#YALI**LEARNS**
FOR #YALI**CARES**
TOOLKIT

Plan and hold a #YALICares
event in your community

YALINETWORK

#YALI**CARES**

Being up-to-date on health care information is as important as ever. Many communities face health issues, but not all communities have all of the facts to deal with them, and in some cases, false information complicates and worsens health issues.

YALICares is designed to increase awareness and literacy on health matters and encourage you to serve as community health advocates. You play a vital role in promoting public health and a healthier Africa!

This toolkit will assist you in planning a #YALICares event that helps others learn about the importance of health communication and how to provide helpful and accurate information.

This toolkit will also help you define the specifics of your event, plan the event itself, and engage with your community before and after the event. It is recommended that you read through the toolkit in its entirety so that you have a good idea of the process, and then work through it section by section as you plan your event.

This toolkit is intended for use by individuals, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), school clubs, houses of worship, or businesses who are organizing a #YALICares event.

DON'T FORGET

The YALI Network Online Course *Community Organizing for Action* (**https://yali.state.gov/courses/community-org/**) provides a great introduction to community engagement. Be sure to complete the course before you begin planning your #YALICares event.

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Step 1: Prepare The Event

Before you begin planning your #YALICares event, make sure you watch "Health Communications: The Message, The Messenger, and The Audience" (lesson 2) from the YALI Network Online *Course Effective Communication for Healthy Outcomes* in order to familiarize yourself with the material.

The goal of your event should be to inform your audience about the importance of good communication and the role it plays in public health and keeping communities healthy.

There are three major pillars to focus on when thinking about your event: the message, the messenger, and the audience.

The **message** of your presentation needs to be timely and relevant to your community. It shouldn't create panic or fear, but should instead be clear, credible, and have a concise call to action — something you want your audience to do as a result of learning this information. As the **messenger**, you too need to be credible and trustworthy, use appropriate language and have a strong background of knowledge on the topic — if you don't then you should find a collaborator who does. Your **audience** should feel like the health issue you're discussing directly impacts them and their families, and that they are partners in addressing the issue.

Think about these steps when working through your planning.

Define the need:

You know your community; what are the issues you see affecting those around you? Identify the health leaders, experts, and advocates in the community and connect with them to better understand the needs. Here are some topics to consider when planning your event:

☐ How to avoid rumors and misinformation about health issues

☐ Where to find good, accurate health information

☐ The importance of good communication on health issues

☐ Other: _____

Create a mission statement:

Include the health need you plan to address, the issue(s) you plan to talk about, and who will benefit. *Example: At my #YALICares event, I want to tell my audience where they can find accurate and reliable information on HIV/AIDS testing online.*

MISSION

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Set a goal for your event:

Think about things like how many people you want to attend, what you want them to take away from the event, and any measurable action steps you want those who attend to take after the event.

WHAT IS THE SPECIFIC GOAL OF YOUR EVENT?

_____

_____

_____

_____

WHAT ACTION STEPS CAN PEOPLE TAKE AFTER YOUR EVENT?

_____

_____

_____

_____

Create your event outline:

Once you've watched the course lesson and thought about your event, you'll need to create your event plan . It should include time to deliver the desired information to your audience, a group activity, and time for discussion and answering questions. These events are typically two hours. Use the facilitation guide on page 15 to help create your event plan.

Optional – Identify potential collaborators:

If you have time, do your research and learn whether there are others in your area working toward the same goals you are. If there are other individuals, such as health care providers, or groups who are experts on the subject matter, they might be interested in providing more information to your audience during your event.

ARE YOU ALREADY INVOLVED WITH A COMMUNITY SERVICE GROUP THAT MIGHT BE ABLE TO SUPPORT THE EVENT?

☐ Yes

    ☐ Name of group

    _____

    ☐ Contact information

    _____

☐ No

WOULD YOU LIKE TO COLLABORATE WITH ANOTHER INDIVIDUAL OR GROUP TO PLAN THE EVENT? IF SO, CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING:

☐ Research potential collaborators: Try to select an individual or group who has an expertise or existing interest in the topic your event will be covering.

☐ Use your network: See if you have any connections who can introduce you to the individual or group, as you're more likely to be successful if there is a personal connection.

