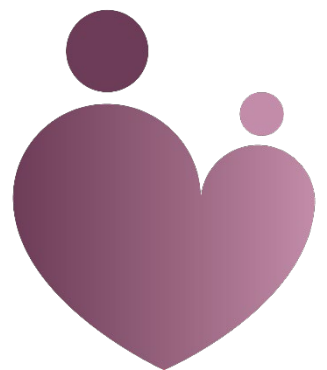## Maternal Health Network of San Bernardino County

Communications Toolkit

The Maternal Health Network

Established in 2018 through funding provided by First 5 San Bernardino, the Maternal Health Network (MHN) exists to establish a comprehensive, coordinated, and responsive support system for families who are planning to become pregnant, those that are pregnant and those that have recently delivered a child.

The MHN is made up of a collective of various service providers and advocates in San Bernardino County who support the maternal health system. Membership includes:

- Prenatal & Postpartum Primary Care Providers
- Community Clinics & Birthing Hospitals
- Oral Health Providers & Advocates
- San Bernardino County Public Health
- Midwives & Doulas
- Health Plans

- Law Enforcement & Detentions
- School-based Services
- Family Resource & Support Service Organizations
- Breastfeeding Support Services & Coalitions
- Behavioral Health & Substance Abuse Providers

The Maternal Health Network of San Bernardino County empowers, respects and supports families before, during and after pregnancy to optimize health and wellbeing for babies and mothers.

Introduction and How to Use this Toolkit

In 2020, the Maternal Health Network of San Bernardino County adopted a five-year strategic plan to collectively further the work of various service providers and advocates who support the maternal health system throughout San Bernardino County.

In this plan, the Network recognized the need to elevate issues of importance for families in San Bernardino County that are planning to get pregnant, those that are pregnant, or those that have recently delivered a child. They also identified the need to provide these families with information to help them make informed decisions to support a healthy pregnancy.

This toolkit is designed to help meet this need, by providing best practices and resources that MHN members can use to share relevant information with families around a variety of topics.

The toolkit contains:

Throughout this guide you'll also find call-outs that share best practices that are standard across many communications platforms. For example, the call-out below explains how utilizing consistent messaging throughout the MHN can lead to a more informed and healthy maternal community.

Utilizing standardized materials and messaging is a best practice for ensuring campaign consistency, and an effective strategy for changing knowledge and behavior.

Email Communications

Email communication is one of the cheapest, most direct ways of engaging with your community. This form of communication can aid in fostering a deep and ongoing connection between people and your organization's work. Current email software products provide a wealth of data about how your emails are being received, how many are opened, how many email addresses are no longer working, and what links people click on most often.

Best Practices

To ensure your emails stand out and grab the attention of these audience members, your email design needs to be engaging and accessible to your target audience. Email recipients often scan information for content that offers them value or appear to be simple and not too dense. Email design and structure will help you capture the attention of, and engage, your email recipients.

Below are some best practices for email design[1]:

1. Craft a strong subject line

2. Write an attention-grabbing pre-header

3. Be concise

4. Keep your email on-brand

5. Think about your layout

6. Personalize every email

7. Incorporate unique visual content: videos, images, GIFs, infographics, cinemagraphs

8. Don't be afraid to use emojis

9. Use a responsive design

10. Optimize your email with calls-to-action

11. Add an "unsubscribe" button

12. A/B test your design (not consistently utilized amongst smaller organizations)

13. Design an email signature

See the next page for an example of how we've used these tips to generate emails for the Maternal Health Network.

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[1] https://blog.hubspot.com/marketing/email-design

Sample Email

This email was created using Mail Chimp, one of the tools described in Appendix B. Use of Mail Chimp allows for a responsive design with optimized layouts (Best Practices 9 and 5).

Examples of how other best practices were used in developing this email are noted in blue below.

From: maternalhealthnetworksb@gmail.com
Subject: MHN | Weekly Update

#1: Strong subject line that accurately describes the content of the email

Weekly Newsletter

#2: Attention grabbing header

#4: Header is branded to the MHN

Good morning **Lisa**!

