Social Movements to Prevent & Control Obesity

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http://prevention.stanford.edu
http://healthyweight.lpch.org
Strategies for Prevention & Control

Environmental
Policy -- regulatory, social, economic
Interpersonal
Individual (self-regulatory)

Changing Behavior
Motivation

To adopt the new behavior (the outcome)

To participate in the intervention itself (the process)
Motivation for physical activity and eating behaviors

**Medical/Public Health**
- Obesity
- Diabetes
- Hyperlipidemia
- Hypertension
- Risk for CVD & Cancer

**Children (and Adults)**
- Fun
- Choice & Control
- Goals, Curiosity & Challenge
- Cooperation & Competition
- Social interaction
- Pride, sense of accomplishment
- Peer/social approval/disapproval
- Parent/adult approval/disapproval
Does a health behavior change intervention need to look, feel, sound, smell or taste like health education?

Stealth Interventions

Where physical activity/reduced inactivity or diet changes are “side effects” of the intervention

Try to identify target behaviors that are motivating in themselves.

Taking Stealth Interventions to the Next Level

Social & Ideological Movements

Environmental Sustainability/Climate Change
Food Justice/Urban Agriculture
Food Safety
Community Safety, Beautification, Traffic Reduction
Human Rights/Social Justice
Anti-Globalization/Nationalism
Animal Protection
Political Action
Anti-Consumerism
Violence and Crime Prevention
Cause-Related Fundraising
Energy Independence
National Security/Anti-Terrorism

Robinson TN. Obesity, 2010;18(suppl 1):S17-S22.
Social Movement Motivations

- Rational choices/benefits
- Identity formation/definition
  - self-identity, social/collective identity, and/or public identity
  - identity values and symbolic beliefs are valued > material incentives
- Social Interaction/social networks
  - perceived social belonging enhances efficacy & performance (esp. stigmatized)
  - Social support
- Collective efficacy beliefs
  - early successes interrupt recursive cycles of negative evaluative feedback (refuting self-stereotypes of failure) and enhance motivation, self-efficacy and performance
- Avoidance of Personal Failure
  - Exchange of personal responsibility for collective responsibility – individual efficacy beliefs protected by successfully contributing to the collective goal
- Emotional Responses

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Also changes in importance of…eating a healthful diet, environmental sustainability, animal rights
Social & Environmental Changes

- Potential to influence public policy thru mobilization of families, government, markets, civil society
- Community- and Society-level changes
  - Norms
  - Laws/regulations
- Further facilitate individual changes
- Self-reinforcing feedback loop
- Changes spread more widely
Piggybacking on Existing Social Movements

- Leapfrog starting a successful movement de novo
- Highly motivating
- Many to choose from
- More dramatic & sustained behavior changes in individuals
- Magnify effects more widely through changes in norms & public policy
- Benefit multiple outcomes
- New allies, resources and strategies

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Save the World
Prevent Obesity