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Health Communication Practice Strategies and Theories

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Introduction

Health communication encompasses oral and written techniques used to impact and empower people, communities, and populations to formulate healthier options. Health communication frequently incorporates multiple theories and models elements to stimulate constructive modifications in beliefs and behaviors. Health communication is also associated with social commerce, which entails advancing activities and interventions formulated to alter behaviors firmly. Theories and models which shape human behavior are critical in giving target people information for a purpose. Health information given has to have a selling point for people to adapt or change a behavior. Theories such as the integrated behavioral model, social cognitive behavior and transtheoretical model are vital when looking at health communication.

1. Explain why theory is used in health communication planning, citing a specific example from the chapter.

Health communication planning is critical. The disseminated public health information should be consistent, correct, concise, and clear communication. Health information is given through health education public health campaigns. However, the important question is how health communication can do what it is intended to. Research plays a critical role in the way information is disseminated purposely for behavior change. This is where health communication theories come in. Theory helps to comprehend the communication phenomena.

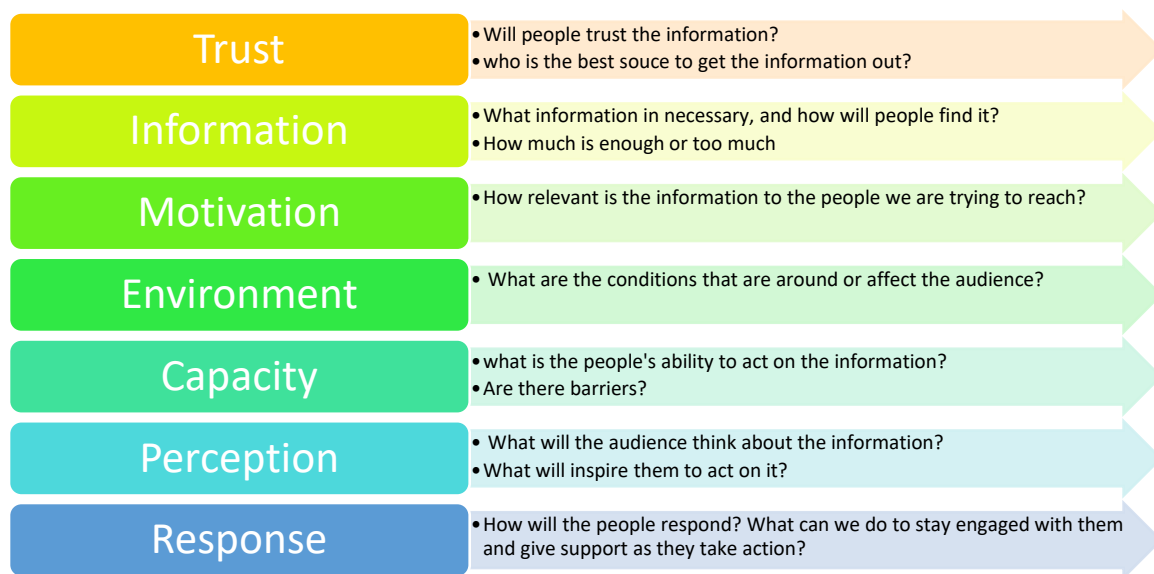
There are a combination of social sciences and behavioral theoretical models and approaches which give insight to behavior change, knowledge, and attitudes. These theories include; behavioral and scientific theories. Theory is used in health communication planning because it assists in understanding the cause of a specific behavior of an individual or a group of people. Those theories gave an insight into the reason for the behavior and to almost predict the expected reaction. Theories can show the relationship between cause and effect thus almost having an advanced hypothesis of the situation on why or when an event may happen. Theories assist policymakers and health professionals to identify behavior risks and providing information to modify or cause behavior change. Thus making health communication interventions effective and feasible.

