

Tailoring Colorectal Cancer Screening Messaging

A Practical Coalition Guide



**NATIONAL
COLORECTAL
CANCER
ROUNDTABLE**

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About the American Cancer

Society National Colorectal Cancer

Roundtable

The American Cancer Society National Colorectal Cancer Roundtable (ACS NCCRT), established in 1997 through a partnership with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), is a national coalition of more than 200 membership organizations. ACS NCCRT members include public organizations, private organizations, voluntary organizations, and invited individuals, each dedicated to reducing the incidence of and mortality from colorectal cancer (CRC) in the U.S., through coordinated leadership, strategic planning, and advocacy. Visit the ACS NCCRT website, www.nccrt.org, to learn more.

Acknowledgments

In 2022, the CDC's Center for State, Tribal, Local, and Territorial Support (CSTLTS) provided funds to ACS to coordinate a pilot project which sought to develop tailored colorectal cancer (CRC) screening messaging in partnership with African American faith leaders from the African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church in the Greater Atlanta metropolitan area. The lessons learned through this pilot project have been incorporated throughout this guide and highlighted in detail in the case study shared on page 20.

The CDC also provides funding to ACS through a cooperative agreement with their [National Comprehensive Cancer Control Program \(NCCCP\)](#), enabling ACS to partner in offering [training and technical assistance](#) to 66 Comprehensive Cancer Control (CCC) programs and coalitions that develop and implement impactful, strategic, and sustainable plans to prevent and control cancer. Development of this guide offered CDC and ACS the opportunity to more broadly disseminate valuable best practices from pilot projects and case studies addressing tailoring health messaging alongside community members. It is written with cancer coalitions in mind, providing them with a practical tool to guide collaborative screening efforts.

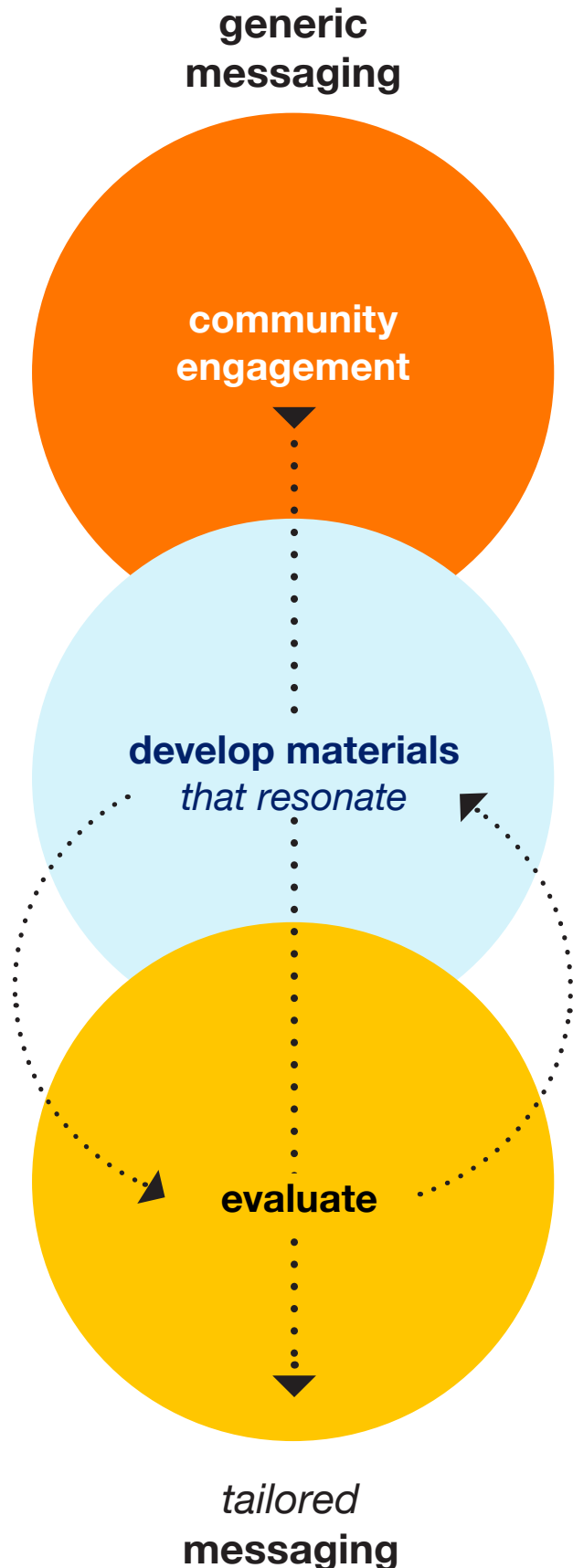
The ACS offers special thanks to Nikki Hayes, MPH, Branch Chief, Comprehensive Cancer Control Branch, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention for her catalytic vision and commitment to this important work.

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Why tailor messaging?

