**MRASH Conference 2024 Messaging in Minutes – Reporting Back on Your Great Ideas!**

We had 32 MRASH participants who weighed in on the topic of **Communicating Safety and Health messages to Special Populations** (Youth, non-English speakers, and those with learning disabilities). And what an amazing job they did! The groups quickly realized that the concepts for effective messaging were cross-cutting between each group. Below is a summary of the work that was done. We hope that these ideas can serve as a springboard for the creation of effective ag safety and health messaging.

**Considerations for developing messaging for YOUTH:**

1. **Use of Media & Technology**: Leverage **social media** and **current trends** (like pop culture, memes, superheroes) to engage youth where they are. **Short videos** and **interactive content** (quizzes, challenges) appeal to their attention spans and help reinforce key messages.
2. **Visuals & Graphics**: Use **age-appropriate images**, **graphics**, **cartoons**, and **illustrations** to simplify complex ideas. **Bright colors**, dynamic visuals, and **funny elements** can make safety more engaging and memorable. **Infographics** and **simple diagrams** can help with clarity.
3. **Age-Appropriate Messaging**: Tailor messages to the child's developmental stage. For younger kids, use **simple concepts**, **comics**, and **short, clear sentences**. For older youth, offer more detailed information with **real-world examples**, and allow for deeper engagement with the topic.
4. **Concise Communication**: **Short messages** are essential for keeping attention, with a focus on **getting to the point**. Avoid overwhelming youth with excessive information—use **less text** and **larger font sizes** to ensure clarity and readability.
5. **Fun & Engaging**: Integrate **humor** and **games** to make learning fun. **Superheroes** or popular characters can model positive safety behaviors, helping to capture interest while delivering key messages.
6. **Parental Involvement**: Ensure messaging considers **parental consent** and aligns with **parental perceptions** of safety. Offer resources or **guidelines** that help parents engage in the conversation, including age-appropriate explanations of topics.
7. **Real-Life Examples & Empowerment**: Use **real-world scenarios** and **interactive education** to encourage decision-making. Empower youth to **take responsibility** for their safety by providing opportunities for hands-on learning and decision-making.
8. **Multiple Outreach Channels**: Implement a **multi-channel approach**, including **school programs**, **social media campaigns**, and **community outreach**. Direct communication through schools ensures the message reaches students in a trusted environment.
9. **Clear Tone & Vocabulary**: Match the **tone of the message** to the audience—use a **friendly**, **respectful**, and **supportive** tone, avoiding language that could provoke fear. Keep the **vocabulary simple** to match the youth's **reading level**.
10. **Simplify Learning**: Focus on **training** that includes **brief explanations**, **interactive activities**, and **hands-on learning** experiences. Use **games** and **simulation-based training** for topics like **tractor safety**.

**Considerations for developing messaging for non-English speakers:**

1. **Accurate and Culturally Sensitive Translation**: Ensure **culturally appropriate translations** that reflect both the **language** and **local cultural context**. Use **consistent translation** across all materials and **back translation** (reversing the translation to check for accuracy). Avoid using language that might have **negative connotations** in the target culture.
2. **Visuals & Graphics**: Utilize **images**, **infographics**, and **visuals** to communicate key messages. **Pictures of universal concepts** (e.g., handwashing, road safety) are effective for overcoming language barriers. Ensure that visuals **model diverse skin tones** and **reflect cultural beliefs** and values to ensure relatability.
3. **Simple Language & Clear Messaging**: Keep the **reading level** appropriate for the audience and avoid jargon or complex terminology. Use **simple, straightforward vocabulary** that aligns with the target population's **health literacy**. Avoid **information overload** by focusing on core messages and breaking down complex topics into easily digestible pieces.
4. **Audio and Multilingual Resources**: Provide **audio translations** for people who may have low literacy in their native language. Consider using **dual-language resources**, with both the local language and English included on the same material. **Social media** can also be an effective tool for sharing audio or video content in multiple languages.
5. **Cultural Sensitivity**: Understand and respect the **cultural beliefs** and **traditions** of the target population. Tailor messaging to align with local customs and practices. Incorporate **cultural references** or **local slang** where appropriate to make the message more relatable.
6. **Appropriate Outreach Channels**: Use **outreach channels** that are commonly accessed by the community, such as local events, places of worship, or community centers. Consider traveling to the target populations directly to distribute materials and conduct training.
7. **Interactive and Hands-On Learning**: Offer **hands-on activities** and **training** in the native language. **Trainers who are native speakers** can build trust and ensure effective communication. Use tools like **flip charts**, **pocket guides**, or **toolkits** to enhance learning and provide accessible references.
8. **Engagement Through Fun and Relatable Characters**: Utilize **superheroes** or culturally relevant characters in educational content to make safety and health topics more engaging. Superheroes can be used as role models to demonstrate safe practices in a fun and memorable way.
9. **Consistent and Clear Signage:** Use clear **signs and visuals** with minimal text to ensure comprehension across language barriers. Keep **font size** large and legible for easy reading.
10. **Respect Local Learning Styles**: Adapt to the learning preferences and **learning styles** of the community, such as more visual or hands-on methods, and incorporate **body language** and **demonstrations** to enhance understanding.