We hope you had a great week, and are excited to provide you with the following updates:

#6: Personalize every email

Black Maternal Health Week

As Black Maternal Health Week (April 11-17) comes to a close, please take a moment to access the Maternal, Child and Adolescent Health (MCAH) Division's social media toolkit and resources and share far and wide to increase awareness about Black maternal health disparities and the policies, systems and structures that have contributed to these disparate outcomes. **Please click the link below to access the variety of resources your organization can use to promote Black maternal health this week and beyond.**

#3: Content is kept concise and to the point

#10: This call to action allows people to simply click on the link to access resources

MCAH Black Maternal Health Resources

Maternal Health Network of San Bernardino County

📞 (775) 324-4567
✉ maternalhealthnetworksb@gmail.com
🔗 www.maternalhealthnetworksb.com

If you would no longer like to receive emails from the MHN, you can update your preferences or unsubscribe from this list.

Follow us on Social Media

#13: This email signature includes everything a viewer needs to be connected more with the organization sending the email, including contact information and social media links

#11: Unsubscribe buttons are critical to maintaining an accurate listserv and are sometimes required based on the type of email being sent out. Using a mail service, like Mail Chimp, can help you easily manage the unsubscribe process.

As you develop your message or post, consider your target audience. Make sure any graphics, language choices, and formatting are accessible and relatable.

Eight Common Email Mistakes to Avoid

1. Using incorrect, broken, or missing links

2. Personalization errors

3. Not checking for email display issues

4. Typos

5. Sending to the wrong person or email list

6. Failure to respond to emails

7. Sending out outdated information

8. Not following an email schedule

Printed Materials

Printed content is a more tangible solution than digital platforms for disseminating communication material. Print provides you with more control over the look and feel of the content and distribution. It also provides your community with physical material that can kept and referred to by recipients over time and when needed. Printed materials such as flyers, brochures, pamphlets, and business cards are also compact and easy to disseminate.

Best Practices

Regardless of the type of printed material you are looking to create, the content and materials need to be in line with your brand or organization, and effectively articulate your message. As with any communication method, printed materials should be thoughtfully and strategically planned and designed.

Below are best practices you should put into place before you begin distributing printed materials[2]:

1. Design and Visuals

- It is imperative that you pay close attention to detail when designing your print campaigns. There are tools available to create engaging and visually appealing content that is consistent with your organization's brand and content. While these tools can provide a good start to developing printed materials, it is often recommended that organizations consult with graphic designers and professionals to ensure your content is organized, sized, and printed correctly.

2. Proofread your Content

- Spelling and grammar are vital for building your brand credibility. This attention to detail helps gain/maintain clients. The voice used in your content should be uniform through all your communication platforms and make sure that the tone reflected in your content is in line with your brand message.

3. Precise Target Marketing

- Audience is vital to the success of your print campaign. It is important to consider location, tone, language, and image to make sure that all elements appeal to your audience and grab their attention. By taking all aspects of your target audience into account you can generate maximum engagement and communication efforts.

4. Clear Call to Action

- Your marketing materials need to be clear about what action you want your target audience to take. Make sure that your message comes across strongly and provides clear and concise instruction or guidance so your audience is directed to follow through on a specific action.

5. Link with Digital Marketing

- Printed materials can work in conjunction with your digital platforms, and vice versa. Your brand identity should be fluid, establishing a clear message that ultimately builds trust with your community.

6. Consistent Approach to Branding

- Printed materials should all have a recognizable look and feel that shows they all represent your unique brand or organization. They do not need to be identical, but they should have a consistent look and feel, including:

Color palette • Font or font family • Heading • Slogan • Logo and iconography • Illustration or design style • Paper

See the next page for an example of how we've used these tips to generate printed materials for the Maternal Health Network.

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[2] https://jetline.co.za/print-marketing-best-practices-need-know/

Types of Printed Communications You Might Consider Using

Business Cards: These are handed out at networking events and can be strategically placed at locations that your target audience frequents.

Catalogs, Brochures, and Postcards: These materials promote specific offers to a targeted mail list. These can often feel more personal and maximize engagement with your content or organization.

Flyers, Pamphlets, and Posters: These marketing materials can be distributed door to door, at businesses, in public spaces, at promotional stands, and in other high traffic areas.

Magnets, Booklets, and Calendars: These materials provide value to your target audience. They are branded items that serve a function beyond the content they include. Adding your branding to something that the community can use increases your brand visibility and establishes brand credibility.