When developing health communications, we are often tempted by the need to create messaging with the broadest possible appeal. However, research shows that health messaging produces greater changes in health behavior when it has been tailored to reflect the needs, values, and motivations of a *specific* community. Accordingly, Comprehensive Cancer Control coalitions (CCCs) often turn to **tailored messaging** when it comes to creating health messaging that resonates within specific communities or specific populations.

Tailoring messaging can be a daunting process, especially for organizations that are trying to reach a new population or who haven't tried tailored messaging before. It requires a deep understanding of the priority population and a lot of investment on the part of the organization and the community they hope to reach. Additionally, the stigma and social discomfort that often accompanies colorectal cancer (CRC) can make developing tailored messaging especially challenging. Though tailored messaging campaigns require more effort to develop than standard messaging campaigns, tailored messages often outperform non-tailored messages when it comes to altering cancer screening behaviors and increasing public knowledge regarding cancer.¹





What does this guide offer?

In an ideal world, organizations would have the funding, time, and capacity to easily and consistently engage their target audiences to develop tailored messaging they know will resonate. But more often than not, organizations find themselves having to make the best use of a limited pool of resources. The American Cancer Society National Colorectal Cancer Roundtable (ACS NCCRT) has developed [several communication guides with comprehensive lists of tailored messaging best practices](#) to help CCCs and their partner organizations navigate the tailored messaging process. ***Tailoring Colorectal Cancer Screening Messaging: A Practical Coalition Guide*** builds upon these existing resources by giving Comprehensive Cancer Control coalitions and their partner organizations a better understanding of what tailoring messaging looks like in practice.

This guide is largely based on information collected during ten interviews with staff from five different organizations—ranging from a rural state cancer coalition to one of the nation’s largest community health center networks—who have recently completed a CRC screening tailored messaging campaign. We have compiled their tips, strategies, insights, and advice so that you can see how a range of different organizations made the most of their available resources to develop materials that resonated with their target audience. We’ve also created [organization-specific case studies](#), so that you can get a better sense of each organization, their specific project, and the resources and strategies they used throughout their campaign. We hope you find their insights helpful as you develop a tailored messaging campaign of your own.

Community

Engagement

Fostering and maintaining community engagement can be challenging. However, building relationships with the community you're trying to reach is a crucial aspect of developing meaningful tailored messaging.

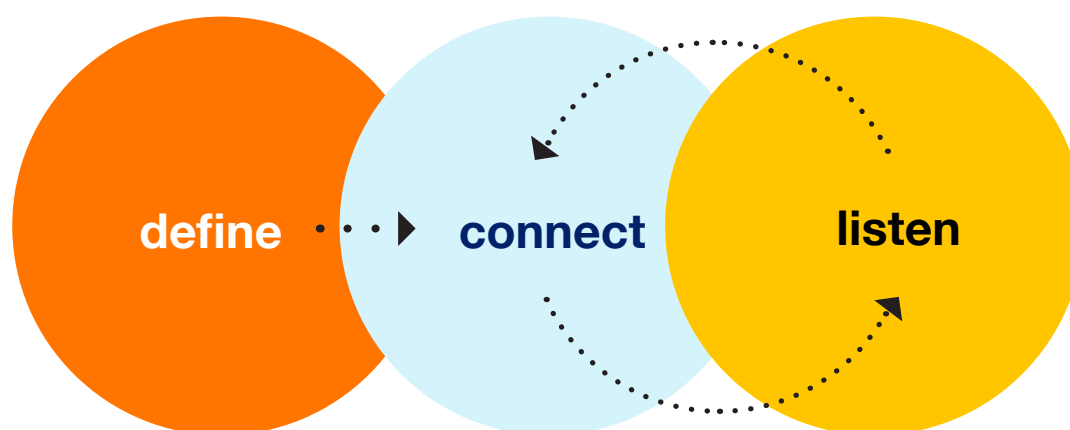
Ultimately, the people that know your target audience best are the community members themselves. Involving them from the beginning not only increases your ability to create messaging that resonates, but also ensures that community members feel like a valued part of the process. Organizations that prioritized the involvement of community members from the start found that maintaining engagement wasn't as difficult because participants understood they were a valued part of the process and were invested in the outcome.

Developing a trusting, mutually beneficial relationship with your target audience takes time. To develop those relationships, you need to:

1. **Define** your target audience and the issues(s) they are facing.
2. **Connect** with community members.
3. **Listen** to their concerns, values, and beliefs regarding the health issue(s).

Keep in Mind:

Tailored messaging requires engagement from your target audience throughout the entire process, from understanding the needs of the target audience to developing messaging and evaluating it for resonance.



1. Define Your Target Audience

The first step in any tailored messaging campaign is to define your target audience. Consider: Who does your coalition need to reach and why? Think about what barriers might prevent people in your community from getting screened, and who in your community is disproportionately impacted by those barriers.

