly what they can expect to get out of it. Or get notice of your event or activity included in someone else's mailing to the target audience. The notion is to get someone else to help do the publicizing for you as part of their own organization's activities.

About three weeks before the presentation is scheduled, make copies and distribute flyers to those persons you would like to invite. Flyers can also be posted on bulletin boards in workplaces, churches, senior centers, physician's offices, clinics, schools and other outlets. Make sure the print is legible and of a size sufficient to read from a distance of at least five feet.

Take full advantage of the opportunities for free media. Contact the editor of your local newspaper or newsletter and encourage him or her to print a news feature during the week or two before your planned presentation. About one week before your program is scheduled, take copies of your media announcement, which should include specific information about your program, to the editors or your local newspapers and newsletters, and to managers of your local radio stations. Ask them to print or read this announcement as many times as possible during the week before your program is scheduled. Ask them to run public service announcements. Try to get on a radio talk show to spotlight both your substantive message and your upcoming event. Make sure you provide the name and telephone number of a contact person in case there are questions.

Try to get the local paper to run a "human interest" story on cancer pain a day or two before your event – interviewing someone who coped well with cancer pain and can convey your messages, or a healthcare provider who is also a cancer patient, or family members of a child who faced cancer, or someone else with an interesting angle. The story should highlight the when and where of your upcoming event.

About four or five days before your program, you may want to display a poster in a place or places that are likely to attract the most attention. The poster can be attached to a bulletin board or it can be mounted on stiff material and displayed on an easel. An art store or a quick print shop may be able to mount the poster for you.

## **11. Organize Logistics**

If you are doing a presentation-type event, it's important to pay attention to logistical details. The appendix has information on such things as:

- Making room reservations
- Ordering refreshments/food
- Setting up the room

- Arranging the room
- Using a slide or overhead projector
- Lighting and sound

## 12. Arrange Handouts

Allow enough time to order handouts or materials or to have them printed or copied. Decide what handouts you or other presenters want to provide. If possible, review materials ahead of time and be sure that they are written in plain English. It's a good idea to use a readability index, and for best results handouts should be written at no higher than an 8th grade reading level and preferably at about a 6th grade reading level. You should also try to be sure that the handout material is culturally appropriate for the diversity of persons you expect.

The Internet is a helpful tool in looking for appropriate handout material and background information on cancer pain for a non-expert audience. Two good general resources for pain information and links to other information sources are the City of Hope Pain Resource Center at [prc@coh.org](mailto:prc@coh.org) and the American Pain Foundation at [www.painfoundation.org](http://www.painfoundation.org). Good sources for cancer pain specifically include the American Alliance for Cancer Pain Initiatives at [www.aacpi.org](http://www.aacpi.org); American Cancer Society at [www.cancer.org](http://www.cancer.org); Association of Cancer Online Resources at [www.acor.org](http://www.acor.org); Cancer Care at [www.cancercare.org](http://www.cancercare.org); Cancer Net at [www.cancernet.nci.nih.gov](http://www.cancernet.nci.nih.gov); and others you can find through links from the above sites or your own search on the Internet.

Identify who will be making copies of handouts-materials for your program. Most hospitals, other healthcare facilities, businesses and other possible partners for your project have the ability to make copies, but be sure to find out whether or not there is a charge for the service. When you have determined who will copy your materials, find out how much time is needed to accomplish the task. If you plan on handing out copies of articles, you will need to obtain copyright permissions for which there is a charge.

You might also want to prepare an evaluation form to be filled out by audience members after the program. Include questions that address those issues you were most concerned about. Perhaps you want to find out if you did reach your target audience, or if an audience you were not anticipating came to your event. The feedback will be invaluable in planning your next educational program.

