



PSYCHOLOGY IN PRACTICE

ECPS4024

Week Three



Week Three:

Health Psychology: attitudes and behaviour change

Aims of Session

- Understand behaviour change theories
- Apply them to health interventions
- Prepare for poster assessment

Week Three Session Plan

- 9am –9.40am: Health Psychology and Behaviour Change Theories
- 9.40 – 10am: Activity One: Public Health Wales
- 10am- 10.30: Workshop: Behaviour Change Campaign
- 10.30 – 10.45: Short Break
- 10.45 – 12: Assessment Guidance & Workshop

PREDICTING & CHANGING HEALTH BEHAVIOURS

- Health protective versus health risk behaviours
- We need to understand why people **choose** to behave in ways that will harm their health
- Need to identify main causes of specific behaviours
 - What **motivates** people to behave in a certain way?

THEORIES OF HEALTH BEHAVIOUR

- Social cognition models are one of the most successful at explaining health behaviours (but not perfect!)
- Include interaction between:
 - Social factors (e.g. social norms)
 - Cognitive factors (e.g., attitudes and beliefs)
- Expectancy Value Principle:
 - Behaviour is likely to change (or stay the same!) if person expects certain outcomes, and values these outcomes as positive.

ATTITUDINAL MODELS: ARE ATTITUDES AN IMPORTANT INFLUENCE ON HEALTH BEHAVIOUR?

Attitudes:

attitudes are considered as relatively enduring and generalisable and made up of three related parts – thought (cognition), feeling and behaviour

- **Cognitive:** beliefs about the attitude-object, e.g. cigarette smoking is a good way to relieve stress/cigarette smoking is a sign of weakness
- **Emotional:** feelings towards the attitude-object, e.g. cigarette smoking is disgusting/pleasurable
- **Behavioural (or intentional):** intended action towards the attitude-object, e.g. I am not going to smoke.

ATTITUDINAL MODELS: ARE ATTITUDES AN IMPORTANT INFLUENCE ON HEALTH BEHAVIOUR?

- Research into relationship between attitudes and behaviour does not find the two factors highly correlated
- Other factors must therefore combine with attitudes to predict behaviour
- **Behavioural Intention** – the person's motivation or conscious plan to carry out the behaviour
 - Considered to be the proximal determinant of behaviour

SOCIAL COGNITION MODELS

- Provide an empirically supported framework for understanding how people make decisions in relation to their behaviours
- Identify key factors found to influence behaviour change
- Interventions can be targeted at any or all of these factors
- Need to consider generalisability and applicability to specific situations.