Tips and Strategies:

Here are some strategies the organizations we spoke with utilized to establish their target audience:

- ✓ Consider the data your organization may have access to, such as electronic health records (EHR) and demographic data, claims data, or evaluation data from past interventions and messaging campaigns.
- ✓ Reference existing data sources like [state and local level screening rates](#).
- ✓ Conduct a literature review on existing CRC screening research.
- ✓ Utilize [reports, data analysis tools, and toolkits](#) where priority populations have already been identified.



We're small and haven't had the luxury of commissioned research. We've had to basically go off what's been published in the literature, what's out there in the public health world, and in the CRC world. It's been a combined experience of [our team's] expertise, as well as existing research on our demographic, as it intersects with CRC.

— [Colorectal Cancer Alliance](#)

2. Connect with Community Members

Connecting with community members can help your coalition gain crucial perspectives and insights that you might not have access to otherwise. Outside partners already established in the community of interest can be key in helping you gain trust, participation, and buy-in.



Tips and Strategies:

Here are some strategies the organizations we spoke with used to connect with their community members:

- ✓ Work with clinical partners to identify patients, cancer survivors, and caregivers who can participate.
- ✓ Reach out to colleagues with connections to the target audience, either through personal experience or previous projects.
- ✓ Consult with volunteers, coalition members, and other ambassadors within and outside your organization.

Keep in Mind:

The connections you build throughout your campaign should be beneficial for both your organization and the community members you work with. Be respectful when building new partnerships. Define roles and expectations early—be conscious of what you’re asking of the community members you’re working with, and make sure you provide them with the tools they need to participate.

Both the process and outcome of your message tailoring should be mutually beneficial.

3. Listen and Learn

Listening to and learning from a variety of community members ensures that your coalition will be able to adapt messages that accurately reflect the wants, needs, and concerns of your target audience. Make the most of your community members' expertise by listening to what they have to say, ensuring they feel heard, and incorporating their insights into the materials and dissemination plan you develop.

Tips and Strategies:

Here are some questions to think about as you connect with community members:

- Where do they get information about CRC screening?
- What do they perceive as barriers to getting screened?
- What is their baseline knowledge on what CRC is and how it can be prevented?
- How do they prefer to receive health information?

Even if you don't have a survey just having that beginning conversation... a meeting to figure out who the right people are to have in the room, and then to really understand what the needs are of the community. How do people access care right now? How are they currently being outreached to, what kind of change do the people want to see? It really can be an informal conversation... It's just important to be heard.

— [Kaiser Permanente Center for Health Research](#)

Some coalitions and/or their partner organizations may have the resources to conduct extensive surveys, convene focus groups, and interview community members to understand their target audience. Others may be limited to having only a few informal discussions with key community members.



Tips and Strategies:

When it comes to listening and learning directly from community members:

- ✓ Be mindful as a facilitator and prioritize creating a space where people feel safe and comfortable enough to share.
- ✓ Make it easy to be involved by choosing meeting times and locations that enable community members to participate in the conversation.

Keep in Mind:

Freely discussing the symptoms, treatment, and outcomes associated with CRC may not come as easily to your community members as it does to you. It's not only important to consider how people may have been impacted by CRC, but also how stigma may affect the way they discuss CRC generally. It can be vulnerable for people to share their stories and ask questions.

We held in-person meetings at their church. We were in a safe place for them, in a familiar place. That really helped everyone feel comfortable ... basically the entire day except for small breakout groups, was held in the sanctuary. People were literally in pews, so it was something that was important for them.

— Kaiser Permanente Center for Health Research

Ideally, you'd be able to learn directly from community members about their needs, barriers and perspectives related to CRC screening. However, limited time and resources may prevent your coalition from hearing directly from community members themselves. Remember—just as there were resources to help you narrow in on your target audience—there are resources available to help you better understand the needs, values, and motivations of your target audience.



Tips and Strategies:

Here are some of the resources the organizations we spoke with used to better understand the needs, values, and motivations of their target audience:

- ✓ Reference [ACS NCCRT toolkits](#) to help shape your understanding of the unscreened.
- ✓ Explore materials from previous tailored messaging campaigns for your target audience
- ✓ Reach out to relevant colleagues or organizations in your personal and professional networks who work or have worked with your target audience.

