

## **Midterm Study Guide – PH2201 Health Communication**

**Your midterm will be a combination of multiple choice and short answer. Be sure to understand the following concepts and be able to provide examples:**

### **Definition of risk perception:**

Risk perception is the subjective judgment that people make about the characteristics and severity of a risk. The phrase is most commonly used in reference to natural hazards and threats to the environment or health, such as nuclear power. Several theories have been proposed to explain why different people make different estimates of the dangerousness of risks. Three major families of theory have been developed: psychology approaches (heuristics and cognitive), anthropology/sociology approaches (cultural theory) and interdisciplinary approaches (social amplification of risk framework).

### **Constructs of the Elaboration Likelihood Model:**

The elaboration likelihood model (ELM) is a psychological theory that addresses the process of persuasion. Specifically, it is a “dual-process” theory – that is, a theory that explains that there are two routes through which persuasion takes place, the central route and the peripheral route.

In the ELM, information is the primary driver of attitude change. When information is carefully considered, cognitive effort is expended, and then an informed judgment is made, an individual is using the central route of information processing. When using the central route, individuals cognitively elaborate on the content of an informational message, evaluate its content, and consider other issues relevant to the information. Elaboration in the ELM thus refers to “the extent to which a person scrutinizes the issue-relevant arguments contained in the persuasive communication.” (Petty and Cacioppo, 1986, p. 7). When elaboration levels are high, the individual is using the central route.

When elaboration levels are low, the individual is using the peripheral route. This route requires less cognitive effort than the aforementioned central route. Heuristics, cues, and affinity with the source of the information form the basis for an attitude change when using the peripheral route. Simple decision rules are used here rather than active, effortful analysis of information.

The ELM explains that changes in attitudes are a function of (1) the quality of the information or argument, (2) peripheral cues, including heuristics and other stimuli that influence persuasion, and (3) elaboration likelihood.

### **Definition of health literacy and types of skill-based literacy:**

Health literacy is defined as the degree to which individuals have the capacity to obtain, process and understand basic health information needed to make appropriate health decisions and services needed to prevent or treat illness.

**Definition of gain and loss framing and understand examples:**

Often, advertisers are not certain of how to construct their message. For example, they might need to decide whether to focus on potential gains, such as "This product enhances your health", or the problems that can be solved, such as "This product reduces health problems". Whether gains or losses are emphasized, called framing, can significantly affect the credibility and utility of messages.

The concept of gain and loss framing was first examined in the context of prospect theory, an account that was disseminated by Kahneman and Tversky (1979; see also Tversky & Kahneman, 1992, for a more advanced variant called cumulative prospect theory). Some changes or initiatives are conceptualized as attempts to facilitate gains or improvements. Other changes or initiatives are conceptualized as attempts to minimize losses or costs. In general, according to prospect theory, when the prospect of gains is emphasized, individuals reject risky behaviors, called risk averse. When the attempt to curb losses is highlighted, individuals tend to prefer risky behaviors, called risk seeking

**Definition of audience segmentation and characteristics used in segmentation:**

Audience segmentation is a process of dividing people into homogeneous subgroups based upon defined criterion such as product usage, demographics, psychographics, communication behaviors and media use. Audience segmentation is used in commercial marketing so advertisers can design and tailor products and services that satisfy the targeted groups. In social marketing, audiences are segmented into subgroups and assumed to have similar interests, needs and behavioral patterns and this assumption allows social marketers to design relevant health or social messages that influence the people to adopt recommended behaviors.

**Difference between "targeting" and "tailoring" health communication:**

Message **targeting** involves defining a subgroup of a population based on common characteristics and providing information in a manner consistent with those characteristics. This approach assumes that if group members possess enough similar characteristics and motivations, they will be influenced by the same message.

Message **tailoring** is another method of customizing health communication messages. While message targeting involves aiming a message at a subgroup of people, health communication experts describe message tailoring as a process that "fits" the message to the individual, much like a tailor would a suit. Fitting a message to meet personal needs and characteristics, rather than targeting group criteria, may be more effective for influencing health behaviors. This process requires an assessment of the individual. The most basic approach to tailoring is personalization, which involves identifying and incorporating into messages characteristics of an

individual such as the person's name or age. Tailoring by personalization may be viewed as analogous to targeting by demographics—both offer customization, but only superficially.

### **Central characteristics of strategic health communication**

1. Reduce Health Risks
2. Incidence
3. Morbidity and Mortality
4. Improve Quality of Life for At-Risk Populations

### **Parts of the Diffusion of Innovation Model and what it explains**

- How new ideas and behaviors are adopted by individuals or groups over a period of time. (Not WHY they change but HOW).
- Premise is the rate of "diffusion" (use, change, acceptance) is determined by the attributes of the innovation, the communication channel used to deliver the message, the social system it is delivered in and the characteristics of the users themselves.

Key Concepts:

- The Innovation
- Communication Channel
- Time
- Social System

**Relative Advantage** – Degree to which the innovation is perceived as being better than the idea it supercedes

**Compatibility** – Degree to which innovation is perceived as consistent with existing values, past experiences and needs of potential adopters (SES, cultural, religious etc).

**Complexity** – Degree to which an innovation is perceived as relatively difficult to understand and use.

**Trialability** – Degree to which the innovation may be experimented with.

**Observability** – Degree to which the results of an innovation are visible to others.

"Signs" and "symbols" and how are they used in communication

Cultural issues that influence how effective health communication is

Internal and external contributions in Attribution Theory

*When individuals observe behavior, they attempt to determine whether it is internally or externally caused*

**Distinctiveness**

**Does this person behave in this manner in other situations:**