

HEALTHWORD

Putting Health Promotion Back in Motion

September 2006

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HEALTHWORD is a monthly e-mail newsletter produced by the American Society on Aging's (ASA's) Live Well, Live Long project, funded by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Live Well, Live Long provides education and resources to professionals in the field of aging to help them improve health promotion and disease prevention efforts aimed at older adults. Current and past issues of this newsletter are available on the Live Well, Live Long website at <http://www.asaging.org/cdc/HealthWord.cfm>.

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FEATURE:

STRENGTHENING HEALTH PROMOTION PROGRAMS THROUGH EVALUATION

To ensure that your health promotion program is achieving its goals, you must evaluate it regularly. Evaluation can identify the program's strengths and weaknesses and help it maintain flexibility to better serve your community.

Program evaluation is an ongoing cycle. More and more, evaluation plans are being built into a program plan at its inception to make sure that evaluation melds seamlessly with other program functions. Whether or not the two are created at the same time, the evaluation should complement the program in its objectives, goals, methods, and implementation. For instance, if one of the goals of the program is to develop a relationship with the community you serve, it makes sense to include in-depth interviews as part of the program evaluation. However, interviews alone may not provide the breadth of information you need to satisfy the needs of funders or your board of directors. No one evaluation method is capable of providing the whole picture. Mixing methods

allows evaluators to draw on the strengths of both quantitative and qualitative methods while minimizing the weaknesses inherent when only one method is used.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has developed a “Framework for Program Evaluation in Public Health,” a six-step process to guide you through all phases of an evaluation:

Step 1: Clarify who your key stakeholders are.

Step 2: Clarify your program’s activities and goals.

Step 3: Determine what the primary purpose of the evaluation is, what to evaluate, and what methods to use.

Step 4: Decide how to collect data that are high-quality, feasible to gather, and minimally burdensome on respondents.

Step 5: Analyze the findings and compare your results with agreed-upon values or standards.

Step 6: Promote maximum use of the findings by providing feedback to stakeholders and sharing recommendations and reports.

To read about the CDC framework in more detail, visit

<http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/rr4811a1.htm>.

The Live Well, Live Long project has recently developed new chapters on program evaluation for three of our existing health promotion and disease prevention modules. Chapter five of the “Blueprint for Health Promotion” module (available online at <http://www.asaging.org/cdc/module1/phase5/index.cfm>) provides an overview of evaluation methodology and techniques. Chapter five of “Road Map to Driving Wellness” (found at <http://www.asaging.org/cdc/module4/phase5/index.cfm>) provides a more in-depth look at focus groups as one method of evaluation. Finally, chapter five of “Steps for Mental Wellness” (found at <http://www.asaging.org/cdc/module5/phase5/index.cfm>) explores how community participatory evaluation can provide a unique and valuable assessment of health promotion programs.

Our hope is that the information contained in these new chapters helps you create an evaluation plan for a health promotion initiative you are designing or update the evaluation plan for an existing program.

**TOOLS YOU CAN USE:
HEALTH PROMOTION ISSUE BRIEFS**

In order to make Live Well, Live Long materials more accessible to professionals with limited time, the American Society on Aging (ASA) has created a new series of “issue briefs.” These condensed discussions of the issues explored at length in the project’s online modules are now available -- as PDF files -- on the project website (http://www.asaging.org/cdc/issue_briefs.cfm). The issue briefs presently available:

* Issue Brief 1: “Health Promotion for Older Adults: Meeting the Challenges of the Future”

http://www.asaging.org/cdc/issue_briefs/Issue_Brief_1.pdf

Health promotion can positively affect the aging process. This issue brief explores the underpinnings of health promotion programs and some of the challenges ahead, such as reaching older adults of culturally diverse backgrounds and elders with low literacy or visual, hearing, cognitive, or physical impairments.

* Issue Brief 2: “Program Evaluation: How to Focus Your Evaluation Using Quantitative and Qualitative Methods”

http://www.asaging.org/cdc/issue_briefs/Issue_Brief_2.pdf

This issue brief discusses how you can focus your program evaluation strategy by using both quantitative and qualitative evaluation methods. It provides tips on choosing the best methods for your program.

* Issue Brief 3: “Collaborations: Skill-Building for Effective Partnerships”

http://www.asaging.org/cdc/issue_briefs/Issue_Brief_3.pdf

This issue brief explores the challenges that collaborations pose in such areas as communicating between partners, determining leadership, building a shared vision, and creating an atmosphere of respect and competence when working with diverse communities. It provides suggestions for maintaining a new partnership or revitalizing a struggling one.

* Issue Brief 4: “Cultural Competence and Health Literacy: Making Your Health Promotion Program Accessible to Diverse Groups of Older Adults”

http://www.asaging.org/cdc/issue_briefs/Issue_Brief_4.pdf

This issue brief discusses how to better address low health literacy through the creation of culturally appropriate health promotion messages.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Event: Living Well to 100: Is Inflammation Central to Aging?

Dates: Nov. 6-7, 2006

Location: Boston

This year’s “Living Well to 100” Conference, presented by Tufts Health Care Institute, an affiliate of Tufts University School of Medicine, will focus on inflammation, which current evidence suggests is an antecedent for many chronic degenerative diseases. Among the topics to be addressed include how to identify which individuals may benefit from reducing inflammation and how lifestyle and nutritional factors may modulate inflammation. For more information, visit <http://www.wellnessto100.org>.

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Event: Annual International Council on Active Aging (ICAA) Conference

Dates: Nov. 15-17, 2006

Location: Las Vegas

Those who work in settings that serve older adults may benefit from attending ICAA's fourth annual conference. Sessions of interest to health promotion professionals include "Motivating the Frail Older Adult," "Walking for Balance," and "Creating an Ageless Attitude: Viewing Aging Through the Wellness Model," among many others. For more information, visit <http://www.icaa.cc/convention.htm>.

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Event: 2006 TASH Conference

Dates: Nov. 8-11, 2006

Location: Baltimore

TASH is an international membership association whose members are people with disabilities, family members, advocates, and professionals working together to create change and build capacity so that all people are included in all aspects of society. Sessions at the 2006 annual conference focus on the following themes: "Inclusive Education Across the Lifespan," "Innovations in Research and Practice," "Transition, Community Living and Employment," and "Values, Advocacy, and Ethics." For more details, visit <http://www.tash.org/2006tash/index.htm>.

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Event: National Health Communication Conference

Sponsors: Institute of Medicine, American College of Physicians (ACP) Foundation

Dates: Nov. 29, 2006

Location: Washington, D.C.

This conference, whose theme is "Moving Toward Real Solutions: Advances to Address Low Health Literacy," provides a unique opportunity for participants to learn about the growing problem of low health literacy and to hear about innovative solutions. The participants are a dynamic, forward-thinking group of individuals representing medicine, industry, pharmaceuticals, media, insurance, patient advocacy, and government. For more information, visit <http://foundation.acponline.org/healthcom/locationmap.htm>.

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For more educational offerings in the field of aging, visit the searchable "Events in Aging" calendar on the ASA website: <http://www.asaging.org/calendar>.

Have an event related to health promotion and aging that you would like to tell your colleagues about? Please submit your event, call for papers, or grant announcements to

Betsy Dorsett at betsyd@asaging.org. Include the title, organization, date and time, location, contact information, and a short description of the event.

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HEALTHWORD

HEALTHWORD (ISSN 1554-5997) is published monthly by the American Society on Aging. Subscription is free of charge, and you are welcome to forward this newsletter to interested colleagues.

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