Develop Materials that Resonate

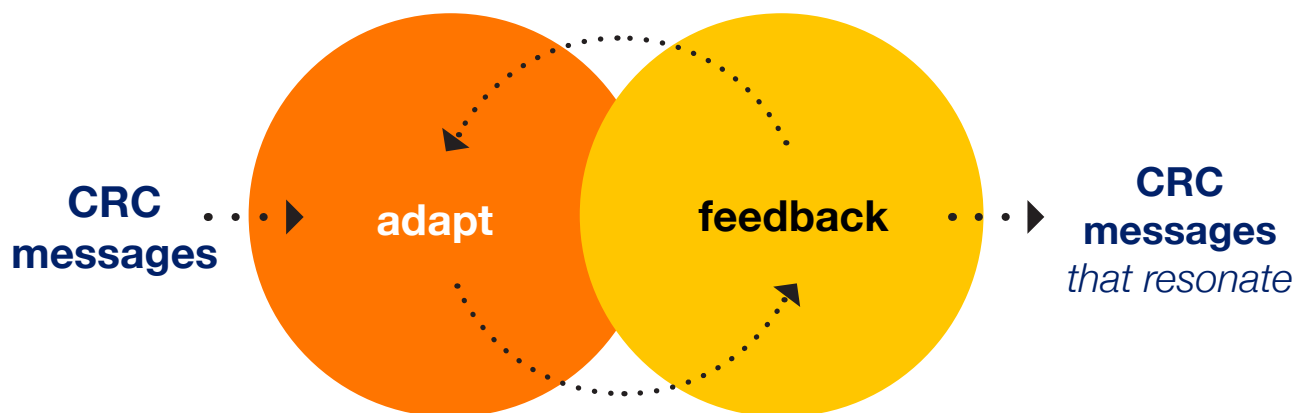
Once you understand the needs of your target audience, you can start developing and adapting materials. The goal of tailored messaging is to create messages that not only resonate, but are also accessible, understandable, and relevant to your audience.

It is important to rely on the expertise of community members to help you shape the content and delivery of your messaging. As you work toward developing materials that resonate, make sure to solicit and incorporate feedback from a variety of community members and stakeholders.

1. **Make adaptations** that are relevant to your target audience.
2. **Seek out and incorporate feedback** from community members.

Keep in Mind:

This is an iterative process. Ideally, your coalition should plan on multiple rounds of adaptations and feedback—the more you invest in this process, the better your chances of creating materials that resonate with your target audience.



1. Make Adaptions

Before creating materials from scratch, explore what's previously been developed that you can personalize, co-brand, or supplement. There's a wide range of modifications that can be made to the content of your messaging and the medium through which it is delivered.

Here are some ways the organizations we spoke with worked to ensure that their messages resonate:

Lean on ACS NCCRT's suggested messaging for the unscreened.

"We leveraged the resources from [ACS] NCCRT, specifically the guidebook for African Americans, for all the guidance and insights that are in there. It's definitely been a big part of how we've crafted specific messages for a social ad or a digital ad."

—Colorectal Cancer Alliance

Don't reinvent the wheel! Look into the messaging that is already out there.

"The University of South Carolina was the best in allowing us to translate their videos. That was huge. We didn't have to spend all this money producing new videos that showed the same thing. All we had to do was adapt the small little piece that showed a different kit than the one that we have, and then translate the other ones into Spanish. That was a huge time saver for us. Huge money saving as well. And they have great products so why not use them."

—AltaMed

Use statistics and data that are relevant to your target audience.

"They were really into numbers. They wanted to know that this was super prevalent and that their community in particular was being affected by it. That was crucial in the way that we ended up developing our program."

—AltaMed

Share personal stories from patients, caregivers, and survivors who resonate with your target audience.

"There is such an impact when you hear a personal story... when you actually hear a person talking about their experience, and them saying, yes, you need to get screened. It's somebody who looks like you. You can relate to it. Bringing that personal element to things has much more of an impact."

—Nebraska Cancer Coalition

Use images, graphics, storylines, and color schemes wisely.

"[Our target audience] wanted us to use more purple because it brings about more of a faith feeling. One of the pictures that we used for our male story, they wanted it changed because the original picture we had chosen was someone more in casual dress, and they said they wanted someone that represented that blue collar workforce. So then we switched to the man in the hardhat."

—Kaiser Permanente Center for Health Research

Partnerships, partnerships, partnerships!

“[The influencer agency] also helped to take that basic foundation from [ACS] NCCRT and then add their own creative input on what that social message looks like at the end of the day. So we do work with an outside agency with experience with this community.”

—Colorectal Cancer Alliance

Use a mixed-media approach and think about how the delivery method can increase resonance.

“If you look at the videos and some of the radio [ads]... there is such an impact when you hear a personal story of someone who has actually been affected versus just reading on a piece of paper...”

—Nebraska Cancer Coalition

Address the specific barriers to screening that impact your target audience.

“The fear component was huge, it came up as one of the main barriers, just being scared. So, we also have fear in [the fotonovela]. I really liked the approach in gathering all the data that’s out there... particularly for the Latino community, and then weaving that in as part of the storyline of the end product.”

—AltaMed

Consider the impact of trusted messengers or the right celebrity influences.

“People talked about, we want to get [the messaging] at the church, because the church is a trusted messenger.... Like with the pastor, having the pastor tell people just to create that trust.”

—Kaiser Permanente Center for Health Research

“One of the ways that we tried to increase the likelihood of reaching the right people was working with African American influencers who have a track record, across their social sphere, of having a significant proportion of African Americans in their audience. You can’t just be African American, you actually have to resonate with African Americans, which is the key that a lot of people miss. Some African American celebrities don’t resonate with African Americans.”

—Colorectal Cancer Alliance

Reflect on successes and lessons learned from your organization’s previous messaging efforts.

