

Exploring Media

Time

30 minutes

Activity Overview

This module provides an introduction into how the curriculum defines media and its purposes. Activities allow participants to brainstorm the many types of media and understand the connection between media and health. Participants take part in an activity adapted from the curriculum that introduces the program’s media analysis tool, the 6 Media Questions.

Activity Objectives

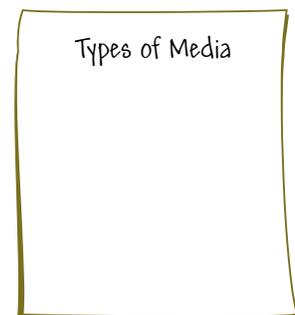
- ◆ Explore the concept of media.
- ◆ Examine the link between media and health.

Materials Needed

- ◆ 6 Media Questions poster
- ◆ Color copies of the same print ad (one copy for each small group)
- ◆ *Media Detective Notepad* sheets (one copy for each participant)
- ◆ Pencils/pens (one for each participant)
- ◆ Watch/timer
- ◆ Masking tape
- ◆ Equipment to play and show the Media-Smart Youth DVD

Trainer's Preparation

- ◆ Place blank paper in the center of each table with the following heading across the top: “Types of Media.”
- ◆ At the front of the room, set up an easel with blank sheets of flipchart paper to write on during the discussion. If you don’t have an easel, tape sheets of flipchart paper to the wall in a place where everyone can see them.
- ◆ Set up the equipment to play and show DVD Segment #8: *The Power of Advertising*.



- ◆ On an index card or piece of paper, write the following fact about media use among children in the United States:
 - “Young people ages 11 to 14 spend an average of 8 hours and 40 minutes a day using media.”⁶
- ◆ Post the 6 Media Questions poster in the room.
- ◆ Photocopy the *Media Detective Notepad* sheet (one copy for each participant).
- ◆ Place one print ad in the center of each table for each small group to analyze as its media sample.

Introduction | 2 minutes

1. **TELL** participants that in this session they will explore the concept of media and that they will examine the link between media and health.
2. **SHARE** with participants a few key points about the way media are presented in the curriculum:
 - ◆ The Media-Smart Youth program does not view media as “good” or “bad.” Media are a well-established part of our culture and a tool for communicating.
 - ◆ Media can have a powerful effect on people’s attitudes, behaviors, and health, including their food choices and body image.
 - ◆ Media-Smart Youth seeks to increase young people’s awareness about the media in their lives.
 - ◆ Media-Smart Youth teaches young people to think about the media messages they receive and to make their own decisions about the media they experience.
3. **EXPLAIN** to participants that even though Media-Smart Youth focuses on young people and the media, the connections between media and health apply to adults, too.
4. **SAY:**

In this session, we will:

 - Define media and the main purposes of media.
 - Discuss media use by young people and the connection between media and health.
 - Practice analyzing media using a tool called the 6 Media Questions.

⁶ Foehr, U. G., Rideout, V. J., & Roberts, D. F. (2010). *Generation M²: Media in the Lives of 8- to 18-Year-Olds*. Menlo Park, CA: Kaiser Family Foundation.

5. **TELL** participants that this session includes actual activities from the Media-Smart Youth curriculum. **EXPLAIN** that because this is a training for facilitators, slight adaptations were made to some of the activities, but that overall, these activities are very similar to the ones they will deliver to youth. This practice will give facilitators a chance to learn the content, and to gain a first-hand understanding of the interactive teaching style used throughout the curriculum.

Brainstorm Media | 5 minutes

1. **SAY:**



Let's begin by defining media. What are media?

