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# Effective Communication for Promoting Healthy Activity

Key Principles and Techniques for Stakeholder Engagement



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# Agenda

Introduction

The Challenge

Core Principles

COM-B Model

Target Audiences

Monitoring

Thank you

# Project Team

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 **Sport Drenthe**

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# The Communication Gap

Many public campaigns remain abstract, failing to provide the practical tools needed to turn intentions into daily habits.

## The Goal

Translate evidence and innovation into concrete actions that can be adopted in schools, families, and communities.

Communication must be multi-sectoral, involving schools, parents, health professionals, and sports organizations to create a unified active environment.

# Core Principles – Equity, Inclusion, and Fun

## Prioritize Inclusivity

Focus messages on groups with the lowest participation rates, specifically girls, low-SES populations and children with disabilities.

## Positive Atmosphere

Emphasize fun, self-improvement, and teamwork rather than high-stakes competition or winning.

## Inclusive Language

Ensure that health services and programs are promoted as accessible, relevant, and affordable for everyone.

## Accessibility

Communicate the availability of low-cost or no-cost programs, such as equipment loan schemes or subsidies, to remove financial barriers.



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# The COM-B Model



## Capability

Provide practical tips and information to help individuals develop the physical and psychological skills needed for activity.



## Opportunity

Use communication to highlight existing spaces (like parks and schools) and social environments where activity is possible.



## Motivation

Design interventions that increase the desire to be active through social engagement and inspiration.

# Peer Inspiration and Success Stories

## Peer-to-peer Influence

Utilize models like the "BASE" program, where peer-led inspiration and social engagement motivate inactive individuals to start moving.

## Highlighting Success

Share real-life stories of individuals who transitioned from sedentary lifestyles to active ones to serve as powerful sources of inspiration.

## Student Involvement

Involve children directly in designing activity programs; their input improves uptake and makes the message more relatable to their peers.



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# Engaging Schools and Educators

## Whole-of-School Approach

Communicate the value of "active recess," movement breaks during lessons, and physically active teaching methods (e.g., Finnish Schools on the Move).

## Positive Coaching

Train educators and coaches in positive techniques that build confidence and prevent the negative impact of bullying or exclusion.

## Timetable Protection

Ensure that planners and educators prioritize and protect time for Physical Education (PE) and active recess in the school schedule.



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# Engaging Families: The Home-School Link

## Practical Tools for Parents

Host family sports afternoons to demonstrate the school's commitment to healthy lifestyles, supported by leaflets with specific tips for active play and nutrition.

## Introduce not Deny

Suggest parents add healthy options rather than focus on removal of unhealthy habits, such as drinking a glass of water before a sugary drink.

## Role Modeling

Encourage parents to be active with their children, as co-participation is a significant driver of child activity levels.



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# Community Campaigns & Public Awareness

## Simple, Clear Messaging

Use media campaigns (TV, social media) to broadcast clear goals, such as "Kids need 60 minutes of play a day!", with accessible suggestions on achieving these goals.

## Multi-Sectoral Policy Support

Capacity planners should communicate across sectors to link urban planning (e.g., bike lanes, safe crossings, car-free zones) with health goals (e.g., active travel to school)

## Mass Participation Events

Sponsor and promote events like family sports days or "play streets" to make movement a normal and visible part of community life.



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## Checklist for Delivering Quality Programs



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# Monitoring and Evaluation



### ✓ RE-AIM Framework

Is the program measuring Reach, Effectiveness, Adoption, Implementation, and Maintenance?



### ✓ Objective Tracking

Are digital tools (apps or pedometers) being used to provide children with feedback on active minutes?



### ✓ Inform Action with Data

Schools and public authorities should use monitoring data (e.g., surveys) to identify at-risk groups and tailor their messaging accordingly



### ✓ Transparency and Safety

Ensure that all data collection and monitoring processes are communicated clearly to parents to maintain privacy and trust.



# Next Webinar

30 September 2026 12:00 CET

*Engaging Children and Older Adults in Active Lifestyles*



# Project Conference

27 October 2026, Verona (IT)

**Educators, Capacity Planners, Policy Influencers and Municipal Sports Partnerships**

Pilot Projects, Impact Results, Policy Recommendations.



# Thank you



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## 📌 Key Takeaways & Action

Communication must engage the target audience with clear and simple actions they can take.

**Immediate Action Step:** Review your communication materials and strategy from the perspective of your target users.



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