**Considerations for developing messaging for non-English speakers:**

1. **Simplified Communication**: Tailor messaging to the **reading level** and **ability** of the audience. **Simplify text** by breaking up long paragraphs, using **shorter sentences**, and incorporating **less text** per page. Focus on **clear, direct communication** and avoid overwhelming the learner with complex language.
2. **Accessible Formats**: Use **larger fonts**, **high-contrast colors**, and **easier-to-read fonts** (such as those designed for dyslexia) to improve **readability**. Ensure that materials are **accessible** through different formats, like **large print**, **audio**, **videos with close**

**captioning**, and **alternative text** for images. Consider **infographics**, **comics**, and **flip charts** for visual support.

3. **Interactive and Hands-On Learning**: Incorporate **interactive activities** like **return demonstrations**, **games**, and **hands-on training** to reinforce concepts. **Demonstrations** and **real-life examples** allow individuals to actively engage with the content and practice skills. Providing extra time during activities helps accommodate various learning paces.

4. **Use of Visuals and Graphics**: Include **pictures** and **graphics** that represent key concepts clearly. **Infographics** and **simple illustrations** help reinforce ideas without relying too heavily on text. Use **color contrast** effectively to draw attention to important information without overwhelming the learner.

5. **Technology and Multimedia**: Leverage **technology** (apps, videos, online tools) to engage learners in different ways, but ensure that technology is not overly complicated or distracting. **Audio and video** can support visual learning and allow for multiple senses to be engaged.

6. **Structured and Clear Training**: Organize training sessions and materials to align with the needs of the audience. **Structure the content** in a logical, sequential way, starting with foundational concepts and building up. Offer clear **directions** and **step-by-step guidance** throughout the learning process.

7. **Environment and Comfort**: Create a comfortable learning environment where individuals feel at ease. This might include the option of having **comfort animals** or offering breaks as needed. Ensure that physical spaces are **accessible** to individuals with various disabilities.

8. **Supportive Educators**: Train **educators** to better understand the needs of learners with disabilities, equipping them with strategies to adapt their teaching methods accordingly. Encourage educators to be patient, **encouraging**, and **supportive** in their approach.

9. **Family Involvement**: Invite **family members** to participate in training sessions to provide additional support. This helps reinforce the information and allows for family-based learning strategies at home.

10. **Specialized Resources**: Offer **specialized resources** such as **pocket guides**, **toolkits**, and **flip charts** that individuals can refer to outside of the training. **Games** and **interactive tools** can also provide a fun way to reinforce learning in a non-threatening way.

**And finally – participants shared one tip for those of us who are communicating ag safety and health messaging with ag communities:**

1. Be specific and avoid negative information

2. When translating use transcreation versus translation.

3. Use extra effort and time when developing resources for special populations.

4. Do your homework – prep!

5. Make content and visual appropriate for demographic.

6. Test materials with your intended audience.

7. Hands on. Got to your audience, don't make them come to you.

8. Use photos and visuals as opposed to words.

9. Don't assume everyone will just "get it".

10. Understand your audience.

11. Video.

12. Presentation matters.

13. Revisit training often.

14. Pictures are good for a large group.

15. The audience of the resource drive the development of the resource.

16. Think about colors.

17. Free stuff/door prizes.

18. Youth have more energy and more adaptability if message strikes them well.

**FABULOUS WORK TEAM!**