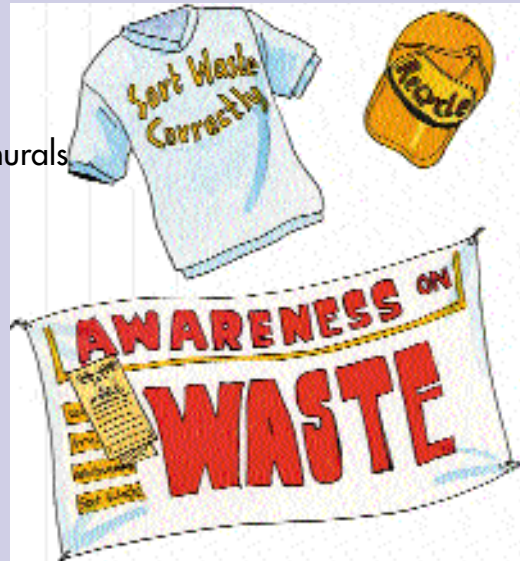


Common awareness activities are:

- Competitions
- Public activities such as painting wall murals
- Dramas
- Fun games
- Distributing pamphlets and posters
- Information stalls
- Public talks
- Open days
- Making a banner
- Wearing T-shirts, stickers or badges



Make sure that you select an awareness activity that is manageable in terms of the time and with the resources you have available. Rather choose a simple activity that can easily be implemented than a complex activity that will overwhelm you.

Sponsorship for awareness activities

Awareness activities do not have to be costly. It is possible to create awareness without spending very much money. In fact, awareness activities are often an opportunity to raise money and to get sponsorship. Companies that provide bins, plastic liners or equipment for cleaning may be willing to sponsor your awareness activities. Your service provider and local municipality are excellent partners for your awareness activities.

Preparing for your awareness activity

Preparing for your awareness activity involves identifying the gaps in knowledge, attitude and skill in your health facility. Awareness activities are a good opportunity to address poor attitudes. Some staff might have a negative attitude towards doing waste disposal differently from how they have done it in the past. Some staff might believe that it is not their responsibility. Your choice of awareness activity should contribute to building good health care waste management practice in all areas of your health care facility.

You can identify problem areas in your health care facility by talking to all levels of staff as well as the service provider who removes HCRW from your facility. You will want to know what common problems exist in the management of health care waste so that awareness activities target these issues. There are three areas to focus on when you meet with staff. These are:

- Problems concerned with waste segregation
- Problems concerned with occupational health and safety issues related to waste management
- Problems concerned with the care of the environment and issues such as recycling practices.

You will need to ask questions about problems of segregation, occupational health and safety, care of the environment and recycling. By doing this first, you will avoid awareness activities that are unnecessary. It will help you highlight the most pressing problems. It will also ensure that you choose an activity that gets the support of staff members.

Deciding on the target audience

The staff in your health facility will have different knowledge and experience of health care waste management. Some awareness activities will not be suitable for all staff members. Based on your identification of problem areas, you should be able to decide which staff are linked to specific problem areas and target them with a suitable awareness activity. Some of the target audiences are:

- ◆ Patients and visitors
- ◆ Doctors
- ◆ Cleaners/general assistants
- ◆ Medical staff
- ◆ Non-medical staff
- ◆ Health care facility management.



General assistants are one of the target audiences of awareness activities

Something to THINK about

Think of three problems, linked to each of the three categories listed, that you know of in health care waste management in your health care facility.

1. A problem we have that concerns waste segregation is...

2. A problem we have that concerns occupational health and safety is...

3. A problem we have that concerns the care of the environment and recycling is...

Something to THINK about

Which categories of workers are important target groups for an awareness activity for the three problem areas identified in your health care facility?

Problem Area 1: Waste segregation: Our target groups are...

Problem Area 2: Occupational health and safety: Our target groups are...

Problem Area 3: Care of the environment and recycling: Our target groups are...

Deciding on the message

It is very important to decide what information you wish to communicate during your awareness activity. Remember, your awareness activity can only successfully communicate one or two messages.

In the table on the next page you will find ideas for important messages that need to be promoted. All the messages are very simple and aim to promote no more than one important piece of information. Sometimes you can use these messages as they are written here. Other times you can decide to rewrite the message into catchy slogans to be put on T-shirts or banners.