THE HEALTH BELIEF MODEL

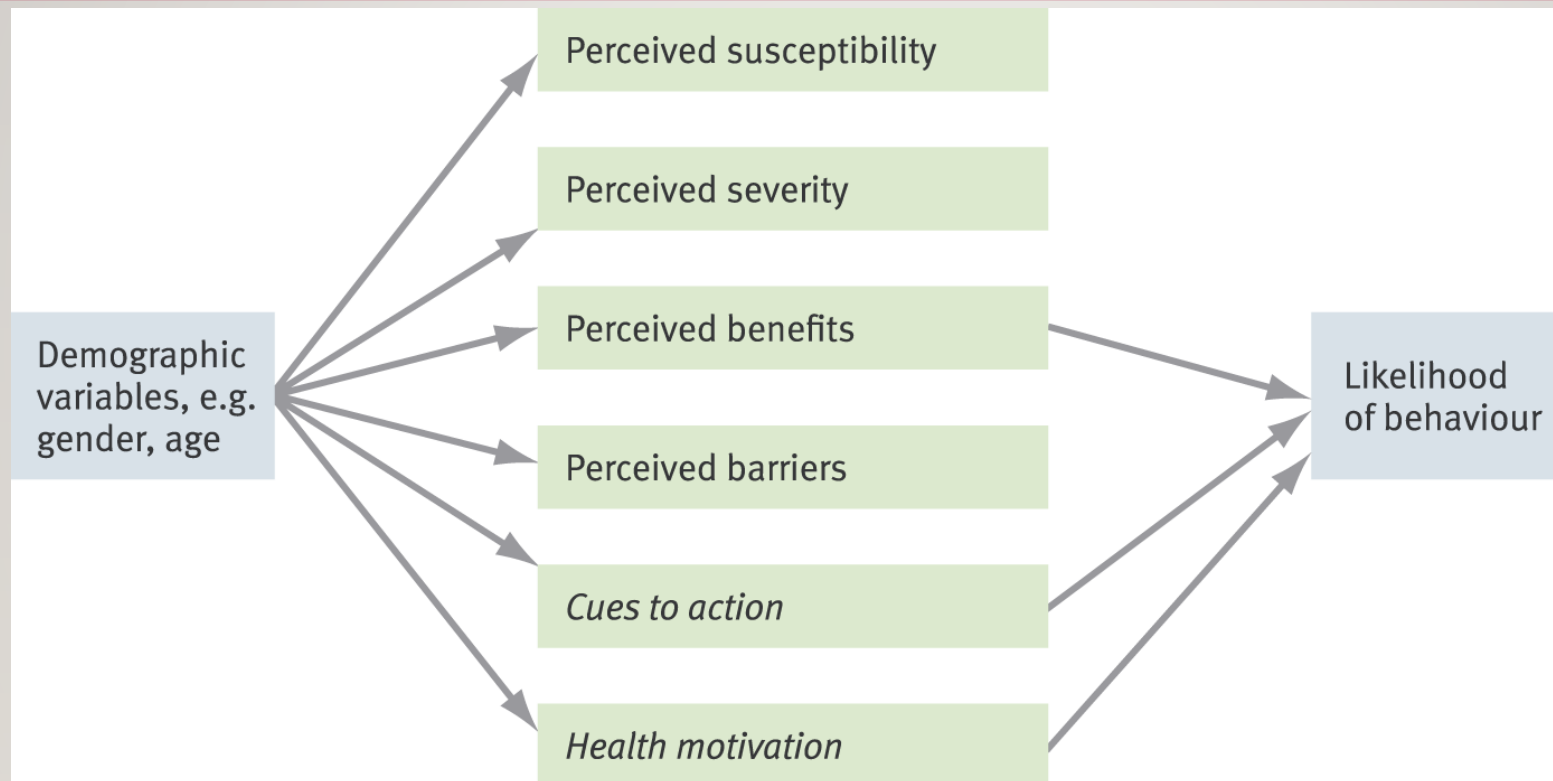


Figure 5.1 The health belief model (original, plus additions in italics); Rosenstock et al., 1950s)

THE HEALTH BELIEF MODEL, EXERCISE AND OBESITY

Perception of threat:

- I believe that not exercising can lead to many serious illness and obesity: **perceived severity**
- I believe that I do not exercise enough/am overweight: **perceived susceptibility**

Behavioural evaluation:

- If I exercise more, my health will improve: **perceived benefits** (of change)
- Changing my daily routine to fit in exercise when I also have a family/busy job will be difficult, and will be really expensive: **perceived barriers** (to change).