LISTEN to ideas from participants. If necessary, guide them to the following types of responses:

- ◆ Ways of communicating or expressing information or ideas to people
- ◆ Examples of media might include:
 - Traditional forms of media, such as newspapers, television shows, music, and books
 - Digital forms of media, such as e-mails, text messages, blogs, and social networking sites

2. **TELL** participants they are going to make a list of all the different kinds of media they come across every day.
3. **TELL** participants they are going to work in small groups to create lists of media. **DIVIDE** participants into their small groups.
4. **ASK** each group to select one or more participants for each of these roles:
 - ◆ Notetaker(s) will write down the group's ideas on a sheet of flipchart paper.
 - ◆ Encourager(s) will cheer on the group and urge it to finish the activity in the time available.
 - ◆ Presenter(s) will read the list when the group is done.

5. **ASK** each group to work together to brainstorm all the different kinds of media formats they can think of. **TELL** participants to record their ideas on the sheet of paper in the center of each table labeled “Types of Media” and to number their lists. Their lists should include any and all kinds of media they can think of. They will have 1 minute to create their lists.

6. **ALLOW** 1 minute for participants to brainstorm and write down their ideas. At the end of 1 minute, have participants count the number of items on their list.

7. **ASK** one table to read its full list to the larger group. **ASK** each of the other tables to add one type of media from their lists that has not already been mentioned by other groups. This might be a type of media that they especially like or something that surprised them on their list.

Examples of media:

- ◆ Television (TV)
- ◆ Advertisements or commercials
- ◆ Infomercials
- ◆ Public service announcements (PSAs)
- ◆ Movies
- ◆ Videos
- ◆ DVDs
- ◆ Visual arts (paintings, photos, sculptures, etc.)
- ◆ Newspapers
- ◆ Books
- ◆ Books on tape or CD
- ◆ Magazines
- ◆ Comic books or graphic novels
- ◆ Flyers or brochures
- ◆ Cell phones or mobile devices, including smartphones
- ◆ Text messages
- ◆ Internet
- ◆ Blogs

A Note About Engaging Participants

To add energy and suspense to the activity, turn it into a friendly contest. For example, see which team has the longest list when the 1 minute for this activity is up. Give a round of applause to the group that wins, and invite those participants to present their list first.

- ◆ Social networking sites (such as Facebook)
- ◆ Websites
- ◆ E-mail
- ◆ Instant messaging (IM)
- ◆ Video games
- ◆ Radio
- ◆ Music
- ◆ Billboards
- ◆ Signs on the outside or inside of buses or at bus stops or transit stops
- ◆ Signs on the sides of trucks and vans
- ◆ Art contests
- ◆ Sports sponsorships
- ◆ Food or drink packaging (for example, cereal boxes)
- ◆ Mail
- ◆ Theater
- ◆ Dance
- ◆ Performance arts

Finding the Purpose | 3 minutes

1. **SAY:**



Now that we are aware of the many types of media, let's think about their purpose. All media products have a purpose, or a reason why they are created.

2. **ASK** participants what the three main purposes of media are. **INVITE** participants to look at the examples of media on their lists to help them think about their purpose.
3. **LISTEN** to ideas from the participants. If necessary, **GUIDE** them to the following responses:
 - ◆ Persuade (for example, magazine and Internet advertisements)
 - ◆ Inform (for example, TV news or blogs)
 - ◆ Entertain (for example, movies or video games)

SAY:

The first letter of each of these purpose words forms the acronym “PIE.” This acronym may be an easy way for the youth to remember the three purposes of media. Keep in mind that some types of media may have more than one purpose.

4. ASK:

- ◆ Why is it helpful to know the purposes of different kinds of media?

LISTEN to ideas from participants. If necessary, **GUIDE** them to the following types of response:

- Knowing the purpose helps us to be more aware of how media are used and how media may affect us.
- Knowing the purpose helps us to think critically about what we see and hear in the media.