“I take a lot of our best practices and apply them towards all our campaigns... From 2022 to 2023, one of the biggest changes that we made was around information about returning the [Fecal immunochemical test or FIT] kit because we were seeing a large percentage of our population ordering the kit but then not returning it. So in 2023, we made some content changes on our envelope and then in our emails as well.”

—HealthPartners

2. Seek Out and Incorporate Feedback

Many of the organizations we spoke with emphasized the importance of soliciting and incorporating feedback in the development of their messages. By incorporating community member feedback, you are helping to ensure any adjustment you make will resonate with your target audience.

Each organization we spoke with used a different combination of approaches for collecting feedback. Some strategies included: multiple focus groups with community members, ‘soft’ campaign launches, and informal conversations with internal stakeholders.

Here are some of the insights organizations shared with us on soliciting and incorporating community feedback:

Test your messaging with your target audience.

“I’ll go sit in a clinic lobby, and while [patients] are waiting, hand them what we just developed and have a conversation with them about what they liked, what they didn’t like, if they understand what we’re trying to say, and just take their feedback on improvements...”

—AltaMed

“We ran a small pilot, because we wanted to see how many people are actually clicking on these email links. ... There’s a lot of spam out there, a lot of different reasons why patients don’t feel comfortable clicking on the link.”

Be open to feedback and incorporate as much as you can.

“Based on feedback, [we] did another iteration of materials and then met again...it was nice because people felt like they were able to continue in the process.”

—Kaiser Permanente Center for Health Research

“It’s really listening to your partners, taking [their feedback] into account, and then truly doing something with their feedback. ... at least acknowledging what they have given you, even if you can’t specifically [make those changes].”

—Nebraska Cancer Coalition

Seek out feedback from a variety of stakeholders.

“There is a particular colleague resource group that is made up of Black and African American colleagues. We did a focus group just of those colleagues because we wanted to understand a little bit of the experience that they have both as colleagues but then also as they’re community leaders and themselves receiving care. They provided us quite a bit of feedback about how we can make our programs more actionable. And when we acted on their feedback, we saw increases in our participation rates and in our member engagement...”

—HealthPartners

Strategy Spotlight: *Boot Camp Translation*

BCT Aims to Answer:

1. What do we need to say in our message to the community?

2. How do we need to disseminate that message to our community?

About Boot Camp Translation:

One highly effective strategy for tailoring health messaging is [Boot Camp Translation \(BCT\)](#).

When the [High Plains Research Network](#) and its Community Advisory Council (made up of farmers, teachers, and other community members in eastern Colorado) identified a lack of community knowledge about colon cancer, they developed BCT to translate evidence-based medical recommendations into accessible and meaningful health messaging.

The BCT process involves a combination of face-to-face sessions, short, focused teleconferences, and numerous mail or email communications to educate participants, brainstorm potential adaptations to existing messaging, and develop locally relevant action-based messages.²

Depending on how it is modified, BCT requires a commitment from community members of 20–25 hours over the course of 4–12 months.³ The process can be modified to be completed in 8 weeks and virtually.

Typical BCT Schedule:

1 Full Day In-Person Session

- robust presentations from local medical experts reflective of the target audience
- facilitated conversation about health condition and evidence-based recommendations
- brainstorm what the messaging should say and how it should be shared

2 Round 1: Follow-Up Phone Calls

- determine focus of phone calls with input from participants
- begin developing main messaging
- solidify target audience

3 Half-Day In-Person Session

- refine and narrow language for messaging
- brainstorm dissemination plan
- discuss evidence-based recommendations with group to inform messaging

4 Round 2: Follow-Up Phone Calls

- continue to narrow and refine messaging and dissemination
- share any mockups with participants for feedback

5 Half-Day In-Person Session

- finalize messaging language
- present mockups for input
- address next steps

We really like [BCT] because it's focused on building a community-based solution. It's engaging the population of focus to develop materials. It's really about local health problems and concerns and focusing on the community at hand.

— Kaiser Permanente Center for Health Research

Strategy Spotlight: *Boot Camp Translation*

Tips and Strategies:

Some questions to ask when adapting messaging:

- How does the messaging resonate with you?
- How does this particular image, character, or phrase resonate with you?
- Do you feel like this message would speak to your community?
- What's missing from the messaging?
- What changes would you make to improve understanding of the health issue?

A component that's really important to me is the expert presenter part... getting the right people there, people that the community trusts. ... When [expert presenters] are sharing information, they're also empowering the participants. You're not just teaching, but you're empowering people. Ultimately that's what you want... for people to understand and feel engaged in [the work].

— Kaiser Permanente Center
for Health Research

Key Components:

- BCT requires a large time commitment from multiple community members. Before implementing BCT, the process is first discussed with key community members to ensure it will be a good fit.
- At the first session, participants receive a robust scientific presentation on the health issue from local medical experts reflective of the target audience. This prepares community members for making informed suggestions for message adaptations by establishing a common understanding of the health issue and encourages engagement from day one.
- Community members act as idea generators during the BCT process, not as session facilitators or note takers. As such, developing partnerships with researchers who can act as facilitators is necessary to keep the BCT process moving and to ensure the messages developed are scientifically accurate.
- BCT uses sessions with community members to brainstorm, adapt, and review changes to materials. Existing messaging on the health issue is shared and community members are asked how they think it could be made more accessible and relevant to their community.