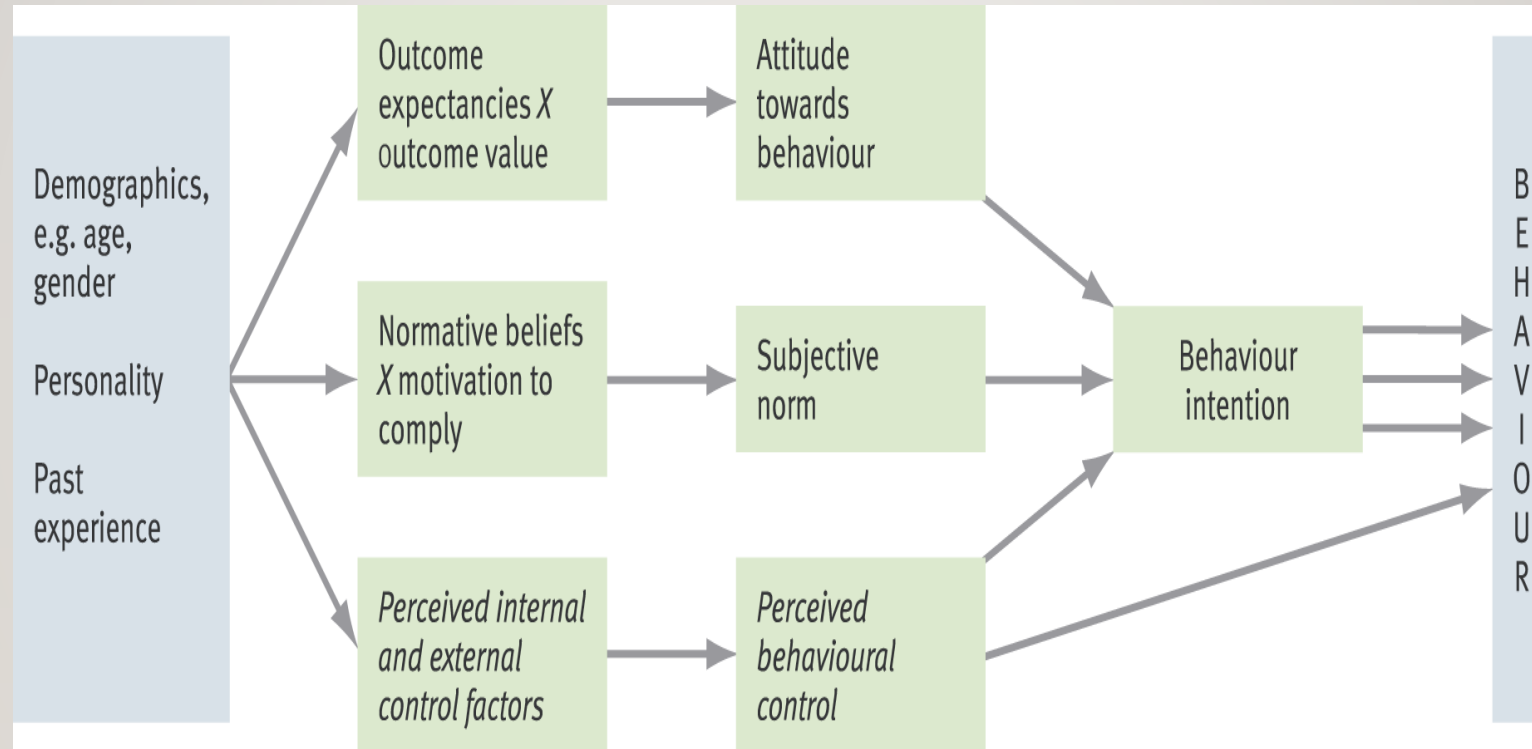
Cues to action

- That recent television programme on the health risks of obesity worried me (external)
- I am regularly feeling breathless on exertion, so maybe I should really think about getting more fit and exercising more: (internal)

Health motivation

- It is important to me to feel healthy

THE THEORY OF REASONED ACTION/PLANNED BEHAVIOUR



The theory of reasoned action and the theory of planned behaviour (TPB additions in italics); Azjen, 1985, 1991)

GROUPWORK (10MINS): TPB & HEALTHY EATING



THE INTENTION-BEHAVIOUR GAP

- Intentions do not always predict behaviour

- Why?



- What processes mediate the relationship between intentions and behaviour?

