Developing an Online Tool

to assist effective use of Behavioural Theory in Intervention Planning & Development

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"There is nothing so practical as a good theory"

Kurt Lewin 1951

But we know people still struggle to know how to select, use & apply theory appropriately

Using theory effectively can help intervention developers in many ways…

STRATEGIC SOCIAL MARKETING

- In harnessing extensive past learning from rich literatures
- In avoiding waste of time & resources on inappropriate or ineffective methods
- In recognising, & then managing, complexity
- In framing of research questions & method selection
- In considering audience segmentation options
- In intervention mix selection & subsequent design
- In improving subsequent evaluation, clarifying initial assumptions and assisting development of intermediate outcome measures

Use of theory to inform intervention design is strongly recommended

STRATEGIC SOCIAL MARKETING

- Within a huge range of literature across the social behavioural sciences
- Leading social marketers across the world
- USA: CDC's performance support tool, CDCynergy
- UK: Government's independent review recommendations *'It's Our Health!'*

Different efforts to Organize & Simplify:

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- Inventories, eg: Maibach & Parrott, Glanz et al.
- The US NIH National Cancer Institute *Theories at a Glance*
- BEHAVE (AED)
- *'deCIDES'* framework (French/Blair-Stevens)
- Processes of Change (with Trans-theoretical Model, Prochaska & DiClemente)
- Integrated Theory Framework Grid Tool (Blair-Stevens)
- + your model or framework?

Eyes still glaze over & practitioners…

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- Use a few "usual suspect" theories of behaviour change
  (eg: 'Stages of Change' or the 'Health Belief Model')
- Are swayed by the trends in popularised theory
  (eg: the *Nudge* version of Behavioural Economics)
- Retro-fit or invoke theory to justify programme design decisions made for other reasons

Our Challenge…

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To improve the quality & consistency of effective behavioural interventions

By helping those developing interventions to select & apply appropriate theory from across the social & behavioural sciences

Possible Solution…

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A "Theory Wizard" performance support tool that:

- would be online freeware
- with a coded database of theories
- offering snapshot descriptions of the theories & examples of their use
- asking questions with drop-down menu response options that helps to narrow potential theories down to 1 or 2 potentially most useful

Draft Logic Tree Segment

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1. **Is changing an existing individual-level behaviour your campaign objective?**
   - 1: Yes
   - 2: No
2. **Is the behaviour you are trying to change:**
   - 1: a health information-seeking behaviour
   - 2: a health risk behaviour
   - 3: a health service utilisation behaviour
   - 4: a behaviour relevant to health policy
3. **Is the behaviour something most people in your audience already know they should do?**
   - 1: Yes
   - 2: No
4. **Has perceived risk been shown to predict the behaviour?**
   - 1: Yes
   - 2: No [eliminate Health Belief Model]

Tool Development Process Vision

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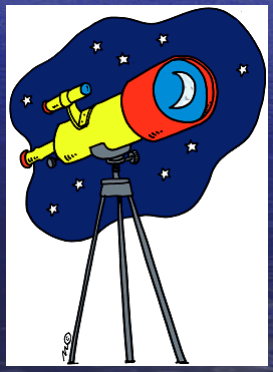
- Initial guidance from conferences
- A Delphi consultation survey to engage selected people/experts on issues such as:
  - The universe of theories
  - Interface features
  - Compatibility with existing tools
- Listserv surveys
- Prototype tests by users



What's the Delphi Method?

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- Developed by RAND in the 1950's, this is a structured communication process in which a questionnaire is distributed to a small group of experts (N = 12-15)
- Responses are tabulated, summarized and fed back anonymously to the initial respondents
- Respondents get a new set of questions (some repeated from the first round), and are encouraged to revise their initial answers in light of the views of the other members in the group
- Process repeats until consensus is reached (eg: Maibach, 1997, Critical elements of social marketing, JHC, 2(4), 304-7)

Your thoughts are needed on…

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- The overall concept
- Who likely users would be
- Theory selection criteria
- Scope & format
- Delphi contributors

2-part Input Format Today

1. Answer initial questions on cards
2. Open discussion

#1

How useful would a tool like this be to people developing interventions?

a) Very useful

b) Somewhat useful

c) Not particularly useful

d) Not really useful at all

#2

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Likely users for such a tool would be:

a) programme developers
b) researchers / evaluators
c) academics / teachers
d) other _____

#3

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The only theories to be included will be those with constructs that have been specified well enough to be measured

(eg: Theory of Planned Behaviour)

Less specified theories are beyond the scope

(eg: Theory of Cultural Capital)

a) Strongly agree
b) Agree
c) Disagree
d) Strongly disagree

#4

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In addition to theories that apply to a broad range of behavioural phenomena
(eg: Social Cognitive Theory)
theories that deal with a narrow range of content should be included
(eg: Extended Parallel Process Model – reactions to fear appeals)

a) Agree

b) Disagree

#5

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Only theories used successfully in the past – those for which there are real-world examples – should be included.

a) Strongly agree

b) Agree

c) Disagree

d) Strongly disagree

#6

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The following theories should definitely be included:

a) _____

b) _____

c) _____

#7

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The tool should narrow theory options down, and give…

a) examples of how they have been applied — yes no

b) assistance in front end and back end research (eg qualitative and quantitative questionnaire design) — yes no

c) references for further reading — yes no

d) something else (please specify)_____

#8

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The following experts on behavioural theory and/or social marketing should definitely be considered for the Delphi consultation:

a) _____

b) _____

c) _____

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