

COMMUNICATION RELEVANT THEORIES

- **Constructivism:** Theory that focuses on the ability to differentiate the way people make sense of things (i.e., personal constructs) and to create person-centered messages.
- **Cognitive-Behavioral Theory:** Theory suggesting that the way individuals construe or interpret events and situations mediates how they subsequently feel and behave. Communication is used to disconfirm irrational beliefs and to teach strategies for change, including cognitive restructuring.
- **Social Judgment Theory:** Theory postulating that people respond to communication with a latitude of acceptance, rejection, or non-commitment. Depending on ego-involvement (i.e., how important an issue is to them), people can be influenced along a certain latitude.
- **Elaboration Likelihood Model:** Theory indicating that people respond to messages along one of two paths: the elaboration (i.e., central) path or the peripheral path. The elaboration path is associated with reflectively thinking about, internalizing, and processing information in a fair and objective manner. Most messages are processed via the peripheral route in an effort to avoid information overload. This pathway is not associated with long-term program success.
- **The Extended Parallel Process Model:** A fear appeal theory postulating that threat motivates action (e.g., too much unprotected exposure to the sun causes skin cancer) and that perceived efficacy (i.e., confidence in one's ability to take recommended action) determines whether the recommended action taken (e.g., wearing a hat or using sunscreen when in the sun) controls the danger or controls the fear (e.g., getting skin cancer). For communication purposes, it is important that high efficacy messages (e.g., sun screen is easy to obtain and apply) accompany high threat messages (e.g., one needs to avoid skin cancer).
- **The Spiral of Silence:** Theory indicating that the fear of isolation causes people to remain silent about minority opinions and even adopt the majority opinion despite personal and philosophical concerns. The mass media may perpetuate this repression of views through constant repetition or coverage of certain themes.
- **Theory of Reasoned Action:** Theory asserting that behavior is predicted by intentions related to the behavior. These intentions are in turn predicted by attitudes toward the behavior and by subjective norms. Subjective norms are predicted by normative beliefs and the motivation to comply with those normative beliefs. Persuasive communication should target the audience's salient beliefs about the consequences of performing a certain behavior and the audience's attitudes toward those consequences. To persuade, communication should also address the audience's beliefs about what other people think about the behavior and the audience's motivation to comply with the perceived beliefs of others (i.e., to adopt the subjective norm).

- **The Agenda-Setting Function:** Theory suggesting that the mass media strongly influence and shape people's thoughts and the priorities they develop. For example, if a specific health problem receives constant attention in the media, the population may soon believe through association that the health problem is an important one.
- **Cultivation Theory:** Theory indicating that television has become a primary source of information. What people see on television, particularly with respect to violence, cultivates an distorted view of reality and builds exaggerated social norms.
- **Stages of Change Model:** Theory postulating that behavior is a process and not an event. Individuals are at varying levels of motivation or readiness to change. People at different points in the process of change can benefit from different interventions matched to their stage at the time.
- **Health Belief Model:** Theory relating to how individuals perceive the threat of a health problem and appraise recommended behaviors for preventing or managing the problem.
- **Consumer Information Processing Model:** Theory of how individuals (i.e., consumers) acquire and use information in their decision making.
- **Social Learning Theory:** Theory indicating that people learn not only from their own experiences, but also by observing the actions of others and the consequences of those actions (i.e., modeling).
- **Community Organization Theories:** Theories suggesting that as problem solving skills of a community are enhanced through locality development, social planning, and social action, the community is empowered to achieve concrete change to redress social injustice.
- **Organizational Change Theory:** Theory that includes processes and strategies for increasing the chances that health policies and programs will be adopted and maintained in formal organizations.
- **Diffusion of Innovations Theory:** Theory addressing how new ideas, products, and social practices are spread within a community or from one community to another.

HEALTH COMMUNICATION RELATED PLANNING MODELS

You should also be familiar with a number of health promotion planning models because they are often used as organizational frameworks for the application of theory. These planning models are described below:

- **Precede-Proceed:** A systematic process for diagnosing and meeting a community's self-determined needs and wants.
- **Social Marketing:** A consumer-oriented process to develop, implement, evaluate, and control behavior change programs by creating and maintaining exchanges favoring the adoption of desired behaviors.
- **Behavioral Intervention Planning Guide:** A framework for systematically 1) identifying intrinsic and environmental factors that contribute to a behavioral health problem and 2) developing interventions

that attempt to ameliorate the underlying processes that are maintaining the problem.

- **McGuire's Matrix:** An input/output matrix that depicts how inputs (i.e., independent communication variables like sources of information, channels, and message content), which constitute the various components of a communication mix used to construct persuasive communication, relate to outputs (i.e., dependent variables like exposure to and comprehension of a message), which represent the necessary and sufficient responses that must take place in receivers to ensure desired changes in attitudes and actions.
- **CDCynergy:** A systematic process for identifying, conceptualizing, and addressing problems through vertically and horizontally integrated health communication that plays either a dominant or supportive role in a public health intervention.