

Health Communication and Theory

A Knowledge to Practice Program



MARY AMELIA
DOUGLAS-WHITED
COMMUNITY WOMEN'S HEALTH
EDUCATION CENTER

Learning Objectives

By the end of this tutorial, you will:

- Understand three behavioral theories and how they affect the way individuals make decisions regarding their health
- Have the skills to apply the components of behavioral theories to make more effective campaign messaging

Outline

Throughout this tutorial, you will cover the following topics:


- Why theory is important in health communication
- Theory of Planned Behavior
- Social Learning Theory
- Transtheoretical Model



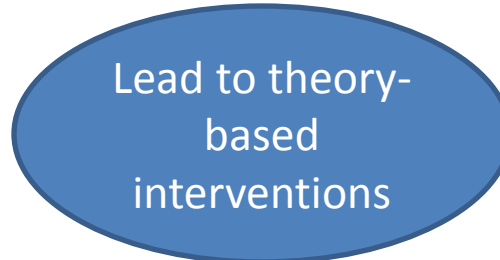
Why is theory important?

The testing of theoretically proposed relationships can advance knowledge and, ultimately, lead to theory-based interventions, which promote positive health behavior change.

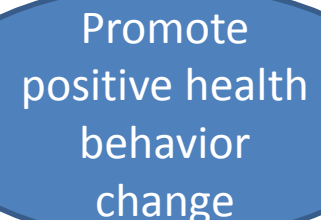
Key words...



Advance
knowledge



Lead to theory-
based
interventions

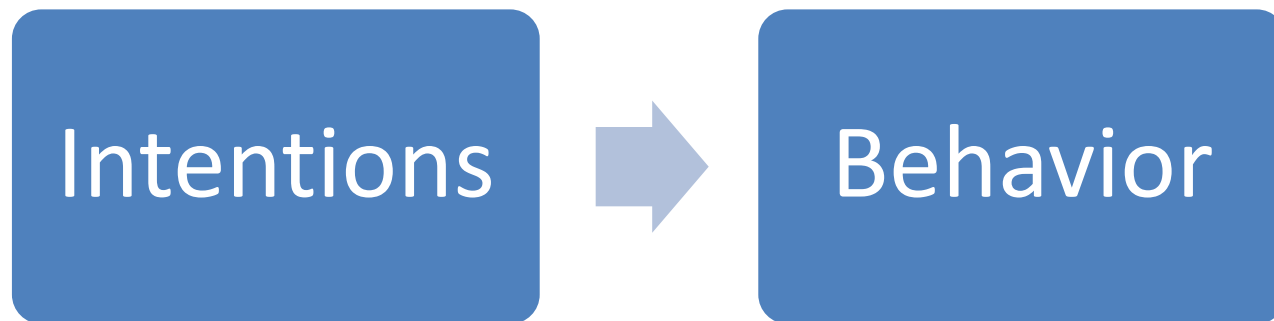


Promote
positive health
behavior
change

**First, let's take a look at the
Theory of Planned Behavior**



The Theory of Planned Behavior states that intentions directly predict the performance of a given behavior. Intentions are assumed to capture the motivational factors that have an impact on a behavior.





Intentions are influenced by 3 things:

Behavioral Attitude

- The degree of positive or negative value placed on a particular behavior

Subjective Norms

- The perceived social pressure to engage or not to engage in a particular behavior

