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Tailoring Hospital Education Materials for *The Period of PURPLE Crying: Keeping Babies Safe in North Carolina* Media Campaign

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Abstract

The social marketing approach recognizes the need to tailor message and channel strategies to effectively reach the full range of individuals who must act or exert influence to bring about knowledge, belief, and behavior change. However, repurposing health education materials for additional target audiences and communication channels may at times be rationalized as a necessary response to budgetary constraints. Furthermore, when the materials in question are the outcome of rigorous testing, the experts involved may be reluctant to accept the need for tailoring those materials. This study demonstrates how a rigorously designed and tested shaken baby syndrome prevention program comprising a 10-minute DVD and an 11-page brochure delivered in-hospital to parents of newborns by specially trained health care workers was adapted for a media campaign targeting additional audiences and channels. Focus group research determined which messages and images from *The Period of PURPLE Crying* DVD and brochure were most salient. Participants were surprised to learn about the normalcy of prolonged infant crying, embraced the *PURPLE* label, and were keen to share this new knowledge. The volume and quality of advice new parents receive emerged as important. Two campaign concepts, including key messages and visuals, were tested using focus groups and intercept interviews. The normalcy of infant crying as a developmental stage rather than an indication of caregiver incompetence or an unhealthy child resonated with respondents and was adopted for the campaign. This approach underscores the value of tailoring and message testing to provide evidence-based guidance for media campaign decisions.

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