Evaluate

Organizations we spoke with noted the value of being able to track the reach and resonance of the messaging they developed. Collecting information about the impact of your tailoring efforts will not only help you identify successes and areas of improvement, but will also allow you to build on previous efforts year after year.

Here are some of the strategies that the organizations we spoke with used to evaluate their efforts:

Use analytics built into social media platforms, email marketing, and websites.

“We just don’t have the resources to do quarterly tracking. The way we look at the results is we have at least good monitoring tools. We know about impressions. We know about engagement. We know how it’s driving to our quiz on our website. So we do have pretty robust data that we can gather ourselves for those campaigns.”

—Colorectal Cancer Alliance

Use qualitative data through social listening to evaluate resonance.

“We’re social listening. We’re listening to how much people are talking about colon cancer, talking about our campaign, talking about African Americans and colon cancer, maybe combining keywords. We have two social media managers on our team who were actually scanning and pulling out comments to show the spectrum of sentiment, positive and negative. We also ran digital ads, and we were looking at those comments too. The comments on the ads and which ads performed better. Some ads were text only, some ads had faces on them. Some of the faces were White, Black. So all of that information was giving us an understanding of how we were resonating”

—Colorectal Cancer Alliance

Tips and Strategies:

Example evaluation questions could include:

- How well did our tailored messaging resonate with our target audience?
- How were people engaging with the messaging?
- Were our organization’s resources used appropriately?
- What changes can we make to future campaigns to increase reach and resonance?
- How did our tailored messaging efforts contribute to the larger CRC community?
- Did the messaging result in people scheduling appointments or completing their CRC screening?

Keep in Mind:

When deciding on what to evaluate, consider your organization’s goals as well as the goals for your particular messaging efforts.

Choose evaluation questions that help you understand the appropriateness and effectiveness of your messaging and dissemination plan.

Partner

Strong partnerships are the cornerstone of health coalitions. They allow you to leverage resources that increase your coalition's capacity to tailor messaging. Consider how to engage other organizations with similar priorities and missions throughout the tailored messaging process. Partnerships are a great way to increase your coalition's ability to identify and engage community members, tailor messages so they resonate, and disseminate the materials once they're developed.

Tips and Strategies:

Organizations we spoke with found partnerships in the following areas:

- Other coalitions in their regions or with similar target audiences
- CRC advocacy groups
- Branches within their own organizations that could support their efforts
- Patient advisory boards
- Media companies
- Influencer marketing companies
- Healthcare/insurance companies
- Research institutions and academic advisory boards

"If an organization is looking to make headway in this space, [ACS] NCCRT membership is a key part of that... you'll get tapped into so many different resources... toolkits and things like that, but also the broader networks of groups that are willing to fund any particular CRC initiative."

— AltaMed

Resources

ACS NCCRT Resource Center

- [2022 Messaging Guidebook for Black and African American People: Messages to Motivate Screening](#)
- [2019 80% In Every Community Messaging Guidebook: Recommended Messaging To Reach The Unscreened](#)
- [80% by 2018 Communications Guidebook: Hispanics/Latinos and Colorectal Cancer Companion Guide](#)
- [80% by 2018 Communications Guidebook: Asian Americans and Colorectal Cancer Companion Guidebook](#)
- [2021 Messaging Guidebook: Effectively Messaging Cancer Screening During the COVID-19 Pandemic](#)

ACS Comprehensive Cancer Control Technical Assistance and Training Resources

- [Tips for Sustaining the Engagement of Cancer Coalition Partners](#)
- [Nine Habits of Successful Comprehensive Cancer Control Coalitions](#)
- [Communication Tools and Resources](#)

ACS NCCRT Colorectal Cancer Screening Rates



Conclusion

Every tailored messaging campaign is going to look a little different. Lean on the steps outlined in this guide to help structure your efforts as you decide on a strategy for tailoring messaging that suits your coalition. Strategies that worked for one organization might not work for yours depending on your organizational capacity or the target audience you are trying to reach. You might find that even within your own coalition, tailoring efforts look different from year to year or even from project to project. But no matter what strategies you decide to use, or how your campaign may change over time, remember:

1. **Community members are the experts** - the people that understand your target audience best are the community members themselves. Rely on them when you can and try your best to incorporate their thoughts and expertise throughout the process.
2. **Don't reinvent the wheel** - there are plenty of resources and materials available to you and your team as you navigate this process. More often than not, someone has already done market research on your target audience, or even crafted CRC messaging with your target audience in mind.
3. **You aren't in this alone** - learn from other organizations and capitalize on the expertise and advice of others. Build partnerships whenever possible and always remember that organizations like ACS NCCRT and ACS have developed communication guides with you in mind.