Exploring the Connection Between Media and Health | 10 minutes

1. **REMINDE** participants that the Media-Smart Youth program does not view media in terms of “good” or “bad.” **EXPLAIN** that Media-Smart Youth teaches young people to think about the media messages they receive and encourages them to make their own decisions about the media they experience based on critical thinking skills.
2. **TELL** participants that the next activity is designed to help them understand the prevalence of media in young people’s lives. This part of the activity focuses on the media behavior of young people.
3. **ASK** participants how much time each day they think young people, ages 11 to 14, spend on average using media, not including any time spent at school. **EXPLAIN** that using media includes activities such as playing video games, listening to music, reading, going online, using their cell phones, blogging, and watching TV or DVDs.
4. **LISTEN** for ideas from the group. **ALLOW** participants to try to answer the question.
5. **READ** the index card or paper with a fact about media use:
Young people ages 11 to 14 spend an average of 8 hours and 40 minutes a day using media.
6. **ASK** participants if they are familiar with the term “media multitasking.”

7. **LISTEN** for ideas from the group. If necessary, **GUIDE** them to the following response:
- ♦ Media multitasking involves using more than one form of media at the same time. For example, using the Internet while talking on the phone is media multitasking.

8. **SAY:**



The statistic that I just shared with you doesn't include times when youth use multiple forms of media at once. Among children 8 to 18 years old, 74 percent use another form of media while using the Internet. When we account for media multitasking, our media consumption shoots up dramatically to a total of nearly 12 hours (11:53) of use in a typical day.⁷

9. **DISCUSS** this statistic and the connection between media and health with participants.

ASK:

- ♦ What influences in all of our lives—both young people and adults—might contribute to this amount of media use?

LISTEN to ideas from participants. If necessary, **GUIDE** them to the following types of responses:

- Media are all around us—embedded in our culture.
- There are many different kinds of media available.
- People talk about, share, and promote media with their friends.
- Media producers and companies use persuasive techniques to encourage consumers to buy their media products.
- Media use can be fun and social (such as going to movies with peers, playing video games with friends, listening to music, and other activities).
- Media use offers instant gratification (via instant messaging, cell phones, and iPod™).
- Some media are associated with images that are appealing to people (for example, it's “cool” to have an iPad™ or an iPhone™).
- Many people rely on media as part of their lifestyle. For example, some people like to have a smartphone or laptop with them when they are away from the office or on vacation.



10. **SHOW** DVD Segment #8: *The Power of Advertising*.

⁷ Foehr, U. G., Rideout, V. J., & Roberts, D. F. (2010). *Generation M²: Media in the Lives of 8- to 18-Year-Olds*. Menlo Park, CA: Kaiser Family Foundation.

11. **DISCUSS** the video segment with participants.

ASK:

◆ What's the connection between media and health?

LISTEN to ideas from participants. If necessary, **GUIDE** them to the following types of responses:

- Media are everywhere and can have a powerful effect on our attitudes, behaviors, and health.
- Many people like to snack while they use media and do not realize how much they are eating. They often choose foods that are high in solid fats, added sugars, and calories. These foods may taste good and fill people up, but they don't have much nutritional value.
- Many media advertisements promote foods that are high in solid fats, added sugars, and calories and that do not have much nutritional value.
- Many media advertisements aimed at young people (and adults) make foods very tempting, which can lead us away from eating to satisfy hunger. People are more likely to overeat if they lose track of whether or not they are hungry.
- Media offer attractive role models who can inspire us to take care of our bodies by eating smart and being active. But media often portray body sizes and shapes that are unrealistic and have little to do with being healthy.
- Media keep us busy, but not necessarily active. People often choose to use media instead of being physically active.
- Media often portray sports as fun and exciting. Even though that portrayal encourages interest in sports, some people watch sports instead of being active themselves.

12. **EXPLAIN** that even though this discussion focuses on the media behaviors of young people, most of these points about the connection between media and health apply to adults, too.

13. **SAY:**

Next, we are going to practice analyzing media.



1. **SAY:**



Creators of media want you to think in a certain way or take a specific action. This relates back to the main purposes of media, which are to persuade, inform, or entertain. Media that serve to persuade or inform are often selling a product or a specific point of view. Creators of media that entertain want to give you pleasure or fun by using or choosing their media.

