

# How do you change behavior, beliefs and attitudes?

## Make a plan

If you really want to change the way communities think about vaccines or the way governments think about civil society, you have to plan for effective and durable change. This means you must understand your context. Ask yourself: What do I want to change? Why do I want to change it? What are the factors that prevent or promote this change?

Your **first step** is to work with key stakeholders to decide the following (taken from “The Five Decisions,” CORE Group, 2013):

1. **Behavior** (who, when, how and where the behavior you want to change is done)
2. **Priority group** (your target group, the one whose behavior you want to change) and **influencing groups** (the group that influences the priority group to adopt or resist a change)
3. **Determinants** (feelings, beliefs and elements in a person’s environment that determine her/his behavior and willingness to change)
4. **Bridges to activities** (the key factors that could affect the determinant)
5. **Activities** (specific actions that address the bridges to activities)

For your **second step**, do a bit of homework to test your ideas about the above **determinants** and **bridges to activities**. You want to make sure your five decisions are based on quality research. In addition to the usual desk review, interviews, pre-tests and evaluation, consider a **Barrier Analysis** (below).

## Do a Barrier Analysis

In order to convince someone to change, you must first understand why they do what they do. Find out who does the desired behavior (the ‘doers’) and who does not (‘non-doers’) and compare them to understand why they are different. Aim to interview 45 ‘doers’ and 45 ‘non-doers.’

Steps in a Barrier Analysis:

1. **Define** the goal, behavior and target group
2. Develop **behavior questions**
3. Develop questions about **determinants**
4. Organize **analysis** sessions
5. Collect field **data**
6. Tabulate and analyze the **results**
7. **Use** the results

### **WHY** do you do it **THAT** way?

#### **The Perceived Social Acceptability argument:**

“I do that because the people who are important to me (ex. my family, my friends, my religious leader) think that I should.”

Use the Excel function for **odds ratios** and **p-values** to calculate your results.

- When ‘doers’ and ‘non-doers’ have similar answers the odds ratio will be closer to 1.0 and p-value will be >0.05 – this means it is **NOT an important determinant** of behavior.

- ❑ When ‘doers’ and ‘non-doers’ have very different answers the odds ratio will be further from 1.0 and p-value will be <0.05 – this means it ***IS an important determinant*** of behavior

## Consider the five stages of change

Your **third step** is to look at your proposed activities and make sure they take into account HOW people change. The below “Five Stages of Change” (Prochaska and Diclemente, 1982) is the classic model for behavior modification. Use it to decide (1) what stage of change your audience is in; (2) what actions/activities can move them to the next stage.

- ❑ **Pre-awareness:** No intention of changing behavior
  - ACTION: Raise awareness of the problem
- ❑ **Awareness/contemplation:** Aware a problem exists. No commitment to action.
  - ACTION: Address barriers to change
- ❑ **Preparation/decision-making:** Intent on taking action
  - ACTION: Address barriers to change; promote “innovators” or “positive deviants” that benefit by the new behavior (below)
- ❑ **Action:** Active modification of behavior
  - ACTION: Put in place systems, policies and networks to support the behavior
- ❑ **Maintenance:** Sustained change. The new behavior replaces the old.

## Look for “innovators” or “positive deviants”

Finally, keep in mind that not everyone changes at the same speed. The “Diffusion of Innovation” theory (Rogers, 1962) explains that people can be grouped into five “adopter categories,” depending on how willing they are to adopt a new behavior. The trick to behavior change communication, then, is not to have a single strategy, but to **tailor your messages** to reach each of the five categories with the information they need to overcome their own barrier to change. The adopter categories are:

1. **Innovators** – Risk-takers who are always interested in new ideas. You will need to do little or nothing to convince them to try a new behavior.
2. **Early adopters** – Opinion leaders who like new opportunities to start a trend. Don’t try to convince them with information, just give them a how-to guide.
3. **Early majority** – Curious people who need to see evidence and case studies.
4. **Late majority** – Skeptical people who need to know that many other people have already tried the new behavior and found it successful.
5. **Laggards** – Conservatives who don’t like change. Target them with statistics and pressure from others in the community.

## For more information

- ❑ [CORE Group Social and Behavior Change Working Group Tools](#)
  - [Designing for Behavior Change Training Guide](#)
  - [A Practical Guide to Conducting a Barrier Analysis](#)
- ❑ [Health COMpass - resources for behavior change](#)