Appendices
Appendix 1

Behavior Change Theories

Theories of Communication Impacts on Behavior
Over the last 50 years, social scientists have advanced various theories of how communication can influence human behavior. These theories and models provide communicators with indicators and examples of what influences behavior, and offer foundations for planning, executing, and evaluating communication projects (Piotrow, Kincaid, Rimon, & Rinehart, 1997). Theories particularly relevant to health communication include the following:

Ideation Theory (Kincaid, Figueroa, Storey, & Underwood, 2001). This theory (Cleland, 1985; Cleland et al., 1994; Cleland and Wilson, 1987; Freedman, 1987; Tsui, 1985) refers to new ways of thinking and the diffusion of those ways of thinking by means of social interaction (Bongaarts and Watkins, 1996) in local, culturally homogeneous communities. Recent sociodemographic literature has identified ideation and social interaction as important determinants of fertility decline. This perspective amounts to a shift from macrolevel structural explanations to microlevel decisionmaking explanations of demographic change.

Stage/Step Theories. Diffusion of innovations theory (Ryan and Gross, 1943) traces the process by which a new idea or practice is communicated through certain channels over time among members of a social system. The model describes the factors that influence people’s thoughts and actions and the process of adopting a new technology or idea (Rogers, 1962, 1983; Ryan and Gross, 1943, 1950; Valente, 1995). The input/output persuasion model (McGuire, 1969)
emphasizes the hierarchy of communication effects and considers how various aspects of communication, such as message design, source, and channel, as well as audience characteristics, influence the behavioral outcome of communication (McGuire, 1969, 1989). Stages of change theory, by psychologists J.O. Prochaska, C.C. DiClemente, and J.C. Norcross (1992), identifies psychological processes that people undergo and stages that they reach as they adopt new behavior. Changes in behavior result when the psyche moves through several iterations of a spiral process—from precontemplation through contemplation, preparation, and action to maintenance of the new behavior (Prochaska et al., 1992).

**Cognitive Theories.** Theory of reasoned action, by M. Fishbein and I. Ajzen, specifies that adoption of a behavior is a function of intent, which is determined by a person’s attitude (beliefs and expected values) toward performing the behavior and by perceived social norms (importance and perception that others assign the behavior) (Fishbein and Ajzen, 1975). Social cognitive (learning) theory, by A. Bandura, specifies that audience members identify with attractive characters in the mass media who demonstrate behavior, engage emotions, and facilitate mental rehearsal and modeling of new behavior. The behavior of models in the mass media also offers vicarious reinforcement to motivate audience members’ adoption of the behavior (Bandura, 1977, 1986).

**Social Process Theories.** Social influence, social comparison, and convergence theories specify that one’s perception and behavior are influenced by the perceptions and behavior of members of groups to which one belongs and by members of one’s personal networks. People rely on the opinions of others, especially when a situation is highly uncertain or ambiguous and when no objective evidence is readily available. Social influence can have vicarious effects on audiences by depicting in television and radio programs the process of change and eventual conversion of behavior (Festinger, 1954; Kincaid, 1987, 1988; Latane, 1981; Moscovici, 1976; Rogers and Kincaid, 1981; Suls, 1977).
Emotional Response Theories. Theories of emotional response propose that emotional response precedes and conditions cognitive and attitudinal effects. This implies that highly emotional messages in entertainment (see chapter 4) would be more likely to influence behavior than messages low in emotional content (Clark, 1992; Zajonc, 1984; Zajonc, Murphy, and Inglehart, 1989).

Mass Media Theories. Cultivation theory of mass media, proposed by George Gerbner, specifies that repeated, intense exposure to deviant definitions of “reality” in the mass media leads to perception of that “reality” as normal. The result is a social legitimization of the “reality” depicted in the mass media, which can influence behavior (Gerbner, 1973, 1977; Gerbner et al., 1980).
References