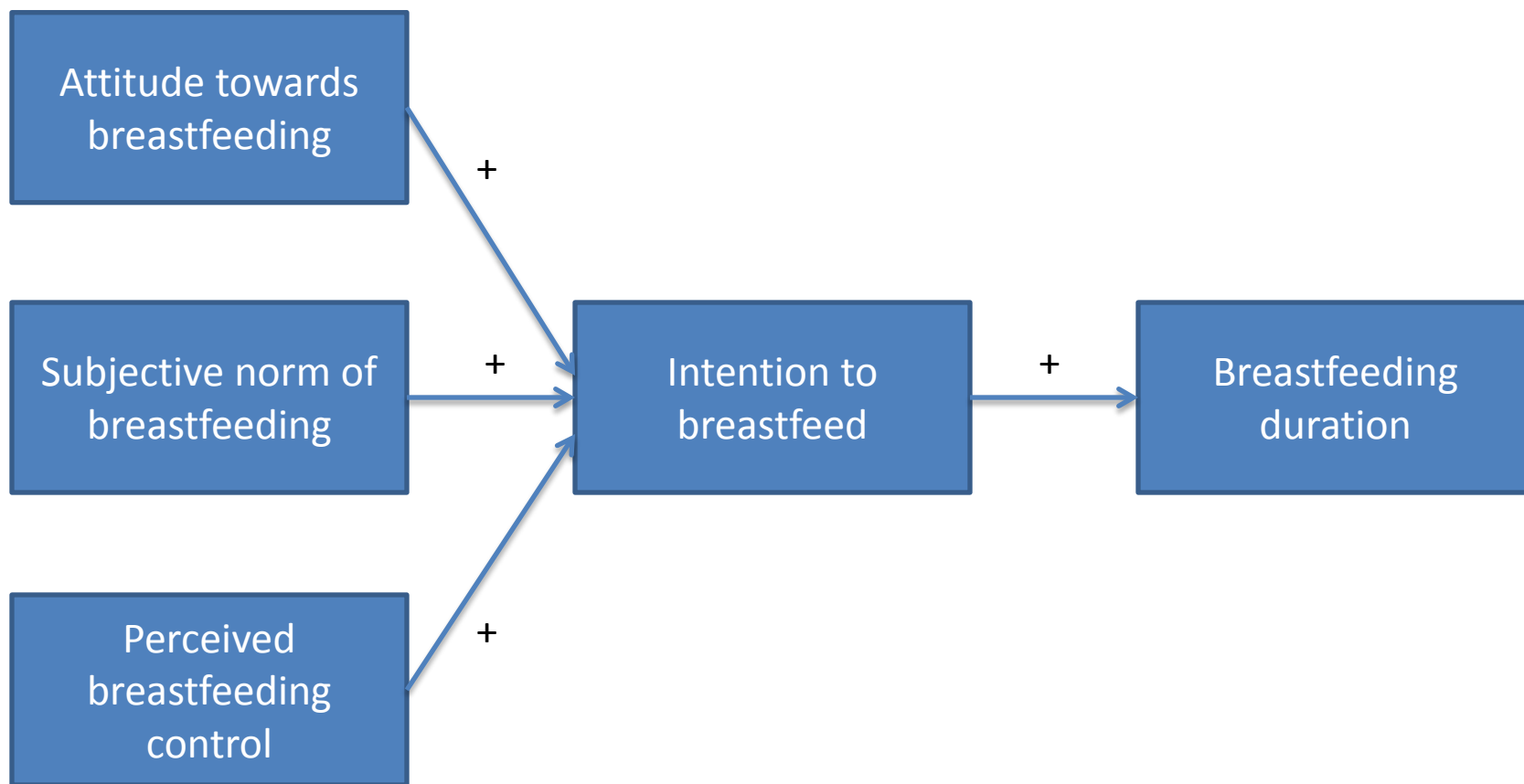
Perceived Behavioral Control

- The perceived ease or difficulty of doing a particular behavior

As a general rule, the more favorable the attitude, the subjective norm, and the perceived control, the stronger the person's intention to perform the behavior in question will be.



For example, here is how the Theory of Planned Behavior might be used to predict breastfeeding intention and duration.



**But how can you apply the
Theory of Planned Behavior to a
health communication campaign?**

During your audience analysis, you can use questionnaires to access attitudes, norms, and perceived control of the behavior you are promoting.

For example, you can measure perceived behavioral control by asking people to indicate how much they agree with the following statement:

If I wanted to, I could easily breastfeed my infant for the intended time period.

Not at all
confident

1

2

3

4

5

Very
confident

Based on the results, you can predict your audience's intention to perform the particular behavior.

To increase intention, your campaign messaging should focus on improving whichever aspect is the least favorable. Here are some sample messages:

To improve Perceived Behavioral Control:

“I breastfed for 6 months”




100% Exclusive Breastfeeding Goal for the First 6 Months

Feed your baby only with mother's milk for the first six months!

Logos for WHO, UNICEF, and other organizations.

To improve Subjective Norms:



You'll see strange things.
Breastfeeding isn't one of them.

