

A Social Marketing Framework for the Development of Effective Public Awareness Programs

Joan Young
Managing Director
Centre for Social Marketing
Colmar Brunton Social Research
GPO Box 2212
Canberra, ACT 2601
(02) 6249 8566
&
Peter O'Neill
Marketing & Communications
State Emergency Service
Level 6, 6-8 Regent Street,
Wollongong, NSW 2500
(02) 4224 2276

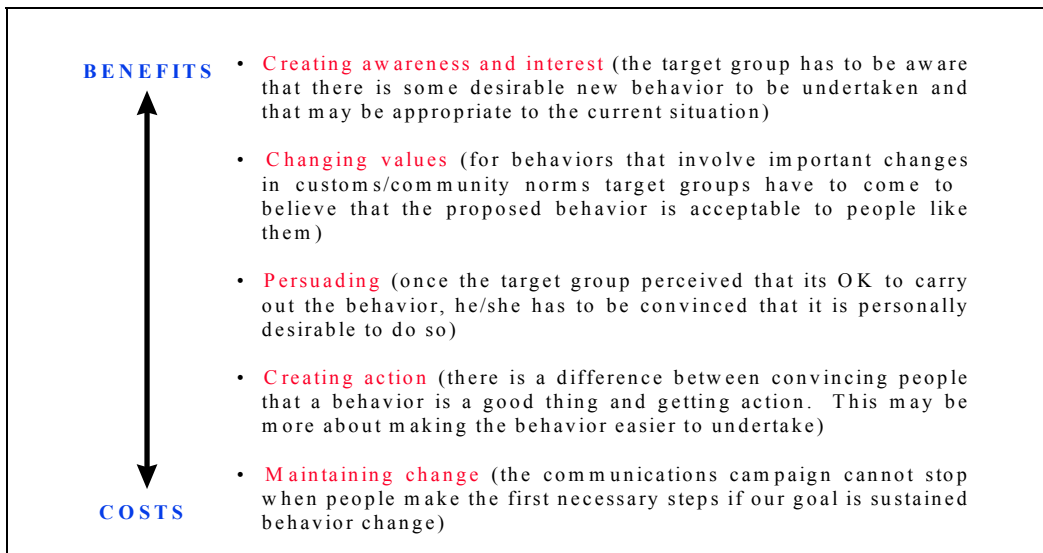
This paper discusses the application of a social marketing framework to the development of effective public awareness programs among flood prone communities. The primary purpose of this type of program would be to encourage residents of flood-prone areas to become prepared for a serious flood. Central to this approach is the identification of strategies aimed at increasing knowledge and awareness, and influencing behaviour change to prevent loss of life in a serious flood.

Social Marketing is defined as *programs designed to influence the voluntary behaviour of target audiences to benefit the target audience and/or the society as a whole*. This approach recognises that in order for a campaign to be successful, increasing levels of awareness and knowledge will not be enough unless behaviour change is an outcome of this.

The literature suggests people do not undertake instantaneous behaviour change, they work their way up to it gradually, often going through clearly definable stages. A useful model of behaviour change stages has been developed by Prochaskau and DiClemente (1986), who suggest that people move through five stages as they go from ignorance or indifference towards some important behaviour to becoming committed to it. The research suggested in this proposal is a first step in identifying what will be required to move people to the next behaviour stage in terms of the following model.

- **Precontemplation:** people really are not thinking about the behaviour as being appropriate for them at this point in their lives
- **Contemplation:** people are actually thinking about and evaluating recommended behaviours
- **Preparation:** people have decided to Act and are trying to put in place whatever is needed to carry out the behaviour
- **Action:** people are doing the behaviour for the first time - or first several times
- **Confirmation:** people are committed to the behaviour and have no desire/intention to return to earlier behaviour

