Behaviour Change Theories

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Roots of Health Behavior Theories

• Primary fields from which most current health behavior theories come:
  – Psychology
  – Sociology
  – Anthropology
  – Communications
  – Others…

• There is much overlap between these disciplines in explaining behavior
1. Stages of Change Model (Prochaska, et. al., 1992)

- Precontemplation
  - unaware of problem
- Contemplation
  - thinking about change in near future
- Decision / Determination
  - making a plan to change
- Action
  - implementation of specific action plans
- Maintenance
  - repetition of desired behavior
2. Social Learning / Social Cognition (see Glanz & Rimer, 1995)

a. Behavioral capability
b. Expectations
c. Self-efficacy
d. Observational learning
e. Reinforcement
f. Social support
a. Behavioral Capability

- Knowledge and skills to influence behavior
  - application:
    - provide information and training about new behavior
b. Expectations

- Beliefs about likely results of new behavior
  - application:
    - incorporate information about likely results of behavior in advance
c. Self-efficacy

- Defined: confidence to take action
- Also known as “personal control”
- Dimensions:
  - internal / external
  - globality / specificity
  - stability / instability
- Illusions of control
  - point out strengths
  - use persuasion and encouragement
  - approach behavior change in small steps
d. Observational Learning

- Beliefs based on observing others like self and / or visible physical results
  - application:
    - point out others’ experiences, physical changes
    - identify role models to emulate
    - If one of my friend will loose weight, as I am observing the difference, I will also change my behavior and emulate with him
e. Reinforcement

- Responses to person’s behavior that increase or decrease changes of recurrence
  - application:
    - provide incentives, rewards, praise
    - decrease possibility of negative response that deter positive changes
    - If someone appreciate my behaviour, I will continue, however, if someone dislike it, I will not continue it in future
f. Social Support

- Defined: communications process that occurs between people, between providers of support and recipients of support, that functions very specifically to help people reduce the uncertainty they face (Albrecht & Adelman, 1987).
3. Diffusion of innovation

a. Relative advantage
b. Compatibility
c. Complexity
d. Trial-ability
e. Observability
a. Relative Advantage

- Degree to which change is preferable to status quo or competing behaviors
  - application:
    - point out unique benefits of change: convenience, time saving, prestige, etc.
b. Compatibility

• How consistent new behavior is with values, experience, and needs
  • application:
    • tailor new behavior for the intended audience’s values, norms, and situation
c. Complexity

• How difficult new behavior is to understand and / or use
  • application:
    • create behavior to be accomplished, easy to perform and understand
d. Trial-ability

- Extent to which the new behavior can be experimented with before a commitment to adopt is required
  - application:
    - provide opportunities to try on a limited basis with incentives
e. Observability

- Extent to which the new behavior provides tangible or visible results
  - application:
    - give an expected time
    - assure feasibility of desired results
    - If I see the result of my jogging (weight loss) I will continue the behavior