A perfect example in this chapter is a person who drinks to intoxication can cause an accident or incident (negative outcome). By modifying this risk, public information would be “do not drink and drive”. However, through theories, the relation to the age at which most accidents happen with drunk driving would be identified. Demographically would determine why easy access to alcohol in this area means many sociable areas. Based on information from the community assessment

tools, the predisposing factors will be presented. Thus policymakers and the Ministry of Health Professionals would address the problem by disabling the behavior.

In a discussion, I can see we used those theories by doing a situation analysis. It was noted that more drunk drinking occurred around the festive seasons or known recognized social activities in Saint Lucia, and most of those who caused the accidents were intoxicated and were within the age range of 18 years-45 years. With this information, a correlation can be drawn. The action plan that I have suggested to my team is to modify or deter the habit by introducing a system where points will be removed from licenses. Increase the age limit of drinking from 16 years to 21 years, re-educate the public on the alcohol act where persons can be arrested and fined. The health promotion approach was to have campaigns on the effects and consequences of drunk driving. The diagram below culminates what is learned from the theories.

Diagram1. **Communicating Health**



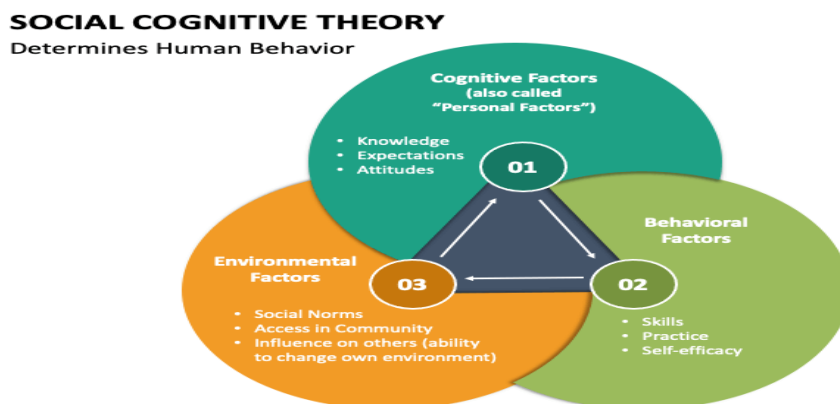
Adopted from: (CDC, 2021)

2. How is the integrative model different from the SCT or the TTM?

Social Cognitive Theory is based on Albert Bandura's theory of learning. This theory states that persons learn by their environment, interaction with others, and seen behavior (personal/internal influences) (Shunk, DiBenedetto, 2020). This theory takes a persons past experience, which will predict or determine behavior. It is also important to note that the behavior is learned, and internal and external social factors reinforce the behavior. All these are critical in the purpose for a person to respond or behave in a particular manner. It is important to highlight that models take pieces from different theories, and it is essential to note that the Transtheoretical model takes critical elements from Social Cognitive Theory (Giacobbi, 2016).

Although models and theories share common elements, they are different. (Giacobbi, 2016). Models are tools that serve to address one specific phenomenon, and theory is more a generalized statement. The Integrative model is driven by purpose. One's behavior is propelled by seven critical factors one's own self-efficacy, attitude, intention, normative beliefs, behavioral beliefs.

Diagram 2.



Retrieved from: (SketchBubble, 2021)

3. How are theories/models of persuasion in health communication different from behavior change theories/models?

Behavior change theories/ models concentrate on illustrating reasons for behavior change. These theories mainly focus on several environmental, social, and psychological aspects that infer a person's behavior or entire community. These theories do not focus on altering behavior (Faith admin, 2020). On the other hand, Persuasion theories/ models of communication try to alter the behavior, moralities, and viewpoint of a marked community. Therefore, the persuasion theories try to impact and modify other communities' moralities, values, and behaviors.

4. Why can communications and interventions designed to scare their intended audience backfire? What types of messages is this approach useful for?

