

# C ontents

<b>1.0 INTRODUCTION</b> .....	<b>2</b>
<b>2.0 TERMS OF REFERENCE AND SCOPE OF WORK</b> .....	<b>3</b>
<b>3.0 APPROACH AND METHODOLOGY</b> .....	<b>4</b>
3.1 APPROACH .....	4
3.2 METHODOLOGY .....	4
3.2.1 Management Discussion Group .....	6
3.2.2 Development of Discussion Guide .....	6
3.2.3 Focus Group Selection .....	6
3.3 FOCUS GROUP ENVIRONMENT .....	6
3.4 FOCUS GROUP EXECUTION .....	7
<b>4.0 FOCUS GROUP AGES 18-25</b> .....	<b>8</b>
4.1 BILLBOARD CONCEPTS .....	8
4.1.1 Concept 1 – Another Reason to say no .....	8
4.1.2 Concept 2 – “reach out and touch and embrace an hiv+ person” .....	9
4.1.3 Concept 3 – “open your mind, open your arms open your heart ...” .....	9
4.1.4 Concept 4 – don’t fight me, fight aids .....	9
<b>5.0 FOCUS GROUP AGES 26–49</b> .....	<b>11</b>
5.1 BILLBOARD CONCEPTS .....	11
5.1.1 Concept 1 – “another reason to say no to ...” .....	11
5.1.2 Concept 2 – “reach out and touch, and embrace ...” .....	11
5.1.3 Concept 3 - “open your mind, open your arms, open your heart” .....	12
5.1.4 Concept 4 – “don’t fight me, fight aids” .....	12
<b>6.0 FOCUS GROUP AGES 50 TO 65 YEARS OF AGE</b> .....	<b>14</b>
6.1 BILLBOARD CONCEPTS .....	14
6.1.1 Concept 1 - “another reason to say no to ...” .....	14
6.1.2 Concept 2 - “reach out and touch, and embrace ...” .....	14
6.1.3 Concept 3 - “open your mind, open your arms, open your heart ...” .....	15
6.1.4 Concept 4 – “don’t fight me, fight aids” .....	15
<b>7.0 IMPLICATIONS</b> .....	<b>16</b>
7.1 ATTENTION .....	16
7.2 COMPREHENSION .....	16
7.3 PERSUASION .....	16
<b>8.0 CONCLUSION</b> .....	<b>18</b>

## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

The National HIV/AIDS Commission has been charged with the responsibility with creating and executing an educational campaign to positively impact the Knowledge, Attitude, Behaviour and Perception of Barbadians with respect to HIV/AIDS and persons living with HIV/AIDS. Central to this exercise is the creation of a promotional campaign.

This research exercise sought to test the copy platform and advertising concepts, which will form the basis of the proposed campaign.

## **2.0 TERMS OF REFERENCE AND SCOPE OF WORK**

For ease of reference, the Terms of Reference and Scope of Work for the exercise are as follows: -

### **TERMS OF REFERENCE**

*The objectives of the research exercise are as follows: -*

- *To test the message clarity and consistency of proposed advertising concepts.*

