

Evaluating Efforts in Mental Health Promotion: RCTs and beyond

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Overview

- Principles and Framework for Mental Health Promotion (MHP)
- Importance of fostering change at the community level
- A tool for assessing and evaluating community level outcomes

Principles of Mental Health Promotion

- There is no health without mental health
- Mental health is more than the absence of illness- it is vital to individuals, families and societies
- A climate that respects and protects basic rights is fundamental to the promotion of mental health
- Intersectoral linkage is key
- Mental health is everybody's business

Source: WHO (2004). Promoting Mental Health: concepts, emerging evidence, practice.

Why invest in MHP?

- There is high cost, and uncertain success with many treatment strategies
- Fragmentation of services and supports also limits success
- “Living well” is something that should be available to everyone

Framework for the promotion of mental health and well-being (VicHealth, 1999)

Determinants of mental health and themes for action



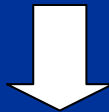
Population Groups and Action Areas



Sectors and Settings for Action



Intermediate Outcomes



Improved mental health, long-term benefits

Themes for action

- Social inclusion
 - Supportive relationships
 - Involvement in group activities
 - Civic engagement
- Freedom from discrimination and violence
 - Valuing of diversity
 - Physical (and sexual and emotional) safety
 - Self-determination and ability to control own life
- Economic participation
 - Work
 - Education
 - Housing
 - Money

Population Groups

- Children
- Young people
- Women (and men)
- Older people
- Indigenous communities
- Culturally diverse communities
- People in rural communities

Sectors and settings for action

- Housing
- Community
- Public
- Education
- Workplace
- Sport, Art, Recreation
- Corporate
- Academic
- Justice
- Local Government
- Health
- Transport

... most evaluation is focused on individuals, and individuals who participate in services or programmes.....



STOP

... if we are truly interested in measuring change at the community level, we need to explore different methods of outcome evaluation ...

Why are community initiatives so hard to evaluate?

- Horizontal complexity – working across sectors
 - Can measure effects of individual programs, but miss the synergy
- Vertical complexity
 - How do community level variables influence individual level outcomes?
- Contextual issues
 - Recognition that there is a broad set of circumstances and events that may impact on the success of the community initiative, yet are not under the control of the community
- Flexible and evolving intervention
 - ‘intervention’ is flexible, constantly changing in response to community dynamics & difficult to track
- Broad range of outcomes
 - E.g., community participation, leadership development, empowerment, community building; organisation change
 - Difficult to operationalise and measure these effects