☐ If the person or group is interested in working with you, set a time for a planning meeting and complete the remaining steps together:

    ☐ Name

    _____

    ☐ Contact information

    _____

    ☐ Date/time of planning meeting

    _____

TIPS TO CONSIDER WHEN RESEARCHING AND COLLECTING INFORMATION

If you present information on a specific health topic, be sure to do your research so that you are knowledgeable on the subject. It's important that, as a health messenger, you're credible and present relevant, accurate, and timely information.

• Check to see that your online source is legitimate. You can start with the YALI website!

• Take a look at The World Health Organization's Regional Office for Africa (http://www.afro.who.int/health-topics) to learn about specific health topics.

• If you're looking at American websites, one way to verify this is to check the URL. If you see .gov, .edu, or .org at the end, you're likely on the right track.

• Be careful with social media — make sure any information you reference is from an organization's official account.

• Make sure the information on a website is up-to-date and accurate and is presented in an informational way.

TO PREPARE IN ADVANCE

• To ensure that you can help encourage conversation, it is a good idea to spend some time with the discussion questions yourself and come up with some possible answers (found in the Discussion Guide under the "Lesson Resources" tab).

• If English might be a challenge for your participants, you can print out the French or Portuguese video transcripts for participants in advance (found under the "Lesson Resources" tab).

• **Optional**: Download the PowerPoint from yali.sate.gov/health to use during your lesson and remember to customize it to your specific presentation.

FURTHER READING

• Learn more about setting goals, so that your #YALICares event aligns with your own long-term vision: https://yali.state.gov/settingandachievinggoals/

• Learn more about facilitating a #YALILearns course: https://yali.state.gov/to-host-a-yalilearns-event-you-dont-need-to-be-an-expert/

Step 2: Plan Logistics

Setting the logistics is where you really get into planning the specifics of your event. You'll want to think about things such as where and when you'll hold your event and whether there are any resources you need to hold the event.

Select a venue:

The type of event you are holding will determine the best place to conduct it. Because you'll be facilitating a course lesson, you may need the space and ability to project from your computer, as well as an area where you can seat all of your attendees so that they can hear the presentation. You may have options such as a local school, library, or community center. Your workplace or another local business also might have space you can use.

WHERE WILL YOU HOLD YOUR EVENT?

☐ School

☐ Workplace

☐ Library

☐ Community center

☐ Health clinic

☐ Place of worship

☐ Other

_____

Confirm the date:

When do you plan to hold your event? Make sure you confirm the date with your venue and with any volunteers you may have.

WHEN WILL YOU HOLD YOUR EVENT?

_____

IF YOUR EVENT WILL BE HELD OUTSIDE, WHAT IS YOUR RAIN DATE (ALTERNATE DATE)?

☐ Date: _____

Set the time of the event:

Your #YALICares event should last approximately two hours. This should include time for your presentation, group activities, and questions and discussion. You should think about when your attendees will be available. Do you need to accommodate work or school schedules? Doing so may limit the amount of time available for the event.

☐ Time of event:
   _____ to _____

Identify resource needs:

Think about the supplies and other resources you'll need for your event. This could include anything from a mosquito net or condoms for demonstrations, to a computer, a projector, and internet service.

WHAT RESOURCES DO YOU NEED FOR YOUR EVENT? THESE MIGHT INCLUDE:

☐ Computer

☐ Projector

☐ Internet access

☐ Microphone and speaker(s)

☐ Information flyers or publications

☐ Signs or banners

☐ Seating

☐ Tables

☐ Other: _____

☐ Other: _____

☐ Other: _____

FURTHER READING

- Find resources for planning a #YALILearns event: https://yali.state.gov/learns/

- Learn tips for planning a #YALILearns event, which are applicable to other types of #YALIServes events as well: https://yali.state.gov/a-step-by-step-planning-guide-on-hosting-a-yalilearns-event/

- Learn about recruiting a celebrity to participate in your event: https://share.america.gov/how-to-attract-celebrity-to-your-cause/

Step 3: Promote The Event

You should identify the audience in your community that you think would benefit the most from the information you'll be sharing. For example, this could be an age demographic, a gender, a tribe, or a category as specific as pregnant women under 25.