Awareness activities in health care waste management should focus on promoting messages in three areas. These are:

❖❖ **Waste segregation**

❖❖ **Occupational health and safety**

❖❖ **Care of the environment and recycling**

Each of these three focus areas has its own messages. Sometimes, however, the messages from one area overlap with another e.g. 'Avoid hazards: segregate waste correctly'. As you can see, the first part of the message concerns occupational health and safety, whilst the second part of the message is about waste segregation. There are, however, some basic principles that apply to the presentation of all messages.

- ◆ All messages should be positive and promote positive actions. For example, 'Put medical waste in red liners' rather than 'Do not put medical waste in the black liners'.
- ◆ Where possible, use personal statements such as 'Protect your health'. This helps people understand the personal relevance of the message to their lives.
- ◆ Correctly translate messages into the various languages used in your health care facility.
- ◆ Pre-test your message with a sample or small group of the target audience to check that the message is understood correctly and that the translation is accurate.
- ◆ Avoid highly technical language that people do not understand.
- ◆ Think about the terms you want to use. For example, do you want to use medical waste, biohazardous waste or health care risk waste? Where possible, use terms that are familiar to staff. In your health care facility is it appropriate to refer to red and black liners or red and black plastics?
- ◆ Ensure that the information provided is accurate.
- ◆ Ensure that the message can be read easily.



PUT ONLY MEDICAL WASTE IN A RED LINER

*Ensure that your messages are short
and can be read easily*

Important messages for awareness activities

Waste Segregation

Medical waste goes in red liners

Sharps go in the sharps container

General waste goes in the black liners

Anatomical waste must be placed in a leak-proof container that is labelled 'Anatomical waste'

Waste must be segregated correctly the first time

Put a waste container close to the point of generation

Close all waste containers and liners when $\frac{3}{4}$'s full

General waste that is found with medical waste is now hazardous and must not be removed or re-sorted

Positive supervision rewards good work and is essential to maintaining good segregation

Positive reinforcement of good segregation practices by management is vital

Save money for your health care facility - put general waste in the black liners only

Occupational Health and Safety

Everyone has a right to work in a safe environment

Correct waste segregation is part of occupational health and safety

Protect your health and safety: put medical waste in the red liners

Take action to protect the health and safety of others: segregate waste correctly

Avoid hazards: segregate waste correctly

Avoid hazards: do not re-sort waste that is incorrectly disposed of

Report all needlestick injuries: you have a right to treatment

Get treatment for a needlestick injury: it will protect you from HIV infection

Wear gloves when working with waste

Report poor health care waste management to your supervisor or health and safety representative

Wash your hands after you have finished working with waste

Read the *Code of Practice* and learn how to work safely with health care waste

Team work in health care waste management protects everyone's health and safety

Use all equipment correctly

Clean all bins and stands daily to protect your environment from germs

Protect your health and safety: put sharps in a sharps container

Care of the Environment and Recycling

Recycle cardboard and protect our environment

Recycle glass and protect our environment

Recycling cardboard, glass or paper makes money for our health care facility

Keep our environment safe from hazards: put all medical waste in red liners and medical waste containers only

Reuse paper before throwing it away and protect our environment

Protect our environment from litter: make sure all general waste is put into black liners

Recycling cardboard supports members of our community

Something to THINK about

Using the information provided above, write three key messages for the problems identified in your health facility.

- Message 1: Waste segregation

- Message 2: Occupational health and safety

- Message 3: Care of the environment and recycling

When to organise your awareness activities

It is important to think about when would be the best time to organise your awareness activity. It is important to organise your activity when it will have maximum effect. This can be achieved by organising the activity when it will reach a large number of people or by targeting an area or department in your health facility that is facing specific problems. For example, the awareness activity can be organised for the whole facility, for one or two wards only or for the cleaning department only.

Find out if there are other events being organised in your health care facility that you can contribute to. For example, an open day may be a useful opportunity to set up an information stall about health care waste.

It is a good idea at the beginning of the year to set up a task team that can plan a realistic draft programme of dates of activities for the year ahead. This does not mean that you identify the actual activities. It means that you take into account the calendar of public holidays, key events being undertaken in the facility and other important days that focus on health such as World AIDS Day. This can encourage the co-ordination of events.