THE INTENTION-BEHAVIOUR GAP

- Intentions do not always predict behaviour
- Competing intentions?
 - I intend to not drink excessively
 - I intend to look cool and fit in with my peers
 - I intend to go out and have the best time
- Implementation Intentions (Gollwitzer, 1993)

THE INTENTION-BEHAVIOUR GAP

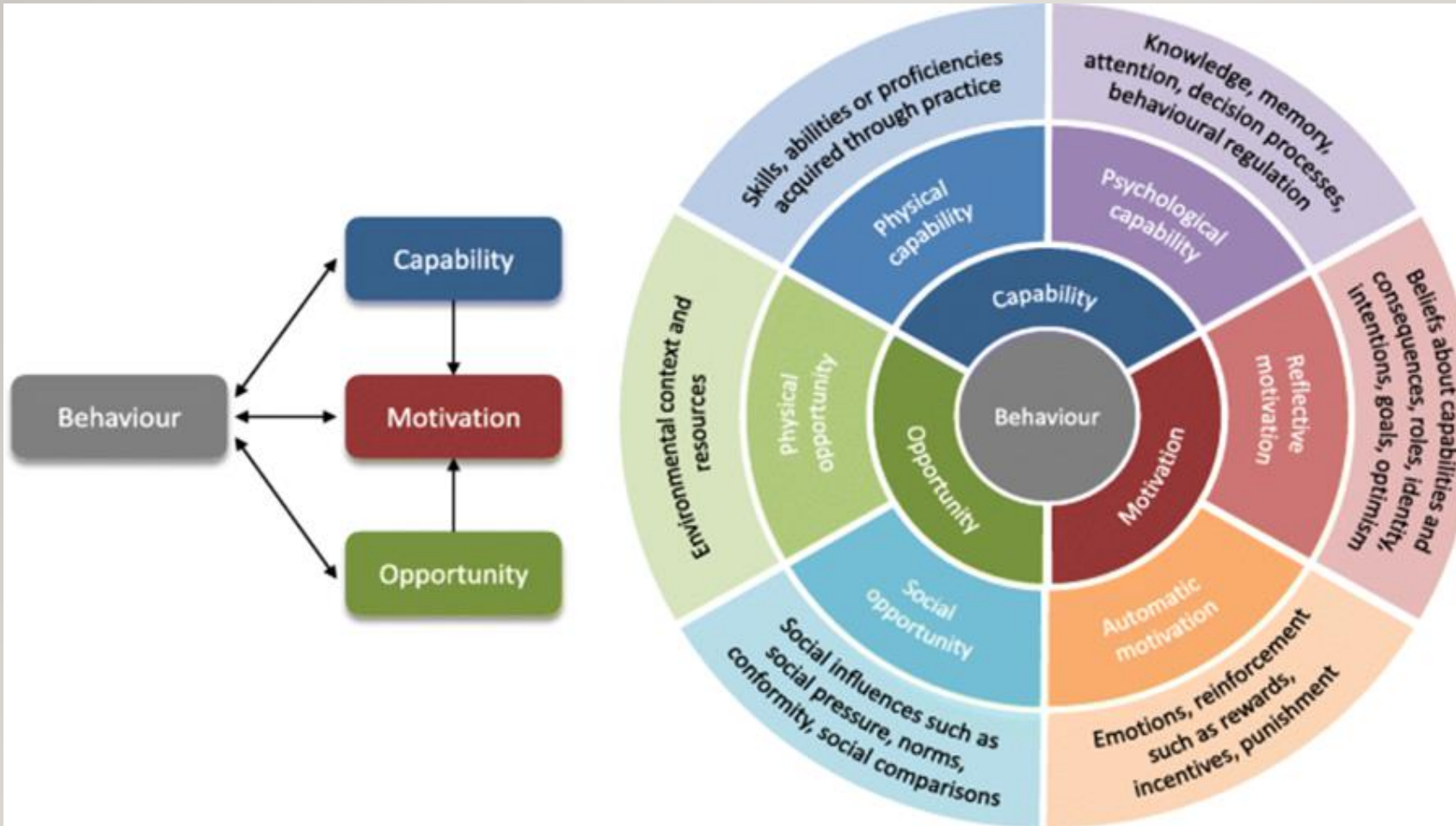
- Intentions do not always predict behaviour
-

- Implementation Intentions (Gollwitzer, 1993)
 - People are more likely to engage in an intended behaviour if they identify specific plans to enact that behaviour (where/when/how)
 - e.g., Orbell et al. (1997) women encouraged to identify a plan to conduct BSE were more likely to later report having performed BSE.

