

COMMUNICATION FOR IMMUNIZATION

E-LEARNING RESOURCES

03 | THE PHASES OF BEHAVIOUR CHANGE

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Ideally, immunization should be a social norm in all communities. People at all levels should be programme advocates and adopt positive behaviours that promote immunization: government invest in immunization; health workers to provide quality services; parents take their children for immunization according to the schedule; and everyone encourages friends and family to do the same. This behaviour change can take time.

People generally go through a process before changing their behaviour, which can be heavily influenced by their family, peers, community leaders, media, and national policy. The following are simplified, commonly understood phases of behaviour change.

In order for people to change their behaviours, there must be an enabling environment set by leadership and repeated at each level of society from national to local.

The enabling environment for behaviour change for immunization

- National immunization policy
- Effective national and local immunization implementation plans
- Sustainable, reliable national and local funding
- Leadership prevention and response to crises
- Social acceptance and demand amongst national and community influencers and the media
- Trained, supervised health workforce
- Quality interaction at the health facility including interpersonal communication
- A cadre of trusted community health volunteers or workers
- Community engagement with marginalized and vulnerable groups
- Complementary and consistent messaging from multiple trusted sources.

Human behaviors will be influenced by several factors, including:

- perception of threat of vaccine preventable diseases
- perceived safety and efficacy of the vaccine
- words and actions of family, friends and community leaders
- accessibility and timing of the session
- attitude and information provided by the health worker
- availability of the vaccine
- trust in government health services
- local and national government actions

If these factors are positive and operating smoothly, they are enablers. If these factors are negative, they will be barriers to service uptake, community engagement and achieving immunization targets.

From no awareness

to action

to social norm.