### **SCOPE OF WORK**

*The research shall be conducted amongst:*

*Participants aged 18-25*

*Participants aged 26-49*

*Participants aged 50-65*

## **3.0 APPROACH AND METHODOLOGY**

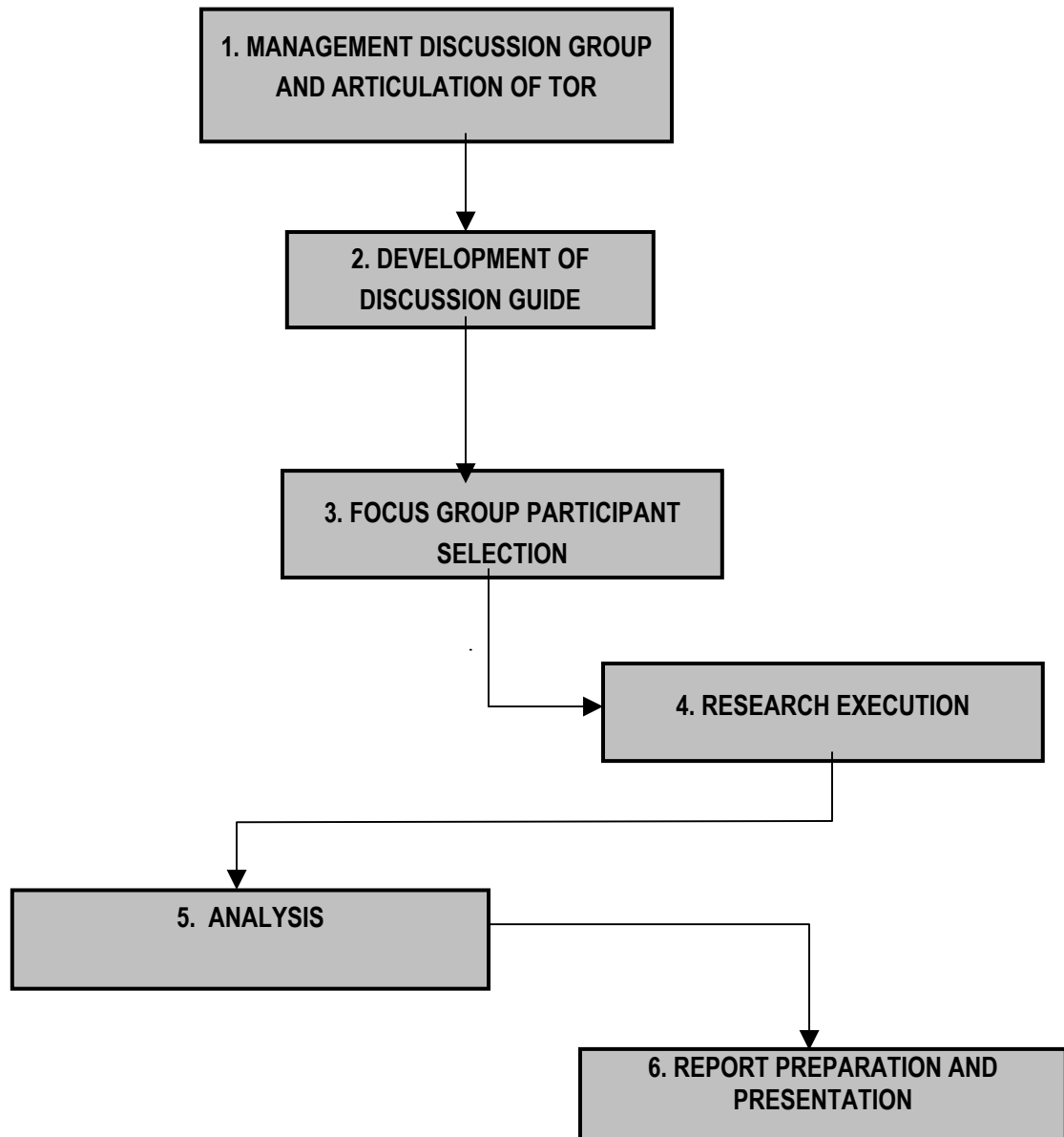
### **3.1 APPROACH**

Our approach was inclusive and emphasised the participation of the client organisation. Given the research design, it is hoped that the exercise addresses the client needs and priorities; promotes ownership and commitment to the exercise; and provides for the effective implementation of a programme that will allow the client to achieve its objectives.

### **3.2 METHODOLOGY**

The methodology for the exercise is outlined in Figure 1.

**Figure 1: Summary of the Approach and Methodology**



### **3.2.1 MANAGEMENT DISCUSSION GROUP**

The Management Discussion Group was an opportunity for the members of the Committee to articulate their information requirements in order to ensure that the resulting report has a high degree of actionable type content.

### **3.2.2 DEVELOPMENT OF DISCUSSION GUIDE**

The information requirements articulated during the management discussion group suggested a specific set of questions as a guide for discussion at the focus groups. The discussion guide set the agenda for each focus group by having participants describe their perceptions with respect to concepts as well as the underlying causative factors for these perceptions.