Keep in mind that messaging campaigns like these are ongoing efforts. As new information and updated guidelines are shared, it may be necessary to revise your messaging to ensure it is up-to-date.

Each campaign sheds light on what is possible in the world of CRC screening and messaging. Keep track of your lessons learned and don't forget to celebrate your successes.

The work you do makes a difference.

Kaiser Permanente Center for Health Research

in partnership with the American Cancer Society and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

Using Boot Camp Translation to Develop Faith-Based Messaging to Promote Colorectal Cancer Screening within the African Methodist Episcopal Church

Project Description:

- **Goal:** Engage target audience to develop faith-based CRC screening messages that resonate with the African Methodist Episcopal (AME) community and identify the role of the church in bringing CRC information to the AME community
- **Target Audience:** Black and African American congregants of AME churches in the Atlanta, Georgia area
- **Primary ACS NCCRT toolkits used:** [2022 Messaging Guidebook for Black & African American People](#)
- **Materials developed:** [fact sheets, pamphlets, and message cards with personal stories printed and distributed at church; digital content including a social media campaign, videos \(educational and testimonial\), and digital stories](#)

Highlights:

- Used an adapted Boot Camp Translation (BCT) process to solicit input from target audience to develop screening messages that resonated with the AME community.
- In-person session held in the church sanctuary and fellowship hall to create an environment where participants felt safe and comfortable to share their stories.
- Participants received expert presentations from a national leader on CRC, a local leader well-versed in barriers to screening and community resources, and a prominent figure within the church clergy.
- Facilitators created materials between sessions and reviewed with them with participants during follow-up sessions.
- Church leadership were surveyed to help facilitators understand the needs and barriers of the community and how church clergy and elders could help facilitate message dissemination.

What advice would you give to an organization about to start their own tailored messaging campaign?

Have a coordinator or champion within the community. Be mindful of creating a space that allows people to feel comfortable and be their authentic selves. I think of this work as focusing on three pieces... listening, empowering and creating. It's critical to take the time to listen to the community and understand their questions and needs. We [try to] empower participants with the knowledge to go forward and share with friends and family...

Think about striking a balance between what you're getting from your community members and what you need to say from a scientific perspective ... you have to understand the public health science principles and what's important to your patients and find that middle ground...

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HealthPartners

2023 HealthPartners FIT Campaign

Project Description:

- **Goal:** Reduce the number of unreturned Fecal Immunochemical Test (FIT) kits by providing clear instructions and motivate members to order, complete, and return the kit.
- **Target Audience:** Eligible HealthPartners members aged 45-75 due or overdue for CRC screening and live in Virtuwel's service area (primarily Minnesota, Wisconsin, Iowa, North Dakota, and South Dakota).
- **Primary ACS NCCRT toolkits used:** [2022 Messaging Guidebook for Black & African American People](#)
- **Materials developed:** emails tailored to specific age groups and Minnesota Senior Health Options (MSHO) members; improvements to FIT kit mailing envelopes

Highlights:

- User experience (UX) sessions were conducted to learn about members' barriers to and experience using and returning FIT kits.
- Based on insight gained from participants during UX sessions, messaging on the outside of FIT kit envelopes was updated to convey time-sensitivity.
- Previous campaign evaluations were used to inform and enhance the 2023 FIT campaign.
- Email templates were created with tailored subject lines and messages dependent on recipients age and potential life stage at that age.

Age groups included: 45-49 years old, 50-55 years old, 56-59 years old, 60-69 years old, 70-75 years old.

What advice would you give to an organization about to start their own tailored messaging campaign?

Understand your audience and make it relevant. Meet people where they're at and consider your entire audience, what they're going through, and what's important for them at that life stage. Don't over complicate things, keep it simple and relatable.

One of the things that has made us really successful is that we are deliberate about setting actionable goals every year, because that really helps keep us focused. There are so many different things that we could be doing. Making sure that our leadership supports those goals, really helps us stay focused.

INTERVIEWEES:

Anne Book

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Colorectal Cancer Alliance

They Didn't Say

Project Description:

- **Goal:** Increase awareness of the lowered screening age; drive people to the Alliance's Screening Navigation tool; increase CRC screening rates, especially among Black and African Americans adults across the US; increase the number of people joining the Alliance community, especially communities of color
- **Target Audience:** Black and African American people aged 35-64
- **Primary ACS NCCRT toolkits used:** [2022 Messaging Guidebook for Black & African American People](#)
- **Materials developed:** [social media press kit](#); [press releases](#); digital ads; [video content](#); [infographics](#)

Highlights:

- Utilized NCCRT's research to balance stark realities with positive, motivating messaging.
- Multimodal approach using influencer-led content, PR amplification, social media ads, crowd-sourced stories, and Now You Know factoids (infographics).
- Partnered with trusted messengers to feature testimonials, conversations and images from real-life community members.
- Awareness messaging reach was extended to include those of pre-screening age.
- Used social media captions to expound on call to action (Get Screened) and to highlight the importance of getting screened earlier if one has symptoms or other risk factors.
- Partnered with an influencer marketing agency to find influencers and celebrities that resonated with the target audience.
- Campaign materials pushed to a screening eligibility quiz on Colorectal Cancer Alliance website.
- Heavy use of social media and website analytics to help evaluate reach and engagement of the campaign, including social listening to track comments and hashtags.