Advertise your event/inform the community:

To bring in the members of the community you hope to help or inform with your event, you'll want to help get the word out about your event to make sure those that you hope to have attend are aware of the event and know how to get involved. Think about who would gain the most from the information you plan to share and who is most affected by the issue you're planning to talk about, and think how to reach them.

IS THERE A SPECIFIC DEMOGRAPHIC THAT YOU WANT TO ATTEND YOUR EVENT?

☐ Women

☐ Men

☐ Students

☐ Specific age range: _____

☐ Speakers of a specific language:

_____

☐ Other: _____

☐ No specific demographic—everyone is welcome

WHERE IS THE BEST PLACE TO ADVERTISE THE EVENT TO REACH THAT GROUP?

☐ Schools/universities

☐ Houses of worship

☐ Community centers

☐ Social media networks

☐ Resident associations

☐ Local businesses

☐ Other: _____

WHAT IS THE BEST ADVERTISING MATERIAL FOR YOUR TARGET AUDIENCE DEMOGRAPHIC?

☐ Flyers

☐ Email

☐ Social media posts

☐ Face-to-face presentation

☐ Other: _____

DO PARTICIPANTS NEED TO REGISTER IN ADVANCE TO ATTEND THE EVENT?

☐ Yes (Be sure your promotional materials include information about how to register!)

☐ No

Optional - Recruit volunteers:

If you have determined that you will need volunteers for your #YALICares event, you need to determine how you will find them and what, if any, particular skills you would like them to have. What populations would be best to recruit from for your specific needs? How can you best reach them and entice them to participate?

WHAT WILL YOU NEED VOLUNTEERS TO HELP WITH?

☐ Setting up and breaking down the event (physical labor)

☐ Presenting information

☐ Facilitating group activities (comfortable talking to others)

☐ Administrative skills

☐ Other: _____

WHERE CAN YOU RECRUIT VOLUNTEERS?

☐ School/university, including volunteer groups or clubs

☐ Work

☐ House of worship

☐ Community group

☐ Local clinic or hospital

☐ Social media networks

☐ Resident associations

☐ WhatsApp group

☐ Local business(es)

☐ Local NGO

☐ Other: _____

Note: If you're holding your event at a business, organization, or school, you may have a ready-made pool of volunteers. Be sure to look to employees, group members, or students first.

WHAT IS THE BEST WAY TO REACH THIS POTENTIAL VOLUNTEER POPULATION?

☐ Flyers

☐ Email

☐ Social media posts

☐ Face-to-face meeting

☐ Other: _____

WHAT MESSAGING CAN YOU USE TO ENCOURAGE VOLUNTEERS TO PARTICIPATE?

☐ We all have a responsibility to educate our communities about health facts

☐ Volunteering is good experience for your resume

☐ A notable person from the community will be participating

☐ The event is a good networking opportunity

☐ Other: _____

HOW WILL PEOPLE REGISTER TO VOLUNTEER?

☐ Email

☐ Phone call

☐ Social media

☐ WhatsApp group

☐ Other: _____

DON'T FORGET

If you want people to register in advance, be sure to send them a reminder notification (via email, WhatsApp, social media, etc.) a few days before the event. Don't forget to send a reminder to your volunteers as well!

FURTHER READING

- Learn tips for planning an event that volunteers will enjoy: https://share.america.gov/it-takes-grit-to-help-volunteers-have-fun/

- Learn some of the benefits of volunteering, which you can use in your messaging to potential volunteers: https://share.america.gov/4-ways-volunteering-benefits-you/

- Learn about getting people to participate in your efforts: https://share.america.gov/5-tips-for-building-successful-campaign/

Step 4: Hold The Event

After preparing for and planning your event, it's finally here! All your hard work will pay off as you share your message. The following prompts will help you ensure the event goes smoothly and that not only do you achieve your goals, but that participants have a great time as well.

1-2 days in advance:

DOUBLE-CHECK YOUR TO-DO LIST:
A day or two before the event, do a final check to make sure you've completed all the planning steps. Check in with your venue to confirm that you have the space and any equipment you may need.

GO OVER YOUR PRESENTATION:
If you have notecards, make sure they're in order, and check that you'll be able to access your presentation either on your computer, through an email, or on a flash drive.

SEND REMINDERS:
Use Facebook, WhatsApp, email, etc. to remind your participants, community, and volunteers about your event one to two days in advance.

