Lessons Learned from 10 Years of Heads Up

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CDC’s Heads Up Initiative

- Provides educational resources to a range of audiences to help keep children and teens safe from concussions and other brain injuries.

- Educates audiences on how to prevent, recognize and respond to concussion and other serious traumatic brain injuries (TBIs).

- Celebrates its 10th anniversary in 2013.
Key Accomplishments

- Developed relationships with 85+ organizations and dozens of key experts.
- Created over 50 products.
- Distributed more than 4 million print resources.
- Trained 1.5 million+ coaches.
- 15,000+ Facebook fans.
- 150 million+ media impressions through print media and TV PSAs.
- Prompted a new effort to create pediatric clinical guidelines for mild TBI.
What is a Concussion?

The Facts

• A concussion is a brain injury.

• All concussions are serious.

• Most concussions occur without loss of consciousness.

• Concussions can occur in any sport or recreation activity.

• Recognition and proper response to concussions when they first occur can help prevent further injury or even death.
Concussion in Children and Teens

- Children and teens are more likely to get a concussion.
- They take longer to recover.
- Concussions can have a more serious effect on a young, developing brain.
- Concussions need to be addressed correctly to prevent short- and long-term health problems that can affect all parts of a child’s life—thinking, learning, behavior and emotions.
What the Data Tells Us

- Children and teens ages 5 - 18 account for an estimated 65% of ED visits for sports and recreation-related TBIs.

- Activities associated with the greatest number of TBI-related ED visits:
  - Bicycling
  - Football
  - Playground activities
  - Basketball
  - Soccer

- During the last decade, ED visits for sports- and recreation-related TBIs among children and teens increased by 60%.
The Heads Up Solution

- Education:
  - Materials
  - Trainings
  - Online resources
- Partnership development
- Outreach and promotion
- Social media
KEY PLAYERS ON THE HEADS UP TEAM

ATHLETES • PARENTS • COACHES • SCHOOL PROFESSIONALS • HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONALS
The Heads Up Approach

- Combines innovative and evidence-based communication strategies to create educational materials and key messages.

- Engages partners every step of the way.

- Includes parents and young athletes as a key part of every initiative.
The Heads Up Approach

Background Research
Conducted informal conversations with key audience members

Formative Research
Conducted in-depth phone interviews and/or focus groups

Expert Reviewers
Engaged content experts to review all materials

Partner Involvement
Developed partnerships early on and expanded partner network throughout the project
Heads Up for All Audiences

- Facts for Physicians (2003; 2007)
- Heads Up to Schools (2010)
Heads Up: Brain Injury in Your Practice

- Audience: health care professionals.
- Toolkit contents:
  - Educational booklet
  - Patient assessment tool
  - Palm card
  - Care plans
  - Fact sheets for patients
- Collaborated with 17 participating organizations.
- 250,000+ print copies disseminated.
- Updated and re-released in 2007.
- Free Heads Up online training with CME credits.
Heads Up: Concussion in High School Sports

- Audiences: high school coaches and athletic directors.
- Collaborated with 17 participating organizations.
- Toolkit contents:
  - Guide for coaches
  - Clipboard sticker
  - Wallet card
  - Video
  - Posters
  - Fact sheets for parents and athletes
Heads Up: Concussion in High School Sports

- 300,000+ print copies disseminated.
- Evaluation showed positive changes in coaches’ knowledge, attitudes, behaviors, and skills.
- Free online training for high school coaches:
  - Created in partnership with National Federation of State High School Associations.
  - 800,000+ coaches trained.
Heads Up: Concussion in Youth Sports

- Audiences: youth sports coaches and administrators.
- Collaborated with 26 participating organizations.
- Toolkit contents:
  - Fact sheets for coaches
  - Clipboard
  - Magnet
  - Poster
  - Fact sheets parents and athletes
- Free Heads Up online training for youth sports coaches.
Heads Up: Concussion in Youth Sports

- Almost 4 million print copies disseminated.

- 25,000-35,000 people complete online training each month.