CRITICAL EVALUATION

- Social cognition models assume we are always rational decision-makers
- Do we always deliberately and consciously weigh up the “pros” and “cons” of a given behaviour?
 - What about behavioural choices that have become routine or automatic?
 - How easy it is change attitudes/beliefs underpinning such behaviours?
- Are our attitudes and beliefs about e.g., social norms fixed and stable?
 - May explain variability in predictive value of models

INTRODUCTION TO COM-B MODEL

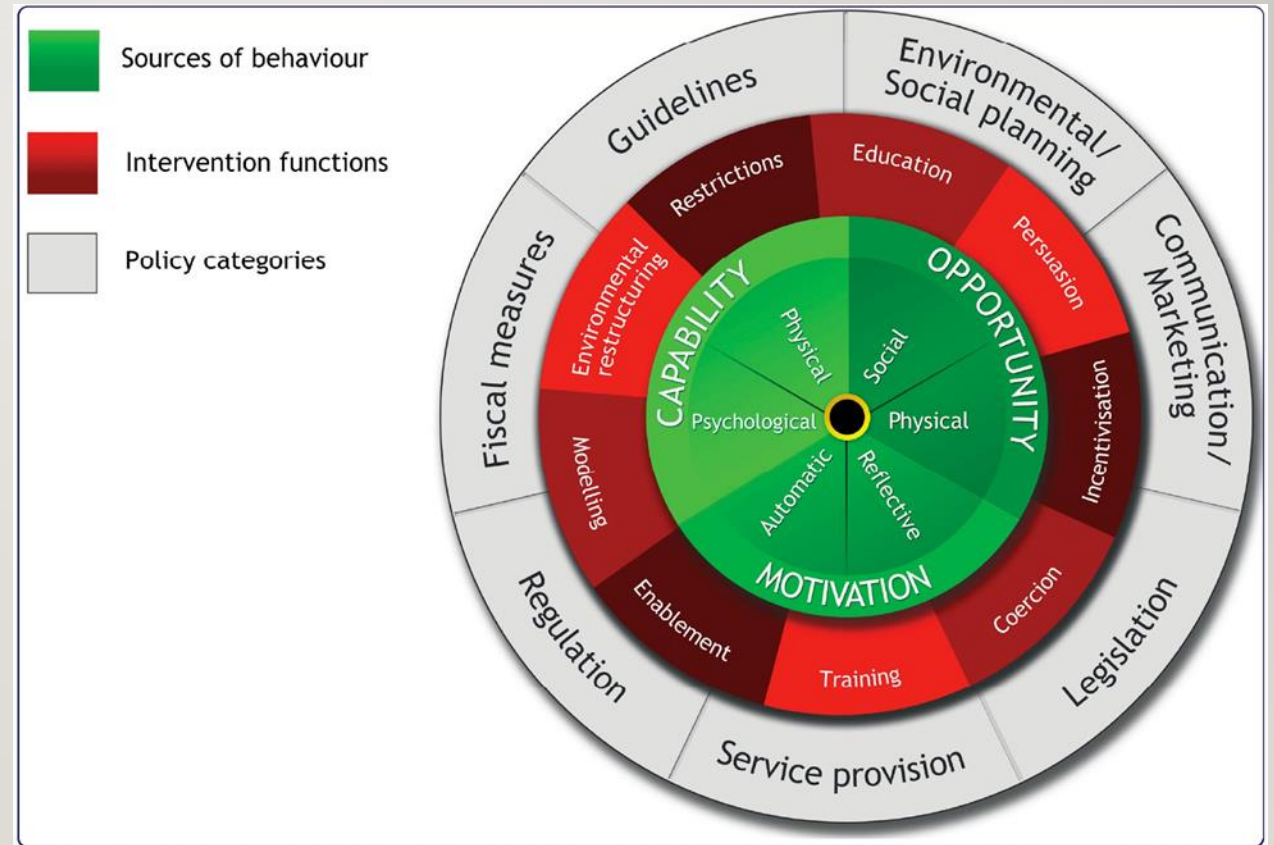


THE COM-B MODEL

Michie, S., Atkins, L., & West, R. (2014). *The behaviour change wheel. A guide to designing interventions*. 1st ed. Great Britain: Silverback Publishing, 1003, 1010.

