Community-Based Social Marketing: Promoting Sustainable Behavior Change

Liz Ross, M.S., Colorado State University
Agenda

- Overview of the CBSM methodology
- Description of the CBSM steps (with examples)
What is the CBSM methodology?
Community-based social marketing (CBSM)

- **Promote behaviors** to achieve a specific goal with **systematic** and **audience-specific** decision-making
Step 1: Select behaviors
Step 1: Select Behaviors

1a. Choose your goal state

1b. Compile list of possible behaviors

1c. Retain behavior(s) with largest goal state potential
Step 1a: Choose a goal state

What’s your goal state?

- NOT a specific behavior. Instead, think about what you want to achieve through adoption of the behavior.

- Reduce emissions
- Support pollinators
- Divert waste from landfills
- Bicycling
- Gardening
- Composting
Step 1b: Compile list of possible behaviors

- Which behaviors will help achieve our goal state?
- Which behaviors make sense for our audience?
- Be sure behaviors are non-divisible and end-state
Step 1b: Compile list of possible behaviors

- Which behaviors will help achieve our goal state?
- Which behaviors make sense for our audience?
- Be sure behaviors are **non-divisible** and end-state

- Bike to work  ✓
- Compost  ✓
- Use efficient clothes dryer  ✓
- Drive car less  
- Reduce food waste  
- Use less energy  

Step 1b: Compile list of possible behaviors

- Which behaviors will help achieve our goal state?
- Which behaviors make sense for our audience?
- Be sure behaviors are non-divisible and **end-state**

- Bike to work
- Compost
- Grow specific plants
- Rent a commuter bike
- Buy a compost bin
- Receive seeds
Step 1c: Find the largest goal state potential(s)

Goal state potential = Impact x Probability x (1 – Penetration)
Step 1c: Find the largest goal state potential(s)

Goal state potential = \textbf{Impact} \times \text{Probability} \times (1 - \text{Penetration})

- **Impact** = How well does each behavior help to achieve the goal state?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goal: Supporting pollinators</th>
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</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Plant native plants</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eliminate pesticide use</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reduce GHG emissions</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Step 1c: Find the largest goal state potential(s)

Goal state potential = Impact \times \textbf{Probability} \times (1 – \text{Penetration})

- **Probability** = What’s the probability that the audience will engage in each behavior?

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Step 1c: Find the largest goal state potential(s)

Goal state potential = Impact x Probability x (1 – Penetration)

- Penetration = What proportion of the audience already engages in the behavior?

- 1 – Penetration = What proportion of the audience doesn’t engage in the behavior?
Step 1c: Find the largest goal state potential(s)

Goal state potential = Impact x Probability x (1 – Penetration)

**1 – Penetration** = What proportion of the audience doesn’t engage in the behavior?

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<tr>
<td>Plant native plants</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4 (.70)</td>
</tr>
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<td>Eliminate pesticide use</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4 (.70)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reduce GHG emissions</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5 (.90)</td>
</tr>
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Step 1c: Find the largest goal state potential(s)

### Goal state potential

\[
\text{Goal state potential} = \text{Impact} \times \text{Probability} \times (1 - \text{Penetration})
\]

- Which behavior(s) has the largest goal state potential?

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Plant native plants</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>4</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
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<td>4</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>5</td>
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Step 2: Identify barriers and benefits
Step 2: Identify Barriers and Benefits

Step 1: Select behaviors

Step 2: Identify barriers and benefits

Step 3: Develop intervention strategies

Step 4: Pilot test the intervention

Step 5: Implement and evaluate the intervention
Step 2: Identify Barriers and Benefits

Why?

1. Informs intervention
   - How can we help the audience **overcome the barriers** and **realize the benefits**?

2. It’s also **crucial** during the behavior selection process
   - Are there significant barriers that can’t be addressed in the intervention?

- Plant native plants 40
- Eliminate pesticide use 48
Step 2: Identify Barriers and Benefits

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Step 2: Identify Barriers and Benefits

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- Plant native plants 40
- Eliminate pesticide use 48
Step 2: Identify Barriers and Benefits

How?

- Personal experience, “hunches”
- Interventions in other neighborhoods/with different audiences
- Ask your target audience
- Observe your target audience
Step 3: Develop intervention strategies
Step 1: Select behaviors

Step 2: Identify barriers and benefits

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Step 5: Implement and evaluate the intervention
Step 3: Develop Intervention Strategies

What should our intervention look like?

1. Address the barriers and benefits
   - Make the sustainable behavior **more** desirable
   - Make the unsustainable behavior **less** desirable

2. Use social science methods
   - Commitments
   - Social norms
   - Prompts
   - Feedback
   - Convenience
   - Social diffusion
Step 3: Develop Intervention Strategies

Commitments

▪ Individuals who commit to engaging in a behavior are more likely to follow through

  ▪ **Written commitments** are more effective than **verbal commitments**
  ▪ **Public commitments** are more effective than **private commitments**

▪ How?