## 13. Prepare and Practice Your Presentation

If you are one of the speakers, obviously be sure to prepare your remarks ahead of time with an outline or actual text. In preparing what to say, put yourself in the shoes of those who will be listening. What do they want to know? What will be most helpful to them? How can you present your ideas and information in a way that connects effectively? What is your central message? Keep it simple, and don't try to crowd in too much information.

Know your audience, and don't assume that you are the best judge of what they want. They are. If you can talk ahead of time with some people who might be attending, you can ask them for suggestions and feedback on your own ideas.

You might also try practicing in front of another person, running through the presentation with the slides. If you are using a microphone, practice with it too, so that you can learn how to adjust the volume to the appropriate level of the size of the room. Ask your "coach" if you sound relaxed and comfortable. When your delivery is smooth your real audience will be able to concentrate more fully on what is being said.

#### **14. Increase Your Impact Through Press Coverage**

Unless there are reasons not to, you should make an effort to get the local media to come to your public education event. They will get your message out to an even larger audience than those who attend. Send a press release and announcement of the event to the press several days ahead of time. And call each of the newspapers (daily and weekly), radio stations and TV stations in your area. When you call, ask for the assignment editor or health reporter.

#### **15. Enjoy the Program**

The advance planning is done. The event is set up. The audience is arriving and you and your program are ready. Relax and enjoy yourself. You are about to pass on some good news to members of your community and give them a good start on the road to better pain management.

#### **16. Evaluate the Program**

How did the program go? Was it successful? What problems did you experience? What can be done differently to help you plan and execute a better program or presentation? It is probably a good idea to hold a quick post-event meeting at which you note everything you want to remember, take action on or learn from the program. And one final point: Don't forget to send thank you notes to all the volunteers, organizations, partners, donors and others who provided help and support.

### **Appendix: Meeting Room Logistics**

#### **Reserving the Appropriate Room**

Select an appropriate place for your pain education program. This will require that you estimate the size of your audience. It is better to choose a room where everyone can be comfortably seated and will be able to see the screen on which the slides or overheads will be projected.

If you are not familiar with the room, you should ask about the acoustics, if microphones can be provided, about the availability of a slide projector, and how the room is best arranged for slide or overhead presentations. A microphone is a necessity for any group presentation.

For daytime programs, you will need to find out if the room can be sufficiently darkened for audiovisuals. You should also ask about the availability of parking and restrooms. It is important to identify the cost of parking – (a) to determine your costs if you decide to pay for parking and (b) to let program participants know the cost of parking if you decide not to pay for parking. The parking fee should be identified on your flyer or advertisement.

### **Ordering Refreshments/Food**

Food is always a nice touch and provides a sense of community and friendship. Cookies, coffee, and tea are an inexpensive and easy means of providing refreshments. Order refreshments so that they are available when program participants arrive.

Whether you are planning to provide refreshments or a meal, such as lunch, you will need to identify your budget and determine who will pay for the refreshments/meal – will you pick up the entire cost, or will you find a sponsor to provide funds for the refreshments/meal.

### **Setting Up the Room**

Set up the room as early as possible on the day of the program. This will allow time to check out all the equipment and time for the “speaker” to practice a few times before the actual presentation. Make certain there are enough chairs for everyone. You can put one set of handouts on each chair or you can make them available for people to pick up as they leave the room. Have nametags available. This facilitates sharing and interaction.

### **Using a Slide or Overhead Projector**

If you are using slides or overheads, try to place the slide or overhead projector at the same level as the screen. If the slide or overhead projector is much higher than the screen, with the light beam shooting at a downward angle toward the screen, you will create an image that is wider at the bottom than at the top. If the slide or overhead projector is much lower than the screen the opposite will happen – an image that is wider at the top than the bottom. Position the slide or overhead projector so that it does not obstruct participants’ view.

Create as large a picture as possible without overflowing the screen surface or dulling the image. The farther back you place the slide or overhead projector from the screen, the larger and less-bright the image will become. The closer you move the slide or overhead

projector toward the screen, the smaller and brighter the picture becomes. You will, therefore, need to strike a balance between the size and the brightness of the image.