Set up an organising task team

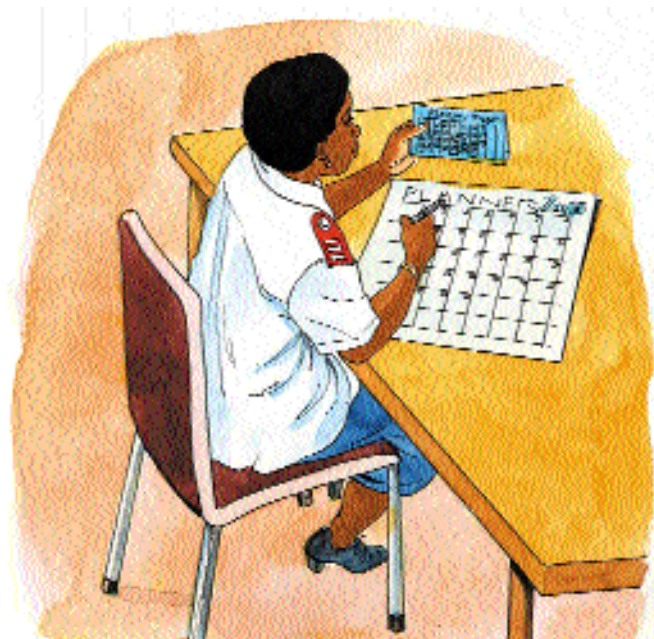
Depending on your health care facility, you might choose to set up a task team that functions for the entire year or you might set up a task team per awareness activity and which disbands on the completion of the activity. Most importantly, you should set up a simple structure to ensure that the awareness activity is successfully undertaken.

To do this, you must:

- ◆ decide who should be involved
- ◆ decide who will facilitate the task team
- ◆ set regular meeting times
- ◆ agree on an action plan
- ◆ delegate tasks to everyone.

In Gauteng Department of Health hospitals and clinics, the designated Health Care Waste Officer or Assistant Health Care Waste Officer has the responsibility to facilitate the planning and implementation of awareness activities for health care waste management. However, this does not mean that other people can not successfully take on this task. For example, an occupational health and safety representative or infection control nurse could do this.

The Gauteng Department of Health HCRW service providers must also plan and support the implementation of one awareness activity per year in each hospital and two per Region to cover all provincial clinic services. Invite your service provider to be part of your organising task team.



Awareness activities need to be planned to ensure that they are effective

What is the awareness activity plan?

This plan is an outline of the course of action you aim to follow to undertake successful awareness activities. It helps you to identify all the tasks that you need to do and the resources that you need in order to do the tasks. The plan is designed so that you can identify who has what responsibilities and to set deadlines for the tasks. Use the awareness activity plan on page 38 in developing your own activities or adjusting those found in this booklet.

The idea of the awareness activity plan is that all task team members should have a paper copy of the plan of action decided upon. They can use it to remind themselves of the task and its related responsibilities. Such a plan is included for all the sixteen awareness activities provided in this booklet.

**COPY
AND USE**
the blank version of the
awareness activity plan
on page 38 of this
booklet

Preparing small media for your awareness activity

Small media are things like banners, posters, flyers or pamphlets, stickers and printed T-shirts. Small media is often used in awareness activities although it isn't always essential. Small media can be costly. It is only effective if it is well designed and well used. Before you print your small media, make sure that you have used a language that is understood by your target group. If you are translating from English, ask someone to read what you have written to check that the meaning and spelling is correct. Once you have decided that you want to use small media, here are some things to think about.

••••• Posters and banners

- ◆ A banner is often more effective than producing posters. Unless the poster is very colourful and well designed, it quickly loses its impact.
- ◆ Banners are easier to produce than a poster because it is easier to paint your slogan or message on to a large piece of material.



••••• Flyers and pamphlets

- ◆ Flyers are simple pamphlets that can easily be produced on a computer and then photocopied.
- ◆ Unless there is a reason for people to keep a flyer or pamphlet, many people throw them away almost immediately. Only produce these if you really need them.
- ◆ If you want to prepare a longer pamphlet then you will need to find someone to help you. Bigger pamphlets will need to be designed and laid out before they can go for printing. Remember to ask someone to help you proof read your pamphlet before it goes for printing. It is very frustrating to find mistakes once your pamphlet comes back from the printers! Always request a quote for design, layout and printing before you start your pamphlet.
- ◆ You must tell your graphic artist and printer the planned size of your pamphlet. For example, if it is A4 or A5 in size, the number of pages you want and whether you want to use colour in your pamphlet and the number of copies you want printed.