### **3.2.3 FOCUS GROUP SELECTION**

Three Focus Groups were held for the following age groups:-

- 18-25 years
- 26-49 years
- 50 years and over

The Focus groups sought to test proposed ad copy, creative concepts and slogans to be employed in the campaign. Concept boards were employed to determine whether the proposed concepts effectively achieved their goals in terms of both message communication and attitude effects.

Specifically, the proposed campaign elements were tested for:

1. The ability to attract attention
2. Comprehension
3. Persuasion
4. Credibility
5. Irritation level and
6. General image concept

### **3.3 FOCUS GROUP ENVIRONMENT**

The focus group environments were based as much as possible on the findings of a number of experts in the field of Focus Group research. The participants were greeted, seated, and provided with refreshments. Each focus group commenced with a short warm-up period. This helped to create a relaxed atmosphere

where informal and spontaneous comments could be encouraged. During the warm up period everyone, including the moderator introduced themselves, and the rules of the group interaction stated.

### **3.4 FOCUS GROUP EXECUTION**

The objectives of the exercise were explained by the moderator who opened the discussion by posing introductory questions at the group. This was done without affecting the content and answers given by the participants. The moderator sought to direct the discussion along relevant dimensions and provide the necessary probing and depth of insight necessary to achieve the stated research objectives.

## **4.0 FOCUS GROUP AGES 18-25**

### **4.1 BILLBOARD CONCEPTS**

#### **4.1.1 CONCEPT 1 – ANOTHER REASON TO SAY NO**

##### **Attention**

According to participants in this group the concept did not draw their immediate attention. However, the tombstone was the first element to grab the attention of half of the participants whereas the background and sky caught the attention of the remaining participants. The popular watch Tower Magazine was what came to mind for one participant. Another said that the concept had some religious overtones and its association with HIV/AIDS came only after a second reading. This latter view, the association with HIV/AIDS, was shared by all of the participants. The NCSA and HIV/AIDS logos were only recognized incidentally.

##### **Comprehension**

The meaning of the particular concept was not immediately clear to participants. However, after looking at the concept for some time it became apparent. It must be noted that this demographic saw more of a correlation between drugs and HIV/AIDS as opposed to drugs and death and to a lesser extent between violence and death. According to one participant, “there is always rehab for the drug user”.

##### **Persuasion**

Participants felt that the concept was somewhat persuasive. According to one participant, it could cause one to stop and make a “reality check”. Another participant felt that the concept was too harsh. Scores for persuasion ranged between four and six. Only one respondent assigned a four and she felt that the concept was too busy and so could not be particularly persuasive. Generally, respondents felt that a change of font and its colour could make the concept more impactful especially for “drugs” and “violence” which received minimal attention.

#### **4.1.2 CONCEPT 2 – “REACH OUT AND TOUCH AND EMBRACE AN HIV+ PERSON”**

##### **Attention**

This concept scored high in terms of its ability to attract attention. Only one individual gave it a low score of four. Again very little attention was drawn to the logos placed on the concept. Participants felt that the logos were very important for this concept and need to be more conspicuous.

##### **Comprehension**

This billboard concept resonated well with participants who said it articulated the need to show support and acceptance of persons living with HIV/AIDS. It was felt that the concept was also conveying through the different hands that HIV/AIDS does not discriminate in terms of age, gender, or race.

##### **Persuasion**

Despite being easily comprehended and having the capacity to attract attention participants felt the concept lack persuasiveness. According to participants, the hands alone cannot sway people and perhaps showing people instead of hands might be more persuasive.

#### **4.1.3 CONCEPT 3 – “OPEN YOUR MIND, OPEN YOUR ARMS OPEN YOUR HEART ...”**

##### **Attention**

The graphics was the first element to grab the attention of those in the focus group followed by the bold contrasting text of “Open your Mind, Open Your Arms, Open Your Heart’. One participant felt that more attention should be drawn to HIV/AIDS by placing it in red.