To become more active and thoughtful users of media, you can use the 6 Media Questions, a set of basic questions for analyzing media. The 6 Media Questions will also help youth create media for their Mini-Productions and their Big Production. Let's review the 6 Media Questions together.

2. **INTRODUCE** the 6 Media Questions poster on the wall and review it quickly. **ASK** for a volunteer to read each question and briefly explain what the question means by asking the volunteer:

- ◆ What is this question asking you to think about?
- ◆ What does this question mean to you?

3. **CLARIFY** the concepts in each media question as needed. **USE** the *Understanding the 6 Media Questions* table on the next page for definitions and examples.

 **A Note to Trainers**

The table on the next page is for trainer reference only. It provides further information to help trainers review and define the 6 Media Questions with participants.

Understanding the 6 Media Questions

What do you think about this media product?
Answer the following questions to help you decide:

Media Question	What Does It Mean?
1. Who is the author or sponsor?	This question is asking you to identify who wrote, created, or sponsored the media product, such as a newspaper journalist, a musician, or a food company.
2. What is the purpose ?	This question is asking you to identify the reason this media product was created (such as to persuade, inform, or entertain).
3. Who is the audience ?	This question is asking you to identify the group, such as young people, parents, older adults, or any other group, you think the media product is meant for. In other words, who does the creator/sponsor want to see, hear, or use this product?
4. What is the message ?	This question is asking you to identify the message that this specific media product is trying to get across. The message is the main statement, point, or opinion that is being expressed in the media. In other words, what is the media product telling you? Once you know what the message is, you can decide what you think about it and whether you agree with it.
5. What information is missing ?	This question is asking you to identify information that is not included in the media message, but that is still important. The act of leaving out information is also known as “omission.” For example, a food ad might leave out information about ingredients, or a news story might present only one point of view about an issue.
6. What techniques are used to attract your attention?	This question is asking you to identify the specific techniques the media product uses to grab your attention and draw you in. The techniques used in media—such as sound, color, humor, or use of well-known personalities—are important because they make the media more interesting and attractive. Different techniques work with different audiences.

Using the 6 Media Questions | 5 minutes

1. **TELL** participants that they will now have a chance to practice using the 6 Media Questions. **EXPLAIN** to participants:
 - ◆ They are going to work in small groups at their tables.
 - ◆ Each group will work together to analyze the print ad in the center of their table by answering the questions on the *Media Detective Notepad* sheet. The sheet is in their folders.
 - ◆ Groups will have 3 minutes to analyze the print ad.
2. **ASK** each group to select one or more participants for each of these roles:
 - ◆ Notetaker(s) will write down the group's ideas on the *Media Detective Notepad* sheet.
 - ◆ Encourager(s) will cheer on the group and urge it to finish the activity in the time available.
 - ◆ Presenter(s) will read the answers when the group is done.
3. **ALLOW** groups to work for 3 minutes. **VISIT** each group, and **PROVIDE** help as needed. **TELL** participants when they have 1 minute left to finish their sheets. **TELL** participants when time is up.
4. **DISCUSS** the activity with the full group. **ASK** each group to answer one of the 6 Media Questions about the sample ad, beginning with *Media Question #1* and working around the room to cover all six questions (one question per table). If there are more than six groups, **INVITE** the additional group(s) to also answer *Media Question #5: What information is missing?* **POINT OUT** that there are many different answers to this question.
5. **ASK** participants:
 - ◆ What is the difference between the purpose and the message of media?
LISTEN to ideas from participants. If necessary, **GUIDE** them to the following responses:
 - The purpose tells you generally what the media product was created to do, such as persuade, inform, or entertain.
 - The message is the specific main point or statement made by a media format, such as the main idea of a TV story or a key point in a news article.

Closing the Activity | 1 minute

1. **CONGRATULATE** participants for being observant about media. **ASK** whether they have any comments or questions.

2. **SAY:**



Knowing how to use the 6 Media Questions is an important step in becoming media smart.

Now it's time for an Action Break!