Learn more. cbmg.ca    **CBMG**
Calgary Breastfeeding Matters Group

To improve Behavioral Attitude:

BREASTFEEDING
GOOD FOR BABY GOOD FOR MOM



Benefits for baby:

- Prevents diarrhea, ear infections, pneumonia and asthma
- Cuts risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome
- Lowers risk for obesity, developing allergies

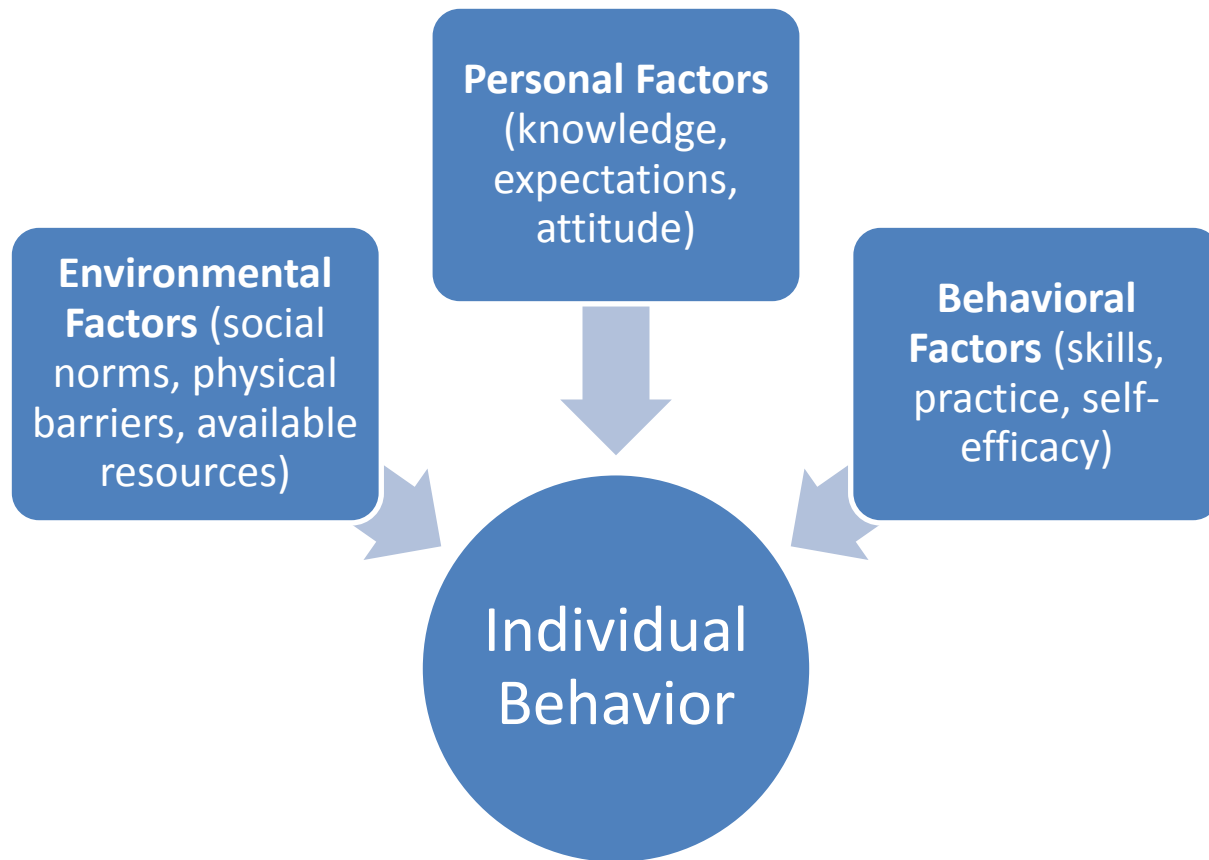
Benefits for mom:

- Lessens risk of breast cancer, ovarian cancer
- Prevents postpartum depression, Type 2 diabetes
- Reduces stress

Sources: U.S. Surgeon General and National Institutes of Health

**Now, let's explore the
Social Learning Theory**

The Social Learning Theory is based on observational learning in which people learn by watching what others do. It situates individual behavior within a context of socio-structural influences (environmental, personal and behavioral).



Now watch the following video that demonstrates observational learning.