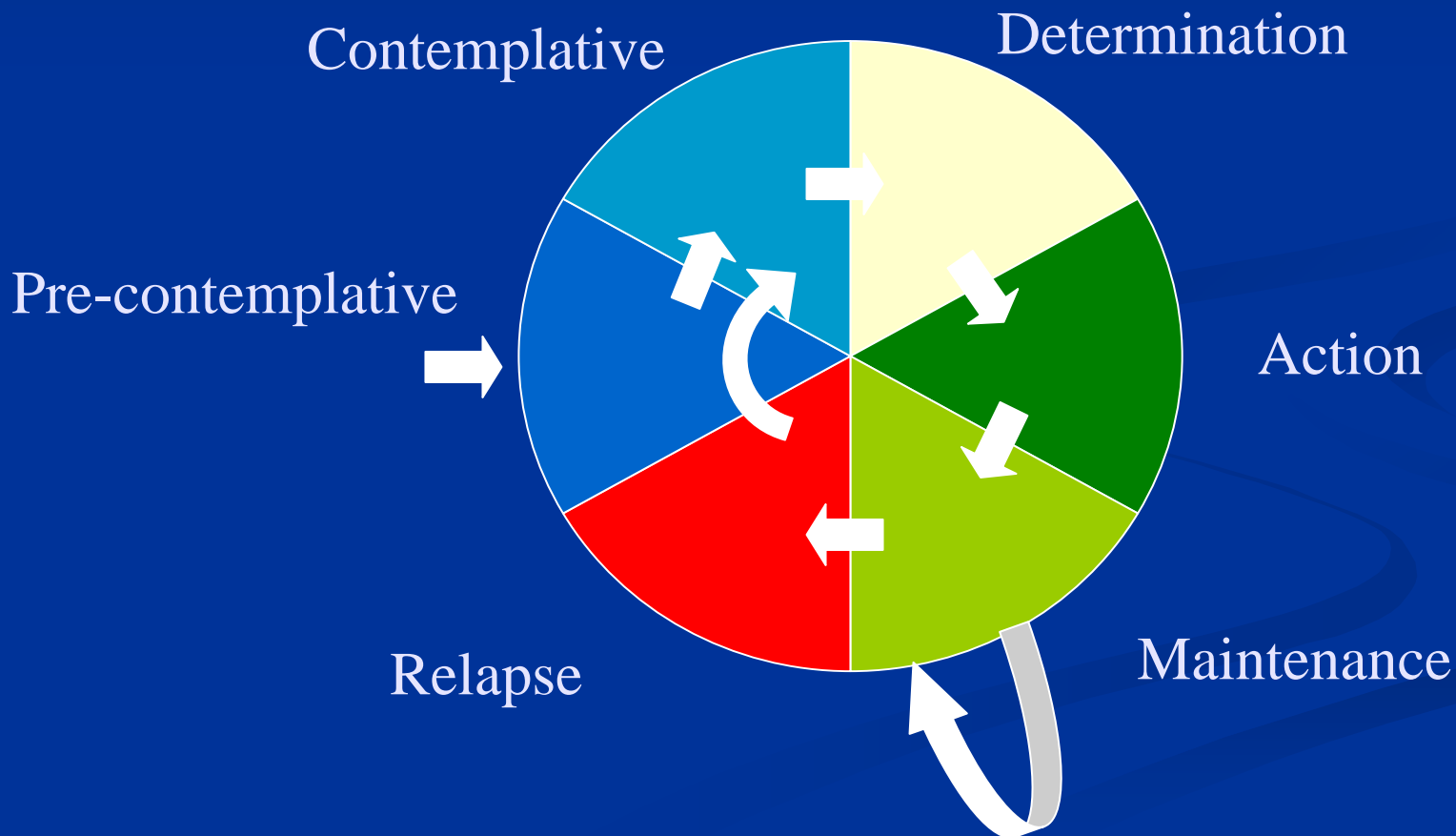
Source: Kubisch, AC., Weiss, C., Schorr, LB, Connell, JP. (1995). Introduction: New Approaches to evaluating community initiatives: Concepts, methods and contexts. Washington DC: The Aspen Institute, Roundtable on Comprehensive Community Initiatives for Children and Families.

