Tool 1: Developing your communications workplan

**Time:**
- 3 days if you have not completed the Global Mental Health Policy Influence Toolkit
- 1 ½ days if you have completed the Global Mental Health Policy Influence Toolkit

**Resources:**
Requires 1 person to take charge of developing and writing the strategy; team to approve; project lead to sign off; access to MS Excel for workplan template.

**Purpose:**
Helps your team to plan your communications work in a way that maximises limited resources, targets your stakeholders’ needs and inspires them into action.

What is a communications workplan?
A communications workplan is an internal, practical document detailing your project’s communications objectives, methods, activities, team member responsibilities and timeline.

**Note:** a communications workplan is useful, but you will still need to be responsive to unforeseen events, e.g. a new announcement for mental health services could be used to generate interest about your innovation.

- See worked example in the communications workplan template (MS Excel)

The steps
If you have completed the [Global Mental Health Policy Influence Toolkit](http://ideas.lshtm.ac.uk/resources/dissemination-policy-influence-toolkit) (strongly advised):

1. **Download the communications workplan template.** The worked example will help with the next steps.
2. **Objective, Stakeholders, Interest/Alignment, Desired behaviour change:** Fill in the communications workplan for your chosen policy objective with your stakeholders, their interest and alignment in your policy objective, and your desired “expect to see”, “like to see”, “love to see” behavioural outcomes based on your results from completing the Global Mental Health Policy Influence Toolkit.
3. **Information needs:** Fill in the boxes on your stakeholder’s information needs by asking yourself “what does the stakeholder need to know in order to change their behaviour?” See the [guiding principles: packaging your messages](http://ideas.lshtm.ac.uk/resources/guiding-principles-packaging-your-messages) to understand more about your stakeholder’s information needs.
4. **Key messages:** Shape your key messages for each of your stakeholder groups, bearing in mind their information needs. Shape your communications messages to your stakeholder’s needs. Use the tips in the [guiding principles: packaging your messages](http://ideas.lshtm.ac.uk/resources/guiding-principles-packaging-your-messages) of this toolkit to make sure your messages are tailored to their knowledge, will be remembered and galvanise them into action.
5. **Communications methods:** Fill out the communications methods you are planning to get your stakeholder to achieve the desired behaviours you have outlined. You will have covered this briefly in your policy influence plan under “How to achieve your desired behaviour change” in Tool 2 from the Global Mental Health Policy Influence Toolkit. You may want to include the products in this toolkit in your methods, as well as considering other options (see [Ideas for communication methods box](http://ideas.lshtm.ac.uk/resources/dissemination-activity-and-impact-maternal-and-newborn-health-projects-ethiopia-india-and)\(^6\)). Tips to keep in mind:
   a. **Use methods that your stakeholders will engage with.** If your stakeholders don’t use Facebook but do go to community meetings, don’t open a Facebook account but attend a meeting!
   b. **Use existing communications methods** either within your project or externally, e.g. the Mental Health Innovation Network newsletter or project reports, rather than developing your own, e.g. organisational website and national policy dissemination event.
   c. If you have completed Tool 3 from the Global Mental Health Policy Influence Toolkit, think about what that means for the types of communications methods you may use, e.g. if you are a

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knowledge broker, you may want to actively engage in policy meetings but if you are a knowledge translator, you may want to focus your resources in writing policy briefs for non-specialist audiences.

6. **Communication activities:** Break your methods down into all the individual activities needed to complete the method, e.g. book a room, create flyers, print flyers. For communications products, use [Tool 2: Perfect communications product checklist](#).

7. **Who leads the activity?** In your team decide who will carry out each communication activity and produce the communications products.

8. **When does the activity happen?** Decide when you will be carrying out your communications activities. You may want to use the [in2mentalhealth calendar of global mental health events](#) to time your communications activities, e.g. launch a report to coincide with World Mental Health Day, 10 October.

9. **Get sign off from your project lead and circulate to your team.**

### Ideas for communications methods

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<td>Social media, e.g. Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn</td>
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<td>Impact summary (Tool 3)</td>
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### If you haven’t completed the Global Mental Health Policy Influence Toolkit:

1. Download the [communications workplan template](#). The [worked example](#) will help with the next steps.

2. **Objective:** Your objective can be a project implementation objective, e.g. train 100 lay workers in counselling, or an objective aimed at changing policy, e.g. to get a national mental health action plan in place. Create a new orange coloured line on the communications workplan matrix for each objective.

3. **Stakeholders:** For each objective, list the key stakeholders you may involve to achieve your objective. Be as specific as possible. If you aren’t best placed to get in touch with one stakeholder, e.g. Minister for Health, you may want to consider listing an intermediary stakeholder, e.g. Minister’s political aide. It is advised you complete Tool 1 from the Global Mental Health Policy Influence Toolkit to identify your priority stakeholders.

4. **Interest and alignment:** For each stakeholder, fill in if they have high, middle or low alignment and interest with your objective.
   a. **Interest:** are they committing resources to mental health? Do they want something to happen? Are they speaking openly about it?
   b. **Alignment:** is your project likely to lead to change that your stakeholder broadly agrees with? Do they share the same sense of its importance?

5. **Desired behaviour change:** For each stakeholder, list the behaviour you would like them to take on in order to achieve your policy objective. If you would like to do some extra analysis, you can break it down into behaviours you would “expect to see” “like to see”, “love to see” using Tool 2 from the Global Mental Health Policy Influence Toolkit.

6. **Continue from step three in the “If you have completed...” section above.**

### What next?

Use this workplan to check back and make sure your communications activities are going ahead. You may want to make adjustments as you respond to changes not included in your initial workplan.