

Adapting Culture

ACTIVITY DESCRIPTION Four popular culture categories are posted around the room: 1. Popular song, 2. Cultural myth/folktale/story, 3. TV show/character/movie, 4. Your choice! (i.e. poem/saying/game/book/dance/ritual, etc.). Participants break up into small groups and develop a communication strategy to reframe a dominant message by modifying a chosen form of popular culture.

PURPOSE To communicate a message in a compelling way by adapting some form of traditional or popular culture

INTRODUCTORY FRAME

All communities develop shared culture – stories, symbols, art forms, norms and practices that connect people and shape their identity. Traditional culture are the songs, rituals, dances, stories and practices that have been a part of a particular community for a long time that communicate shared values, norms and beliefs. Popular culture are the ideas, perspectives, attitudes, memes, images, etc. that are current and mainstream in any given culture. They are heavily influenced by mainstream culture, pervade everyday life and are very influential in shaping our way of thinking and acting.

We are going to use this resource to bring forth our own messages, perspectives and ideas in a way that the community can relate to and can also help to garner media attention. It is powerful to adapt forms of traditional or popular culture because they are familiar to the community, will help people to relate to your issue and make your message more memorable and compelling.

PROCESS

- Review F.R.A.M.E. from Center for Story-based Strategy.
- Using the worksheet below, design a communication strategy by adapting a particular traditional or popular culture medium (i.e. song, dance, movie, folktale, etc.) to transmit a particular message about their specific issue.
- Modifying might mean changing the lyrics of a popular song that everyone knows; using a traditional myth and tweaking the story to reflect modern social issues; developing a theater skit based on a well-known popular TV show or movie to communicate a compelling message about an issue; or modifying a popular dance or ritual to involve people in the creation of a new story.

Adapting Culture Worksheet

WHAT IS YOUR ISSUE?

WHO IS YOUR TARGET AUDIENCE?

WHAT ARE THE DOMINANT BELIEFS/ASSUMPTIONS/VALUES ABOUT THIS ISSUE THAT YOU WANT TO CHALLENGE OR REFRAME?

WHAT DO YOU WANT YOUR AUDIENCE TO DO/THINK/FEEL?

WHAT IS YOUR KEY MESSAGE?

What are you appealing to – morality, logic, spiritual values, emotions, economic benefit?

WHAT POPULAR CULTURE MEDIUM DO YOU WANT TO USE?

(i.e. myth, story, song, dance, ritual, TV show, character, advertisement, product, game, parable, poem, book, movie, etc.)

HOW MIGHT YOU TWEAK OR ADAPT IT TO CONVEY YOUR MESSAGE?

Examples:

- ❖ Applying new visual metaphors or connections
- ❖ Developing catchy phrases or lyrics
- ❖ Changing the story to reflect current issues
- ❖ Using humor or irony

START BRAINSTORMING IDEAS AND CREATE A DRAFT!