Measuring community change

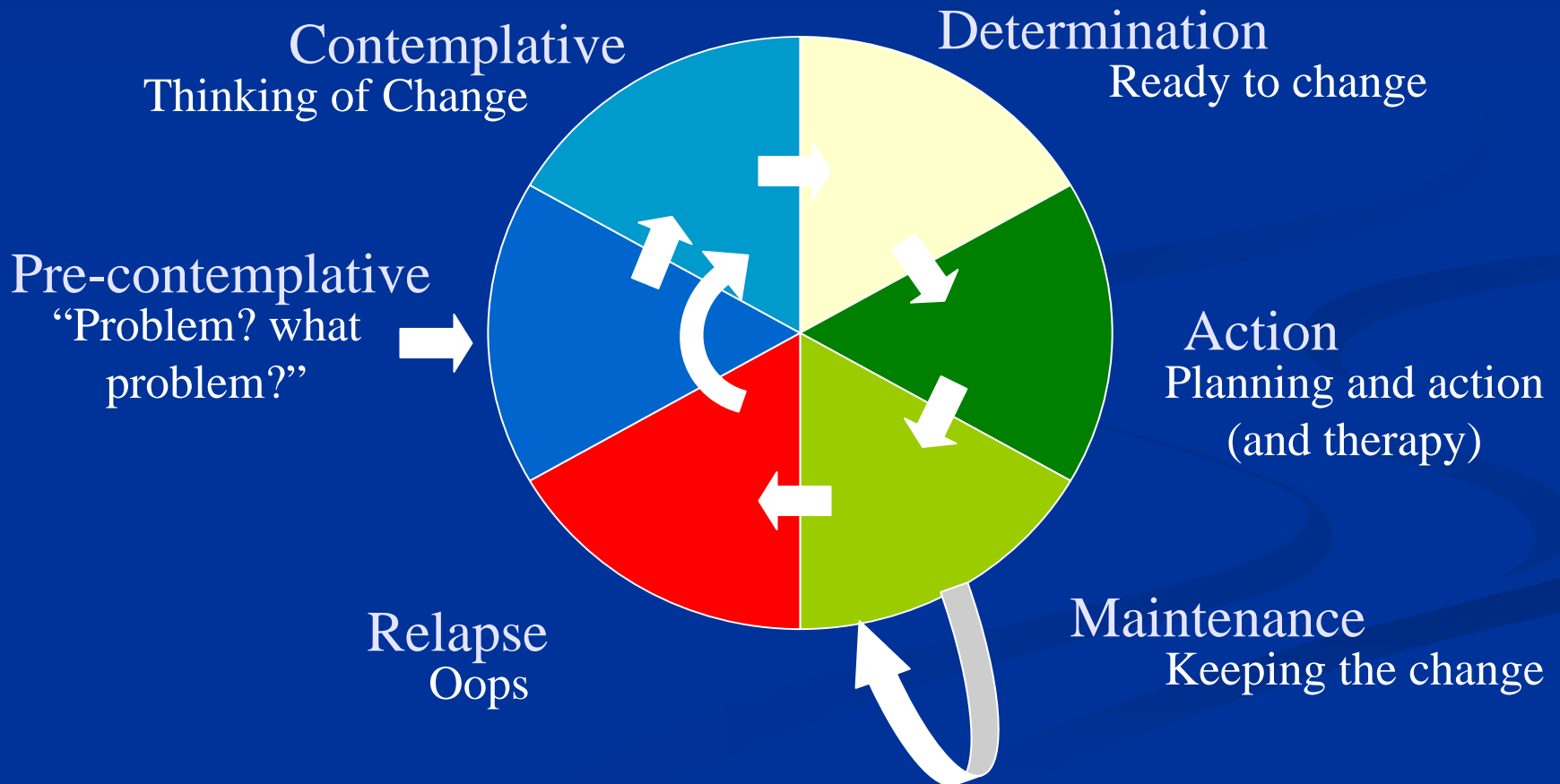
- Community Intervention Trials
 - Challenges
 - Issues of comparability
 - Challenges in determining unit of analysis
 - (How do you define “community”)
 - Problems of spillovers, crossovers, in- and out- migration
- Theory-based evaluation
 - Unpacking implicit theories of change

So what are our theories of
change for communities?

Stages in the Wheel of Change



Stages in the Wheel of Change



Community Readiness Model* =

Stages of Change Model

+

Community Development

Source: Edwards, R.W., Jumper-Thurman, P., Plested, B.A., Oetting, E.R., & Swanson, L. (2000). Community readiness: Research to practice. *Journal of Community Psychology*, 28 (3): 291-307.

Conducting Community Readiness Interviews

- 4-5 key informants
- 20-35 Questions, interviews can last up to 60 minutes
- Interviews conducted by telephone or face to face

Dimensions of community readiness

- Community efforts (programs, activities, policies, etc)
- Community knowledge of the efforts
- Leadership (formal and informal)
- Community climate
- Community knowledge about the issue
- Resources related to the issue (people, time, money, space, etc)

Stages of Community Readiness

9. High Level of Community
Ownership

8. Confirmation/Expansion

7. Stabilization

6. Initiation

5. Preparation

4. Preplanning

3. Vague Awareness

2. Denial/Resistance

1. No Awareness

Summary

- Mental Health Promotion is fundamental to our well-being
- Changes in key determinants of mental health (social inclusion, freedom from discrimination and violence, economic participation) requires coordinated community action
- Evaluation of CCI's is complex, but with careful application of theory, and attention to experimental design, we can make progress