Communication and interventions designed to scare their audience can backfire because the public can be deterred or disgusted by the visual or information and shut down, thus losing their attention. The communications and interventions designed to scare their intended audience backfire because this type of communication can terrify workers, triggering more behavior changes than identical information without the scare component. Scare appeals are more suitable to be utilized when conveying warning messages against an occurrence so that the intended party becomes more vigilant about a situation (Faith admin, 2020).

5. Describe the distinctions among theoretical methods, practice strategies, and activities or channels.

Theoretical methods originate from experimental research on how behavior change occurs within the population using indirect learning, extended parallel procedure, elaboration likelihood. These allow the prediction that persons who are not attracted to data along a primary route may be attracted to the peripheral route they identify.

Practice strategy is a technique of intervention through education activities, risk information to bring up the fear of outcomes, targeting peripheral cues. This is useful in making customers know the commodity and its advantages, highlighting behavioral economics and evidence of being beneficial to change the health nature (Faith admin, 2020).

Activities or channels are essential in sending practice strategies to influence a person or a group's action. This entails role model narrated stories, photo novels, targeted print, television, radios. Specific media e.g., plays, radio, televisions, will be created to implement the activities such as social media posts, counseling sessions.

6. What can public health communicators learn from the private sector about the perspective of the consumer?

Public health communicators learn that consumers prefer services from the private sector providers perceiving them to be more responsive to their (consumers) preferences. These preferences are in terms of privacy, hotel characteristics, and speedy services. According to the consumers, private sectors are also more geographically accessible than public sector providers (Faith admin, 2020). Private sector providers give out transparent information that allows the consumers to make decisions based on the information provided. These decisions include choosing different healthcare providers, considering quality, reputation, and costs.

7. What is your analysis of the Health Communications around the coronavirus situation by governments and Health Organizations?

The government as well as health organizations through health communicators have played an essential role in delivering accurate and valid information about coronavirus. This information has spread quickly and in huge amounts. Health communicators have been able to deliver clear and simple messages during the pandemic to reach all audiences (Faith admin, 2020). The tools that have been utilised include social media platforms, posters, newspapers, brochures, radios, and televisions. These data have helped people in the decision-making process regarding the epidemic. However, individuals have been overwhelmed by the vast amount of information on COVID, making it challenging to differentiate reliable and beneficial data from false data. Interestingly, recent research done by Doung, Nquyen, McFarlane & Nguyen (2021) integrated the integrative model to achieve a positive result. The key to preventing COVID-19 is wearing masks and socially distancing behaviors. Using the Integrative Model of Behavior Prediction, surveys (590) were used to influence such practices. The study revealed that positive attitudes were associated with persons choosing to follow the protocols, which became a perceived norm (Doung, Nquyen, McFarlane & Nguyen, 2021). The study further stated that adding societal and personal risk perceptions was a plus for the model. However, mask-wearing was seen negatively in personal risk perception (Doung, Nquyen, McFarlane & Nguyen, 2021).

Conclusion

This question-answer paper is a formulation that provides clear highlights into the provided questions regarding health communication practice strategies and theories. The paper gathers evidence and facts from the provided article under chapter four. Interestingly, to note that human behavior is complex despite implemented models. In my country, the saying goes one shoe size does not fit all. External and internal factors contribute to shaping behavior; however, morals and personal beliefs also contribute to an expected or unexpected outcome. Health communication uses a strategic approach to achieve expected outcomes. For decades research has studied and continues to study human behavior and communication. Health professionals can develop theories like Bandurah and others to achieve behavior change by comprehending human communication.

After doing this course I can now link health communication theories that shape health promotion. To promote or encourage behavior change for the better, information has to be effective and impactful for persons to see the need for change. The strategy that marketing used is a great benchmark because the market shows you the need for their product in order to buy it. The same goes with health communication. Persons need to be persuaded or based on the outcome of a particular action to want to change. This chapter was very insightful and informative.

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