Day of the event:

ENJOY!
You've put a lot of work into planning the event, and now is the time to see that hard work pay off. Enjoy sharing your knowledge with your attendees, interacting with members of your community, and making an impact by effectively communicating health information!

SHOWCASE THE WORK YOU ARE DOING:
Be sure to document the event, particularly by taking photos. Time permitting, you can share your event on social media as it is happening, or share photos after the fact. If you have established any media contacts, see if they can stop by the event to share it with a wider audience.

GET FEEDBACK:

Have participants complete a short survey or feedback form after the event, but before they go home. It may be harder to get this information from them after they have left the event. Their feedback will help you improve when you plan future events. You can ask questions such as:

☐ Did you feel the information from the presentation, the group activities, and the discussion were valuable? Why or why not?

☐ Did you feel the event was well organized? Why or why not?

☐ What was your favorite part of the event? Why?

☐ How would you improve the event?

(IF APPLICABLE) THANK VOLUNTEERS FOR THEIR INVOLVEMENT!

Make sure they understand the importance of their contribution, and the impact of the event.

FURTHER READING

- Learn tips for making sure your event runs flawlessly:
  https://yali.state.gov/6-lessons-i-learned-organizing-a-yali-network-event/

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Step 5: Follow Up After The Event

Measuring and evaluating the success of your event will give you crucial data on how well your plans met your goals and if you made a difference in your community.

The participants who were involved in your event can form a great foundation for future events, and most importantly they can become trustworthy health messengers using the information they learn from your event. Be sure to keep in touch with them! Consider the following prompts to think through how you can continue your community engagement beyond one day.

If you worked with any other individuals or groups in your community, think about ways to continue those relationships and how you can continue to be involved in bringing health information to your community.

Assess your level of engagement:

Do you want to start planning health education events on an ongoing basis? Would you prefer to hold additional events on an infrequent basis? Would you rather not commit to additional events, but perhaps instead share information with others via channels such as email or social media?

WHAT LEVEL OF INVOLVEMENT FEELS RIGHT TO YOU?

☐ I would like to hold more events — on a weekly, monthly, or semi-annual basis!

☐ I might plan another event in the future, but I'm not sure how often.

☐ I will stay in contact with my participants, but mainly by sharing information.

☐ Other: _____

(If applicable) Evaluate volunteer and collaborator needs:

Once you have a sense of what engagement efforts you would like to undertake long-term, think about how your volunteer pool and anyone you worked might be able to assist in effectively spreading health information.

WHAT COULD VOLUNTEERS STAY INVOLVED WITH?

☐ Forming a community group that meets periodically

☐ Participating in future events

☐ Recruiting additional participants

☐ Planning their own events

☐ Other: _____

(If applicable) Contact volunteers and collaborators:

Within a few days of the event, be sure to contact volunteers and collaborators to thank them again for their involvement. This is a great time to share success metrics, such as the number of people who received information from the event. It's also a great opportunity to lay the foundation for ongoing communication. Let them know what your plans are for future activities, and ask them to let you know if they would like to stay involved.

Establish a communication channel:

Once you know which of your volunteers and collaborators would like to be involved in future activities, think about the best way to stay in contact with them. For example, you may want to start a WhatsApp group, create an email list, or start a Facebook group.

WHAT IS THE BEST WAY TO STAY IN TOUCH?

☐ WhatsApp group

☐ Facebook group

☐ Email list

☐ Announcements at community events

☐ Community message board

☐ Other: _____

DON'T FORGET

You now have a great resource at your disposal — a group of volunteers who are interested in contributing to future community engagement efforts! Be sure to stay in touch with them, and make the most of this great opportunity to continue making a difference in your community.

Facilitation Guide

This facilitation guide provides you with a plan for facilitating "Health Communications: The Message, The Messenger, and The Audience" (lesson 2) from the *YALI Network Online Course Effective Communication for Healthy Outcomes.*

Timeline: two-hour event plan with multiple activities

Introduce Yourself (2 minutes)

Introduce yourself as an interested YALI Network member who wants to start an important conversation about public health and health communications in your community. You can explain why you are interested in this subject, what you hope to accomplish, or some background information about yourself. But remember to keep it short!