  ▪ Signed or verbal commitments in neighborhood meetings, door-to-door, over the phone, or in online forums

“I, [name], agree to grow only native plants in my yard.”
Social norms

- When individuals believe that a behavior is normal and common, they are more likely to engage

Asch conformity study (1951)
75% of people who stayed at this hotel reused their towels at least once during their stay.
90% of MHS Students DISAPPROVE of pressuring another student to drink.
Please consider our environment

70% of members use more than 1 towel per visit.

Only use one towel per visit.
The MSC/ASC certification contributes to sustaining marine resources

28% of all customers buying seafood in our shop yesterday chose MSC/ASC

Richter et al., 2018
More and more New Yorkers are carrying reusable bags. Join in! Remember to Bring Your Own bag when shopping.
Step 3: Develop Intervention Strategies

Prompts

- Help people remember to engage
- How?
  - Use decals, signs, stickers, notepads
  - Encourage a specific positive behavior
  - Make the reminder noticeable and self-explanatory
  - Place the reminder near the behavior (in space and time)
Step 3: Develop Intervention Strategies

Feedback

- Communicate a behavior’s progress and impact
- Be specific!
  - How many native plants have been planted?
  - How many cans have been recycled?
  - How much energy has been saved?
    (And how much CO\(_2\)?)

“Our neighborhood planted 25 native plants last summer!”

“This street has recycled over 500 cans this year!”

“Our complex has saved 2,400 kWh of energy this month!”
Step 3: Develop Intervention Strategies

Convenience

- Make the behavior as easy as possible by addressing external barriers

How?

- Give people as much help and social support as possible. For example:
  - Bike racks
  - List of native plants
  - Recyclable materials decal
  - Compost bins
  - LED bulbs
  - Bike-to-work events
Social diffusion

- Behavior engagement spreads through **communication** and **visibility**
- Model the behavior
Step 4: Pilot test the intervention
Step 4: Pilot Test

Step 1: Select behaviors

Step 2: Identify barriers and benefits

Step 3: Develop intervention strategies

Step 5: Implement and evaluate the intervention

Step 4: Pilot test the intervention
Step 4: Pilot Test

- “Test run”

- Piloting takes time, but it will save time in the long run and will increase the impact of the intervention

- Ideally:
  - Small subset of audience, divided into two groups: intervention + control

- But at least:
  - Consistent, in-depth discussion and review of intervention
Step 5: Implement and evaluate the intervention
Step 1: Select behaviors

Step 2: Identify barriers and benefits

Step 3: Develop intervention strategies

Step 4: Pilot test the intervention

Step 5: Implement and evaluate the intervention
Goal state: Reduce residential water use

3 regions in Ontario, Canada: York, Durham, & Halton

**York**

**What:** Information-based campaign

**How:** Gave water-efficiency brochures, rain gauges, and prompt tags to homeowners

**Result:** 1% reduction in water use
Goal state: Reduce residential water use

3 regions in Ontario, Canada: York, Durham, & Halton

**Durham**

**What**: CBSM-based campaign

**How**: College students went door-to-door
Obtained public commitments by providing window stickers; placed prompts on outdoor faucets

**Result**: 32% reduction in water use
Real-world Example Intervention

- Goal state: Reduce residential water use
- 3 regions in Ontario, Canada: York, Durham, & Halton

**Halton**

**What:** CBSM-based campaign

**How:** Staff went door-to-door
Obtained public commitments by providing window stickers; gave homeowners rain gauges

**Result:** 45% reduction in water use
Summary
Choose a behavior

1. Identify your goal state

2. Compile list of behaviors that will help achieve the goal state

3. Select 2-3 behaviors with largest product of:
   - ✓ Impact
   - ✓ Probability
   - ✓ 1 – Penetration

4. Identify the barriers and benefits of behavior engagement

5. Choose a behavior with manageable barriers
Summary

Design the intervention

6. Address the barriers

7. Use social science methods. Consider:
   - Commitments
   - Social norms
   - Prompts
   - Feedback
   - Convenience
   - Social diffusion

8. Pilot test to the extent possible

9. Run the intervention! (And don’t forget to make notes for the future!)
Thank you!

Questions?

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Fostering Sustainable Behavior: An Introduction to Community-Based Social Marketing, 3rd ed. by McKenzie-Mohr

Social Marketing to Protect the Environment: What Works by McKenzie-Mohr, Lee, Schultz, & Kotler

www.cbsm.com
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Step 1: Select Behaviors

2c. Retain behavior(s) with largest \textbf{goal state potential}

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- How well does each behavior help to achieve the goal state?

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<th>kg CO$_2$-equivalent (per person per year)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Eliminating car use</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2,450</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plant-based diet</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>841</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LED bulbs</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>170</td>
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2c. Retain behavior(s) with largest goal state potential

Goal state potential = Impact x Probability x (1 – Penetration)

1 – Penetration = What proportion doesn’t engage in the behavior?

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<td>3.6</td>
<td>.34 (2)</td>
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