

CONSENSUS ON FACTORS THAT PREDICT BEHAVIOR

In July 1993, "Behavioral and Social Sciences and the HIV/AIDS Epidemic" was published by the National Commission on AIDS. Among other things, this document suggests that for a person to perform a given behavior, one or more of the following conditions must be true:

1. the person has formed a strong positive intention (or made a commitment) to perform the behavior;
2. there are no environmental constraints that make it impossible for the behavior to occur;
3. the person has the skill(s) necessary to perform the behavior;
4. the person believes the advantages of performing the behavior outweigh the disadvantages;
5. the person perceives more social pressure to perform the behavior than not to perform it;
6. the person perceives that the behavior is consistent with their self-image and does not violate their personal standards;
7. their emotional reaction to performing the behavior is positively reinforced, and
8. they believe (have confidence) they can execute the behavior.

These eight conditions or factors that represent a consensus of opinion among leading behavioral and social scientists concerning what is important to consider when developing an intervention designed to change a health-relevant behavior(s). The first three conditions (i.e., intention, environmental constraints, and ability) are considered "necessary and sufficient" for inducing a target behavior. In other words, for a behavior to occur, a person must have: 1) a strong positive commitment or intention to perform the behavior; 2) the skills required to implement the behavior; and 3) live in an environment that is conducive to the behavior occurring.

The remaining five conditions (i.e., anticipate outcomes, norms, self-standards, emotion, and self-efficacy) are viewed as influencing the strength or intensity and direction of the intention.