Sample Printed Material

#1: Engaging and visually appealing content that is consistent with MHN's brand

#3: Imagery and language is accessible and geared toward the target audience

#2: Content has been proofread and is free of spelling and grammatical errors

#6: Flyer is branded to the MHN, using our logo, color palette, design style, and font. It also provides the opportunity for other organizations to co-brand this document. While not a standard best practice, this allows organizations to more easily leverage existing content and share with their families.

 # 5: Inclusion of the MHN website links viewers with digital marketing platforms

Seven Common Printed Material Mistakes to Avoid

1. Not using the right tools

2. Not sticking to a color palette

3. Being afraid of white space

4. Not considering the material color

5. Hard to read text

6. Using the wrong file formats for printing

7. Improper image or vector resolution

Social Media

The rise of social media in recent years presents organizations with an opportunity to fundamentally rethink their traditional communications tactics. The purpose of social media outreach is to let potential supporters and other key stakeholders in the public know about the work of your organization. Compared to other methods of communication, this goal can be achieved at a fraction of the cost with social media. Social media is also a way to listen to your community and learn what they care about. The two-way nature of the communication provides real time feedback about how well you are connecting with your target audience.

Best Practices Across all Social Media Platforms

There are numerous social media platforms in which you can engage your community, including Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. While each platform has different limitations and requirements for the type of content that may be posted, there are a few key practices that should be implemented when creating content for social media.

What to Think About Before You Post

Whether you and/or your organization is a social media novice or expert, the following best practices are helpful in developing and strengthening your social media presence, so that your posts can reach the widest audience possible.[3]

1. **Learn Everything You Can About Your Audience |** If you don't know who your audience is, you can't give them what they want. Research the demographics of your target audience. This will help you determine which networks to use, and which may not have as great of an impact.

2. **Choose Which Networks to Use |** Different social media platforms serve different purposes and allow you to explore using different types of content. For example, Instagram is a visual platform that relies on photos and videos to share information with your target audience, while something like Twitter allows you to draft written content within a 280-character limit to disseminate information to your audience.

3. **Have a Plan |** Establish a posting schedule, planned content to post on each platform, and how to engage your community through social media. Your organization should have goals around using social media to understand what is working well, what may need to change, and what content your audience best responds too.

4. **Listen for Mentions of your Brand |** It is important to know what people are saying on your social media channels. This can be done through social media monitoring and listening. This involves 1) monitoring channels to capture mentions of your organizations, hashtags, or relevant keywords, and 2) use that information to inform next steps and future content. Monitor to learn from the past. Listen to create your future.

5. **Establish your Social Media Voice and Tone |** All of the content you write, design, post, and respond are part of your brand and voice for your organization. Find buzzwords and adjectives that are in line with the voice and tone for your organization and include these in the content you distribute on your social media platforms.

6. **Respond to all Comments and Mentions Promptly |** Social media is about fostering a direct connection with your target audience and community. In order to build this relationship, consistent and timely communication is critical.

7. **Don't Repost the Same Message across Networks |** While you should keep the material and branding consistent across all communication platforms, it is important to diversify the content you distribute on each platform. This does not mean your organization needs to start from scratch, but by editing the content to best suit each platform, you can optimize your engagement with your target audience.

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[3] https://blog.hootsuite.com/social-media-best-practices/

8. **Use Data to Determine When and How Often to Post |** Use social media reports and analytics to track results for who is engaging with your brand and posts, including the number of views your content gets, number of followers, interactions from your audience, and conversations around your brand or organization. This will allow you to make informed decisions about when and how frequently to post on each platform.

What to Post[4]

There are a few different types of content that you can consider posting on your social media channels. Using a variety of these content types can help keep your feeds fresh and better engage your target audience. No matter what you post, make sure to keep the content approachable, authentic, and engaging, and don't be afraid to feature the people that work at your organization—featuring real people can help viewers feel comfortable reaching out if they have questions or need support.

1. **Educational Content |** A key objective of the Maternal Health Network is to provide families in San Bernardino with the information they need to make informed decisions that support the health of their pregnancy. You can support this objective by posting educational resources on your social media channels—these might be articles, research studies, factsheets, or video clips (from reputable sources) that share messaging that will help increase maternal health knowledge throughout the county.

