

It is important to know your audience before creating an educational material. Knowing the needs of your audience can help create an appropriate educational material that communicates its message effectively. Here are some helpful tips to consider when learning about your target audience.

Ask Questions

Begin by asking: “Who will this material be developed for?” and “How will the audience benefit from this educational material?” Answering these questions in depth can help you better understand the audience that you want to present the material to. Several factors to consider that can help you better understand the audience and answer these questions include:ⁱ

- Ethnicity
- Gender
- Age
- Profession
- Marital status
- Sexual orientation
- Location
- Native language
- Education
- Income
- Technological expertise
- Family composition
- Beliefs



Study Current Research

Once you know your target audience, study the population by researching and learning more about their practices, beliefs, customs, and health status. Several online and print resources can help you obtain this information, including:

- Google Scholar
- Proquest
- Peer-reviewed journals
- Newspaper articles

Conduct Field Work

Work with the target audience and learn where they lack knowledge and what they already know about the issue being presented. This will help you understand what does and doesn't need to be included in the material. Use surveys, observations, and interviews to get to know the audience better. There is a lot of diversity within each group; hence what one individual understands might be what another individual doesn't. Be specific. Clearly define your audience by identifying who the material is for.



Obtain Expert Help

Ask target audience experts for help in finding and understanding the proper audience. These include:

- Community Agencies and Coalitions
- Health Organizations
- Priority Population Advocacy Groups
- Statewide Technical Assistance Agencies (including TEAM Lab)

Be Culturally Sensitive

Knowing your audience and their cultural beliefs will help you deliver a message that is culturally sensitive. Culturally tailoring your material is important so that the message is better understood by the audience you are trying to reach. It can also help prevent a material from being interpreted offensively. For example, some American Indian tribes use tobacco for medicinal and/or religious purposes, so when discussing tobacco, a distinction needs to be made between recreational and traditional use. The materials must be sensitive to these influences and will vary from community to community.

ⁱSource: <http://www.wahm.com/articles/how-to-determine-your-target-market.html>