##### **Comprehension**

In addition to making individuals attend to the concept the graphic stimulated their interest. The individual it was said, seemed to be pleading for someone to open their mind, arms and heart to “him”. “Arms” was interpreted as being both figurative and literal arms with the latter interpretation not being well received by participants who felt that they will have difficulty embracing someone who they know has HIV/AIDS.

##### **Persuasion**

Persons felt that although the concept evoked emotion they did not believe that they could be persuaded to be within close proximity of a person living with HIV/AIDS which “arms” was suggesting. Participants felt that “arms” broke down the communication and they were unable to process any further information.

#### **4.1.4 CONCEPT 4 – DON’T FIGHT ME, FIGHT AIDS**

##### **Attention**

This concept caught the attention of participants almost immediately especially the font and what participants called “the face of a child” which was embedded in the text. The interests of participants were

aroused particularly because of the word “fight” which they stated is very much a part of the vernacular of this age group and the younger population.

**Comprehension**

The meaning assigned to the concept was consistent among respondents who also felt that “me” had a double meaning. That is, “me” the person living with HIV/AIDS and “me” another youth. This was largely due to the fact that fighting is now a major aspect of the culture of the youth. The relevance to the youth according to participants, is further emphasized by the “child’s face” within the text.

**Persuasion**

This group believed that the concept had the capacity to persuade and influence the youth particularly because of the word “fight” which is now a major part of the culture of the youth. The face in the text, they believed, helped to make the ad more relevant for the youth. When asked to rate the concept in terms of its ability to persuade respondents assigned high scores of nines and tens.

## **5.0 FOCUS GROUP AGES 26–49**

### **5.1 BILLBOARD CONCEPTS**

#### **5.1.1 CONCEPT 1 – “ANOTHER REASON TO SAY NO TO ...”**

##### **Attention**

Participants rated this concept highly in its ability to attract attention. The slogan “Say No” caught the attention of six of the ten participants whereas the tombstone caught the attention of another three. “Another reason” was passed over by participants who felt that it could be omitted from the concept as it adds nothing to the overall effect of the ad. Other text elements such as “Violence”, “Drugs”, and “Violence” respondents admitted were important but never caught their attention. So too did the logos affixed to the art work. Participants were unable at the first attempt, to correctly decode the desired relationship between the logo and the text.

##### **Comprehension**

There was no difficulty on the part of participants in interpreting and articulating the meaning of the message.

##### **Persuasion**

The concept was deemed to be fairly persuasive. However, it is believed that the graveyard looked too unused to be convincing and that perhaps a few more tombstones (some broken) would have more impact. This might also suggest that more people have succumbed to the disease. Another suggestion was that of placing the HIV/AIDS logo or the “Violence”, and “Drugs” on the tombstone.

#### **5.1.2 CONCEPT 2 – “REACH OUT AND TOUCH, AND EMBRACE ...”**

##### **Attention**

Participants scored the concept relatively highly with respect to its ability to attract attention. The outstretched arms caught the attention of respondents more than any other element.

##### **Comprehension**

Attendees had no difficulty interpreting the message and felt that the text and graphics were consistent in meaning. Participants interpreted “embrace” both literally and figuratively. That is, physically embrace someone or mentally by showing acceptance of them. It was suggested that the ad was asking too much by suggesting embrace and that that element could be omitted.

### **Persuasion**

Despite the fact that respondents were uncomfortable with the “embrace” aspect of the concept they felt that the concept had great potential in term of persuasion. Participants also believed that the message could be more effective if “embrace” were omitted.

### **5.1.3 CONCEPT 3 - “OPEN YOUR MIND, OPEN YOUR ARMS, OPEN YOUR HEART”**

#### **Attention**

The concept was able to command the attention of the entire group without much difficulty. When asked to rate the concept on its ability to command attention respondents score ranged from eight to ten with nine being the modal frequency.

#### **Comprehension**

Participants believed that the figure in the proposed bill board represented someone in the advanced stages of the AIDS disease. Showing one individual, a male in this case, was believed to be suggesting that one gender type is more prone to the disease and thus represented some element of bias. Respondents felt that having two individuals would eliminate the bias.