2. **Interactive Content |** Interactive content is a great way to engage your target audience and start a dialogue about key topics. Some platforms have interactive tools built in (e.g., you can embed polls in Instagram Stories), but a simple way to be interactive is to include questions in your post and ask viewers to respond in the comments. If you use this, make sure to set the comment preferences and have someone managing the comments to either remove inappropriate or disruptive comments, or to respond to and engage with commenters.

3. **Visual Content |** Visual content, such as infographics, GIFs, photos, videos, etc., tends to perform better than plain text. Try not to do text-only posts, and always include a visual element. If you do post videos, make sure to use closed captioning and keep in mind the average attention span of your viewer—put the most important information early in case they do not watch the entire video.

Where to Get Content[5]

You can either create your own content, or post content that has been created by others—using both approaches is a best practice for social media posts.

1. **Curated Content |** This is content that you share on your platforms, but that you or your organization did not create. Leveraging curated content is a great way to increase your post rate without having to spend your staff's time creating original content. Make sure to vet your sources and review any content before you post or link to it on your channel. Visit the links included in Appendix A to access social media content that the Maternal Health Network has created and that is available for use on your channels.

2. **User Generated Content |** This is content that your organization creates in house. It can take more time to create your own content than to simply report or link to curated content, but posting your own content is an important way that you can connect your target audience and make them better aware of the services and supports your organization provides.

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[4] https://blog.ezmarketing.com/best-practices-for-awesome-social-media-content
[5] Ibid.

Sample Social Media Posts

The following is an example of an Instagram post made by the Maternal Health Network. It raises awareness around a particular topic in a visually appealing and accessible way and maintains consistent branding with other MHN materials (color palette, use of the MHN logo, etc.).

Content Types: This post contains all three types of content. It provides **educational content** to help families make informed choices during their pregnancy; **interactive content** as these posts prompted viewers to click through to the second slider; and **visual content** through use of infographics

This post utilized **User Generated Content**, produced by the MHN to serve the specific purpose of sharing pregnancy-related nutrition tips with followers during National Nutrition Month