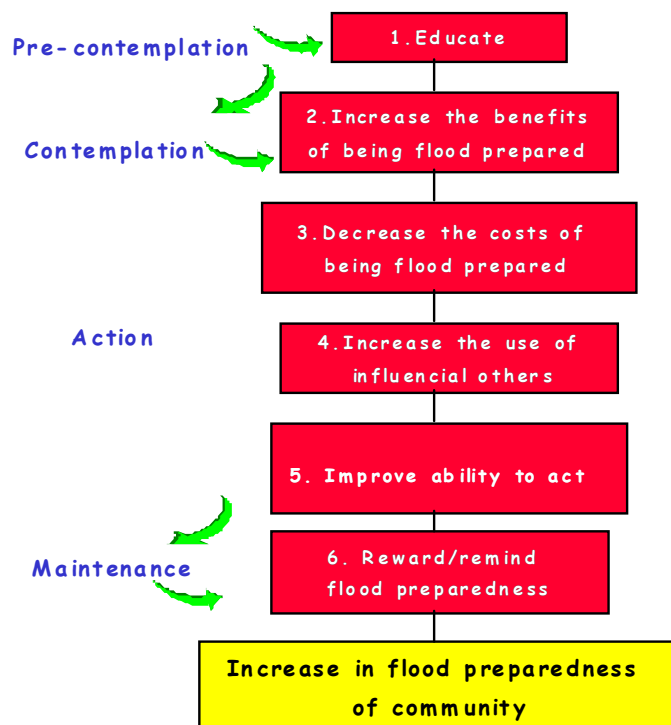
The five behaviour stages can be cross-referenced to the following five programme tasks:



This paper applies the above models to the task of encouraging people to become flood prepared. The strategy would involve influencing the knowledge, attitudes and behaviour of people who live in a floodplain so that they are prepared for, and survive, a serious flood with minimum injury and loss of possessions.

Andreasen (1995) has developed a model that aligns the behaviour stages with the communications task.

BEHAVIOURAL STAGE



The six different stages and their behavioural stages are explained as follows:

How to encourage flood preparedness

This section presents the messages and strategies required to shift people from each stage of behaviour towards maintaining the behaviour of being flood prepared.

1 Raise awareness of flood preparedness

People in pre-contemplation may either not be aware of the need to be flood prepared or may not see flood preparedness as something that is appropriate or desirable for them. **Education** is required to shift people from pre-contemplation to contemplation through 1. Raising awareness and 2. Communicating the positive consequences of becoming prepared so that people view being prepared as desirable, relevant and appropriate for them. In order to move people from not even thinking about becoming flood prepared to considering undergoing flood preparedness, the following beliefs may need to be changed by sending out specific messages which address each one:

Current belief

- flood preparedness is not necessary
- flood preparedness won't make any difference
- flooding is not a risk
- there will be plenty of time to worry about evacuating once the flood is actually on it's way
- the authorities have a plan which means I don't have to do anything/worry

Message

- flood preparedness is necessary
- flood preparedness will prevent death, injury and loss of possessions
- a serious flood could happen 'to you'
- a serious flood could happen any day time and there may only be a few hours warning so get prepared now
- your chances of survival in a serious flood will be higher if you have your own plan/be responsible for yourself and your family in a serious flood

Once people are aware of the need to be prepared the following strategies are required to shift people from wanting to be prepared to actually doing something about it.

2. Increasing the benefits of flood preparedness

When people are in the contemplation stage, Andreasen's model states that 'the most effective behaviour change strategy is to emphasise the **benefits** of the new behaviour'.¹ His research also tells us to 'pay more attention to the benefits of the behaviour itself than to the long term outcomes of that behaviour'.² In the context of this paper, it means that the immediate benefit of for example participating in an activity that is exciting or fun may be extremely important in encouraging flood preparedness behaviour. Key benefits, which may motivate people to become flood prepared, are:

Benefit	Message
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prevention of death/injury 	To be flood prepared will help keep you, your family/friends/loved ones safe
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Control 	You can control the impact of a serious flood by becoming flood prepared

¹ Alan.R.Andreasen, 'Marketing Social Change', 1995, p.231

² Alan.R.Andreasen, 'Marketing Social Change', 1995, p.231

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sense of relief, peace of mind and belonging 	To be flood prepared will ensure you know exactly what to do and who will help in an evacuation. Get to know your neighbours and be part of the community
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fun, enjoyment 	Flood preparation is enjoyable and group/family activities are fun

3. Decrease the costs of flood preparedness

Andreasen's research tells us that changing behaviour always involves some kind of cost³. Therefore, it is important to understand and identify the costs of becoming flood prepared if behaviour change is to be implemented successfully. Minimising the perceived costs will have most impact on people who have begun to consider the benefits for themselves, but who are at the early part of the contemplation stage. Like benefits, costs may be both rational and emotional. Costs that may have significant influence on changing behaviour if reduced are:

