

# DEFINITIONS—INFLUENCING FACTORS OF BEHAVIOR CHANGE

## THINGS ON THE INSIDE—INTERNAL FACTORS

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- ▶ **Knowledge**—What we know about the behavior and the health problem.
- ▶ **Attitudes and Beliefs**—What we think and believe about the behavior and the health problem and how that may affect use of risk reduction.
- ▶ **Perceptions of Risk.**
  - **Perceived risk/susceptibility**—Belief that we are personally at risk and vulnerable to the health problem.
  - **Perceived severity**—Belief that getting an STD or HIV is a serious threat to our health.
- ▶ **Other Perceptions**
  - **Perceived barriers**—Obstacles that get in the way of the behavior change (for a given person).
  - **Perceived benefits**—Positive results of making the behavior change (for a given person).
- ▶ **Intentions**—Willingness to try to change the behavior.
- ▶ **Self-Efficacy**—Feeling confident that we have the capacity to change the behavior, that we can do the new behavior.
- ▶ **Emotions**—How we feel such as happy, sad, scared, anxious, guilty, or ashamed (negative emotions can trigger risk behaviors).
- ▶ **Values, Self-Standards/Identity**—These are interrelated concepts of self. Values define how we see ourselves as individuals—what we believe in, what we think is okay and not okay for us to do. Identity refers to the concept of how a person defines who he is and where he fits in society. Self-standards refer to how the behavior fits in with how we see ourselves.
- ▶ **Skills**—The actual ability we need to do the new behavior.

## THINGS ON THE OUTSIDE—EXTERNAL FACTORS

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- ▶ **Sexual Relationship Dynamics**—Issues of power, control, and decision making within one’s sexual relationship(s).
- ▶ **Social Norms (Family/Cultural/Religious/Peer)**—What we have learned from our families, culture, religion, or our social network about the behavior, whether it is right or wrong or whether it is okay or not okay to do.
- ▶ **Social Support**—Positive reinforcement of the behavior change efforts from partners, family, and peers. Encouragement to make the change from people in one’s social network.
- ▶ **Policies, Procedures of Agencies/Providers**—The rules in places that we need to help us with the change, whether the rules help or create barriers.
- ▶ **Laws, Regulations**—The laws or regulations that govern whether the behavior is legal or illegal and whether they support the positive behavior change or create barriers.
- ▶ **Environmental Factors/Barriers**—Things in your neighborhood or community that make the change easier or harder, whether we have access to the necessary prevention materials to support the behavior change, whether we have access to health care preventive services.
- ▶ **Social Influence: Racism**—Perceived and experienced negative societal attitudes, beliefs, and actions based on race that affect a person’s behaviors, attitudes, and beliefs.
- ▶ **Social Influence: Homophobia**—Perceived and experienced negative societal attitudes, beliefs, and actions based on sexual orientation that affect a person’s behaviors, attitudes, and beliefs.