

How individuals, environments, and health behavior interact

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Interpretive Summary: Not required for a book chapter.

Technical Abstract: Social Cognitive Theory (SCT) addresses both the psychosocial dynamics influencing health behavior and methods for promoting behavioral change. Within SCT, human behavior is explained in terms of a triadic, dynamic, and reciprocal model in which behavior, personal factors (including cognitions), and environmental influences all interact. Among the crucial personal factors are the individual's capabilities to symbolize behavior, to anticipate the outcomes of behavior, to learn by observing others, to have confidence in performing a behavior (including overcoming the problems in performing the behavior), to self-determine or self-regulate behavior, and to reflect on and analyze experience (Bandura, 1997). Health educators and behavioral scientists have creatively used SCT to develop interventions, procedures, or techniques that influence these underlying cognitive variables, thereby increasing the likelihood of behavioral change. This chapter provides a brief history of the development of Social Cognitive Theory, includes a description of key concepts, and analyzes two recent examples of how the theory was used to design health education programs.

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Eight: how individuals, environments, and health behaviors interact: social cognitive theory. Alfred L. McAlister, Cheryl L. Perry, and Guy S. Parcel. Part Two focuses on theories of individual health behavior, and its chapters focus on variables within individuals that influence their health behavior and response to health promotion and education interventions. Four bodies of theory are reviewed in separate chapters: the Health Belief Model, the Transtheoretical Model, the Theory of Reasoned Action/Theory of Planned Behavior/Integrated Behavioral Model, and the Precaution Adoption Process Model. Preface. xxiii.

Environmental Behavior Change and Technology. For averting the threat of environmental resource depletion, a variety of approaches toward changing user behaviors have been proposed, such as providing technical alternatives, regulatory rules, financial incentives, information, social examples, and/or organizational change (e.g., De Young, 1993; Geller, 2002; Geller et al., 1982; Gardner & Stern, 2002; Steg & Vlek, in press; Vlek, 2000). Changes in human behaviors may be encouraged by addressing individual persons' and groups' knowledge, beliefs, and preferences, for instance, through marketing, advertising, and information strategies. However, such "demand-side management" may have limited effects.