Six Common Social Media Mistakes to Avoid

1. Working without a social media plan

2. Not identifying your target audience

3. Choosing the wrong tone for your content

4. Using irrelevant hashtags

5. Staying silent in the comment section

6. Deleting negative comments
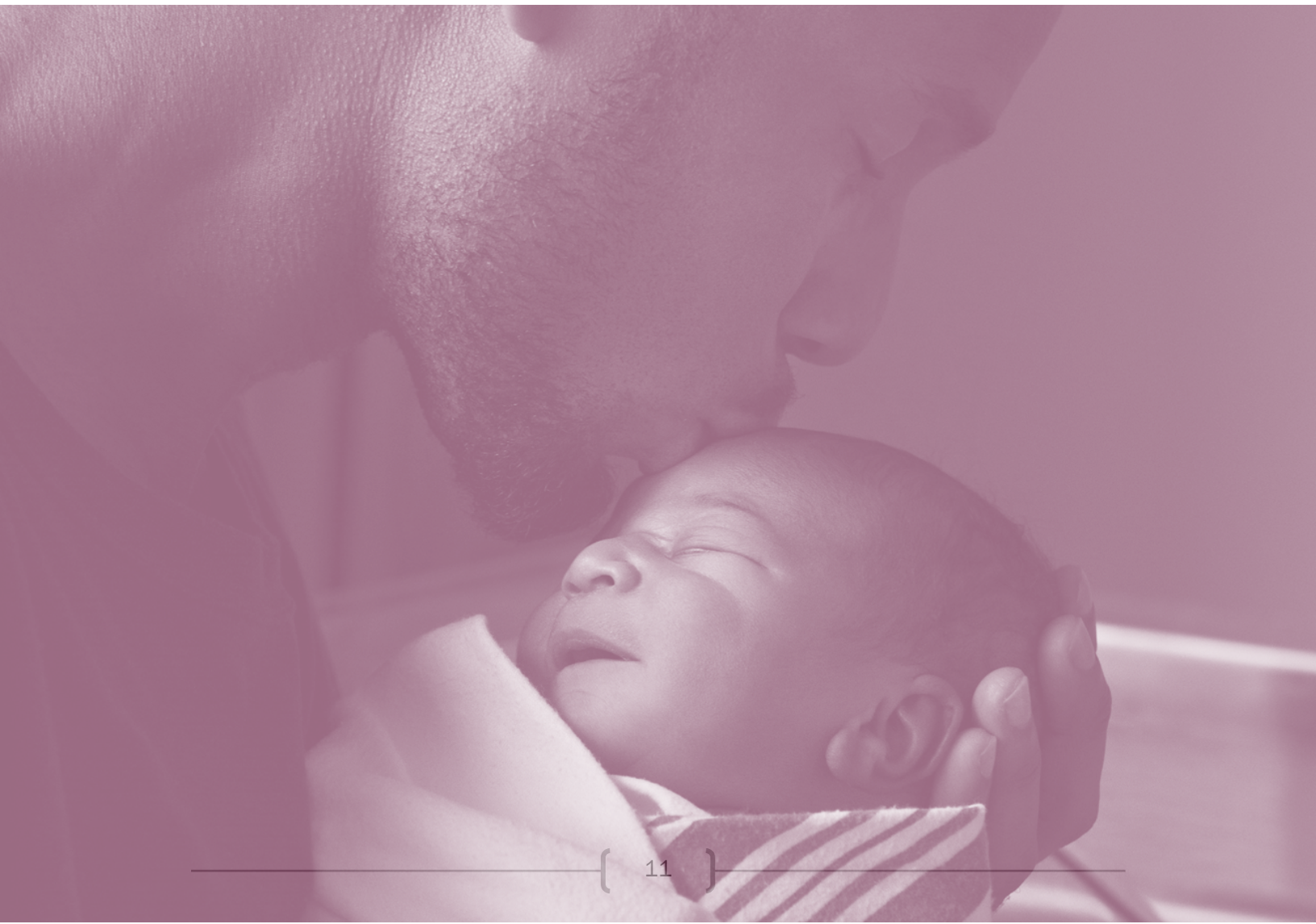
Website Content

First impressions about your organization are typically made online. More people access information digitally from a mobile device than from a desktop. That means a responsive, mobile-friendly website is essential, as are other fundamentals for creating content optimized for a blog or website.

Best Practices

Good websites are easy to navigate, clearly and consistently organized, and have robust search functions. Short sections of content and descriptive subheads also make it easier for visitors to find the information they want. It is often best to opt for simple structure and content to provide an easy-to-use interface for anyone who comes into contact with your website. Here are seven best practices to keep in mind[6]:

1
- Use Plenty of Headings | Well-written headlines act as the informal outline of a page. Creating headings that summarize the content of the paragraph(s) lets the user understand what that section is about before deciding whether they want to read it.

2
- Use bullet points | Bulleted lists allow for optimal readability and allow users to easily understand and store that information. Almost any series of items separated with commas has potential to be formatted into a bulleted list.

3
- Keep paragraphs short | Long paragraphs are dense and hard to scan quickly for relevant information. If you review a long paragraph, you can almost always find a place where you could break it up in to two paragraphs. This makes the information easier for the user to digest.

4
- Frontload important information | Start with the content that is most important to your audience, then provide additional details. By starting with the conclusion and primary message you are trying to convey, you give the user the ability to stop reading at any point and still leave with the main point of the page.

5
- Call attention to key terms and phrases | By utilizing text format tools like bolding or highlighting, you allow the user to easily find key terms/phrases within a paragraph of copy. It is important however to remember to use this technique sparingly, as you run the risk of it becoming distracting and less useful.

6
- Know your audience | Use words and language that is accessible to your audience and that they are familiar with. Using complex language or jargon will most likely confuse the user. Audience appropriate language is key to allow the user to easily scan and understand the information.

7
- Omit unnecessary words | Drafting content for a website is not like conventional writing in that it is best to be concise and succinct. By getting rid of unnecessary words, you not only reduce the length, but you also make the content more prevalent and easier to scan.