<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YclZBhn40hU>

So what has to happen for someone to imitate what they have observed?



The “modeling” process has 4 steps:

1. Attention

- In order for an individual to learn something, they must pay attention to the features of the modeled behavior.



The “modeling” process has 4 steps:

1. Attention

- In order for an individual to learn something, they must pay attention to the features of the modeled behavior.



2. Retention

- Humans need to be able to remember details of the behavior in order to learn and later reproduce the behavior.



The “modeling” process has 4 steps:

1. Attention

- In order for an individual to learn something, they must pay attention to the features of the modeled behavior.

2. Retention

- Humans need to be able to remember details of the behavior in order to learn and later reproduce the behavior.

3. Reproduction

- In reproducing a behavior, an individual must organize his or her responses in accordance with the model behavior. This ability can improve with practice.



The “modeling” process has 4 steps:

1. Attention

- In order for an individual to learn something, they must pay attention to the features of the modeled behavior.

2. Retention

- Humans need to be able to remember details of the behavior in order to learn and later reproduce the behavior.

3. Reproduction

- In reproducing a behavior, an individual must organize his or her responses in accordance with the model behavior. This ability can improve with practice.

4. Motivation

- There must be an incentive or motivation driving the individual’s reproduction of the behavior. Even if all of the above factors are present, the person will not engage in the behavior without motivation.

**But what makes someone want to
model another person's behavior in
the first place?**



A person is more likely to look to others for example if the situation is:

- Ambiguous
- The situation can be understood in two or more ways so there isn't a clear way to act
- Public
- There are a lot of people around to witness your behavior

**How can you apply the
Social Learning Theory to a
health communication campaign?**

In order for someone to want to imitate another person's behavior, they have to think of that person as a role model.

Make sure you use a credible role model in your campaign that your audience can relate to.



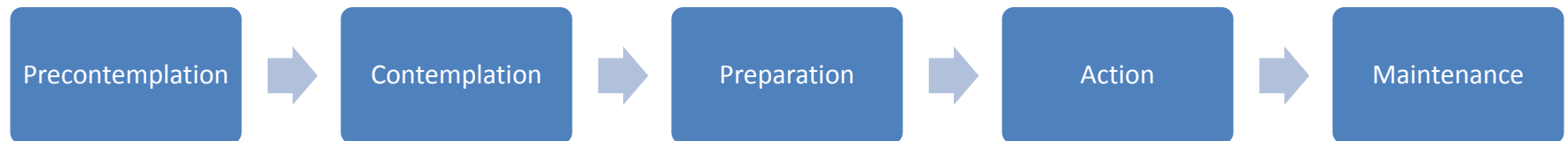
Celebrities like Laila Ali or Angelina Jolie could be used to promote breastfeeding



**Now, let's move on to the
Transtheoretical Model**



The Transtheoretical Model is also known as the Stages of Change Model. It states that people are at different stages of readiness to change their behavior and thus need different messages/interventions. There are 5 stages:



How do you know what stage your audience is at?



Here are the descriptions of the different stages:

Precontemplation

- Audience has no intention to change their behavior within the next 6 months

Contemplation

- Audience intends to change their behavior within the next 6 months

Preparation

- Audience intends to change their behavior within the next 30 days and has taken some steps in this direction

Action

- Audience has changed their behavior, but it has been less than 6 months

Maintenance

- Audience has changed their behavior, and it has been more than 6 months

**But how can you apply the
Transtheoretical Model to a
health communication campaign?**



Based on the stage of your audience, your message should do the following:

Precontemplation

- Increase their awareness of the need for change and personalize the risks and benefits

Contemplation

- Motivate and encourage them to make specific plans to change

Preparation

- Assist them in developing concrete action plans and setting gradual goals

Action

- Assist them with feedback, problem solving, social support, and reinforcement

Maintenance

- Assist them in coping, reminders, and finding alternatives

For example....

This campaign might be best for an audience in the **precontemplation stage** because it informs them of the potential benefits if they decide to breastfeed.

Whereas this campaign might be best for an audience in the **action stage** because it helps mothers know they can continue to breastfeed even when they return to work.



Conclusion

- Using theories is a good way to understand your audience and figure out which type of messaging would be most effective in promoting healthy behavior change