#### **Persuasion**

To be more persuasive it was believed that a family should be portrayed which would suggest that all are prone to the disease. This, participants felt, would evoke more empathy and concern. Despite this however, participants were of the view that they could not be swayed by the concept and this was due primarily by their interpretation of the figure as being in a deteriorated state of health. A healthier looking person or a family for that matter would be better able to persuade them.

### **5.1.4 CONCEPT 4 – “DON’T FIGHT ME, FIGHT AIDS”**

#### **Attention**

This concept score low in attention as participants said that it did not appeal to them or caught their attention. In fact, some regarded it as “busy” and “confusing”.

#### **Comprehension**

Most focus group members were unsure of the concept’s message and suggested that too much effort was required in processing the information which the concept sought to communicate. Difficulty was experienced particularly with the meaning of “me”. Only one participant successfully decoded the message and suggested that it would be appropriate for schools.

**Persuasion**

Undoubtedly this concept received low scores for its ability to persuade. Only one participant offered a high score of nine; this being the individual who thought it had particular relevance for the youth.

## **6.0 FOCUS GROUP AGES 50 TO 65 YEARS OF AGE**

### **6.1 BILLBOARD CONCEPTS**

#### **6.1.1 CONCEPT 1 - “ANOTHER REASON TO SAY NO TO ...”**

##### **Attention**

It was apparent from the discussions with this group that the words “Say No” and the tombstone in the foreground were the particular concept elements that caught the attention of individuals. Attention was only drawn to “Another Reason” and “Drugs, HIV/AIDS and Violence” on a second or third glance.

##### **Comprehension**

The message proves quite clear to respondents as all agreed that it was suggesting abstinence even though some respondents felt that making “Drugs”, HIV/AIDS”, and “Violence” more outstanding would allow individuals to process the information more quickly. A lack of familiarity with the NCSA’s logo slowed the assimilation process for some participants.

##### **Persuasion**

Discussion suggested that the concept was a little persuasive but could be more effective by making the HIV/AIDS logo more prominent perhaps by placing it on the tombstones. According to participants, death is depicted as something nice and peaceful and not something to shun or fear. This they believed was achieved through the peaceful atmosphere of the grave yard, and the new and clean tombstone. This reduced the persuasiveness of the ad. According to participants the graveyard needs to look “used”.

#### **6.1.2 CONCEPT 2 - “REACH OUT AND TOUCH, AND EMBRACE ...”**

##### **Attention**

Participants felt that this concept did not particularly catch their attention because it was too busy. One participant felt that perhaps a larger HIV/AIDS logo could catch the attention of individuals.

##### **Comprehension**

Despite the fact that the concept did not catch the attention of participants the message was explicit to them. One participant however, indicated that he was unable to process the message because he was turned off due to the concept being so busy. Another participant felt that the message elements were not consistent. That is, the “stay safe, love life” logo suggested abstinence and low risk behaviour whereas the text in the concept called for less discrimination. Participants questioned the aquamarine and blue used in the concept and wondered whether it was a deliberate patriotic gesture.

##### **Persuasion**

Participants felt that the concept cannot persuade individuals especially as there is a strong reluctance to physically embrace persons living with HIV/AIDS.

### **6.1.3 CONCEPT 3 - “OPEN YOUR MIND, OPEN YOUR ARMS, OPEN YOUR HEART ...”**

#### **Attention**

This concept resonated well with participants who found it to be very attractive especially the boldness and contrasting colours of the font which was the major element that drew their attention. Score for this aspect of the ad ranged from eight to ten.

#### **Comprehension**

Participants had no difficulty in getting the meaning of the concept. However, if the idea of open arms is to be taken figuratively as well as literally then there would obviously be difficulty with the latter meaning as respondents felt that such an act does not resonate well with the society.

#### **Persuasion**

Scores for this concept's ability to persuade were between nine and ten. Participants felt that the concept was very impactful and has the capacity to influence behaviour especially when the metaphorical meaning of “arms” is applied.