Cost	Strategy
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fear of a serious flood 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preparation will protect you from the worst consequences of a serious flood
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inconvenience 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quick, easy and fun – part of everyday life

4. Increase the positive influence of others

This involves identifying people who can influence the behaviour of others in the community (such as business leaders, publicans, ministers of the church, principals and safety officers in institutions) and encouraging them to suggest, remind and support others to become flood prepared. As Andreasen's research suggests, 'behaviour change does not take place in a social vacuum, rather the broader society, cultural norms and values have important roles to play – as do individuals, family and friends'.⁴ The influential others may be able to influence change by:

- Ensuring the people they come in contact with are aware of the flood risk and know what to do to be prepared
- Telling people that flood preparedness is important and part of ensuring their families safety
- Providing encouragement, support and highlighting the importance and key benefits of becoming flood prepared
- Alerting and reinforcing the importance and need for flood preparations and by providing information removing fear about flooding and any stigma attached to becoming prepared.

5. Increase self efficacy

This strategy involves providing people with the skills, confidence and resources to believe they can successfully become prepared for a flood and help them to actually change. For example by providing accessible and inexpensive disaster kits, flood plans, or reminders on street signs that a road is a major evacuation route.

To ultimately shift behaviour it is useful to identify the barriers which prevent or make it harder for people to change their behaviour from not undergoing flood preparedness to actually maintaining regular flood preparedness behaviour. The critical key barriers, which may need to be overcome before people can be flood ready, could include:

- Lack of awareness of the consequences of a serious flood – therefore lack of motivation for flood preparedness

³ Alan.R.Andreasen, 'Marketing Social Change', 1995, p.238.

⁴ Alan.R.Andreasen, 'Marketing Social Change', 1995, p.253

- Not knowing where to get information from and what to do to become prepared
- Concern that flood preparedness will take time and effort
- Feeling that flood preparedness is for people who are paranoid/worriers.

The potential solutions for these identified barriers may include:

- Undertaking a high impact campaign which personalises the potential for loss of life
- Providing a number of sources of information and publicising these
- Offering flood preparedness ideas that are easy, quick and even fun
- Re-positioning flood preparedness so that it is seen as practical, sensible and responsible. It must offer a sense of control, reassurance, power and fun/excitement as the exchange to get people to undertake the behaviour.

6. Reward and remind positive behaviour

Once people have undertaken action to become flood prepared it is very important that they maintain this behaviour. If flooding occurs infrequently a reminder system that will prompt people to practice their flood preparedness may be required. This could include continuous media exposure, street evacuation competitions, a flood evacuation day, commemoration or concert. In addition whenever flooding occurs in the area or anywhere in Australia or throughout the world there is an opportunity to use the event to remind people about the threat of flood and ways to become prepared.

Bibliography

Andreasen, A-R (1995), Marketing Social Change: Changing Behaviour to Promote Health, Social Development, and the Environment, San Francisco: Jossey Bass.

Prochaskau, J.O., Di Clemente, C.O., & Norcross, J.C., (1992), In search of how people change: Application to addictive behaviours. American Psychologist, 47: 1102-1114.
Emergency Management Australia (1995). Flood Warning: An Australian Guide.

Planning and Management Consultants (1983). Notifying Floodplain Residents: Assessment of Public Information Programs. Prepared for Illinois Department of Transportation, Division of Water Resources.

Chas Keys. Making Sure That Warnings of Severe Weather Are Understood in the Community. New South Wales State Emergency Service.

Ketteridge, A., & Fordham, M. (1997). Flood warning and the local community context. In J. Handmer (Ed.), Flood Warnings: Issues and Practice in Total System Design. Middlesex University: Flood Hazard Research Centre.

The South Pacific Programme Office of the United Nations Department of Humanitarian Affairs and the United Nations Department for Development Support and Management Services (1997). Developing Effective Education and Awareness Programmes: An Information Guide For National Disaster Management Officials.

O'Neill, P. (1999). Summary of the Holistic Intervention in Local Government Areas (HILGA) Model.

Dow, C., & Cutter, S.L. (1997). Repeat Response to Hurricane Evacuation Orders. University of South Carolina.

Fitzsimons, J. (1997). Flood Warnings – Dissemination in the National Rivers Authority: In J. Handmer (Ed.), Flood Warning: Issues and Practice in Total System Design. Middlesex University: Flood Hazard Research Centre.