Adjust the distance between the slide or overhead projector and the screen until you will the full width of the screen without spilling the picture too far past the edges. However, a little picture spillover is probably unavoidable.

If you have a large audience you will need to create an image big enough for all to see. Rooms that are very light during the presentation will make any picture, and especially larger pictures, more difficult to see. Have an extra bulb readily available should the one in the projector burn out during the presentation.

If you do not have a screen, find a blank (white or off-white) wall surface on which to project your images. A white sheet can even be used in a pinch. But unless your surface is fairly white, smooth and unblemished you should try to locate a screen. If you use a portable screen remember that it can also be moved toward or away from the projector as well as raised or lowered to help you with picture alignment.

### **Arranging the Room**

As a speaker, you should stand in front of the room, slightly forward and to one side of the screen so you can face the audience without blocking the screen or interfering with light coming from the projector. Use a podium, or even a table, if one is available. If you stand at the front of the room and the projector is at the back of the room, you may need someone else to operate the slide projector. Or if available, you can change slides using a remote control slide changer. Most projectors are equipped with such a remote changer and a long cord. (Be certain to secure the projector so that people will not trip over the cord endangering themselves and the projector.)

If you are changing the slides yourself, familiarize yourself with the “forward” control on the remote changer, and place your thumb lightly on this button during the presentation so you can change the slides without looking. If someone else is serving as projectionist, make certain that this person has a copy of the script (and a light to read by) so he or she can change the slides without being told to do so.

### **Lighting and Sound**

As a general rule, try to make the room as dark as possible. The darker the room, the brighter the slides will appear. But make sure you have a podium or reading light so you can read your text or outline during the presentation. If you can't easily arrange a reading light, try keeping the room lights on at the dimmest setting, leaving only enough light to read your script without straining.

If the room and the audience are large, you may need to use a microphone and sound speakers. Many rooms used for audiovisual presentations have such equipment available and someone who can help set it up.

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 (Note: The information in this presentation and appendix was adapted in part from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Public Health Service, National Institutes of Health, A Mammogram: Once a Year for a Lifetime – A Presentation on Mammography and Breast Cancer, 1991; and from the Resource Center of the American Alliance of Cancer Pain Initiatives, Communications Toolbox – A Resource Guide to Help State Cancer Pain Initiatives Work with the Media.)

### **TIPS FOR TV INTERVIEWS**

#### **Before the interview:**

1. Do your research: know who will interview you and for what show.
2. Decide on the main points you want to make.
3. Develop your main messages - and be able to deliver them in 20 - 30 seconds.
4. Anticipate what questions might be asked and develop your answers to them.
5. Pick something comfortable to wear: feeling comfortable is important to appearing comfortable.
6. Be prepared to back up any statement you make with facts.

#### **Once the news crew arrives, but before the interview begins:**

1. Go over possible questions with the reporter.
2. Ask that the camera lights be turned on for a minute or so so that you can get used to the glare before the taping begins.

#### **During the interview:**

1. Remember that television is an emotional medium. How you look and act will communicate more than what you say.
2. Select an interview site where you feel comfortable. Ideally, the site will also convey, visually, part of your message.

3. Look at the reporter.
4. Keep your physical motions calming.
5. If you are sitting, sit on the front half or third of the chair. Do not sink or slouch into the chair.

**Interview Tips:**

1. Be concise
2. Know your messages, deliver them, and repeat them.
3. Always tell the truth.
4. Never say anything "off the record."
5. When you are done answering, STOP.
6. Pause before and after important statements.
7. Answer in complete and concise sentences.
8. Avoid jargon.
9. Don't be sarcastic, patronizing, angry.
10. Try to humanize your answers with personal examples and anecdotes.
11. If you don't know the answer to a question, say so, but say that you want to get the answer and get back to the reporter. Then follow up.