What advice would you give to an organization about to start their own tailored messaging campaign?

I have come to learn that [the stigma around CRC and screening] is a huge issue, especially within the Black community. Don't come in thinking you know what you know, because you don't know what you don't know. Even if you've got experience in health care or cancer.

Leave no stone unturned, make no assumptions, know what you know and know what you don't know. Even if you are a part of or feel an affinity toward the target population. Diversifying our research was important... look for scientific and evidence-based research, but also have conversations. We didn't have a formal focus group, but I had lots of conversations with Black people on our team, patients, survivors, family members, and caregivers.

INTERVIEWEES:

Nana Kufuor
Project Manager
Colorectal Cancer Alliance

Marcie Klein
Senior Vice President of Prevention
Colorectal Cancer Alliance

Nebraska Cancer Coalition (NC2)

Time To Fight Back 2023

Project Description:

- **Goal:** Create an awareness campaign that combats the lack of information and misinformation about colorectal cancer in Nebraska; heighten awareness of lifesaving colorectal cancer screening
- **Target Audience:** Nebraskans, ages 45-75 who are unscreened or know someone who is unscreened, with an emphasis on rural communities
- **Primary ACS NCCRT toolkits used:** [2019 80% In Every Community Messaging Guidebook: Recommended Messaging To Reach The Unscreened](#) (specifically section on ‘rural dwellers’); [2022 Messaging Guidebook for Black & African American People](#)
- **Materials developed:** [News release; flyers, posters; social media content; radio and video interviews](#)

Highlights:

- Created materials to address the reduced recommended screening age to 45. ensure they resonate with the specific target audience.
- Increased relevance to target audience by tailoring data with statewide statistics.
- Primarily worked with healthcare providers and local partners to distribute CRC information and materials.
- Developed materials in multiple languages based on target audience, including English, Spanish, and Arabic.
- Tailored images of individuals in all materials to ensure they resonate with the specific target audience.
- Made materials co-brandable to amplify their usage state and nationwide.
- Created social media materials to promote “Dress in Blue Day” to raise awareness for colon cancer.
- Partnered with agricultural partners to push digital and print materials.
- engagement of the campaign, including social listening to track comments and hashtags.

What advice would you give to an organization about to start their own tailored messaging campaign?

Talk with your partners and develop a relationship! Ask them, what works in their communities. Do not assume that you know all the answers. It is about listening to your partners and tailoring materials to meet the needs of the communities and those we serve.

INTERVIEWEES:

Tamara Robinson

Program Director
Nebraska Cancer Coalition

AltaMed

CRC Screening Outreach at a Large Urban Federally Qualified Health Center

Project Description:

- **Goal:** Increase the number of FIT kits completed and returned by AltaMed patients.
- **Target Audience:** AltaMed patients in Southern California with an abnormal colorectal cancer screening test result
- **Primary ACS NCCRT toolkits used:** [80% by 2018 Communications Guidebook: Hispanics/Latinos and Colorectal Cancer Companion Guide](#)
- **Materials developed:** [Colonoscopy fact sheet, bowel preparation infographics, FIT instructional video](#)

Highlights:

- Used virtual Boot Camp Translation (BCT) process consisting of three sessions conducted via Zoom and facilitated by bilingual staff.
- Helped to ensure participation by having designated staff available to support BCT participants experiencing issues using the teleconference platform.
- Mailed BCT participants printed copies of materials to be discussed in upcoming teleconferences to prevent tech issues associated with needing to view multiple windows at once.
- Developed bilingual (English and Spanish) materials.
- Adapted existing [FIT kit video tutorial](#) by translating to [Spanish](#) and editing video to include visuals of the FIT kit used by the health system.

What advice would you give to an organization about to start their own tailored messaging campaign?

Get started. There are so many different ways to learn from patients. Whether there's a formal, participatory research method that's used like Boot Camp Translation or partnering with patient experience teams that are already embedded within health services operations. It's critical to foster opportunities to ask the end users of our services what their clinical experiences are.

Don't recreate the wheel. There's a lot of very similar groups that are doing similar work. For example, when the new screening age was decreased to 45, we were able to get examples of postcards that people are sending. Being open to asking others that are doing similar work. Seeing what's out there and not recreating the wheel. Taking advantage of the work that [ACS] NCCRT has done. Reading through the companion guides. Just really immersing yourself in the different activities, webinars, creating partners.

INTERVIEWEES:

Anne Escaron, PhD, MPH

Research Scientist
Institute of Health Equity, AltaMed Health Services Corporation

Esmeralda Ruiz, MPH

Population Health Manager
Institute of Health Equity, AltaMed Health Services Corporation

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