Using the Health Belief Model to Guide Behavior Change

**Important Terms Used**

**Health Belief Model**: An intrapersonal theory that "addresses a person's perceptions of the threat of a health problem and the accompanying appraisal of a recommended behavior for preventing or managing the problem." (Cottrell, Girvan, & McKenzie, 2006)

**Behavior Change Program**: A program designed for an individual specifically to their health needs. It involves "using behavioral contracts, goal setting, and self monitoring to try to foster a modification in an unhealthy habit in an individual." (Cottrell, Girvan, & McKenzie, 2006)

**Logic Model**: A visual explanation or "map" of the Behavior Change Program and the expected predicted outcomes of the plan as a whole.

**What I Did**

This project demonstrates the process of a client-orientated health consultation with a specific health goal. First I interviewed the client to determine what kind of health behavior change she wanted to make. I also tried to determine the degree to which she wanted to make this change, as well as the work she was willing to put in to succeed. Then I designed both a Health Belief Model and a Logic Model to clearly describe how we would go about putting her behavior change objective into practice. I tried to incorporate practical, enjoyable, and feasible activities to help maintain her motivation to reach her goal.

**Client Overview and Background**

The client that I interviewed was an alcoholic for many years. She had previously attempted to quit drinking by several different methods, without success. Motivation to quit at this time resulted from a heart disease advertisement. Other important personal factors influenced her decision as well. She expressed a high amount of interest and enthusiasm for the program we designed. At this time she is well on her way to reaching her objective completing the course.

**Self-Efficacy**: Low

**Likelihood of Taking Preventative Action**:

**Outputs**:
- Learn new skills
- Attends counseling
- Watches videos
- Gathers information
- Works on relationships
- Exercises more
- Eats better

**Activities**:
- Educational Videos
- Relationship Counseling
- Instruction in nutrition & exercise
- Job search
- Internet sites

**Influential Factors**:
- Friends: Societal pressure
- Self-esteem
- Stress of work
- Loneliness
- Unstable emotions
- Addiction
- Background: Alcoholic father
- Self-perception

**Intermediate Outcomes**:
- Improve coping skills
- Learn relationship skills
- Gains tools to improve self-esteem
- Continues to lose weight
- Ability to combat desires to drink
- Begins to make healthy choices
- Motivated to maintain new lifestyle

**Initial Outcomes**:
- Stop drinking (short-term at least)
- Gain support group
- Begin contemplation of maintaining new lifestyle
- Begins to lose weight
- Motivation to quit drinking
- Increased awareness of effects of drinking on life and choices
- Learn skills to cope with desire to drink
- Learns how to make healthy decisions
- Gains a positive attitude towards decision

**Inputs**:
- Money
- Time
- Materials: books, videos
- Counselor
- Support group

**Assumptions**: The client will diligently follow through with the set program.

**Perceived Susceptibility**:
- Thinks is at risk for heart disease

**Perceived Seriousness**:
- Thinks that heart disease risk is enough to want to quit drinking

**Perceived Threat**:
- She sees that her problem with alcohol may contribute to heart disease.

**Perceived Benefits**:
- Better health and heart, better health, more self-respect, save money, less headaches, boyfriend would not leave

**Perceived Barriers/Risks**:
- No replacement for drinking, addiction, emotional problems, friend Lisa, possibility of failure, times of being alone or at parties

**Modifying Factors**:
- Pressure from friends who drink, familial history of alcoholism, feels that has no emotional support or close relationships, insecurity, low self-esteem, dislike of job, stress of father living at home

**Cues to Action**:
- Advertisement on TV
- Sister, boyfriend advise/support
- Alcoholic father, death of alcoholic grandfather from heart disease