Stages of Change Theory and Safe Routes to School

*Spare the Air Youth TAC Meeting*

December 15, 2021
What is Stages of Change Theory?

- One of several behavior change theories
- People have to want to change their behavior
- We will be more successful in our work if we seek to understand the subject’s ‘readiness to change’
- Behavior change is a step-by-step process
- The “intervention” that works best for someone in one stage is inappropriate for another stage
The Stages of Change

Precontemplation

No intention to change
The Stages of Change

- Precontemplation: No intention to change
- Contemplation: Considering change
The Stages of Change

1. Precontemplation: No intention to change
2. Contemplation: Considering change
3. Preparation: Intention to make a change
The Stages of Change

- Precontemplation: No intention to change
- Contemplation: Considering change
- Preparation: Intention to make a change
- Action: Trying new behavior

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The Stages of Change

1. Precontemplation
   - No intention to change

2. Contemplation
   - Considering change

3. Preparation
   - Intention to make a change

4. Action
   - Trying new behavior

5. Maintenance
   - Habit
How does it help us?

- Understanding audience & setting goals
- Segmenting audience
- Delivering the right interventions to each stage
- Evaluating movement across stages
Evaluation

Thinking about all of the trips you took last week, did you use transportation options at least 2 days? (N=139)

- No, but I’m thinking about it: 20% pre-survey, 11% post-survey
- No, but I intend to: 18% pre-survey, 15% post-survey
- Yes, but it’s difficult for me: 16% pre-survey, 12% post-survey
- Yes, and it’s easy for me: 47% pre-survey, 63% post-survey

16 percentage point increase in people in maintenance stage
Stage-Specific Interventions

- **Precontemplation**: Build awareness of need to change
- **Contemplation**: Integrate into identity; strengthen motivation
- **Preparation**: Make plan & follow through
- **Action**: Build habit & confidence
- **Maintenance**: Prevent relapse; strengthen identity

**WHY CHANGE?**

**HOW TO CHANGE**
What do Precontemplators need?

- Explore costs of status quo
- Reflect on goals & values
- Provide facts & information
- Explore feelings
- Acknowledge tension or dissonance
- Reveal or create social norms
What do Contemplators need?

- Explore costs of status quo
- Reflect on goals & values
- Provide facts & information
- Explore feelings
- Acknowledge tension or dissonance
- Reveal or create social norms
- Develop/strengthen a new identity
- Build self-efficacy
What do Preparers need?

- Develop/strengthen a new identity
- Build self-efficacy
- Make public commitments
- Hold themselves accountable
- Set achievable & measurable goals
- Make an action plan
- Seek social support and help
What do Actors need?

- Make public commitments
- Hold themselves accountable
- Seek social support and help
- Replace old habits with new ones
- Make specific plans; prepare for setbacks
- Track progress/receive feedback
- Develop reward plans & enjoy intrinsic rewards
- Create new cues
What do Maintainers need?

✓ Seek social support and help
✓ Replace old habits with new ones
✓ Make specific plans; prepare for setbacks
✓ Track progress/receive feedback
✓ Develop reward plans & enjoy intrinsic rewards
✓ Create new cues
✓ Anticipate setbacks
✓ Help others
Segmentation by Stage

• My child does not regularly walk and/or bike to school, and we do not intend to start within the next six months. [Precontemplation]

• My child does not regularly walk and/or bike to school, but we are thinking about starting within the next six months. [Contemplation]

• My child does not regularly walk and/or bike to school, but we plan to start within the next 30 days. [Preparation]

• My child regularly walks and/or bikes to school, and has been for less than six months. [Action]

• My child regularly walks and/or bikes to school, and has for six months or more. [Maintenance]
Segmentation by Stage

Thinking about how your child will travel to school in the coming school year, will they walk or bicycle at least one day per week?

• No, and I’m not considering it [Pre-contemplation]
• No, but I’m thinking about it [Contemplation]
• No, but I’d like to [Preparation]
• Yes, but it’s hard for our family [Action]
• Yes, and it’s easy for our family [Maintenance]
What have we learned?

• People won’t change their behavior until they are motivated
• Stages of Change theory helps us understand that motivation
• People need different kinds of support depending on their Stage of Change
  • Research provides us with different ‘interventions’ for different stages
  • To provide “stage-matched” interventions, we have to segment our audience
• SOC helps with audience insights, program design, and evaluation