It is only worth printing pamphlets if you wish to have a large number of them.

- ◆ It takes time to produce a pamphlet. If you need your small media in a hurry, do not try to make a pamphlet.



Stickers

- ◆ Stickers can be put on people, on books, diaries, over bins and containers. There are lots of ways to use stickers.
- ◆ A local print shop, such as those you find at a shopping mall, will be able to make stickers for you.
- ◆ When you go to the printer, take along the slogan you want written on your sticker. If you have a picture that you also want to use, take that with you. Make sure that the picture is clear. Ask your printer for advice about whether you can use the picture on your sticker.
- ◆ Remember to get a quote for printing your stickers. Tell the printer the size of the sticker you want, the colours you want on it and how many stickers you want made.
- ◆ If you are making stickers to put over or on bins/containers to encourage correct waste segregation, then make sure that these stickers are made of strong adhesive plastic. Check whether the printer can do this. If not, ask him/her to refer you to someone else who can help you. You do not want your stickers to tear or to fall off the wall or container.



Making a T-shirt

- ◆ T-shirts are a useful way to identify the people who are organising your awareness activity. They make people feel part of a team. T-shirts can also be nice prizes.
- ◆ A local print shop such as those you find at a shopping mall may be able to make T-shirts for you, or look in the *Yellow Pages* telephone directory for names of companies who print T-shirts.
- ◆ When you go to the printer, take along the slogan you want written on your T-shirt. Take a picture that you want to use, but make sure that the picture is clear. Ask your printer for advice about whether you can use the picture on your T-shirt. Plan to print something on the front and back of your T-shirt. It is best to have only a few words that can be printed in bold!
- ◆ Remember to get a quote for printing your T-shirts. You will need to tell the printer the size and colour of T-shirts you want, the colour/s you want printed and how many T-shirts you want made.



Other novelties

- ◆ Other novelties such as pens, pencils and key rings can be given away as prizes during an awareness activity. They can make a nice change from stickers. It is also possible to print a short message on such novelties.
- ◆ Ask your local printer or look in the *Yellow Pages* to see where you can have these made. Always get a quote before you decide to proceed.
- ◆ Novelties can be expensive and need to be used wisely.

SIXTEEN

AWARENESS ACTIVITIES TO CHOOSE FROM

The following awareness activities fall within the three focus areas of:

- ◆ **WASTE SEGREGATION**
- ◆ **OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY**
- ◆ **CARE OF THE ENVIRONMENT AND RECYCLING**

For each activity, you are provided with an awareness activity plan which can be adjusted to suit the particular needs of your task team and health care facility. These activities should inspire you to create vibrant and successful activities that meet the needs of your health facility.

After an awareness activity has been completed, it is recommended that the task team meet to discuss the success and failures of the activity. In this way, problems can be avoided in future activities and the team can build a good understanding of what makes for successful activities.

Evaluation

At the completion of an awareness activity, take time to evaluate your activity to see what worked and what did not. On page 39 you will find a simple evaluation form for your task team to complete. By going through the questions together, it will allow you to talk about your awareness activity and to identify strengths and weaknesses for the future.

You do not need to take much time to do this evaluation.

Use it to bring closure to an activity. It can motivate and guide the task team with future planning.

COPY AND USE

*the blank version of
the evaluation form
on page 39 of this
booklet*

AWARENESS ACTIVITIES FOR WASTE SEGREGATION

There are six examples of awareness activities in this section. These are:

1. An inter-ward competition
2. Lucky draw or raffle
3. An information session with senior management
4. General assistants' tea
5. The production and distribution of stickers
6. Stickers for waste bins

Each awareness activity is accompanied by a description of the activity, the target group and the main messages to be communicated.

You can choose to implement one of these awareness activities in your health care facility. To do this you need to set up your task team and complete the awareness activity plan.

Often the first activity is to produce an outline plan that you can present to others and to senior management to secure their buy-in and co-operation with your plan. This does not have to be a very detailed plan. Plan to write a page about your intentions and then you can attach the completed awareness activity plan.

Something to THINK about

A successful awareness activity is well planned.

Use the colour coding to identify three components of an awareness activity.

the ACTIVITY

the MESSAGE

the TARGET GROUP

Make sure you have thought about all three!

REMEMBER

All of these activities can be adapted to communicate other messages