- Coaches view concussion more seriously and could more easily identify athletes who may have a concussion.
Heads Up to Schools: Know Your Concussion ABCs

- Audience: school professionals serving students K-12.
- Collaborated with 30+ organizations.
- Toolkit contents:
  - Fact sheet for school nurses
  - Fact sheet for teachers and counselors
  - Magnet
  - Poster
  - Signs and symptoms checklist
  - Fact sheet for parents
- Over 1.3 million print copies disseminated.
Partnership Outreach

- Partners play an essential role in Heads Up.
- Help to put this information in the hands of coaches, parents, athletes, health care professionals, and school professionals across the U.S.
Teaming Up With Sports Organizations

- Professional Sports Leagues
- USA Baseball
- USA Basketball
- USA Cycling
- USA Volleyball
- US Lacrosse
- USA Skateboarding
- USA Softball
- US Soccer
- USA Rugby
- USA Cheer
- USA Football

…and many more!
Other Partnerships

- Launching local initiatives.
- Partnering with sports equipment companies.
Social Media and Online Resources

- Facebook: CDC Heads Up Brain Injury Awareness.
- Twitter: @CDCInjury.
- Website: Concussion and TBI views increased 200%.
- Obtained 30 million+ social media impressions.
- Podcasts, e-cards, web buttons and videos.
- CDC’s YouTube channel.
- Customizable materials for schools and sports teams.
Giving a Voice to Brain Injury

Shelby’s Story:

High Rates of Head Injury Lead to National Rule Change in High School Cheerleading

Says the older players: "High school was rough, she was good until she just didn't have the same.

The parents were a little on edge. Shelby was a consistent high jumper, but playing a running game over the spring and summer, they were a lot of hard knocks. Shelby had some concussions, and now she is at risk for more. Shelby has been dealing with headaches and dizziness.

"People used to say, 'you're a tough girl. You can take it; straighten up, and get back in the game.'

Dr. Nicole Eastman’s Story

Finding Hope Through Connecting with Others

Dr. Nicole Eastman never imagined she would be an advocate for others who have experienced traumatic brain injury (TBI). The 10-year survivor and social entrepreneur is promoting hope and healing through her own journey. She understands the challenges faced by injured people, and she is passionate about connecting with others who have similar experiences.

Lt. Col. Tim Maxwell’s Story

The Importance of Team Support on the Road to Recovery

They’re together. They fight together. If it’s possible, why not consider taking it to the next level? Col. Tim Maxwell shares how the support of his team helped him on the road to recovery.

"When you’re in the hospital, you are surrounded by so many doctors and nurses. But once you’re out of the hospital, it’s tough."

Tell Your Story,

Give Brain Injury a Voice.

Heads Up Film Festival
PSAs

- PSAs featuring professional athletes
  - Severe brain injury
  - Role of parents
  - Signs and symptoms
  - Helmet use
- Teen and parent stories
  - How concussion changed their lives
- Expert insights
- Helmet fit
Heads Up to Parents

- Helps parents recognize, respond to, and minimize the risk of concussion or other serious brain injury:
  - Signs and symptoms
  - Returning to school
  - Returning to play
  - Helmet safety
  - Safety tips for cars, bikes, sports, playgrounds, and homes
  - Ways to get involved
Heads Up Mobile Application

- Resource for parents.
- Teaches parents how to spot a concussion and what to do if they think their child has a concussion.
- Information to help parents select the right helmet for their child.
- Some helmet companies include a QR code for the app directly in their helmets.
Impact on Science

- Lack of clinical guidelines on mild TBI for the pediatric population.
- CDC leading effort to create clinical pediatric guidelines for the diagnosis, treatment and management of mild TBI.
- Focus is on all causes of mild TBI.
- Over 50 experts in Workgroup.

1. Identify clinical questions
2. Conduct literature review
3. Draft recommendations
4. Finalize recommendations for publication
Lessons Learned

- Listen to your audience.
- Identify and refresh your key audiences.
  - But, stay focused and in touch with primary audiences!
- Invest in partnership development.
  - Engage diverse partners and find common ground.
  - Recognize and celebrate your partners regularly!
- Stretch promotion funds to maximize their impact and build on people’s passion.
Lessons Learned

- Keep an open mind and be willing to adapt to the latest technology.
- Establish a cohesive core to the project but let it grow.
- Remember that awareness drives demand. A communication program can have a huge impact on a public health issue.
- Stay true to your goals. The Heads Up Initiative continues to improve concussion prevention, recognition, and response nationwide across diverse and overlapping audiences.
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Learn more: http://www.cdc.gov/Concussion

The findings and conclusions in this presentation are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official position of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.