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[6] https://hingemarketing.com/blog/story/7-best-practices-for-website-copywriting

Sample Webpage

#3, #6, #7: Paragraphs are kept short, unnecessary language is omitted, and language is accessible to the target audience of this page

#4: Important information is presented high on the page

#1: Multiple headings helps users understand each section

#2: Bullet points improve readability

#5: Key terms are bolded

Eight Common Website Mistakes

1. Not clearly establishing goals for your website

2. Losing sight of the goals of the donors, volunteers, or advocates coming to your site

3. Failure to appreciate what good design brings to a website

4. Overwhelming the reader with content that is too long or complex

5. Not taking full advantage of what an interactive, responsive medium has to offer

6. Not tracking site results in a useful manner

7. Not putting together an in-house web team

8. Not recognizing that the website is a system that must be continually maintained and updated

Appendix A | Content and Resources That Can Be Shared with Families

This appendix provides links to resources that you can use to generate emails, printed materials, social media posts, and website content. Content is provided within 12 topic areas; whenever possible, these topic areas are linked to national "months of" (e.g., August is "National Breastfeeding Awareness Month"). You might consider theming your communications with families around these months as well, but feel free to use any of the content below at any time.

Use the resource link column to visit the section of the Maternal Health Network website where you can find, access, and download content. Make sure to check back regularly, as these resources will be updated throughout the year—the month that information will be available by is also included in the table.

Topic	Themed Month (when available)	Month Content will be Available By	Resource Link
Accessing Your Support System Before and After Delivery • Role of midwives, doulas, and lactation consultants • Community services/peer groups • Role of Family Members and Friends	NA	June 2021	https://www.maternalhealthnetworksb.com/accessing-your-support
Advocating for Yourself: Preparing Your Ideal Birth Plan • What to expect in the hospital	NA	May 2022	https://www.maternalhealthnetworksb.com/advocating-for-yourself
Breastfeeding 101: Benefits, Tips, and Tricks	August | National Breastfeeding Awareness Month	July 2021	https://www.maternalhealthnetworksb.com/breastfeeding-101
How to Support Your Pregnant Family Member	NA	November 2021	https://www.maternalhealthnetworksb.com/support-your-pregnant-family-member
Maintaining Healthy Relationships Before and After Delivery • Intimate partner violence	October | Emotional Wellness Month	September 2021	https://www.maternalhealthnetworksb.com/maintaining-healthy-relationships

Topic	Themed Month (when available)	Month Content will be Available By	Resource Link
Mental Prep for Pregnancy and Birth • Managing stress and addressing mental health concerns during and directly following pregnancy	May | Maternal Mental Health Awareness Month	April 2022	https://www.maternalhealthnetworksb.com/mental-prep-for-pregnancy
Nutrition Tips for You and Baby During and After Pregnancy	March | National Nutrition Month	February 2022	https://www.maternalhealthnetworksb.com/nutrition-tips
Physical Prep for Pregnancy and Birth • Preparing your body for delivery • Staying active during and after pregnancy	NA	December 2021	https://www.maternalhealthnetworksb.com/physical-prep-for-pregnancy
Preparing A Safe Home For Baby • Safe Sleep	September | Baby Safety Month	August 2021	https://www.maternalhealthnetworksb.com/preparing-a-safe-home
What to Avoid During and After Pregnancy • Alcohol, tobacco, and other harmful substances • Dietary considerations • Physical limitations	November | Tobacco Awareness Month	October 2021	https://www.maternalhealthnetworksb.com/what-to-avoid
What To Expect After Delivery • Caring For Yourself 60 Days Post Delivery	NA	March 2022	https://www.maternalhealthnetworksb.com/what-to-expect-after-delivery
Why Birth Spacing Matters	NA	January 2022	https://www.maternalhealthnetworksb.com/why-birth-spacing-matters

Appendix B | Online Tools for Creating Content

The chart below details tools that you can use to develop content across the four communication types described in this guide. It is important to note that you should always check license requirements for any graphic, image, or photo service, as some will require a paid account to remove a watermark or other credit to the original source. Remember that you can also use Appendix A in this guide to be connected with existing resources and Network-created materials that you can use in your communications with families.

