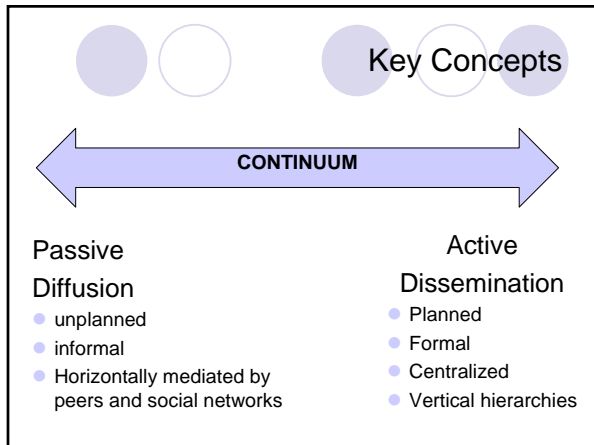


Diffusion of Innovations Theory

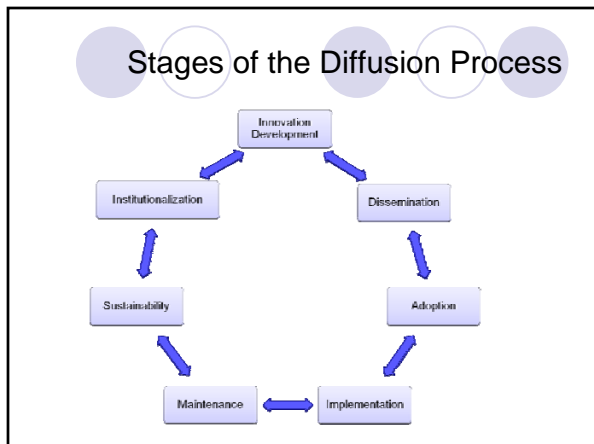
A Review

Presented by: Melanie & Sylvia

- ### Key Concepts
- Why is Diffusion of Innovations (DOI) important?
 - Diffusion vs. Dissemination



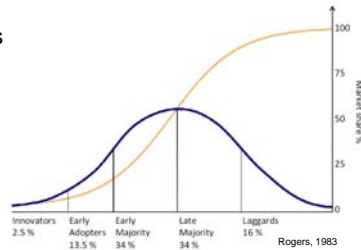
- ### Key Concepts
- 3 General Pathways of Active Dissemination:
- Direct to Practice distribution**
 - of materials and tools
 - Enactment**
 - of policies, legislation or regulations
 - Systematic, sustained and long-term approach**
 - using multiple strategies and methods, including ongoing evaluation over time.



- ### Characteristics of the Innovation
- Relative Advantage:**
 - Is the innovation better than what was there before?
 - Compatibility:**
 - Does the innovation fit with the intended audience?
 - Complexity:**
 - Is the innovation easy to use?
 - Trialability:**
 - Can the innovation be tried before making a decision to adopt?
 - Observability:**
 - Are the results of the innovation visible and easily measurable?

Characteristics of Adopters

1. Innovators
2. Early adopters
3. Early majority adopters
4. Late majority adopters
5. Laggards



Features of Settings

- Features of settings and organizations can influence the diffusion process:
- Geographical settings
- Societal culture
- Political conditions
- Globalization and uniformity

Applications in Health Promotion

Natural Diffusion

- **Dof theory is used in HP literature to contextualize and understand the natural diffusion of health risk behaviors or social problems in a given population**

Examples

- e.g. Alcohol, drugs and tobacco use (Sharma et al, 2008)
- e.g. Columbine-style killings (Malcolm Gladwell's *The Tipping Point*)

Applications in Health Promotion

Planned Diffusion/Dissemination

- DoI used to identify elements and contexts of an intervention that result in its adoption and dissemination
- Pilot intervention is translated into a new or "real world" context
- Outcomes are measured and compared to pilot
- Process evaluation used to identify innovation features or characteristics of adopters or social contexts attributable to adoption of the intervention

Examples:

- Began in HP with immunization campaigns, family planning programs (Sharma et al, 2008)
- Alcohol, tobacco and drug prevention programs (e.g. Smart Choices – School tobacco program)
- HIV/AIDS prevention programs (e.g. STOP AIDS in San Francisco)
- Healthy lifestyle programs (e.g. GOAL program in Finland & Australia, Pool Cool, Skin cancer prevention program, Hawaii & Massachusetts)

Advantages

Provides a framework to critically analyze target audiences and focus interventions

Provides a framework for analyzing innovations

Accessible theory: Concepts easy to understand and convey to stakeholders

Promotes the concept of accessible innovations: "Little things mean a lot"

Limitations and Challenges

Limitations:

HP Innovations are preventative innovations

Descriptive vs. Predictive

Individual level approach

Pro innovation bias

Challenges:

Social Responsibility

Measurement

Research

Complexity, specificity, feasibility

The Tipping Point: Creating a Social Epidemic

The Law of the Few:

- **Connectors:** "People with a gift of bringing the world together"
- **Mavens:** "People with the gift of collecting information and who are socially motivated"
- **Sales "men":** "People with the gift of persuasion"

The Stickiness Factor

- "Is the product memorable?"

The Power of Context

- "It is possible to be a better person on a clean street than in one littered with trash & graffiti"

In Summary

There is significant lag in diffusion of effective HP programs.

Diffusion of Innovations Theory attempts to map the process of how new ideas or innovations become adopted.

Diffusion of Innovations

Innovations have a life-cycle that reflects a pattern of early adoption by few influential individuals, followed by a period of rapid adoption by the majority, and finally a slower adoption by the "hold-outs".

Successful diffusion depends on: qualities of the innovation, the adopters and the environmental context.

Thanks!

Questions?