


Handout E

Attitude and behaviour change

	Stages of behaviour change		Who/what influences somebody?
	1. Awareness 2. Interest	Cognitive/ Intellectual ("HEAD" feelings)	Mass media, events, books, films, friends, family
	3. Trial 4. Evaluation 5. Adoption/ rejection	Emotional ("STOMACH" feelings)	Emotional event (particularly if it involves people close to you) People you respect and trust (such as friends, family, professional colleagues)

Which ideas result in change, and why?

NB We are faced with many new ideas every day, from people around us, from media and from books, articles etc. **Most of these ideas do not cause us to change.**

When we become **aware** of a new idea, we can become interested. Still, this does not cause us to change or take action. These ideas are still only in our head. We call the first two stages the **cognitive**, or **intellectual**, stages.

An example: A mother might hear on the radio that you should give a person with fever a full course of malaria medicines. She becomes aware of this idea, but she continues to give her child the malaria drug only until the fever has gone away, as she has always done.

Another example: A man hears from various sources (radio, papers, friends) that smoking is bad for his health. He knows. Still he continues to smoke.

In the cognitive stages, only the "head" is involved.

Decision: I will try to change. How?

The next three stages involve **ACTION** – now the person has decided to try to change. (How that decision is made is a key factor!) The person **tries** out the new behaviour, evaluates it to see if it fits in with his/her life, and then **decides** whether to **keep/adopt** the new behaviour or go back to the old one. **These stages involve feelings.** There has to be an emotional reaction before you decide to try out a new behaviour. We call these stages the **emotional** stages.

An example: The mother whose child had fever experiences that her child does not get well, he gets better from the fever for a few days, but then he gets sick again. She is afraid he might die. She goes to the local health worker, who explains to her the reason why she should give a full course of drugs to the child – some germs get killed with every dose, and they get stronger again if not all are killed. She is ready to try new action, and gives the child the full course of the drugs (**trial**). The child stays well (**evaluation**) and it is likely the mother will give the full course of drugs again the next time the child is sick (**adoption** of new behaviour).

Another example: The smoker has a friend who also smokes. The friend gets sick, he has lung cancer. The smoker experiences his friend's slow death, and gets scared: **this could happen to me**. He decides to quit smoking (**trial**), and has a tough time (**evaluation**), but is backed up by his family who want him to live. He manages to stay off the cigarettes, slowly feels healthier, and decides it is worth the pain (**adoption of new behaviour**).

Think about your own example, and look at how it fits into the five stages. Reflect on the feelings involved in making the changes, and the time it took.

Reflect on: who or what influenced you to take action in the different phases?

Conclusion

- **In the cognitive or intellectual stages** (awareness and interest), anything or anybody can influence you (media, books, films, events, family, friends)
- **In the emotional stages** (trial, evaluation and adoption/rejection) you will be influenced by people you respect and trust, e.g. friends, family, professional colleagues). You can also be influenced by an emotional event (e.g. you get very sick, and need to change behaviour for this not to happen again, or you cause someone a big problem when you are drunk, get very embarrassed, and decide to stop drinking)

Attitude and behaviour change in summary

- Attitude and behaviour change is often triggered by an event (action and emotions)
- it is influenced by someone close to you, someone you respect and/or your own experience.

It usually takes a long time.

Beside we illustrate how behaviour change happens – involving the head and the heart:

Stages of behavior change (1)

- Awareness
- Interest *Cognitive*
- Trial
- Evaluation *Emotional*
- Adoption/Rejection

