

Using Technology to Increase Access to Services

Provider Day Networking Session notes

Challenges

- Website, Facebook, Twitter can all be seen by youth as uncool. How can we get youth involved in creating Tumblr, Instagram, etc.—platforms they do consider cool?
- Confidentiality and privacy issues when using online media.
- Bureaucracy prevents programs from making use of interactive social networking – needs too much approval; approval may not be given in the first place. Some providers don't even have Facebook pages for this reason.
 - For one group it took a full year to get internal approval to put up a FB page, and they still don't have approval to make it interactive. But baby steps are still progress!
- How can we use digital media with minimal investments of time and funds?
- Decisions on funding from the state take a long time. When we hear that funding cuts are possible it puts projects in limbo. Not all agencies can take the risk to move forward. If you have to take a cut to your core program, can you take the tech money and put it toward your core program?
- Using QR codes
- Lack of staff to maintain interactive site.
- Keeping equipment updated.
- Technology changes so fast. Hard to keep up.

Discussion

Uncool to youth

- Peer ed group helped. They got their friends involved. With experience, youth were allowed to be administrators on FB.
- Another group had a secret FB group (the tightest available security on FB), which was very successful. (Mixed success with their public page for adults. Adults aren't engaging so much there. It's hard to justify the time it takes.)
- Identify your social media goals so that you can choose the tool that fits your goals.
- One program is having a lot of success with FB as a communication vehicle, e.g. answering questions about how to get to the clinic. Youth also use FB to make clinic appointments through private messaging. Their peer educators use Tumblr because that's cooler for them.
- Some use FB, such as FB ads, as teasers that drive users to websites. Has not worked well for everyone, however.
- Asking people to register to get into website drove people away.
- Many websites don't work as well on cell phones. FB pages do work on mobile.
- Some organizations have only adult sites, not youth-friendly. One solution is to create a youth-friendly micro-site, which does not have to be too expensive.

- Check FB insights for usage statistics and demographics. However, you need to have a certain number of fans to get access to stats.
- One agency assigns a staff member to answer questions asked confidentially via email.

Tech changes fast.

- Could products be designed “from above,” centrally, and providers given access? As it is, many are trying to invent things without the full expertise, which is labor and dollar intensive.

Texting

- Various groups are using texting campaigns, e.g., texting a healthy living message once a week with the clinic. Not all teens like it, because they don’t want others seeing the message.
- Planned Parenthood affiliates (and maybe others?) subcontract with a Colorado group to run their text messaging. It includes local information and keeps local statistics.
- One group is trying out weekly texting to parents and youth as a way of starting a conversation.

QR Codes

One agency uses QR codes that drive user to a mobile website. So far they have not seen a lot of success with this.

Mobile Sites

Mobile site may be very condensed. It doesn’t have nearly as much information as the original site.

Mobile Apps

- This is the wave of the future! How to keep up?
- Apps could help with the confidentiality problem—they’re not as socially interactive.
- Again would need extensive approval, etc., to use or create apps.
- Not DIY! Need to hire consultants to develop apps.
- All NYC agencies can use the [“Teens in NYC” app for iphones](#) or [“Protection Plus” for Androids](#) – it directs youth to NYC sexual health services and includes videos.

Bureaucracy

How to talk to your CEO?

- In one case, going through the Marketing Director worked – that person had the ear of the decisionmaker.
- The YTH white paper [Youth Sexual and Reproductive Health in the Digital Age](#) can help you make the case.
- Reframe the conversation with the leadership. Think of what matters to them, such as increasing utilization of services. And isn’t it better to be seen as a leader among youth? Frame it in a positive way that meets what the agency is trying to do.
- Everyone talking about it. Talk is what creates change.