THE BEHAVIOUR CHANGE WHEEL

- The COM-B model (Michie et al., 2011) lies at the core of the BCW
- Identifies different intervention strategies that can be applied to any of those components of the COM-B
- Provides general intervention strategies/categories that can be linked to



HEALTH PSYCHOLOGY AND PUBLIC HEALTH

- Identify why people engage in unhealthy behaviours (e.g., smoking, inactivity, poor diet)
- Use behaviour change theories to design effective interventions
- Develop health messages that motivate behaviour change
- Evaluate whether campaigns successfully improve health outcomes

UK Examples:

- Smokefree campaigns
- Change4Life
- Better Health campaigns
- NHS vaccination campaigns



HEALTH PSYCHOLOGY AND PUBLIC HEALTH

- Health psychologists use evidence-based techniques such as:
-  Increasing knowledge: Explaining health risks and benefits
-  Boosting self-efficacy: Helping people believe they can make changes
-  Goal setting: Encouraging realistic, achievable targets
-  Social norms: Showing that healthy behaviours are common and valued
-  Prompts and reminders: Text messages, app notifications

Health psychology provides the scientific foundation for many UK behaviour-change campaigns.

WHY IS HEALTH PSYCHOLOGY IMPORTANT FOR PUBLIC HEALTH?

- Improves campaign effectiveness
- Encourages long-term behaviour change
- Reduces preventable illness
- Supports healthier communities
- Helps reduce health inequalities

Public health campaigns are most effective when they understand how people think, feel, and behave. Health psychology provides the theories and evidence needed to create meaningful and lasting health behaviour change.



ACTIVITY I (20MINS): PUBLIC HEALTH WALES

Analyse a public health campaign on the PHW website e.g.

- Smoking cessation
- Vaccination
- Exercise campaigns

ACTIVITY 2 (30MINS):

- Act as Behaviour Change Consultants and design a campaign to either:
 - Increase exercise
 - Improve sleep
 - Reduce vaping
 - Increase healthy eating

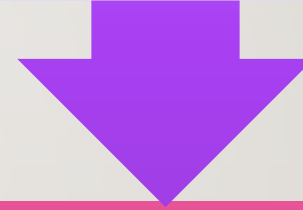
BREAK

RESEARCH IN HEALTH PSYCHOLOGY:
WHY DO YOU THINK IT IS IMPORTANT?

RESEARCH IN HEALTH PSYCHOLOGY

Often multidisciplinary and collaborative –

excellent teamworking and communication
skills essential



Research projects with patient groups and/or other
health professionals, including third sector organisations.

Ability to communicate psychological
information to non-expert groups is critical.

RESEARCH IN HEALTH PSYCHOLOGY

Often involve NHS ethical approval processes and working with vulnerable populations

Strong understanding and commitment of research ethics is crucial



Use a range of qualitative and quantitative research methods, including mixed methods research

May lead on projects or may offer consultancy or specialist expertise to existing projects

ASSESSMENT GUIDANCE

SESSION WRAP-UP AND REFLECTIONS

- Health Psychology helps us to understand why people choose to behave in ways that will harm their health
- Social cognition models are one of the most successful at explaining health behaviours (but not perfect!)
- Public health campaigns are most effective when they understand how people think, feel, and behave. Health psychology provides the theories and evidence needed to create meaningful and lasting health behaviour change in individuals and populations
- The ability to evaluate the impact of these campaigns is important.