Tool	Description and URL	Email	Printed	Social Media	Website
Analytics					
Google Analytics	Provides data and insight on web user behavior, experience, and utilization. https://analytics.google.com/				✓
Email Management					
ConvertKit	Provides email management and email content generation. https://convertkit.com/	✓			
MailChimp	Provides email management and email content generation. https://mailchimp.com/	✓			
Fonts					
Google Fonts	Provides fonts and icons for use in any published content. https://fonts.google.com/	✓	✓	✓	✓
Infographic Templates					
Adobe Illustrator	Create graphics, logos, and vector images. Learn more at: https://www.adobe.com/products/illustrator.html	✓	✓	✓	✓
Adobe InDesign	Create digital and printed reports, pamphlets, brochures, and other multipage publications. Learn more at: https://www.adobe.com/products/indesign.html	✓	✓		✓
Canva	Create social media graphics, presentations, posters, documents, and other visual content. https://www.canva.com/	✓	✓	✓	✓
Easel.ly	Provides free templates for infographics. https://www.easel.ly/	✓	✓	✓	✓

Tool	Description and URL	Email	Printed	Social Media	Website
Graphic River	Access templates for presentations, flyers, logos, and printed materials. https://graphicriver.net/	✓	✓	✓	✓
Infogram	Access templates, animations, and interactive infographics. https://infogram.com/	✓	✓	✓	✓
Inkscape	Create vector icons and graphics. https://inkscape.org/	✓	✓	✓	✓
MS Publisher	Create a variety of publications including content that can be printed as well as shared online. Learn more at: https://www.microsoft.com/en-us/microsoft-365/publisher	✓	✓	✓	✓
PlaceIt	Create logos and social media content, and order branded printed and physical materials. https://placeit.net/		✓	✓	
Snappa	Create graphics for social media and website posts. https://snappa.com/			✓	✓
Stencil	Create social media graphics, presentations, posters, documents, and other visual content. https://getstencil.com/	✓	✓	✓	✓
Venngage	Provides free templates for infographics, posters, reports, and social media posts. https://venngage.com/	✓	✓	✓	✓
Photo and Icon Resources					
MS Word Stock Icons	Insert free icons into Word formatted documents and reports for inclusion in various publications. Learn more at: https://support.microsoft.com/en-us/office/insert-icons-4c8c86aa-a844-4edb-aee0-02b7387fc99d	✓	✓	✓	✓
MS Word Stock Images	Insert free images into Word formatted documents and reports for inclusion in various publications. Learn more at: https://support.microsoft.com/en-us/office/insert-pictures-3c51edf4-22e1-460a-b372-9329a8724344	✓	✓	✓	✓

Tool	Description and URL	Email	Printed	Social Media	Website
Pexels	Access images free for commercial use in documents and presentations. https://www.pexels.com/	✓	✓	✓	✓
Pixabay	Share copyright free images, videos, music, and vector graphics. https://pixabay.com/	✓	✓	✓	✓
The Noun Project	Find free icons and photos. https://thenounproject.com/	✓	✓	✓	✓
Unsplash	Access images free for commercial use in documents and presentations. https://unsplash.com/	✓	✓	✓	✓
Social Media Management					
Bitly	Shortens links so that you can post them on your social media accounts. Provides real-time analytics. https://bitly.com/			✓	✓
Buffer	Schedule and organize posts across social media platforms, and review analytics. https://buffer.com/			✓	
Campsite	A platform to host all social media and content links in one place using one link connected to any or all social media accounts. https://campsite.bio/			✓	
Everypost	Schedule and organize posts across social media platforms. http://everypost.me/			✓	
Hootsuite	Execute campaigns across multiple social networks from one web-based dashboard. https://www.hootsuite.com/			✓	
Planoly	Create, schedule, publish, and manage Instagram content. https://www.planoly.com/			✓	
SocialFlow	Optimize and manage content published across social media platforms. https://www.socialflow.com/			✓	

Tool	Description and URL	Email	Printed	Social Media	Website
Video Editing Resources					
FilmoraGo	Video editing software for PC. https://filmora.wondershare.net/	✓	✓	✓	✓
iMovie	Video editing software for Apple products. Learn more at: https://www.apple.com/imovie/	✓		✓	✓
Story Slicer	An iOS mobile app that allows you to cut, edit, and post videos to social media sites. https://storyslicer.us/			✓	
Website Management					
HubSpot Blog Topic Generator	Search keywords and nouns to generate engaging topics and titles for web content. https://www.hubspot.com/blog-topic-generator				✓
Siteliner	Scan your website to check for duplicate content, phrasing, and sentence structure. https://www.siteliner.com/				✓