Explain the Structure of the Event (3 minutes)

Give participants your agenda to follow for the session. Walk them through what to expect, including interactive activities, and outcomes. Don't forget to explain all directions and activities fully and clearly before you begin.

Ice Breaker (10 minutes)

Ice breakers are short, group activities that help participants get to know each other and feel more comfortable having conversations. Some suggested ice-breakers are included below, but you can come up you own. Just be careful - icebreakers can take a long time, so make sure you're keeping an eye on how much time you've given the groups.

Suggested Activity: Similarities - Break the participants up into groups of 3-5, depending on the event size. Ask the participants to find 6 things that all group members have in common (ie. hobbies, where they are from, number of siblings, work that they are passionate about, etc.) - Have each group appoint a spokesperson to present those 6 similarities to the whole group. See how many items the whole group has in common!

Before You Watch (5 minutes)

Before you start the video, remind your participants to be thinking of the three main lesson objectives as they watch:

1. What are the three key pillars of reporting and communicating health information?

2. Why is it important to accurately report health information?

3. What are the consequences of distributing and promoting inaccurate health information?

Watch Lesson Two

- "Health Communications: The Message, The Messenger, and The Audience" (16 minutes)

- View the lesson as a group. This should take about 16 minutes.

Post Video Discussion (5 minutes)

After viewing the video, lead the group in a quick discussion about the lesson objectives, to ensure that everyone heard and understood the answers to the above questions.

Group Discussion (30 minutes)

The questions below are designed to encourage deeper, more thorough conversations with your participants about the importance of accurate health information. You do not need to answer every question, choose 2 or 3 questions to focus on. You may want to use the accompanying PowerPoint presentation to walk your group through the questions. If you do, make sure you have customized your slides if you don't plan on discussing every question!

1. In the lesson, Dr. Demby notes that for health messages to have an impact on their intended audiences, they must be important, relevant, credible, reliable, and verifiable.

   - Can you think of a recent health campaign in your community? Was it clear to whom the message was directed?

   - What were some of the ways the message was crafted to reach the intended audience? In what ways did you think it was effective or not?

   - Was it clear that the health campaign was based on reliable data from a credible source? If so, how?

- How do you think the message could have had a bigger impact on the intended audience? Did it resonate with you?

2. As noted in the lesson, the health messenger is as important as the health message.

   - Who do you consider your most credible, straight-forward, honest, and non-judgmental health messenger? Why?

   - What are the best sources of credible health messaging for your community and why?

   - What are some of the reasons you would not listen to a health messenger?

   - How can you ensure that as a health messenger, you don't stigmatize individuals and communities?

3. Crafting health messages for specific audiences is critical. Those you're trying to communicate with may have different backgrounds and beliefs, and different groups may receive and react to messages differently.

   - How many potentially different "audiences" can you identify in your community?

   - What are the similarities between the groups? What are the most significant differences?

   - How can one group positively or negatively influence how the health message might be received?

   - How can you craft a message that provides a clear call to action to one audience, but also encourages support from other audiences? What tools and tactics could be used to reach distinct audiences?

These questions are designed to promote discussions, not just have one person in a group answer them. Feel free to let your participants keep talking about an issue, if there is a productive and healthy conversation happening.

[TEN MINUTE BREAK IF NEEDED]

Group Activity: Action Planning (30 minutes)

After discussing the questions, have your participants break into pairs or small groups to talk about the next steps they can take to help educate the rest of their communities about the importance of health and health education. Here are some example questions to help get them started:

1. Identify a health message you think should be shared with your community. Talk about how you would you craft the message to be relevant, credible, verifiable, and non-judgmental.

2. Identify specific tools that could be used to reach audiences with this health message in your community, such as holding educational events, flyers, using Facebook or WhatsApp. Draft specific messaging and audiences for each tool.

3. Identify the different groups in your community to whom you would direct the message. Identify the distinct characteristics of each group that might affect how they might receive and respond to a public health message.

Wrap-Up (5 minutes)

If possible, encourage attendees learn more about #YALICares by visiting yali.state.gov/health and pledging to be a health advocate. You may also encourage them to sign up for the YALI Network, if they are not already members. Don't forget to thank all your participants, and refer back to the #YALICares toolkit for things to do when your event is over.