### **6.1.4 CONCEPT 4 – “DON’T FIGHT ME, FIGHT AIDS”**

#### **Attention**

This concept failed to attract the attention of most of the participants within this group except one.

#### **Comprehension**

All of the focus group participants experienced difficulty in articulating a meaning from this concept. Indeed, only one attendee offered an interpretation which corresponded to the intended meaning. The word “me” in the slogan served to confuse participants. One participant also suggested that “Don’t fight me” be removed and the concept should read “Fight AIDS”.

#### **Persuasion**

Consistent scores for the concept’s ability to persuade were three (3). Attendees clearly believed that this concept lacks the necessary capacity to impact the public.

## **7.0 IMPLICATIONS**

One of the major challenges of promotional campaigns is to ensure that consumers attend to, comprehend and ultimately remember information about the subject being promoted. The proposed concepts were evaluated in terms of how effectively focus group participants went through three important stages of the information process i.e. how they attended to the information, how they comprehended the information, and how persuasive the information was to them.

### **7.1 ATTENTION**

A change in the level of stimulation to which individuals have become habituated will arouse attention. This can be achieved through the use of contrast as in concept 3 which aroused the attention of participants from all three focus groups. Participants were attracted to the size and bright colours of the font which, according to research, generally attract more attention than small sizes and muted colours. This is also the case in concept 1 where “SAY NO” caught the attention of participants because of its large size. However, “Another Reason To”, “Drugs”, and “Violence” which were in smaller font did not initially “grab” the attention of respondents.

Other factors influencing attention are interest and relevance. Individuals will attend to things that are of relevance and interest to them. It is no wonder that concept 4 resonated so well with the younger participants, in the first focus group where “fight” and “fighting” are a part of their everyday vocabulary.

### **7.2 COMPREHENSION**

With concept 4 having relevance to the younger group they were able to accurately decode it. This process however, proved quite difficult and unsuccessful for the other groups as it lacked relevance for them. Concepts 2 and 3 had relevance to all the groups and were well comprehended by them.

Another factor, which influences comprehension, is message complexity. For a message to have impact, the receiver must understand the message. If the information is too complex, or presented in a garbled, confusing manner, receivers are less likely to comprehend and be persuaded by it. The signature slogans “Another Reason to Say No” and “Open Your Mind, Open Your Arm Open Your Heart” were successfully decoded by all participants irrespective of demographic profile.

### **7.3 PERSUASION**

The success of a message may be regarded by its ability to change behaviour. Advertising attempts to develop and change attitudes by touching the emotions of target audiences. Concepts 1 and 3 have the potential to influence behaviour. As articulated by one participant, concept 1 causes one to stop and make a “reality check”. This concept has an element of fear appeal and with minor changes can be very

**National HIV/AIDS Commission**

*HIV/AIDS Concept Testing Focus Group*

*General Findings*

persuasive. Concept 3 did evoke some emotions from participants though they were somewhat uncomfortable with the issue of coming into close proximity with individuals living with HIV/AIDS. This, however, is one of the attitudes which the concept is seeking to change.

## **8.0 CONCLUSION**

It is clear that all of the concepts possess the capacity to effectively communicate messages to target audiences. Two useful suggestions were to make the graveyard in concepts 1 look a bit “used” and place some of the logos on the tombstones, and to place more than one person in concept 3.

The stigma reduction campaign is particularly timely but few of the concepts with stigma reduction as their objectives were not decoded to mean such. Group contribution suggested that participants were unable to successfully process the message entirely because of the idea of close physical contact. Participants admitted that they were aware that HIV/AIDS cannot be transmitted by touching but indicated that they were uncomfortable with getting too close to persons living with HIV/AIDS.

The increased use of icons instead of text will help in the processing of messages and will speak to the recognition of these logos. For example, participants were not familiar with the NCSA logo in concept 1 and this slowed the processing of the information. On the other hand, the HIV/AIDS logo was immediately recognized by participants who immediately concluded that the message had some relation to HIV/AIDS. Within the context of message elements, this is of particular importance as interface is more likely to be considered in seconds as opposed to minutes.